

DECEMBER 2024

# the Hummer

Arts,  
Entertainment  
& Ideas

free



The 2024 Gift Giving Guide



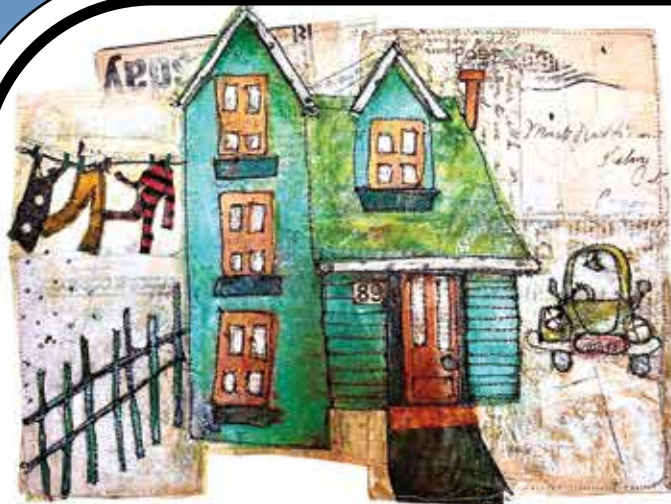
December's Events



It's a Wonderful Life!



Rockin' in The Pews



The Art of Catherine Arbour p.5



**Helping at the Holidays**

Local charities and not-for-profit organizations play integral and important roles in our Ottawa Valley communities. Now more than ever they could use our support, so please consider making a donation — or gifting a donation in someone's name — at the holidays.

These organizations would be so appreciative of your support:

**The Hunger Stop, Lanark County Food Bank** <[lanarkcountyfoodbank.ca](http://lanarkcountyfoodbank.ca)>  
**Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust** <[mmlt.ca](http://mmlt.ca)>  
**Lanark County Interval House** <[lcih.org](http://lcih.org)>

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The concept of the paradox of tolerance is usually credited to the Austrian-British philosopher **Karl Popper**. In his work *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, published near the end of World War II, Popper writes in an extensive footnote:

“If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant ... then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.... We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant. We should claim that any movement preaching intolerance places itself outside the law, and we should consider incitement to intolerance and persecution as criminal.”

Who's Reading theHumm



Last December, **Irene Chahley** sent in this awesome photo of you-know-who enjoying theHumm during the annual Christmas in Merrickville event, and wrote “Thought you might enjoy this pic!”

We certainly do, Irene — thanks for thinking of us!



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theHumm is a monthly arts, entertainment and ideas newspaper delivered free to businesses and visitor attractions in Almonte, Perth, Carleton Place, Westport, Pakenham, Carp, Arnprior, Smiths Falls, Burnstown, White Lake, Balderson, and Merrickville. Our mandate is to connect and promote people and events in the small towns and rural communities of the Ottawa Valley — where the arts flourish and entertaining characters run amok!

#### Submissions

By email or on disk.

#### Content Deadline:

20<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication

#### Advertising Deadline:

22<sup>nd</sup> of the month prior to publication

#### Subscriptions

cost \$40 (includes HST) for one year (11 issues). Send a cheque with your name and address to: theHumm: 237 Borden Road Mississippi Mills ON K7C 3P1

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#### Subscribe to Hummail — it's Free!

Do you know about our weekly e-newsletter called “Hummail”? We use it to further promote independent local performers, creators, businesses and community initiatives. It's also a great reminder of what's coming up on the weekend, in case someone has stolen your copy of theHumm...

So far we have sent out over 225 editions of Hummail, and we have over 1800 subscribers.

We would love it if you would subscribe too, and we promise not to share your email address with anyone. You can subscribe at <thehummm.com>, or by emailing <kris@thehummm.com>.

Red Plaid Productions Presents  
**MUDMEN**  
in Concert  
**Studio Theatre Perth** 63 Gore Street East  
**Saturday, December 28**  
Doors 7:00PM • Show 7:30PM • General Admission  
Tickets: \$35 all ages from [ticketsplease.ca](http://ticketsplease.ca), 613-485-6434  
[mudmen.ca](http://mudmen.ca) NON LLBO Mudmen Inc Event [studiotheatreperth.com](http://studiotheatreperth.com)

## “WINTER” HUMM DEADLINE!

Just a reminder that we are changing up our distribution schedule again in the beginning of 2025, when we will publish a “Winter issue” that comes out in mid-January and covers you through to the end of February. The deadline for submitting ads, editorial and calendar listings to the Winter issue of theHumm is:

**MONDAY, JANUARY 6**

We plan to distribute that issue during the week of January 15. We will resume regular monthly publication with our March issue (which follows our normal deadline of February 20 for editorial and calendar listings, and February 22 for ads)

TICKETS  
Please

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**TICKETSPLEASE.CA**



**CP Gallery Workshops and Creative Classes**  
CP Gallery, Carleton Place  
Ongoing



**Long Sault Trio**  
Folk, Blues, Jazz, and Traditional  
**Music at MERA**  
December 1



**Strumming, Singing & Fluting**  
A family-friendly concert  
**Almonte Public Library**  
December 1



Almonte in Concert presents  
**J.S. Bach's Long Walk in the Snow**  
**Almonte Old Town Hall**  
December 7 \*\* **SOLD OUT** \*\*



**Keith Glass Band**  
Original roots/rock  
**The Pews, Merrickville**  
December 7



**Diana Beresford-Kroeger**  
in conversation with Ed Lawrence  
**Almonte Old Town Hall**  
December 8



**The Barrel Boys**  
Carols from the Barrel  
**The Pews, Merrickville**  
December 14



**Folkus Music Series**  
Series passes available now.  
Individual concert tickets Jan. 1  
**Almonte Old Town Hall**



**Winter Wonderettes**  
presented by  
**Studio Theatre Perth**  
November 28–December 8



**Jingle All the Way**  
Christmas concert  
**Goulbourn Male Chorus**  
December 1



**Yavor Kresic**  
Art house music series  
**CP Gallery, Carleton Place**  
December 5



**Rock & Roll Christmas**  
The music of Elton John & Billy Joel  
**Farrell Hall, Perth**  
December 7



**A Christmas Gift of Music**  
Christmas concerts  
**Carleton Place Town Singers**  
December 8 & 10



**Comfort & Joy**  
**Tripoly & the Grenville Troubadours**  
presented by Trinity United Church  
December 13



**Mudmen**  
All ages bagpipe rock  
**Studio Theatre Perth**  
December 28



**Art House Music Series**  
2025 line-up announced  
Discounts on ticket bundles.  
**CP Gallery, Carleton Place**

**SELLING TICKETS?**  
Concerts • Plays • Festivals

**WE CAN HELP!**  
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# Showing the Local Love for the Holidays!

Here at theHumm we're big on local economies. The retail and service businesses in the small towns that we cover play a huge role in the cultural life of those towns. Each store, restaurant, or small enterprise attracts and serves a particular clientele — some inside the community, some from outside. Some

by Kris and Rob Riendeau

businesses host their own special events; others join together with local festivals to make the whole experience more vibrant. Many provide support in cash or in kind to local initiatives. All of them add their own particular flavour to the delicious mix that is small-town Ottawa Valley. A healthy local economy is an essential component to a healthy community.

It is with this in mind that we bring you theHumm's 24<sup>th</sup> annual **Gift Giving Guide** in both the November and December issues. Our hope is that you'll find two kinds of inspiration in the many lists that appear throughout these issues. As you peruse the various categories, we hope you'll discover the perfect present

for everyone on your list. But we also hope that you'll be inspired to investigate even more of the independent, locally owned and run businesses throughout our coverage area. In doing so, you're likely to encounter not only friends and neighbours, but also some old-fashioned small town peace and joy —not to mention amazing customer service!

The gifts we buy locally do double-duty by giving pleasure to the recipient and at the same time supporting the business of a friend or neighbour. Many shops and galleries feature works by area creators and/or gifts that are eco-friendly. The money you spend in your community tends to circulate back into the local economy too, so you'll be contributing to a wonderful ripple effect.

We would like to thank the participating merchants for taking the time to send in their Gift Giving Guide suggestions, and thank our readers for shopping locally and thereby supporting both the shops and our paper. To see photos of many of these items, subscribe to our free weekly Hummail e-newsletter! Find details at <thehummm.com>.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy holiday season!

## Gifts for Coffee & Tea Lovers

- Beautiful and functional mugs & teapots**, General Fine Craft.....\$50 & up
- London Fog gift box**, Good Food Co. ....\$40
- The Coffee Basket**, Ottawa Valley Gift Baskets.....\$79.95
- Tall ceramic mugs by Jane Snider**, Riverguild Fine Crafts.....\$45
- Bulk and bagged tea, including christmas favourites**, The Granary.....\$5-20

## Gifts for Cooks & Gourmets

- Jenna Rose hand printed linen tea towels**, Back Forty Artisan Cheese.....\$25
- 3-course Table d'hôte Menu**, Black Tartan Kitchen.....\$84
- Kricklewood boxed set of 4 infused sunflower oil 100ml**, Dandelion Foods...\$29.95
- Beautiful variety of pottery serving ware**, General Fine Craft.....\$50 & up
- Gourmet Inspirations sample cooking sauce box**, Good Food Co.....\$25
- Exotic spices gift sets and exquisite olive oils**, Pêches & Poivre .....\$30-80



**With locally sourced artisan products, speciality foods and zero waste options you can feel good about gift giving this year.**



## Join us for our Annual Chocolate Party Dec. 6 & 7

*Don't forget to get your fresh turkey orders in*

*Helping you achieve Health, Naturally*

**The Granary Bulk & Natural Foods**

107 Bridge St. Carleton Place

**www.granary.ca**

Open: Mon-Wed 9-7, Thurs & Fri 9-8  
Sat 9-5 & Sun 10-4

# Gift Giving Guide Shop Directory

Here's an alphabetical list of the shops that are participating in the December Gift Giving Guide, followed by the town in which they are located and the page on which you can find their ad. Great gift suggestions can be found throughout this issue, organized in categories. Happy local shopping!

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Alliance Coin & Banknote.....	Almonte, p.18
Almonte Antiques & Collectibles.....	Almonte, p.13
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Black Tartan Kitchen.....	Carleton Place, p.9
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The Book Nook.....	Perth, p.13
The Gift Boutique.....	Almonte, p.13
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Total Rhythm Dance Studio.....	Carleton Place, p.15
Under My Roof.....	Amprior, p.9
Vamos Outdoors.....	Almonte, p.7



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# A Concert of Strumming, Singing & Fluting

## A Musical Adventure for Children

Attention families and music lovers! Get ready for a musical adventure that will have children wiggling, clapping, and discovering the magical world of flutes, guitars and songs at the second Friends of the Mississippi Mills Public Library annual Live! @ the Library family concert.

On Sunday, December 1 at 2:30PM, the Almonte Branch of the Mississippi Mills Public Library will transform into a vibrant musical playground. Renowned flutist and singer Gertrude Létourneau will be joined by Ottawa's versatile guitarist Garry Elliott, a musical maestro who seamlessly bridges the worlds of classical and jazz music.

Elliott brings a remarkable musical range to the performance, with a guitar style that can whisper classical elegance one moment and swing with jazz improvisation the next. His ability to navigate different musical landscapes makes him the perfect companion to Létourneau's dynamic performance.

But there's more! Létourneau isn't just a masterful flutist — she's also a captivating singer who will delight the audience with well-loved songs that everyone can sing along to. From familiar children's classics to toe-tapping favourites, her vocals will invite audience participation, turning the concert into an interactive musical celebration.

This isn't just another concert — it's a journey through sound that will introduce children to the enchanting world of classical music. Létourneau will showcase four different types of flutes, each with its own unique voice and character, inviting young listeners to explore the rich tapestry of musical expression.

Families are invited to escape the winter chill and warm up with toe-tapping tunes and hand-clapping rhythms. Whether you're a music enthusiast or simply looking for a delightful family activity, this concert



Garry Elliott and Gertrude Létourneau will take youngsters on a musical journey on December 1

guarantees smiles, wonder, and perhaps the spark of a lifelong musical passion.

Don't miss this opportunity to inspire young hearts and minds. Mark your calendars for December 1, and prepare for an afternoon of pure musical joy! Tickets are available by donation through Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434), and all proceeds support the Mississippi Mills Public Library.

*creative gift ideas to celebrate hand-crafted, local and unique*

ceramics~jewellery~glass~wood~textiles~paintings & more!

Visit us **7 days a week** during December:  
Mondays to Saturdays 11-5, Sundays 11-4  
**open til 7pm on Thursdays and Fridays**  
closed December 25-27

63 Mill St., Almonte ON tel: 613-461-3463  
[www.generalfinecraft.com](http://www.generalfinecraft.com)

### Gifts for Outdoor Enthusiasts

- "Sunset for George" 504-piece jigsaw puzzle, TheOccurrence .....\$28
- Celebration maple tree, Home Hospice North Lanark.....\$85
- Smartwool merino wool baselayers, Vamos Outdoors.....\$139 & up
- Merino Abby Top, cozy, lightweight and warm, Duffield Design.....\$139
- Black sterling silver twig necklace, Kehla Jewellery Design.....\$380
- Donation / membership in their name, Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust.....various
- Groove Belt, backed by a 94-year warranty, Acquisti Life.....\$89.99

### Gifts for Parents & Grandparents

- 2024 Royal Canadian Air Force Centennial \$2.00 set, Alliance Coin .....\$14.95
- Lunch Gift Cards, Black Tartan Kitchen.....\$50
- Group dance lessons for two (4 weeks), Total Rhythm Dance Studio.....\$120
- Power Bed with Tempur-Pedic mattress, Under My Roof.....\$2999 & up
- Limelight hydrangea, Home Hospice North Lanark .....\$100
- Cheeks Ahoy unpaper towels in a variety of styles, Dandelion Foods .....\$14-18

Lise, Sandra and the team wish you a *sweet and savoury* season!

89 MILL ST. ALMONTE 613-256-5764



# Catherine Arbour – School’s Out – Playtime!

Collage artist Catherine Arbour is following her own advice. After more than two decades of teaching elementary school students, she is applying her successful classroom techniques to her own retirement. Her primary goal as a teacher was to develop confidence in her students’ individual abilities, whether they were academically inclined or not. And art — non-judgmental creativity — was her principal tool.

by Sally Hansen

Arbour’s collages are the wonderful, whimsical, surprisingly complex result of her playing — playing with paper, playing with scissors, playing with resins, experimenting with layering and always, always, looking for new ingredients for her intriguing and utterly charming artworks. Many of her works feature everyday subjects. But her layered portrayals of a sewing machine or a piano or a house draw you in. Closer inspection reveals layer upon layer of paper and stitching and fabric. Textures abound, and you find yourself trying to read the text in the snippets of paper she has chosen. Sometimes she blurs the words; sometimes not, and you are left to wonder what and why.



The overall effect of many of the works by this Almonte artist is somewhere between nostalgia and yearning for simpler, less technology-dominated days. At times her collages almost evoke the comforting aura of folk art. Her works remind you that there is a real world waiting to engage you, if only you could

stop looking at your cell phone and disconnect from social media.

Her enthusiasm for her chosen medium of collage is based on her appreciation of the positive effects of play. The medium is known for its flexibility and no-holds-barred creativity. Catherine “auditions” various flavours of papers for inclusion, considering colours, texts, images — there are no rules to inhibit her creativity. (She confides that some of her works contain re-purposed and re-decorated bits of theHumm in them!) She has always loved textiles and scours thrift shops for interesting fabrics, looking for abstracts and patterns and wonderful colours. A lifetime sewer, she discovered that she could make her own “fabric paper” by applying an acrylic medium on it that allows her to stitch and colour and print on it. She admits to having studied concepts like design and balance and variety in colour and shape via Instagram, but she is a free spirit. Her collages become visual puzzles, drawing you in to create your own story about what she is saying.

## The Play’s the Thing

If you Google “How to be playful,” the Internet will tell you to watch children. In Catherine’s case, during her years as an elementary school teacher she discovered that encouraging children to play with art was an effective way to build their self-esteem. By praising their originality and creativity, she was able to keep them engaged, incorporating art to illustrate everything from mathematical concepts to literacy. Her goal was to inspire kids to experiment, to try something nobody else would think of — “Make it your own!” She credits her mother with fostering her appreciation of creativity; her mom bought her a child-size loom and taught her how to make patterns for weaving rugs for her dollhouse. Her face lights up when she describes the pleasure it gives her to create something. “I do art for the joy of playing,” she states, and admits that it’s as much fun to create the papers she incorporates as it is to create the image that she has in mind.

Although she was raised in Toronto, her father’s sabbaticals as a professor of Theology meant that she was born in Strasbourg, France, spent a year in Germany at age ten, and lived in England for a year when she was twenty. Her family loved traveling, and she does too. She completed a post-graduate



degree at the Institute of Child Study in Toronto, and met her husband, Patrick. Her husband’s career moved them with their two daughters from Toronto to Cleveland, Ohio, where their third daughter was born. Canadian to the core, two years later they moved to Vancouver, then Niagara-on-the-Lake, and eventually to the Ottawa Valley where they lived for 19 years on Ramsay Concession 8.

Catherine had been an occasional teacher while raising their three children, and started teaching in Toronto. She spent the majority of her career at Naismith Memorial Public School in Almonte, where she taught for eighteen years. Catherine and her husband moved into their wonderfully refurbished home in Almonte in 2009.

As her retirement approached, she began considering what she wanted to do with her free time. In addition to embracing collage art, she joined with a group of other retiring teachers to form the Ukuladies. It has been renamed the String Cats as the serenading group has reached a mixed membership of over 25 community-minded songsters. Quixotically, they chose an instrument that none of the founders had ever played, and in only three years they began to serenade senior residences, perform at parties, and invite their bemused audiences to sing along. Catherine reports their repertoire is now at 169 songs and growing.

She describes herself as “a bit of a dinosaur.” Catherine Arbour has no web presence, and no desire to be an “influencer,” so the only way you can see her heart-warming pieces is by dropping in at the Ottawa Valley Coffee shop in Almonte. When friends drop in at the home she shares with her husband, they not only beg to buy a piece, they frequently ask her to create a commissioned collage of some specific scene or object, often as a gift for another friend. While it isn’t as spontaneously playful as her own concoctions, she occasionally relents, and can be reached at her email address on the back of her Artist Trading Card if you are so inclined. It would make a delightful gift.

Catherine won’t be here to see this edition of theHumm as it hit the streets. That love of travel will have her somewhere touring Portugal with her female companions, hiking in the Azores, or participating in a yoga retreat and Nia class. She knows how to play.

## Gifts for Art Lovers

- Colourful mixed-media by Tamara Campbell, Arts CP Art Hub.....\$40-1500
- Tara Pocket hand painted ornaments, Cedar Hill Christmas Tree Farm.....\$49
- Small paintings by Jay Li, General Fine Craft.....\$275-400
- Silk and textile framed art by Darian Lajoie, MVTM Gift Shop.....\$125 & up
- Gallery gift certificates, Sivarulrasa Gallery.....\$100
- Gorgeous fused glass abstract, The Gift Boutique.....\$146
- Canvas prints in all sizes, Under My Roof.....\$99 & up



Mississippi  
Madawaska  
Land Trust

**Thank You**

to our community and supporters  
for your generous donations,  
memberships, and volunteer time.  
You help MMLT create lasting  
impact for land and wildlife  
conservation in our area.  
Our warmest wishes  
for this holiday season.

**mmlt.ca**

BARBARA GAMBLE

ERIC WALKER

JIM HAKE

MARINA RAIKE

10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SHOW  
NOV 16 - DEC 22, 2024

**SIVARULRASAGALLERY**

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of original  
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this Christmas!

Our biggest  
show of the year  
continues  
to Dec 22!

**sivarulrasa.com**



WHO Catherine Arbour  
 WHAT Collage Artist  
 WHERE Ottawa Valley Coffee. 61 Mill St., Almonte,  
 <ovcalmonte.com>;  
 catearbour@yahoo.ca  
 WHY "I love it for the experience of playing"

•ARTIST•TRADING CARD•



The actors are getting ready to perform this unique production and put you in the holiday mood!  
 Catch the Smiths Falls Community Theatre's production of *It's A Wonderful Life* on December 6-8 and 12-15.

## It's A Wonderful Life

### A Radio Play to Get You into the Holiday Spirit!

The Smiths Falls Community Theatre is pleased to present *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* by Joe Landry as their holiday performance and final play of the season. Inspired by the classic American film, this is performed as a 1940's live radio broadcast in front of a studio audience. Nine actors perform the dozens of characters in the radio play. A piano player adds the music for the play as well, and a foley artist produces the sound effects on stage for the audience to see.

The audience will be sure to enjoy the retelling of this beloved Christmas story. George Bailey has so many problems that he is thinking about ending it all during the Christmas season. As the angels discuss George, we learn about his life in flashback. As George is about to jump from a bridge, he ends up rescuing his guardian angel, Clarence. Clarence goes on to show George what his town would have been like if it had not been for all his good deeds over the years.

Directed by Liz Stienberg and produced by Lynda Daniluk, this play will be sure to put you into the Christmas spirit. Come and enjoy a different twist to the remaking of this story and learn about all the different elements incorporated into conveying the story to the audience.

The show starts with performances on Friday and Saturday, December 6 and 7 at 7:30PM, followed by a matinee on Sunday, December 8 at 2PM. The second weekend runs Thursday through Saturday, December 12-14 at 7:30PM and finishes up with a 2PM show on Sunday, December 15. Tickets are \$24 for adults, \$10 for students, and can be purchased at Special Greetings (8 Russell Street in Smiths Falls), online or by phone (283-2244) with credit card. If tickets are still available, they can be purchased a half-hour before showtime at the door. Check out all that is happening at The Station Theatre at <smithsfallstheatre.com>.



**Joanne Beaton**

**Christmas Wish List**  
 for Grandma... a bungalow  
 ✓  
 311 Honeyborne

for Auntie Susan and Uncle Bob ...  
 a home in the country  
 ✓  
 4817 Kinburn Side Road

for Mommy & Daddy (and me) ...  
 a home in a great family neighbourhood  
 ✓  
 24 White Tail

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## Handmade Gifts

Stained glass art panels & smalls by Marlene Othmer, Arts CP Art Hub.....\$25-200  
 Handmade board w/ Back Forty cheese & local charcuterie, Back Forty Cheese\$125  
 Batik tulis cotton tablecloth 56" x 96", Fine Batiks.....\$90  
 Jewellery workshop at FM Silversmith Studio, Fiona Macintyre Design.....\$110-175  
 Friendship necklace by Glee Jewelry, handcrafted in Canada, Acquisti Life.....\$25  
 Happy Hooves locally made lip balm, Foodsmiths.....\$5  
 Felted finger puppets, ornaments & birdhouses from Nepal, Mill Street Books\$17-50  
 Handwoven tea towels, MVTM Gift Shop.....\$40  
 Garneau slippers, Rowland Leather.....\$99 & 129  
 Painted silk & wool scarves by Jean Down & Mette Baker, Strévé Designs...\$79-160



## Advent to Christmas by Candlelight

Sunday, December 22, 4 pm

St. James the Apostle Anglican Church

12 Harvey St. Perth ~ 613-267-1163 - stjamesperth.ca

Guest Artists:

Sylvia Goodeve, Piano

Patrick Kline, Cello

Brad Mills, Organ





# Holiday Roundup of Books by Local Authors

The holidays are here, so let's talk about books, shall we? And let's talk about books written by local authors. Because there are a lot of them. And we love our local authors... almost as much as we love peppermint eggnog!

Let's start with some non-fiction. **Hugh and Me** by James Owen Colley is a comical memoir that's both a coming-of-age story and a wild road trip adventure. When James was 14, he was asked to accompany his Great Uncle Hugh — a man he'd never met — on a trip around Europe and Africa. This was in

by John Pigeau

the '70s, and Hugh, a quirky, cantankerous character, drove a stick-shift Volkswagen camper van. But since he couldn't turn his head due to an old neck injury, he enlisted James to be his navigator and spotter.

The two were oddball travelling companions. Great Uncle Hugh — 60, described as "eccentric as hell" — had once been a professor at the University of Toronto. He'd also worked as an architect and a social worker. Never married, he was well-educated and cultured — and thrifty and neurotic. Set in his ways. Used to making all his own decisions.

James, meantime, was naïve and stubborn, and for the first time in his young life, far from home and family. He had a good sense of humour, though — lucky thing, that. Because James and his Great Uncle — a mismatched pair, to be sure — would quickly have to learn to get along.

Did they? Well, their zany six-month journey took them through 17 countries, across three continents... and they lived to tell the tale.

After his life-changing adventure, James (who now lives with his wife in a home on a beautiful lake north of Kingston) had stories to tell. And he's been telling them to friends and family for years. But he says he isn't a writer, so he asked his good friend Adam Berklemans to help write this memoir for him, which Berklemans did, based on James' memories of his unforgettable trip, as well as his old journal entries and handwritten notes. The result is **Hugh and Me**, which is an entertaining, charming, and often funny memoir — a bit bumpy at times what with Uncle Hugh's grouchiness and nit-picking, one wild night in Amsterdam, and the trip ending on a sobering note in Germany when the two hear the horrifying news of the terrorist attack at the Munich Olympics (not so far from where they were, at the time). All told, **Hugh and Me** is genuinely heartfelt and whole lot of fun. I give it three VW camper vans out of four.

In his historical novel **The '37**, Perth's John Kalbfleisch offers something dramatically different — a story centered on the Lower Canadian Rebellion of 1837. The book focuses on a then young, reform-minded lawyer named George-Etienne Cartier, a future Father of Confederation. Weaving fact and fiction, inspired by three of Cartier's recently discovered letters, **The '37** (Friesen Press) imagines how an affair with a beautiful young school teacher changes Cartier's life — and helps ensure the birth of an independent Canada.

This is a wonderful novel, marked by crisp, eloquent prose and a well-told story perfectly paced. It is top-notch storytelling. Little wonder: Kalbfleisch was a journalist who spent four decades at the *Montreal*

*Gazette* as a reporter, editorial writer and Op-Ed page editor, and also wrote a regular column on the city's history. He is also the author of three works of non-fiction and co-author of a fourth, and has written the novel **A Stain Upon the Land**, all centred on Montreal's rich past.

**The '37** was truly a pleasure to read. I recommend it highly — even to those who are not normally fans of historical fiction. Because this is simply one darn good yarn. Two of Perth's bookstores have it in stock. And if your local independent does not, you can ask them to special order it for you.

Switching genres once again, James McMahon, also from Perth, offers readers **The Laura Lure**, the first book in a fantasy trilogy. The novel, published by Austin Macauley USA, begins in the present day setting of Ottawa, the Valley, and the Marysburgh Vortex outside of Kingston. Like many fantasy novels, it is a story of intrigue, time travel, and a struggle between good and evil.

It begins ominously in the Secure Treatment Unit of a mental hospital, where we meet the book's central figure, Dr. Shamus Bergin, a staff psychologist. He meets a patient called J.D., an amnesiac who defies clinical diagnosis. Other doctors have written him off, but Shamus is intrigued by the man, and he investigates. But he is frustrated to find redacted files.

And he's met with evasiveness from hospital administrators and government agencies. Then, all at once, the doctor-patient relationship shifts radically: the patient says he has time-travelled from a forgotten Age of Lora to seek help from modern day members of The Sacred Order of Keepers in order to find the last living angel.

Is Shamus dealing with the delusions of a sick mind, or should he take a leap of faith and help the man achieve his mission? That is the question that spins the action in **The Laura Lure** — which the patient reader might just find to be a complicated yet feverishly creepy thriller.

In fantastic news, Amanda West Lewis has been named a finalist for the 2024 George Bilson Award

for Historical Fiction for Young People for her radiant novel **Focus. Click. Wind**, which we reviewed earlier this year (our congratulations to Amanda!). Her latest book, **A Planet is a Poem**, is certainly another highlight from 2024. It's a cosmically fun, fascinating and educational read — for stargazers of any age. And wouldn't it just make for an excellent gift this holiday season? Yes, it would!

Another terrific book that would make a wonderful Christmas gift is **Toller Cranston: Ice, Paint, Passion** by Phillipa Cranston Baran. The multi award-winning book, featured in theHumm earlier this year, celebrates an extraordinary life with messages that resonate: *Be creative now. Chase your destiny. Live authentically. Never quit.* Phillipa Cranston Baran lives in the Arnprior area, where the Cranston family has roots. **Toller Cranston: Ice, Paint, Passion** is available wherever fine books are sold.

And last but not least, Diana Beresford-Kroeger's beautiful and enlightening book **Our Green Heart: The Soul and Science of Forests** would make a perfect present for anyone with an interest in the environment and the impact humans have on it. It will empower the reader to do what they can for our planet, and our future.

I wish you all a happy book buying season, and a very happy Christmas, too!



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# Holiday Open House

## Annual Festive Day at Back Forty Artisan Cheese

On Saturday, December 14, Back Forty will be hosting the annual Holiday Open House at their farm in Mississippi Station. This festive day is a great opportunity to stock up on cheese for the holiday season and get 15% off select cheeses as well as free sampling. The shop will feature a unique selection of locally crafted food, one-of-a-kind gift items, gift baskets, and frozen farm meats, including their grass-fed lamb, highland beef, and whey-fed heritage pork. Their annual holiday gift baskets are always a hit, pairing their cheeses with other local food and drinks in a reusable basket. They are available to pre-order on their website <artisancheese.ca> and pick up at the open house or any day after at the farm.

In addition to the cheese shop, the Jenna Rose Textile Studio, which is situated above the shop and tasting room, will be featuring Jenna's hand-printed linens and textile products — visit <jennarose.ca> for a preview of her work. Local chocolatier Ludwig Ratzinger will also be on-site with his delectable hand-made chocolates <finechocolate.ca>.

Their licensed riverside bistro will be serving a selection of hot and cold beverages alongside hot food from the wood oven and other holiday treats for you to enjoy fireside. Come on out to 1406 Gully Road in Mississippi Station on Saturday, December 14 from 11AM to 4PM!



Pre-order your delicious local food & beverage baskets online, and pick them up at Back Forty's Holiday Open House on December 14!

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Cafe Cardi in luxurious organic cotton fleece, Duffield Design.....	\$199
Batik cotton table napkins, set of 4, Fine Batiks .....	\$27
Donation / membership in their name, Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust.....	various
Book-themed tote bags, The Book Nook .....	\$9
Patagonia down sweater, Vamos Outdoors .....	\$349
Newport plum tree, Home Hospice North Lanark.....	\$90

### Gifts for Faraway Friends

Sumptuous, soft silk Batik scarf, Fine Batiks .....	\$50 & up
The "Forget me Not" jewellery series, Fiona Macintyre Design .....	\$130-148
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# And the Winners Are...

By Jessie Carson and Jenn Snider Cruise

Produced by Almonte Readers & Writers, the Lanark Lit Writing Competition launched in April of this year and set out to offer local writers of all ages an opportunity to share their work in print and in person, as well as win a monetary prize. With the call for submissions for this inaugural year focused on works of short fiction, we're thrilled to report that the local writing community delivered an impressive tour de force of powerful, imaginative, and compelling stories that transported us and captured our hearts!

After a two-month-long process of deliberation by a panel of judges, we are excited to announce the winners of the competition! Note that we will be celebrating the winners, and all the writers who submitted stories, on December 8 from 2–4PM with an Awards Gala, which will be held at the Almonte Public Library (155 High Street, Almonte). Please join us, enjoy some refreshments, and hear the winning writers and the runners-up read from their stories.

Without further ado, we are thrilled to announce the winners of our first annual Lanark Lit Writers Competition! As selected by an independent jury of local literary experts, our winners are:

*\*drumroll please\**

## Ages 17 and Under

Winner: *The Apartment*, by Mattea Crabtree (Perth), "a whimsical and fresh voice with excellent character work." Mattea is an aspiring author—at twelve-years old she has already written three books and numerous short stories, which she one day hopes to publish.

## Young Adults 18–29

Winner: *The Story of Gilbert's Hill*, by Georgia Walker (Almonte), "a beautiful piece of poetic prose that effortlessly captures the longing that comes from memory and nostalgia." Georgia describes having an "in-my-veins kind of feeling" about writing, where their "passion and dedication becomes stronger in every word, sentence and paragraph."

## Adults 30+

Winner: *Funeral Arrangements*, by Carolee Mason (McDonalds Corners), wowed the judges with a story "reminiscent of Alice Munro; the pace, the hints and the revelations were perfect. An excellent, gratifying read." Carolee likes to keep busy in Perth where she has written and directed scores of plays for teenagers and adults. Online creative writing courses during the pandemic rekindled her early love of historical fiction. From a family of oral historians, she writes about the past — both 20<sup>th</sup> century Canada and 16<sup>th</sup> century Scotland.

First Runner Up (2<sup>nd</sup> place): *Team Bob*, by Sara Jane O'Neill (Almonte), an "imaginative, humorous, and well-written work of dystopian eco-fiction". As a career environmentalist, Sara's writing focuses on the optimistic side of eco-fiction. She aims to create stories on important environmental topics through exciting fantasy worlds or light-hearted adventures.

Second Runner Up (3<sup>rd</sup> place): *The Book Reader*, by Michael Sobol (Lanark), "transported the reader to a time and place — a fascinating premise, captivating." Mike has written a variety of unpublished short stories, plays and novels, as well as published works including a radio play (CJET), television comedy (CBC Writing Competition) and most recently a creative essay on Norman Bethune.



(top l-r) Carolee Mason, Mattea Crabtree, Sara Jane O'Neill, Mike Sobol. Not pictured: Georgia Walker

## About the Lanark Lit Competition

With a total of 42 submissions across three categories, stories were sent in by writers from all over Lanark County (and a bit beyond) including Almonte, Carleton Place, Perth, Smiths Falls, McDonalds Corners, Westport, Arnprior, Delta and Lanark. The range of style in the stories was vast, and represents the creative diversity of the literary arts in the area. Written with love and command of language, these stories all left an impression on our competition jurors, and invoked a wide range of emotion and experience; from laughter, to imagination, amusement, sadness and longing. Well done, everyone!

This region is absolutely chock full of writerly talent, and the judges definitely had their hands full. Our esteemed panel of jurors each participated in a round of blind consideration of the submissions. All author names were removed prior to circulation, and discussions maintained anonymity of the authors until the decisions were finalized. The first set of jurors in the Adult 30+ category created a long-list of stories, and the second set of jurors decided on a short-list and eventually a winner. Each juror thoughtfully considered every story and took their role seriously. As members of our literary community, they knew the courage taken by every writer to submit, and they appreciated elements of every submission. On behalf of our community and all participants we wish to thank our jury for their time, dedication, and thoughtfulness.

Jury members for the Adults 30+ category were Jim McEwen, Ann Shea, Judi Bowe, Edith Cody-Rice and Margaret Carson. Elysia Rourke was the jury member for the 17 and under and young adults 18-29 categories.

A huge thank you to all those who submitted a story. Without you, there would be no competition, and we know it takes creativity and focus to write and finish a story, not to mention bravery! We encourage all writers to continue sharing their work. This is how you can connect to your peers and develop your skills. We look forward to seeing you on December 8!

Almonte Readers & Writers wishes to thank the Lanark Lit project funders, the Elizabeth Kelly Foundation, and the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

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# Loving Art and its Value, Right Here in the Valley

Aren't we lucky here in the Ottawa Valley, having access to art and craft made locally and across Canada? We have so many opportunities to bring art into our lives and enjoy the contributions that artists make to the local culture and economy. Galleries, museums and businesses work hard to present beautiful works, especially during the gift-giving season.

We admire human ingenuity and vision — but consider the many ways art has lasting value. There is value in artistic talent, skills, training and creativity. There is value in the traditions of dedicated craftsmanship. There is value in the joy and inspiration that art brings to daily life. There is value in the message that one supports creativity as an intrinsic part of life.

Here's something to remember when you go into your local art gallery: don't assume anyone is making a lot of money! If consignment, artists are paid out when their work has sold with a percentage commission going to the business to cover a myriad of expenses. Both artists and galleries are of course subject to rising costs of materials, rent, labour, etc. So the retail prices you see are generally very reasonable, especially when compared to work of equal quality in the US and UK markets.

Art and fine craft is widely appreciated and supported in many ways by Canadians. We give artful



One great place to find a wonderful selection of local and Canadian art is at General Fine Craft in Almonte!

gifts, collect objects that please and inspire us, are curious about the story behind the artwork. It is important to support the incredible skills we so admire, and pass them on to future generations. Be inspired and explore the options in your own backyard!

— Richard Skrobecki

## A Christmas Gift of Music Holiday Concert by the CP Town Singers

By Danette Hanneman

It's time to celebrate the Christmas season, and a performance by the Carleton Place Town Singers is the best way to get you in the holiday spirit. Our gifted choir director Laurel Tye has chosen a unique set of songs that are sure to pull your heartstrings, put a smile on your face and get your toes tapping. Our incredibly talented accompanist Ian Guenette will entertain you with his own selections, and we will also be highlighting a few choir members. Rosalynn Heurer's cello performance will charm you, and Michelle Kay's performance on the bells adds just the right amount of sparkle.

As always, this season's song selection has challenged the choir and we are certainly up to the test.

No matter the trials and tribulations of the past year, an evening of inspirational music is sure foster a joyous holiday season.

### New Performance Venue!

Our performance location has changed to Zion Memorial Church, located at 37 Franklin Street in Carleton Place. We are looking forward to performing for you on Sunday, December 8 and Tuesday, December 10 at 7PM. Tickets are \$15 (children under 12 are free) and you can purchase them at Tickets Please ([TicketsPlease.ca](http://TicketsPlease.ca), 485-6434), The Granary (107 Bridge Street, Carleton Place) and from Choir members. Only cash will be accepted for tickets purchased at the door.

### Gifts for Lovers of Vintage Treasures

"Simmer Seeds Catalogue" 504-piece jigsaw puzzle, TheOccurrence.....\$28

Roman glass perfume bottles (2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.), Alliance Coin & Banknote.....\$195

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# Buy Art, Support Interval House!

Until December 22, the Arts Carleton Place Art Hub is hosting a group art show called Winter Wish, featuring fine art, glass work, woodturning, pottery, jewellery, photography and art cards. Find the perfect gift for the art lover on your list!

During the Winter Wish show, a purchase from the "Gifts for Interval House" table will support Lanark County Interval House

and Community Support <lcih.org>. These items include donated art, or reprints of original art, by members of Arts Carleton Place. 100% of purchase price will be donated to Interval House.

The Art Hub is located at 50 Bennett Street in Carleton Place, and you can find more information about it and participating artists at <artscarletonplace.com>.

# Christmas Concert at St. James Perth

According to Dr. Seuss, "Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas... perhaps... means a little bit more!" Christmas is a special time at St. James Anglican Church in Perth, and again this year the choir will provide a beautiful opportunity to experience that "little bit more" of Christmas.

For many years, the people of Perth have attended "9 Lessons and Carols" at St. James. This year, this special celebration of the Christmas story will return in a new shorter format that will be sure to delight listeners of all ages. "Advent to Christmas by Candlelight" will take place on Sunday, December 22 at 4PM at St. James.

Peter Woodwork, organist and Music Director, along with Val Leavitt, Music As-

sociate at St. James, are pleased to invite the everyone to hear the St. James Choir retell the Christmas story in song. Because many of us enjoy singing some of the old Christmas favourites ourselves, Christmas carols will alternate with readings to tell the story of Christ's birth.

Guest artists Sylvia Goodeve and Patrick Kline (piano and cello) will accompany most of the carols and anthems during the hour-long service. Brad Mills, organist at St Paul's United Church and longtime friend and partner of St. James, will accompany two of the anthems on organ.

All are welcome to experience that "little bit more" of Christmas in this warm and festive candlelight celebration. A freewill offering will be gratefully accepted at the door.

# Pine Ridge Christmas A Two-Day Sale of Art and Pottery

Pine Ridge Studio invites everyone to their annual half-price Pottery Sale! On the weekend of December 7 and 8, from 10AM to 4PM each day, all Pine Ridge Studio pottery — mugs, bowls, teapots, platters and plates, everything — will be 50% off the regular prices. Find those special pieces for yourself or for gift-giving at a super low price.

Three artist friends will be bringing their special Christmas offerings as well. In the house, Janice Johnston will be offering her awesome dill pickles and other preserves as well as original hand-painted notecards, Christmas decorations and handmade artists' books.

Brenda Beattie will be showing her water-colour paintings and pen-and-ink drawings.



You'll find art, preserves, fresh greenery and half-price pottery at Pine Ridge!

She may have some notecards and decorations as well.

Martha Fraser will be bringing her new milk-painted works. She finds that the milk-paint medium "lends itself in character and inherent ingredients to the natural subtle raw tones found in landscape and animal life art".

As always, there will be a selection of free fresh-cut greenery, pinecones, grapevine wreaths and other natural decorating materials from the woods of Pine Ridge. Hot chocolate and cookies will also be available, of course. Pine Ridge Studio is located at 6114 Carp Road. For more details, please visit <pine-ridge.ca>.



# Goodbye Party

Let's celebrate - drop by for a glass of wine, a bit of chat and a little visit.

**Thursday, December 12 from 4-7PM**

Our retail store at 88 Queen Street will be open for the final time on December 13 and 14 before we move to a virtual store at

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*Michaela*



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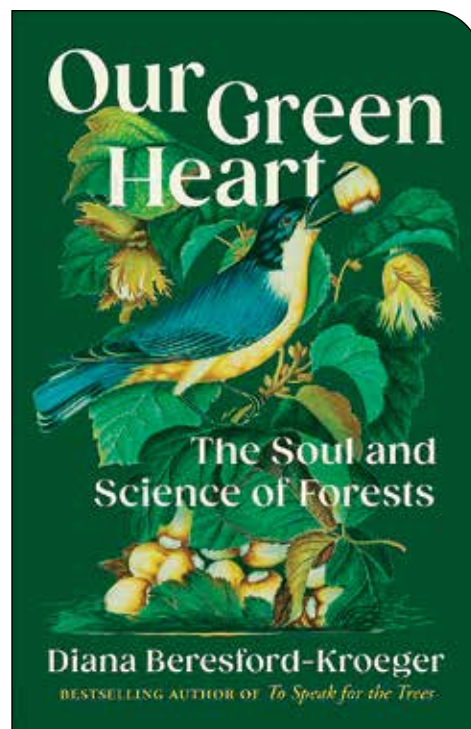
# Our Green Heart

## Ed Lawrence in Conversation with Author Diana Beresford-Kroeger

Diana Beresford-Kroeger is delighted to be returning to Almonte for a second conversation with Ed Lawrence about her latest book, *Our Green Heart: The Soul and Science of Forests*. After her October event filled up almost immediately, this second iteration is now set for Sunday, December 8 at 1PM at the Almonte Old Town Hall. Reservations are required at Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434). Tickets are “pay what you can”, to cover the cost of renting the hall.

Beresford-Kroeger is a bestselling author and world-renowned scientist in the fields of medical biochemistry, botany and medicine. *Our Green Heart* is a “reminder of all trees do for us,” she writes. “It is a reminder of their central role in the healthy functioning of this planet and everything — everything — that lives upon it... And it is a reminder that the only way out of this mess we have made is to protect the forests and plant new ones.”

If you were registered for November’s postponed event and are still interested in attending, you must re-register at <Tickets-Please.ca>. Any additional funds collected will be donated to Lanark County Food Bank to support their good work in the community. Diana’s new book will be available for



Diana Beresford-Kroeger returns to Almonte on Sunday, December 8

sale and signing at the event. More details can be found at <millstreetbooks.com/events>.

## Home (Alone) for the Holidays

Celebrate the holiday season with a night of laughter, warmth, and community spirit as Aprikose and Studio Theatre Perth team up to host a special screening of the beloved holiday classic *Home Alone*. The event will take place on Saturday, December 14 at 6PM at the Studio Theatre in Perth.

Bring your family and friends to enjoy an evening filled with festive cheer. Hot chocolate, coffee, tea, popcorn and a variety of

treats will be available for purchase at the concession, ensuring everyone stays cozy while enjoying the film.

Proceeds from this event will support MS Canada — Ottawa chapter, helping fund critical research and provide support for individuals living with Multiple Sclerosis.

Tickets can be purchased in advance at <shopaprikose.com>, or at the theatre on the night of the event.

## 2025 Folkus Concerts Same Lineup, Different Order

By Steve Wildesmith

The Folkus Concert series has been asked to make a change in the performers’ order of appearance to accommodate Whitehorse, who were touring with Sarah McLachlan as part of her band. Sarah had to cancel the tour due to health issues, and they asked to reschedule so they could resume the tour in January/February. This made Whitehorse unavailable for the January 25 show, so we asked Lynn Miles if she could switch, and she agreed.

Season ticket holders will still see the stellar line-up they signed up for, just in a different order. Lynn Miles will kick things

off on January 25, Steve Poltz takes the stage on February 22, Whitehorse comes to town on March 29, and Maria Doyle Kennedy closes out the season on April 5.

But here’s the kicker... after all the changes were made to Whitehorse’s dates in January and February, it appears Sarah will not be resuming the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary tour of *Fumbling Towards Ecstasy* at that time after all. Word is she is going to look at something later in 2025.

So sorry for any inconvenience this could pose for our season ticket holders.

— Steve Wildesmith is the Artistic Director of Almonte’s Folkus Concert Series



Whitehorse (above) will now play on March 29, with Lynn Miles appearing on January 25



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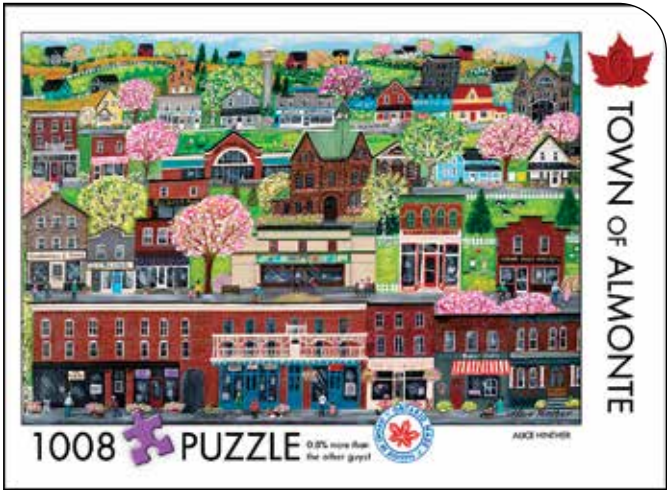
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# Almonte Puzzle Launch!

At the height of the P-word, then Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison declared that jigsaw puzzles were an essential item. At the time, Brigitte Gall and Michael J. Bainbridge looked at each other in slack jawed amazement. The year before that prime ministerial declaration, the couple had started Canada's only 100% locally owned and operated jigsaw puzzle manufacturing company — TheOccurrence — much to the slightly embarrassed disbelief of friends and family.

Cut to 2024. Jigsaw puzzle competitions occur globally. The Canadian Basket of Goods (aka average Canadian household spending) for jigsaw puzzles is projected to reach US \$58M, and TheOccurrence has moved from Haliburton to Merrickville where it continues to create and manufacture premium quality, 100% Canadian jigsaw puzzles. Their newest design is "The Town of Almonte" by artist Alice Hinther. Recently tapped by Ravensburger (puzzlers will know this is some serious street cred), Alice was asked to create "The City of Halifax" jigsaw puzzle for that global titan. The release date is scheduled for 2025. Until then, you can get your Town of Almonte jigsaw puzzle



Just in time for the holidays, the new "Town of Almonte" jigsaw puzzle will be available starting on November 30

box signed by the artist on Saturday, November 30 at Gilligallou Bird in Almonte! You can also find this and other TheOccurrence designs at Mill Street Books, or at their factory/gallery/shop located in Merrickville.

Find more information and other awesome puzzle designs at <theoccurrence.ca>.

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# Find the Almonte Elf!

Back by popular demand, the merchants of Destination Almonte are delighted to be hiding the Almonte Elf on their shelves this holiday season. Starting on November 28 at their Winter Night Market, and running until December 20, searchers can cut out their passport from theHumm, pick one up at Mill Street Books, or print one from <destinationalmonte.com>, and head out to find the Elf!

Completed passports can be turned in at Mill Street Books. There will be a draw for gift certificates donated by participating merchants, and the winners will be notified by phone or email on December 21.

The merchants hope that local residents and visiting shoppers will enjoy this event throughout the month of December, and take advantage of the extended shopping hours, with many shops staying open until 7PM on Thursdays and Fridays throughout the month.



Photo by Stephanie de Montigny of Pure Natural Portraits



## FIND THE ALMONTE ELF IN ALMONTE!

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Tin Barn Market	Vamos Outdoors	JB Arts	Mississippi Valley Textile Museum	Almonte Library
Joanne Beaton EXP Realty Brokerage (Write code from window)	Baker Bob's	Pure Natural Portraits (Write code from window)	Nine Lives Antiques	Dairy Distillery (Vodkow)
	Cheerfully Made		Tea & Cake	



# A Musical Celebration of Christmas

The Music Team at St. Paul's United Church in Perth is presenting "A Musical Celebration of Christmas" on Sunday, December 15 at 2PM. The first half of the concert will feature the St. Paul's Senior Choir singing *I Hear the Prophet Callin'*, a Christmas cantata that incorporates Appalachian, Irish, Latin, Cajun, and early American musical styles.

The second half of the program will feature a variety of vocalists and instrumentalists. Joel LeBlanc, long-time member of the St. Paul's choir, will sing *Joseph's Song*, a poignant piece that recounts the birth of Jesus from the father's perspective. Don McLean, the minister at St. Paul's, is also a cellist in the Kingston Symphony. Along with Director of Music Brad Mills on piano, Don will convey Christmas greetings with *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*.

Brad was music director for the Studio Theatre's recent production of *Winter Wonderettes*. The four women from the show — Courtney Mason, Lauren Bailey, Lindsay Williams and Justine Sousa — will sing and dance a high energy number, *Rockin' Christmas Medley*, featuring popular Christmas music such as *Rockin' around the Christmas Tree* and *Jingle Bell Rock*.

Six members of the St. Paul's choir are in a barbershop octet called "High Octane". They will be harmonizing together on a barber-

shop arrangement of the traditional English melody *What Child is This*. High Octane consists of Terri Henderson, Leslie Hoyle, Rick Comrie, Sue Upham, Brad Mills and Bill Elgie from the St. Paul's choir, joined by Tineke Doornbosch and Dan Woods.

Since 1965, television watchers have been enjoying the annual broadcast of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* with Emmy award-winning music by jazz pianist Vince Guaraldi. Brad Mills will be joined by Cam Gray on bass and Terry Kirkpatrick on drums to accompany the St. Paul's Junior Choir singing *Christmas Time is Here*, followed by an energetic bossa rock instrumental number called *Christmas is Coming*.

Interspersed amongst all of this will be an opportunity for the audience to join the choir in singing some favourite carols, accompanied by the St. Paul's mighty pipe/digital three manual organ, one of the finest instruments in the region. Brad will pull out all the stops for a rousing arrangement of *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*.

Following the concert, everyone is welcome to join the choir for refreshments. There are no tickets or admission charge, but donations for the work of St. Paul's will be accepted at the door. St. Paul's is located at 25 Gore Street West in Perth, and you can find more information at <stpaulsperth.ca>.

## And Sometimes They Kill You...

### Confronting the Epidemic of Intimate Partner Violence

Author and lawyer Pamela Cross will be stopping at the Almonte Public Library on Wednesday, December 4 from 2–4PM as she tours her new book *And Sometimes They Kill You — Confronting the Epidemic of Intimate Partner Violence*.

Despite decades of activism by feminists and their allies, women and their children continue to be killed by their partners and former partners in shocking numbers, leading the federal government to describe intimate partner violence (IPV) as an epidemic in Canada. Why have we failed to respond effectively to a social problem that affects millions of women and children?

After working for more than three decades with survivors, frontline workers and the systems they turn to for help, lawyer Pamela Cross provides an in-depth look at intimate partner violence in Canada. *And Sometimes They Kill You* untangles what intimate partner violence is, the barriers to its eradication, and what we could be doing to eliminate those barriers. Told in an engaging and accessible fashion, the book weaves together Cross's personal experiences and reflections on what she has learned with the heartbreaking stories of victims, survivors, and the alarming but convincing data. Cross offers practical and hopeful ideas for how each of us can engage in the vital work of eradicating intimate partner violence. This a call-to-action for the all-of-society, revolutionary response to gender-based violence needed to build communities that are safe and healthy for everyone.

"*And Sometimes They Kill You* is an impeccably subversive roadmap for anyone interested in an end to gender-based violence. Cross orchestrates decades of professional and personal experience into a no-nonsense harmony of truth and knowledge-sharing,"



Lawyer Pamela Cross will be in Almonte on December 4 as part of her book tour

says Jennifer Good, MSW, psychotherapist, activist and survivor.

#### About the Author

Pamela Cross is a feminist lawyer who works in the gender-based-violence movement. She brings an intersectional feminist analysis to her work as a researcher, writer and educator, which is focused on the intersections between gender-based violence, and particularly intimate partner violence, and Canadian legal systems. She has worked with a wide range of women's equality and gender-based-violence organizations across Canada, sits on Ontario's Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, and is a frequent media commentator on these issues. Pamela has a long history as a political activist, for which she boasts a healthy criminal record. She lives in Kingston, Ontario with her partner and their cat.



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Photo by Terry Boyd

In rehearsal, pictured left to right are the talented singing & dancing foursome of Lindsay Williams (Betty Jean), Lauren Osterhout (Cindy Lou), Courtney Mason (Suzy) and Justine White (Missy)

# Winter Wonderettes

## They'll Have You Rocking in Your Seats!

Studio Theatre Perth is thrilled to present *Winter Wonderettes* — the third show in the franchise that includes *The Marvelous Wonderettes* and *The Marvelous Wonderettes Dream On*, both of which previously ran at the theatre in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

The holiday tunes in this iteration make it the perfect high-energy pre-Christmas production. This fun-filled, colourful confection features the return of the same outrageously talented performers, this time mastering the holiday songs and dances of four high-spirited characters: sassy siren Cindy Lou (Lauren Osterhout), silly and pregnant for the second time Suzy (Courtney Mason), the serious Missy (Justine White), and the edgy clown Betty Jean (Lindsay Williams).

At the annual 60s-era Harper's Hardware Holiday Party, the "girls" share their lives, loves and failures with music, tears and laughter. The new show is classic holiday entertainment, with lots of singalong (and dance-along) favourites including *Rockin' Around*

*the Christmas Tree*, *Winter Wonderland*, *Sleigh Ride* and *Santa Baby*.

C.Lee Bates is directing *The Winter Wonderettes*, along with musical director Brad Mills, both of whom were involved with the previous *Wonderettes* shows. Brad on keyboards is supported by Gordon Craig on saxophone, Cam Gray on bass, Steve Hanna on guitar, Terry Kirkpatrick on drums, and Lynn Morrison on flute.

Dani Corbishley is the choreographer, and the creative colourful outfits are by costume manager Ann Hawthorne.

The musical opens on Thursday, November 28 and runs until December 8, with Thursday and Friday performances starting at 7:30PM, and Saturday and Sunday matinées beginning at 2PM. Tickets are \$27 each and can be purchased at the door or online from Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434). For more information, please visit <studiotheatreperth.com>. Youth 17 and under are always half-price.



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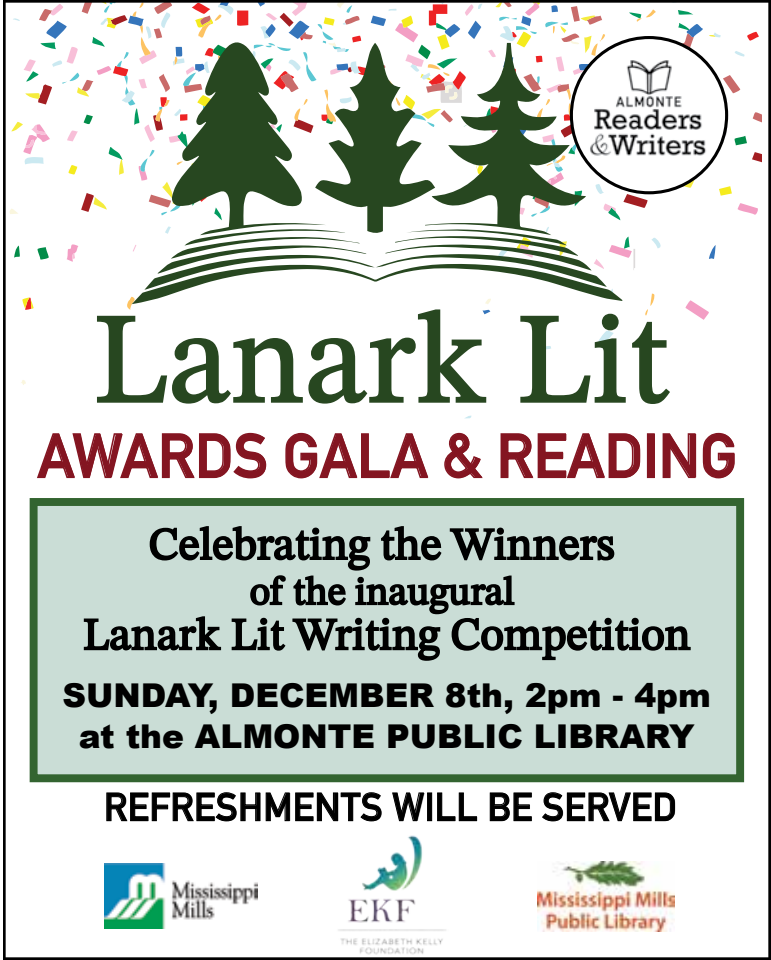
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# Rockin' in The Pews

Knowing how busy the month of December is for everyone, The Pews in Merrickville has very carefully chosen two stellar performances that are sure to wow audiences, without overloading the calendar.

First up, The Pews is thrilled to present the Keith Glass Band on Saturday, December 7 at 7:30PM. This is a must-see for anyone who enjoys excellence in a rock performance.

"The best description of our music that anyone has ever come up with is roots/rock, and I think that's pretty accurate," says Glass. "We are, at heart, a rock and roll band, but that term covers so much musical territory, from country to blues to straight-up rock — basically all our collective influences, so expect a pretty varied repertoire."

A high energy quartet, the band consists of Keith Glass (founding member of Prairie Oyster) on vocals and lead guitar, with fellow Prairie Oyster alum Alistair Dennett on drums, Steve Trecarten on organ and saxophone, and Mike Turenne on bass. All four are seasoned musicians in their own right.

"I look at any show we do as an opportunity not simply to showcase our music, but hopefully also to move people to dance," adds Glass. "I love seeing people move to our music. There is no more obvious indication that you're getting through to the audience than that."

So what better venue than The Pews, where audience members can enjoy a glass of wine or beer to whet their whistle between kicking up their heels on the invitingly spacious dance floor?

Just one week later, The Pews is delighted to host The Barrel Boys for their Christmas Concert. If you missed their show this past August, you'll really want to catch them on Saturday, December 14.

This bluegrass powerhouse features rich vocal harmonies, killer picking, and a fun, down-to-earth stage presence. The Barrel Boys are a unique staple of Canadian roots music. Members of this five-piece bluegrass band all play acoustic instruments including, fiddle, banjo, dobro guitar and upright bass, and take turns singing lead vocals and joining in on big vocal harmonies.

"This time we are playing our bluegrass Christmas show which we call 'Carols from the Barrel,'" says band leader Nathan Smith. "We play a mix of some very well-known traditional carols like *Joy to the World* and *Silent Night*, and a few songs off the beaten path — winter songs that might be new to some folks."

According to Nathan, this show will be another high energy performance featuring a lot of familiar Christmas carols played in a bluegrass style.



The Pews features the Keith Glass Band (above) on December 7, and The Barrel Boys on the 14<sup>th</sup>

"Typically when we play, it's all original content. The Christmas Concert is less original music written by us, but it is adapted by us. It will be a lot of songs that are familiar to people, but they've never heard them in quite this way," says Smith.

Both the Keith Glass Band and The Barrel Boys tickets are \$30 at TicketsPlease (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434) and \$35 at the door, but it's best to get yours soon so you don't miss out.

Last but not least, The Pews will open its doors during Christmas in Merrickville on December 7 during the day.

"We are hosting reindeer in the parking lot and indoor yard games in the basement, plus serving hot beverages starting at 10:30AM," says Anne Barr, chair of The Pews Cooperative.

Then at 2PM, come into Newans Hall and enjoy some free, light musical entertainment from the newly formed Merrickville Community Choir.

"It's a sing-along event and a debut for this new choir. We have about 25 to 30 members in the choir," says Anya Perry, choir leader and music instructor.

The choir is made up largely of residents who have been practicing for this concert since September, and the performance will feature at least a couple of solos. "We have four songs that are full choral arrangements, and the rest we are all singing in unison to encourage the audience to sing along," adds Perry.

Check out <thepews.ca>, and don't forget to book your tickets for Keith Glass and The Barrel Boys early.

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During December, drop in at the Almonte Library to see an exhibit of art by grade 11 & 12 students from Almonte & District High School

## ADHS Art at the Almonte Library

By Marjorie Mennie

Almonte & District High School is an amazing school which I am proud to be a part of. What makes me even more proud of being a student there is the incredible art program. I am currently in Natasha Charpentier's Grade 11/12 visual arts class. This class has given me opportunity after opportunity to improve my art skills and improve at art, which is something I am passionate about.

This art class creates a warm, welcoming environment and I always feel good about creating things. The way the class is set up allows me and every other student to be led by our own creative process. While everyone will get the same assignments, we are all encouraged to put our own spin on things. Multiple media have been discussed in this class, each bringing a new way for us to explore art.

Natasha Charpentier's art class has given me the opportunity to display my art in a showcase held at the Almonte branch of the Mississippi Mills Public Library. Annually the Library does an art exhibit featuring art by Almonte & District High School students. The exhibit is winter-themed and features many beautiful snow-covered works. Nearly every student, including myself, has contributed a piece to the gallery. All the pieces have come together to create a beautiful, near ethereal look. Multiple media are featured, all executed with great care.

All this being said, the exhibit is a great thing to see around Almonte in wintertime. With free admission, interesting art and a cozy atmosphere, what winter activity could be better? I recommend it to everyone who can check it out.

— Marjorie Mennie is a student at Almonte & District High School



Celebrate the season with the sounds of choir and brass on December 7

## Christmas with Brass

On Saturday, December 7, the Kanata Choral Society will present their Christmas concert.

One of the musical works to be performed at this concert will feature two choirs: the first will be their own SATB choir, and the second will have only trumpets, because Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672) set *Psalm 100* to music for choir and brass. Nicholas Cochrane and Nicholas Dyson are the trumpet players. They will also perform in *Twelve Brassy Gifts*, arranged by Howard Cable for the Canadian Brass.

Other music to be performed includes favourite Christmas carols for choir and audience by John Rutter, Jonathan Willcocks, Eleanor Gow and others. Graig Courtney wrote *A Musicological Journey Through the Twelve Days of Christmas*, advising us what not to request for Christmas if we want to have a quiet celebration with family and friends. He composed this work very cleverly and borrowed music from other composers through the ages.

Strings are a natural component for a Christmas concert. Carolyn Ho and Véronique Allard (violin) and Stephanie Lachman (cello), together with Eliana Kurilov de Castro (piano), will perform some lovely music to delight us all. The MC for the evening is Don McLeish.

This concert will be conducted by Scott Auchinleck, the Kanata Choral Society's music director.

It takes place on Saturday, December 7 at 7:30PM at St. Paul's Anglican Church, located at 20 Young Road in Kanata. There will also be a Silent Auction and reception to follow in the Rutter Hall.

Tickets are available at the door or by visiting [kanatachoralsociety.ca](http://kanatachoralsociety.ca), where you can also find information about the Silent Auction. Admission is \$22 for adults in advance or \$25 at the door; \$20 for seniors and \$10 for students. Children under 13 are admitted free of charge.

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Your generous contributions allow LCIH to provide safety, empowerment, and healing to those who need it most. This year has brought significant challenges for many, and the struggles faced by those seeking refuge can feel even more daunting

during this festive time. Not everyone has the comfort of a homemade meal, a warm bed, or the means to buy gifts for their children.

Together, we can create a wave of love and support that reaches far beyond the walls of our shelter. Your financial support helps LCIH be a beacon of hope and a safe haven for those in need. Cash donations are gratefully accepted and can be made securely online, and you will receive your tax receipt through Canada Helps. To do so, please visit <lcih.org/gift-of-money> or e-transfer to <finance@lcih.com>

# Holiday Portraits Support Food Bank

Stephanie de Montigny, owner of Pure Natural Portraits, has put together an exciting month-long event for a great cause. This year's annual fundraiser benefits the Lanark County Food Bank — The Hunger Stop, and will be through pop-ups and drop-ins throughout the area. Families, business owners and residents will have the opportunity to be photographed with the "traveling Merry Christmas sign" to capture their holiday spirit and love for giving back to the local community.

"Last year's pop-up fundraiser at the Mississippi Mills Business Breakfast was such a success that I decided to take it up a notch and bring it to the entire community this year," says Stephanie. "By participating in this unique fundraising opportunity, families and businesses get to commemorate the feel-good-moment on their seasonally decorated porch or storefront, creating beautiful memories to share with their friends and family and spread the holiday spirit."

All proceeds from the registration fee will be donated to The Hunger Stop to continue their invaluable work of providing goods and resources for the community. Additionally, all props and set supplies have been sourced locally from small businesses to ensure every dollar spent stays in our community and further helps our merchants.

For more information on registration or how to get involved, please contact Stephanie at <hello@purenaturalportraits.com> or 371-4594.



Photo by Stephanie de Montigny of Pure Natural Portraits

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The above photo of Makhena Rankin-Guérin was taken by Eliakim Hawi

# The Mississippi Valley Textile Museum

## A Year in Review and the Year Ahead

For almost 40 years, the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum (MVTM) has been preserving our vibrant community’s unique past and present, and it needs support to continue for another 40 years. Looking back at 2024, it’s clear that the Museum has entered an exciting period of change — rebranding with local design company nineSixteen, launching a new website, and redeveloping memberships — with inclusive exhibits and community events at the centre of it all.

The past year has been packed with back-to-back exhibits and sold-out events, including the biggest Fibrefest yet, with over 2500 visitors. More programs like Soup for Thought(fullness), Textiles and the Stories They Tell, and Fibrefest are what the Museum hopes to achieve in the year ahead. New partnerships were formed that the Museum wants to strengthen, such as with The Inclusion Project, Reconciliation Through Art, and Local Immigration Partnership. These programs and the local, national, and international exhibits that the MVTM hosts help make Mississippi Mills a destination for tourism, art and culture.

The Museum is a small charity with a smaller team, and the historic building, engaging exhibits,

and diverse programs come at a cost. Though this year has been one of the most successful for fundraising, unstable Provincial and Federal government funding has made sustaining the Museum’s growing operations difficult. That operational government funding accounts for less than 20% of the Museum’s budget, and it relies on the community, on generous donors, to help meet that budget every year.

The Museum is a community hub for learning, gathering and connecting. As a historical site, it’s a testament to all the lives it affected in over 100 years of operation. Most importantly, it’s a community repository for local stories. Your donation will help ensure that the Museum remains a community resource where everyone can see their stories represented.

Commit to unraveling history and weaving community today! Receipted donations can easily be made online for singular and monthly gifts, made in-person, or sent by cheque or e-transfer to <curator@mvtm.ca>. Please visit the Museum’s website at <mvtm.ca>, email Laila Hack at <l.hack@mvtm.ca>, or call 256-3754 for more information about how to give.

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Looking for that perfect gift idea? Consider ordering a gift basket from **Ottawa Valley Gift Baskets**. Baskets are created showcasing locally sourced fine food items including **Balderson Cheese; Snark Coffee; Mississippi Meadows Honey; michaelsdolce** gourmet jams; **Temple's Sugar Bush** maple syrup; **Mrs. McGarrigle's** chutney, mustards, spices and vinaigrettes; **The Mix Company** gluten free mixes and dips; **Village Treats** chocolates; and **Top Shelf Preserves** salsa and red pepper jelly.

Select from many basket ideas ranging in price from \$30.95 for the **Lil' Taste O' The Valley** to \$214.95 for **The Office Commendation** — or let us design a custom basket creation for you! We deliver locally and ship throughout Canada using CanadaPost & FedEx Ground.

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### Gifts to Divert & Entertain

2-hour workshops in pottery, glass fusing, painting & more, JB Arts .....\$25-85  
Vintage board games, Almonte Antiques & Collectibles .....\$10 & up  
Gift Cards, Black Tartan Kitchen.....various  
Miniature DIY dollhouse room & wooden model kits, Spark Books & Curios.....\$50-80  
Games and puzzles for various ages, The Book Nook.....various

### Gifts for Hosts & Hostesses

Hummingbird Chocolate sampler box, Dandelion Foods.....\$24.95  
Charcuterie gift box, Good Food Co.....\$150  
Chocolate Salamis (fudge, ganache & flavours, Hummingbird Chocolate.....\$31.99  
Candles, beautiful napkins, duo of cheeses, Pêches & Poivre.....\$6.50-30  
Classic Christmas mugs (singles or pairs), The Gift Boutique.....\$20-32  
"Merrickville Road Trip" 1008-piece jigsaw puzzle, TheOccurrence.....\$33

### Gifts for Husbands & Significant Others

Beer & Chocolate Combo with local brews, Hummingbird Chocolate .....\$70  
"Gift of Cheese" club subscription, Pêches & Poivre .....\$55 & up  
Leather belts, Rowland Leather.....\$58-65  
Wedding Special (3 private dance lessons), Total Rhythm Dance Studio.....\$155  
DU/ER performance flannel, Vamos Outdoors.....\$129  
Sports jerseys and memorabilia, Almonte Antiques & Collectibles.....\$5 & up

BACK FORTY  
ARTISAN CHEESE

Holiday  
OPEN HOUSE

December 14th  
11am - 4pm

FIRESIDE DRINKS & HOT FOOD,  
RAW SHEEP'S MILK CHEESE,  
LOCAL FOOD, GIFTS, & BASKETS

1406 Gully Rd. Mississippi Station  
WWW.ARTISANCHEESE.CA



Polar Bear Plunge, Perth, Jan 1  
The Complete works of William Shakespeare (Abridged), Perth, Jan 23-Feb2  
Lynn Miles, Almonte, Jan 25  
Trio Uchida-Crozman-Chiu, Almonte, Jan 26  
Vicki Brittle, CP, Jan 30  
There Goes the Bride, SE, Feb 14-23  
Steve Poltz, Almonte, Feb 22  
George Turcotte, CP, Feb 27  
New Orford String Quartet, Almonte, Mar 8  
Holmes and Watson, Perth, Mar 20-30  
The Ragged Flowers, CP, Mar 27  
Whitehorse, Almonte, Mar 29  
Maria Doyle Kennedy, Almonte, Apr 5  
Fierbois, Almonte, Apr 12  
Songwriting w/Lynn Miles, CP, Apr 23  
Lynn Miles, CP, Apr 24  
Jonas and Barry in the Home, SE, Apr 25-May 4  
Waiting for the Parade, Perth, May 1-11  
Bray and MacLean Trio, CP, May 29  
The Savannah Sipping Society, SE, June 20-29  
TRiPOD, CP, Jun 26

Festivals

Light Up The Night, Dec 6, 7PM. Annual outdoor Christmas concert in downtown Almonte. Food & drink vendors, Santa & fireworks. lightupthenightalmonte.com  
Pakenham Santa Claus Parade, Dec 7, 1PM. Hot chocolate & hot dogs after at Stewart Community Centre. Downtown Pakenham. mississippimills.ca  
Almonte Christmas Night Parade, Dec 8, 5PM. Follow the parade back to the arena for hotdogs & hot choc & free skate! Downtown Almonte. mississippimills.ca  
Kintail Country Christmas, Dec 14, 12-6PM. Wagon rides, outdoor activities, Santa Claus & more. Mill of Kintail Conservation Area, Almonte. \$20/vehicle. millofkintail.com

Literature

Guest Author Saturdays - Mary Jane Maffini, Nov 30, 1-5PM. Meet the author; signing A Bunch of Whimsy, Carleton Place. Free. abunchofwhimsy.com  
Rom Com Sunday, Dec 1, 12-2PM. In-store Book signings: Jennifer Whiteford and Ruby Barrett. Mill Street Books, Almonte. Free. millstreetbooks.com  
Pamela Cross Book Tour, Dec 4, 2-4PM. Author & lawyer presents her new book And Sometimes They Kill You &mdash; Confronting the Epidemic of Intimate Partner Violence. Almonte Library. Free. mississippimills.ca/en/live/almontebranch.asp  
Lanark LitWriting Competition Awards Gala, Dec 8, 2PM. Includes readings by the winning writers and more! Almonte Library. almontereadersandwriters.org  
Mystery Sunday, Dec 8, 2-4PM. In-store book signing: Katie Tallo with Buried Road. Mill Street Books, Almonte. Free. millstreetbooks.com  
Diana Beresford-Kroeger in conversation with Ed Lawrence, Dec 8, 1PM. Discuss Diana's book Our Green Heart &mdash; The Soul and Science of Forests. Almonte Old Town Hall. Pay what you can at TicketsPlease.ca. millstreetbooks.com  
Friday Night Happy Hour(s), Dec 13, 5-7PM. In-store Book signing: Noah Lefevre with A Century of Song. Mill Street Books, Almonte. Free entry. millstreetbooks.com

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<b>Arts Carleton Place Art Hub</b> presents <i>Winter Wish</i> , a group art show with some proceeds going to Lanark County Interval House [until Dec 22] <artscarletonplace.com> <b>General Fine Craft</b> presents new Pysanky decorated hanging eggs by Tanya Deacove; figurative and functional ceramics by Chandler Swain, and colourful blown glassware by Paulus Tjiang <generalfinecraft.com> <b>Mississippi Valley Textile Museum</b> presents <i>Common Threads, Contrasting Cloths</i> , works by Sue Clark and Judi Miller [to Dec 14] <mvtm.ca> <b>Sivarulrasa Gallery</b> presents their 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show with works by 29 Canadian artists <sivarulrasa.com> <b>Art in the Manor</b> presents paintings by Charles Spratt, Fairview Manor Lobby, 75 Spring St., Almonte <b>The Corridor Gallery</b> at the Almonte Library presents works by students of the grade 11/12 art class at Almonte & District High School			
2 Nolan Hubbard, The Cove	3 Cooking Connections, Perth Community breakfast, Ashton Teagan McLaren, The Cove	4 Pamela Cross Book Tour, Almonte Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove MFNC Monthly Meeting, Arnprior Lanark County Camera Club Meeting, Perth	5 Winter Wonderettes, Perth Social Swing Dance with Revival Swing, Almonte Karaoke for a Cause P.A.W.S. Fundraiser, The Cove Yavor Kresic, Carleton Place
9 Nolan Hubbard, The Cove	10 A Christmas Gift of Music, Carleton Place Julia Finnegan, The Cove Cooking Connections, Perth	11 Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove	12 It's a Wonderful Life Live Radio Play, Smiths Falls Goodbye Party for Kehla Design, Almonte Dennis Bouwmann, The Cove Carleton Place Toastmasters Club
16 Nolan Hubbard, The Cove	17 Community breakfast and bake sale, Ashton	18 Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove	19 A Kentucky Xmas w. Kentucky & Amanda Keeley, The Cove
23 Nolan Hubbard, The Cove	24 George Turcotte, CC's on the Rideau River City Junction, The Cove	25 Perth Community Christmas Day Dinner, Perth	26 Carleton Place Toastmasters Club

Local Food

Chocolate Party, Dec 6-7, 10AM-4PM. Specials on local, fair trade, and sustainably-sourced chocolate. Granary, Carleton Place. granary.ca  
Almonte Holiday Farmers' Market, Dec 7, 9AM-1PM. Local food, crafts & gifts. John Levi Community Centre, Almonte. Free. almontefarmersmarket.com  
Back Forty Holiday Open House, Dec 14, 11AM-4PM. Fireside drinks and hot food, sheep's milk cheese, gifts and baskets. Mississippi Station. artisancheese.ca

Visual Arts

Artistic Creations, Nov 29-30, 3PM-8PM (Fri); 9AM-4PM (Sat). West Carleton Arts Society's exhibition and sale of works priced at \$200 & under. Mess Hall, Carp. westcarletonartsociety.ca  
Art & Fine Craft, Nov 30, 11AM-4PM. Christmas show and sale of local talent! Artisan Village at the Falls, Smiths Falls. artisanvillagesmithsfalls.com  
Beckwith Christmas Craft Show, Nov 30, 10AM-3PM. Free admission. Food & cash donations for the Lanark County Food Bank. Beckwith Recreational Complex. 435-8929

Lanark County Camera Club Meeting, Dec 4, 7PM. Improve your photographic skills. Algonquin College, Perth. Free. lccameraclub.com  
Nick of Time Artisan Show, Dec 7, 10AM-3:30PM. Gifts & food by local artisans and makers. Donations to The Table welcome. Crystal Palace, Perth. Free. facebook.com/nickoftimePerth  
Holly Jolly Art Show, Dec 7-8, 10AM-4PM. Art show & sale by members of the Rideau Lakes Artists' Association. Perth Legion. rideaulakesartists.com  
Christmas At Pine Ridge, Dec 7-8, 10AM-4PM. Meet 3 local artisans; browse art; 50% off pottery! Pine Ridge Studio, Carp. pine-ridge.ca  
Goodbye Party, Dec 12, 4-7PM. Celebrate Kehla Design's final day at 88 Queen St. in Almonte before moving online to kehlaesign.com

Theatre

Cabaret Rachelle, Nov 29, 6-9PM. Stand-up, burlesque and drag, hosted by Rachelle Elie, presented by The Hub/Rebound. Almonte Civitan Hall. \$25 from TicketsPlease.ca

Winter Wonderettes, Nov 28, 29, Dec 5, 6 (7:30PM); Nov 30, Dec 1, 7, 8 (2PM). 60s-era holiday tunes and dances bring life to the season. Studio Theatre Perth. Tickets from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. studio-theatreperth.com  
Seasons of Love, Nov 29-30, 7:30PM. An evening of Music, Song, and Theatre. Carleton Place Town Hall. \$60 at TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. mississippimudds.ca  
It's a Wonderful Life Live Radio Play, Dec 6, 7, 12, 13, 14 (7:30PM); Dec 8, 15 (2PM). A beloved holiday classic comes to captivating life as a live 1940s radio broadcast. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. \$24 adult; \$10 student. smithsfallstheatre.com  
Home (Alone) Fundraiser, Dec 14, 6PM. Screening of Home Alone with festive cheer and treats. Fundraiser for MS Canada. Tickets at shopaprikose.com or door. Studio Theatre Perth. \$10. studiotheatreperth.com  
Yuk Yuks With Headliner Rob Pue, Dec 21, 7PM. Worldclass comedy. Final Score Sports Bar, Carleton Place. \$23. yukyuks.com/carletonplace

Youth

Meet & Greet with Santa, Nov 30, 11AM-2PM. Bring family & friends to have your picture taken with Santa. Code's Mill, Perth. Free. perth.ca/holidayevents  
Winter Princess Party With Snow White, Dec 8, 2PM. Let your kids' imagination run wild! Final Score Sports Bar, Carleton Place. \$10 adult; \$17.5 kid, inc kid meal; under 2 free. finalscoresportsbar.ca

Music

Ian Sherwood, Nov 30, 8PM. Canadian folk pop. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. \$40. smithsfallstheatre.com  
Tis the Season with London Trio Plus, Nov 30, 7:30PM. Ottawa's premier Gospel singers followed by wine & cheese. St. James Carleton Place. \$35. stjamescarletonplace.ca  
OldTyme Country Dinner Dance, Dec 1, 2-6PM. Country music, dancing, 5PM buffet. Musicians welcome. Clayton Community Centre. Adults \$20, children 6-10 \$13. 256-0740



Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<div><div></div><div><div>Winter Wonderettes, Perth</div><div>Art in the Manor: Charlie Spratt, Almonte</div><div>Artistic Creations, Carp</div><div>Cabaret Rachelle, Almonte</div><div>Wendell Ferguson, CC's on the Rideau</div><div>Rick &amp; Lindsay, St. James Gate</div><div>Seasons of Love, Carleton Place</div><div>Devarrow, Neat Coffee Shop</div><div>Scottish Country Dancing, Perth</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Winter Wonderettes, Perth</div><div>Artistic Creations, Carp</div><div>Seasons of Love, Carleton Place</div><div>Beckwith Christmas Craft Show</div><div>Art &amp; Fine Craft, Smiths Falls</div><div>Guest Author - Mary Jane Maffini, Carleton Place</div><div>Fashions from Laura, Pakenham</div><div>East Coast Experience, The Cove</div><div>Tis the Season with London Trio Plus, Carleton Place</div><div>Ian Sherwood, Smiths Falls</div><div>Michael Bernard Fitzgerald, Neat Coffee Shop</div><div>Meet &amp; Greet with Santa, Perth</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Winter Wonderettes, Perth</div><div>Strumming, Singing and Fluting!, Almonte</div><div>Rom Com Sunday, Almonte</div><div>Holiday Heritage House, Smiths Falls</div><div>Old Tyme Country Dinner Dance, Clayton</div><div>Ringing in the Season Concert, Carleton Place</div><div>Long Sault Trio, McDonalds Corners</div><div>Jingle All the Way, Carp</div><div>Eric Uren &amp; Meghan Balogh, The Cove</div></div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div>Winter Wonderettes, Perth</div><div>Chocolate Party, Carleton Place</div><div>No Principals, The Cove</div><div>Light Up The Night, Almonte</div><div>DaNielle Hewitt, CC's on the Rideau</div><div>Sing Noel Christmas Concert, Arnprior</div><div>It's a Wonderful Life Live Radio Play, Smiths Falls</div><div>Scottish Country Dancing, Perth</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Winter Wonderettes, Perth</div><div>Chocolate Party, CP</div><div>It's a Wonderful Life Live Radio Play, Smiths Falls</div><div>Holiday Farmers' Market, Almonte</div><div>Holiday Makers Market, Lanark, Portland</div><div>Kids-only Christmas Shopping Event, Almonte</div><div>Christmas Family Day, Appleton</div><div>Nick of Time Artisan Show, Perth</div><div>Holly Jolly Art Show, Perth</div><div>Christmas At Pine Ridge!, Carp</div><div>Lecture: The 1917 Halifax Explosion, Perth</div><div>Santa Claus Parade, Pakenham</div><div>Sing Noel Christmas Concert, Arnprior</div><div>Keith Glass Band, Merrickville</div><div>Christmas with Brass, Kanata</div><div>Rock &amp; Roll Christmas - The Piano Men, Perth</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>A Christmas Gift of Music, Carleton Place</div><div>Winter Wonderettes, Perth</div><div>Holly Jolly Art Show, Perth</div><div>Christmas At Pine Ridge!, Carp</div><div>Diana Beresford-Kroeger in conversation with Ed Lawrence, Almonte</div><div>Lanark Lit Writing Awards Gala, Almonte</div><div>Mystery Sunday, Almonte</div><div>It's a Wonderful Life Live Radio Play, Smiths Falls</div><div>Winter Princess Party With Snow White, Carleton Place</div><div>Christmas Night Parade, Almonte</div><div>Eric Uren &amp; Meghan Balogh, The Cove</div><div>Lanark Legion Ladies' Auxiliary Craft Sale, Lanark</div></div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div>It's a Wonderful Life Live Radio Play, Smiths Falls</div><div>Friday Night Happy Hour(s), Almonte</div><div>Comfort and Joy, Smiths Falls</div><div>MonkeyJunk, Neat Coffee Shop</div><div>Scottish Country Dancing, Perth</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>It's a Wonderful Life Live Radio Play, Smiths Falls</div><div>Back Forty Holiday Open House, Mississippi Station</div><div>MonkeyJunk, Neat Coffee Shop</div><div>Sleigh the Holidays, Smiths Falls</div><div>Kintail Country Christmas, Almonte</div><div>A Country Christmas feat. McCullough, Badour + Jones, The Cove</div><div>The Weekend Specials Duo, CC's on the Rideau</div><div>Home (Alone) Fundraiser, Perth</div><div>The Barrel Boys, Merrickville</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>It's a Wonderful Life Live Radio Play, Smiths Falls</div><div>A Musical Celebration of Christmas, Perth</div><div>Valley Voices Christmas Concert, Almonte</div><div>Eric Uren &amp; Meghan Balogh, The Cove</div></div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div>Matt Dickson, The Cove</div><div>Scottish Country Dancing, Perth</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Chris Murphy, The Cove</div><div>Yuk Yuks With Headliner Rob Pue, Carleton Place</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Advent to Christmas by Candlelight, Perth</div><div>Eric Uren &amp; Meghan Balogh, The Cove</div><div>Shawn McCullough + Friends, The Cove</div></div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div>NYE Primer with Jeff Callery + Shawn McCullough, The Cove</div><div>Scottish Country Dancing, Perth</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Mudmen, Perth</div><div>Holiday Hoedown with The Adam Knapp Band, The Cove</div><div>Comedy Night, Neat Coffee Shop</div><div>Jono Townsend, CC's on the Rideau</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Eric Uren &amp; Meghan Balogh, The Cove</div></div></div>

**Ringing in the Season Concert**, Dec 1, 2PM. Carleton Place and District Community Band. Zion-Memorial United Church, Carleton Place .A donation to the Lanark Food Bank. facebook.com/cpadcb

**Jingle All the Way**, Dec 1, 3PM. Concert by the Goulbourn Male Chorus. Trinity Presbyterian Church, Carp. \$25 adults, \$15 students. goulbournmalechorus.com/new

**Long Sault Trio**, Dec 1, 2PM. Folk, Blues, Jazz, and Trad. music. MERA Schoolhouse, McDonalds Corners. \$25 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. meraschoolhouse.org

**Strumming, Singing and Fluting!**, Dec 1, 2:30PM. Gertrude Létourneau (flutes and vocals) and Garry Elliott (guitar). Almonte Library. By donation at TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. friends@missmillslibrary.com

**Social Swing Dance with Revival Swing**, Dec 5, 7-9PM. Intro lesson followed by social dance. No experience or partner needed. Hillside Reformed Presbyterian Church, Almonte. Entry by donation + an item for the Food Bank. facebook.com

**Yavor Kresic**, Dec 5, 7:30PM. Live music, local treats and art. Carleton Place Gallery. \$30 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. cpgallery.ca

**Sing Noel Christmas Concert**, Dec 6, 7:30PM; Dec 7, 2PM. Tickets available from White Pine Books. Glad Tidings Pentecostal Church, Arnprior. Adults \$20; children 12 & under \$10. 622-7844

**Rock & Roll Christmas - The Piano Men**, Dec 7, 8PM. The music of Billy Joel & Elton John. Farrell Hall, Perth. \$35 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434; \$39 at door

**Keith Glass Band**, Dec 7, 7:30PM. Roots-rock and roll, R&B, folk, blues, and country. The Pews, Merrickville. \$30 from ticketsplease.ca, 485-6434. \$35 at the door. thepews.ca

**Christmas with Brass**, Dec 7, 7:30PM. Kanata Choral Society annual Christmas concert. Seniors \$20, students \$10 (12 & under free). St. Paul's Anglican Church, Kanata. \$22 adv, \$25 at door. kanatachoralsociety.ca

**A Christmas Gift of Music**, Dec 8 & 10, 7PM. A wonderful evening of seasonal music with The Town Singers. Zion-Memorial United Church, Carleton Place. \$15 from TicketsPlease.ca. cptownsingers.com

**Comfort and Joy**, Dec 13, 7PM. Presented by Tripoly & Grenville Troubadours. Trinity United Church SF, Smiths Falls. \$20 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434

**The Barrel Boys**, Dec 14, 7:30PM. "Carols from the Barrels", a Christmas concert. The Pews, Merrickville. \$30 from TicketsPlease.ca, \$35 at the door. thepews.ca

**A Musical Celebration of Christmas**, Dec 15, 2PM. The Christmas Story in music and narration, carols, refreshments and more. St. Paul's United, Perth. Freewill offering. stpaulsperth.ca

**Valley Voices Christmas Concert**, Dec 15, 7PM. "Snowfall", seasonal songs and stories. Almonte United Church. \$15 from Baker Bob's or the door. facebook.com/ValleyVoicesofAlmonte

**Advent to Christmas by Candlelight**, Dec 22, 4PM. Music and carols, with special guests. St. James Anglican, Perth. Freewill offering. stjamesperth.ca

**Mudmen**, Dec 28, 7:30PM. Canada's celtic rock warriors. Studio Theatre Perth. \$35 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. mudmen.ca

**Pub Listings**

**Neat Coffee Shop** (Burnstown, 433-9960): 8PM

Nov 30 Michael Bernard Fitzgerald, 8PM, \$30

Dec 7 Jason Blaine, 8PM. \$55

Dec 13 MonkeyJunk, 8PM. \$50

**The Cove** (Westport, 273-3636): 5-8PM unless noted; Mon Nolan Hubbard; Wed Wings 'n Tunes w/Shawn McCullough (5:30-8:30); Sun Eric Uren & Meghan Balogh

Nov 30 East Coast Experience, 7-11PM, \$85 Dinner, Show + Charity

Dec 3 Teagan McLaren

Dec 5 Karaoke for a Cause P.A.W.S. Fundraiser, 7PM

Dec 6 No Principals

Dec 10 Julia Finnegan

Dec 12 Dennis Bouwmann

Dec 14 A Country Christmas feat. McCullough, Badour + Jones, 6PM. \$60 includes buffet dinner, show + donation

Dec 19 A Kentucky Xmas w. Kentucky & Amanda Keeley

Dec 20 Matt Dickson

Dec 21 Chris Murphy, 5-9PM.

Dec 22 Shawn McCullough + Friends, 1-4PM

Dec 27 NYE Primer with Jeff Callery + Shawn McCullough

Dec 28 Holiday Hoedown with The Adam Knapp Band, 8-11PM. \$20

Dec 31 NYE Party with River City Junction. \$120 buffet, show, party favours

**CC's on the Rideau** (Rideau Ferry, 267-6060)

Dec 6 DaNielle Hewitt, 7PM

Dec 14 The Weekend Specials Duo, 6PM

Dec 28 Jono Townsend, 6-9PM

Dec 31 New Year's Eve Party with George Turcotte, 6PM

**Community**

**Scottish Country Dancing**, Fridays, 9:30AM. Beginners and experienced dancers welcome. McMartin House, Perth. \$30 per year. 264-2767

**Cooking Connections**, Tuesdays, 10AM-1PM. Socially-inclusive cooking workshop. The Table Community Food Centre, Perth. facebook.com/thetablecfc

**Fashions from Laura**, Nov 30, 2PM. Fashion show with fall and holiday styles. St. Andrew's United Church, Pakenham. \$15 at the door or 850-6679. standrewsunit-edpakenham.org

**Holiday Heritage House**, Dec 1, 1-3PM. Costumed interpreters, special guests and seasonal decorations. Heritage House Museum, Smiths Falls. by donation. facebook.com/SFHeritageHouseMuseum

**Ashton United Church community breakfast**, Dec 3, 9-11:30AM. With music by Dave Brown and friends. Ashton United Church. Freewill offering. 791-6246

**MFNC Monthly Meeting**, Dec 4, 7PM. Monthly meeting. Guest Speaker: Arnprior Curling Club. Non-members: \$5. mfnc.ca

**Lecture: The 1917 Halifax Explosion**, Dec 7, 1-2:30PM. By Michael Dupuis. Perth Library. Free; RSVP online. perthunionlibrary.ca

**Holiday Makers Market**, Dec 7, 10AM-3PM. Handmade gifts & nibbles by over 20 local artisans. Timber Run Golf Club, Lanark. Free entry. elizabethconfections.ca/pages/holidaymarket

**Portland's Annual Artisans Christmas Market**, Dec 7, 10AM-4PM. Holiday-themed makers' market. Emmanuel Heritage Centre, Portland. 272-9324

**Kids-only Christmas Shopping Event**, Dec 7, 10AM-1PM. Kids shop for the family; free wrapping; donations only. Almonte Baptist Church. Free entry. Almontebaptistchurch@gmail.com

**Christmas Family Day**, Dec 7, 10AM-3PM. Themed family Christmas day with fun crafts, cookies, and scavenger hunt. North Lanark Regional Museum. \$5, \$10 family. northlanarkregionalmuseum.com

**Lanark Legion Ladies' Auxiliary Craft Sale**, Dec 8, 10AM-3PM. Craft, Bake and Christmas Sale. Lanark Legion. 259-3249

**Carleton Place Toastmasters Club**, Dec 12 & 26, 7PM. Improve public speaking and leadership skills. via Zoom, contact for link. Free. carletonplace.toastmastersclubs.org

**Sleigh the Holidays**, Dec 14, 12-3PM. Horse & wagon rides, reindeer visit, scavenger hunts & more. Smiths Falls Town Square Bandstand. Free. downtownsmithsfalls.ca

**Ashton United Church community breakfast and bake sale**, Dec 17, 9-11:30AM. Ashton United Church. Freewill offering. 791-6246

**Perth Community Christmas Day Dinner**, Dec 25, 12PM. Sit-down meal, takeout, or delivery. Code's Mill, Perth. Free! perthcommunitychristmasdinner.org



# Spreading Holiday Cheer and Support

## Home Hospice North Lanark Annual Tree Fundraiser

This Christmas season, Home Hospice North Lanark (HHNL) invites the community to make a difference while celebrating the holidays with the launch of their 10<sup>th</sup> annual Tree Fundraiser. The online shopping site is now open, offering a selection of living trees and shrubs that make perfect environmentally friendly gifts. These will not only brighten up gardens and landscapes — they'll also help support individuals in North Lanark facing terminal or life-limiting diagnoses.

HHNL is known for its compassionate services, providing advocacy, respite care and grief support to clients and their families — all at no cost. As they receive no government funding, HHNL relies entirely on fundraising efforts like this to continue their mission of easing the burden for families during their most challenging times.

### A Green Gift with Heartfelt Impact

This year's selection features exciting new varieties, including Charles Joy Lilac, Primrose Lilac, Scarlet Crabapple, Sienna Maple and Siouxland Poplar. All trees and shrubs are carefully chosen to thrive in the local

climate, ensuring that they will bring beauty and life to North Lanark for years to come.

Every purchase directly supports HHNL's essential services, meaning that checking off names on your holiday list can also provide much-needed comfort and assistance to neighbours in need.

### Pick Up and Bonus Gifts

Orders can be placed now at <trees.hhnl.ca>, with early shopping recommended for the best selection. Trees will be available for pick-up in spring 2025 at Reid Gardens in Carleton Place, marking the fifth year of a partnership with owners Chris Gow and Doris Goerzen. This year, each purchase includes a complimentary bag of 3-Way Planting Mix and a package of Root Rescue, generously donated by Reid Gardens to help ensure the healthy establishment of every tree.

### The Committee Behind the Magic

The success of the Tree Fundraiser is thanks to a dedicated committee of volunteers with deep roots in horticulture and community service:

Peggy McPhail, the lead organizer for six years, combines her love of trees with her passion for HHNL's mission.

Allan Goddard, with a career spanning international and local landscapes, brings his expert touch.

Ed Lawrence, well-known from his CBC days, adds his extensive knowledge from years overseeing Canada's official residences.

Dr. Ron Ayling, a retired dendrology professor and international development expert, lends his wisdom.

Supporting them are Nora Kazda, who manages the online shopping platform; Carolyn Leslie, who handles marketing; and several other dedicated volunteers including Christine Boil (a long-time member and past Chair of the HHNL Board), Christine McPhail (a member of the Board), and Jan Watson (Chair of the HHNL Board).

### A "Hospice Without Walls"

Home Hospice North Lanark offers a "hospice without walls" model, delivering compassionate care directly to clients' homes. They assist adults navigating serious health changes or



facing terminal diagnoses, as well as the loved ones caring for them. Bereavement support, educational outreach, and a commitment to respecting each client's dignity and preferences are core to their service.

To explore the tree selection or learn more about HHNL's vital work in the community, please visit <hhnl.ca>.

Shop now, make a difference, and spread joy that will last long beyond the holiday season!

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# Theatrical Technicalities

## Upgrading a Theatre's Equipment is Helped by Community Support

Submitted by Studio Theatre Perth

Whenever you are watching a play or a movie at a theatre, you look to the front. It is, therefore, easy to forget how important all that stuff behind you is to your experience.

At the Studio Theatre in Perth, for example, there is a wide booth-like room with glass windows. This is where the “techies” live. All theatres have such a booth, and inside is the technical equipment that controls lights, sound and movie projection. If everything goes well, you don't even notice it, and your theatre or movie night is a good one. If there is a glitch, it needs to be “fixed” as soon as possible or that experience is not so good. So, no pressure.

All this equipment needs to be maintained, operated properly, and upgraded on a regular basis. And nowadays that is a lot more than just changing light bulbs, cables and dimmer switches. There has been a revolution in the way light and sound equipment is designed and powered, and that revolution is ongoing.

Overseeing a major upgrade of the equipment at the Studio Theatre is Brent McLaren. Better known as a choir and musical director (and of course as Perth's town crier), Brent is also a technical whiz.

“I have spent countless hours working in all aspects of theatre sound and lighting. A lot of my work has been in the newer generation of LED and digitally-controlled lamps,” notes Brent.

“I have been involved in sound since 1968 and am really happy that today's systems are much lighter than the anchors we hauled around at that time. I work with both digital and analog sound systems.”

Today's equipment is more compact and way more energy efficient. “I cut my teeth (and several fingers and arms) on the old rheostat boards that made up the two vaudeville theatres I hung around as a kid. I remember the first so-called miniature lighting board I saw; it was only six feet high. Suddenly we didn't need a ladder to reach the top dimmers.”

The Studio Theatre has a “challenging combination” of old and new technology, says Brent.

“The biggest problem facing anyone is trying to incorporate changes without simply throwing everything out and starting over. New lighting technology requires one tenth of the power and generates one hundredth of the heat. A fixture that used to have a bulb life of 100 hours now has a life of 50,000 hours.”

This is all well and good, but while the new technology offers so many more opportunities to enrich the audience's sound and light experience, it means, without getting too technical here, more capacity is needed from the equipment that delivers that experience.

“We want to maximize the use of everything that we have. We want to fix what can be fixed and make decisions about items that are beyond use or repair. Only then can we make plans to move forward in a proper, responsible direction. Until then, we want to continue to produce high quality entertainment to the best capability of everything we have.”

Brent is also very much enjoying his new position of tech team manager.

“You learn a lot when you watch other actors work. You also learn when you get to watch stage technicians work. The best actors and the best technicians love to share their passion not only when you get a minute to talk shop, but when you get to watch them at their best.”

“I am stepping into this new role trying to teach people how to love and learn the theatre. The biggest compliment is to see others taking charge and safely doing new tasks. My biggest challenge is to stay out of their way as they rise to new occasions. That is what the root of community theatre truly is.”

Danna Jones started working as a tech volunteer at the Studio Theatre 18 months ago. “My son started volunteering for his hours for school, so we did it together,” she explains. “I loved it so much, I haven't left!”

She had no previous tech experience and was “not very tech savvy.”

“But I've had really great teachers and it's been so interesting to learn.” The theatre “has become my home away from home,” she says. “Everyone is like family. We all work together to put the best performances on stage, and being a part of it all is truly rewarding. I've got the best seat in the house!”

Support from the community doesn't just come from volunteers. A big part of the funding of the technical upgrades comes from the sale of 50/50 tickets at each show. We really appreciate your support!

And if you are interested in learning more about any technical aspects of the theatre and being part of this wonderful team, don't be shy — contact technical team lead Brent McLaren at <techbooth@studio-theatreperth.com>.



Under the supervision and training of Studio Theatre Perth's technical team lead Brent McLaren, Danna Jones and David Shaw are running the show

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- smithsfallstheatre.com (Visa/Mastercard/Paypal)
- By Phone - 613-283-2244 (Visa/Mastercard/voucher)
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The Reever Report

# One Sparkle Too Many

I got to December 1 without succumbing to holiday hype. I averted my gaze from store windows, especially the arrays of Christmas villages. I talked myself out of Christmas socks, the plaid slippers, the new sweater, and the glittery mitts that shouted: "Merry Merry! Come and get me". Oh yes I was doing well... until I inadvertently dropped into Canadian Tire. Stupid, stupid!

by Glenda Jones

As soon as I was through the door, I knew I was hooked. Aisle upon aisle crammed with every bit of Christmas glitz imaginable, from realistic twinkle-lit trees with bits of fake snow glittering on the branches to reindeer too big to land on any roof. There were Santas in every shape, and size, enough to destroy a child's faith in the dear old guy. Would the REAL Santa want to see himself as a huge blow-up candidate for Weight Watchers?

The siren call of dazzle invited me down every Christmas-y lane, past ornaments for every taste and hobby. When it's dark, I want sparkle everywhere, and this trip was filling the bill.

You could decorate a whole tree with hockey memorabilia or cooking implements. Dreaming of ballet slippers and tutus? Yup, there they are. Want a tree decorated in a single colour? Fill your boots! Need an upside-down tree? It's there too, with all the shiny balls, the pinecones and tinsel, ribbons, bows, hanging icicles and more dangling incongruously from a giant hook.

Up to the ceiling of the store crept the wreaths and garlands, the fake holly and huge silk poinsettias, the oversized ornaments for those oversized trees, and huge bows suitable for the side of a highrise. Wouldn't I love to see them hanging in my trees? Would I be the envy of the neighbourhood? Would it be the best Christmas EVER?!

Well, no it wouldn't. I headed for the door, steeled to my resolve, but was blindsided by a display of little pet ornaments. Ahh, maybe just three would be cute. And they had glitter on them too. I'd put them on the wreath by the front door.

My old wreath was in battered shape last year, so if I wanted to make a statement I should probably get a new one. I could go to the woods and cut boughs and... oh fiddle. The wreath is right there in front of

me. I might as well get it now and be done with it. A silver bow would make it pretty.

What was I doing? I'd caved, obviously, and now there was no going back. Everything was heaped in a shopping cart. I had the wreath, the bows, the ornaments, twinkly lights, solar candles, a pile of batteries, and an extension cord. Everything but Martha Stewart to do the arranging was right there at my fingertips and my Visa card tingled with excitement.

I'd been horn-swaggled into believing all it would take was this mass of decorations to make it all "Holly-Jolly." What was I thinking? We've got a puppy that takes everything apart until I'm contemplating putting the tree in the Xpen, and her on the outside. The wreath will not last, the lights will burn out, the batteries will go dead, and all that glitter on the ornaments will land on the carpet. I really don't need any of this stuff, no matter how my imagination soars.

In what I can only describe as common sense whapping me upside the head, I abandoned the shopping cart and left the store. I'd saved myself a pile of money.



Smug and righteous, I deserved a treat; a large Chocogato at Hummingbird would do the trick. So I sat there perusing the Christmas Food & Drink magazine, and conjuring up a lovely decorated table for a buffet supper. NOT!! All those beautiful people will have to do without my company as we sit peacefully in our cozy Christmas house watching the puppy, enjoying our close friends and not having to buy into the total holiday hype. That's really what we need and want, and no amount of goo-gahs will replace that.

P.S. We've strung the outdoor lights festively, our tree is up, I have twinkle lights on every flat surface, and I've hauled out the old CDs. We're ready...

Enjoy your holiday with excess or not, with snow or not, and with my fervent hope that you have someone with whom to share it.

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- Assorted raw sheep's milk cheese wedges, Back Forty Artisan Cheese.....\$7-17
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- Journals, pens, calendars, card decks, puzzles & games, Mill Street Books ...various
- MMLT animal friends tote bag, Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust.....\$20
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- Beautiful Art For Aid Project prints & art cards, The Gift Boutique.....\$5-65
- Scarlet crabapple tree, Home Hospice North Lanark.....\$75





# Food Bank Use Is Skyrocketing

The numbers are frightening. In March 2024 there were over two million visits to food banks in Canada, representing a 6% increase compared to 2023, and a 90% increase compared to 2019, according to the 2024 Hunger Count produced by Food Banks Canada. They conclude that there are signs that the food-banking system is reaching its absolute limit.

by David Hinks

The level of food bank visits is unprecedented. The report argues that it is consistent with record high rates of food insecurity, and reflects findings from other recent studies showing greater numbers of people experiencing economic hardship. High food inflation is obvious at the grocery store, but it is exacerbated by the effect of housing inflation. People with the lowest incomes spend over 80% of their disposable income on food and housing alone. As rent absorbs more and more of their income, the likelihood that they will need a food bank increases.

Locally the numbers are very similar, with the number of clients more than doubling from 2019 to 2024. About half of the folks in Lanark County are served by the Lanark County Food Bank (also known as The Hunger Stop), which provides service to Beckwith Township, Carleton Place and Mississippi Mills. Other food banks in Lanark County are located in Perth, Lanark Village and Smiths Falls. Call 211 to find the food bank nearest you.



Shelves at the Lanark County Food Bank

To find out more about how food banks operate, I did a bit of research with The Hunger Stop (of which I am a member of the Board of Directors). The Hunger Stop is a registered charity and has a Board of Directors elected by the community. Financial statements are public and there is an Annual General Meeting which the public is welcome to attend. There is no funding from any level of government.

The Hunger Stop welcomes anyone who needs food. There is absolutely no means test required. Some statistical information is requested, such as the household main source of income. This is used for purposes such as lobbying by Food Banks Canada.

Clients are entitled to obtain enough food for approximately five days once a month. Typically, the shopping cart includes milk, bread, eggs, cereal, juice, school snacks, baked beans, pasta, pasta sauce, macaroni and cheese, canned soups and stews, canned fish and meat, canned and fresh fruits and veggies, rice, cheese, yogurt, meat, peanut butter, coffee and tea, and toilet paper. About half of the items would be classified as fresh produce.

Clients are also able to visit once a week for a top-up. This typically includes three items from the top-up shelf, buns and bread from the freezer, items from the bonus shelf (vegetables, treats, regular shelf overflow), fresh produce and milk, and pet food. Clients are also able to book up to four emergency visits a year.

The Hunger Stop operates out of a storefront in Carleton Place. A shopping model has been in place for about eight years. Clients call in and make an appointment. They select items from shelves, and the number of items of each type of food varies depending on family size and seasonal availability. There is a volunteer assigned to help and answer any questions. Virtually all clients are very appreciative of their “shopping buddy”. Some clients are socially isolated and develop friendships with the volunteers.

The lack of public transportation in Lanark County has a huge impact on our marginalized neighbours. Food delivery options were expanded during Covid for clients unable to get to Carleton Place. For example, the satellite operation in Almonte was suspended in favour of delivery to the door of clients.

What is the reason for food insecurity? It’s pretty basic — lack of income! Over 40% of food bank clients are on disability pensions and many others are the working poor. Interestingly, food insecurity drops significantly for folks 65 and over when government pensions and income supplements kick in. Also very telling, Covid was slow to have an impact, and the number of clients actually dropped with the first Covid wave. This appeared to be directly attributable to the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). Demand at food banks dropped off when marginalized folk started receiving income supplements.

This is not the case now as demand continues to increase sharply. On the positive side, the response of local donors in the community has been astounding.

Our society and our governments have been loath to respond to the plight of the food insecure by raising disability pensions, social assistance benefits or minimum wages. The response has largely been food charity, ranging from food banks to soup kitchens — virtually all of which rely on volunteer effort and donations.

But, bottom line, there are many folks who rely on food banks to feed their families, and there are many heroes who are volunteering their time, money and energy, many sacrificially, to make sure their neighbours do not go hungry.

Looking to the future requires a crystal ball; however, there are ominous signs on the horizon. The question remains as to whether food bank financial reserves are sufficient to weather approaching storms. Increases in the price of gasoline, housing, utilities and groceries are putting intolerable pressure on marginalized folk.

I applaud the efforts of those who are lobbying government to increase disability pensions, to provide more affordable housing, and to work towards a guaranteed annual income. However, we must not lose sight of the urgent need to ensure that our neighbours do not go to bed with empty bellies.

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# Another Step in Hospice Hub's Growth

By Sally Smith

She's new... brand new (just at the Hospice Hub a week, as of this writing). She's young... just 30. And she's keen, almost fluttering with excitement, to get the Hospice Hub initiative fully underway!

In 2018, Hannah Ryan graduated from Trinity Western University B.C. with a Bachelor of Science and Nursing, then headed to Pembroke, then Smiths Falls, and then, during Covid, transitioned to a dialysis unit where she got to know patients and absorbed how the whole system works, how it meshes together.

What she noticed was "a lot of gaps when trying to get services for people." So she thinks it's "really cool" to have an organization like The Hospice Hub to bring it all together, to make it all (the journey of life) end well.

Hannah is still learning what her job is as Nurse Coordinator of the organization, but part of it is as a "gatekeeper to who we serve". Other tasks include assessing needs, making referrals, and setting up times to meet. She unobtrusively talks to volunteers as they sit with patients; she listens if a volunteer says a patient is shorter of breath, more fatigued. She can then advocate for more pain management, get things going, help navigate the system.

"Volunteers aren't medically trained, but any human would be able to see or sense a need, if there's been a change," she says. So she depends on volunteers, trusts their senses.

A little bit of her back story: she grew up in Seven Sisters Falls in rural Manitoba. "It was a great place," she recalls. "It was a small community of 80 people. Eight little towns made up the school of 250 kids, from K to 12. We knew everybody and their dog — we learned to be a neighbour there. Everybody's very connected. From Seven Sisters Falls to Smiths Falls was a big adjustment," she adds, grinning.

But why does a young woman want to specialize in hospice work?

"I've always had an interest in hospice," Hannah explains, reflecting a bit. She remembers that during her nursing training she found those last minutes of life "very sacred, moments where you can make an impact on peoples' lives. It's a time where you know you've made a difference."

But how does she handle the dying, the loss, the tugging at heartstrings...

"I have a lot of things to keep me grounded and healthy, to not be depleted," she says. "And... I think that things shouldn't stop bothering me. I don't expect it to NOT be tugging at my heart, to not be afraid of showing empathy or compassion. That's what will get me moving and advocating."

And she admits she often cries...

The Hospice Hub is a new resource for Perth and Smiths Falls, and even though the aging population



Hannah Ryan is the new Nurse Coordinator of The Hospice Hub, which provides support to anyone at end of life and bereavement, including family and caregivers

is large in this area, it's for the whole spectrum of ages. Death, Hannah says, is not easy to talk about, it's not something we easily do, but she sees her role as decreasing the fearfulness of that end-of-life conversation through education and discussing options — dying at home, dying in the hospital.

The goal is to "end well, have a good death." The Hospice Hub gives a choice.

Hannah adds that: "At the end of life, people are more interested in their legacy, their relationships, who they're leaving behind, whether they've left a mark on this world. Their end of life doesn't reflect their whole life as a person. They remember the good times, the things they've done."

Want to get involved? There are several options! You can email <info@thehospicehub.ca> or <nursecoordinator@thehospicehub.ca>, visit <thehospicehub.ca> or call 627-0974. You can also join the **Polar Bear Plunge 2025** to Plunge or Pledge for Hospice. Visit <thehospicehub.ca> to be part of the splash!

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- Lavender sleep pillow by Lavender Lane, MVTM Gift Shop.....\$20
- "Cavendish II" by artist Wendy Robertson, Sivarulrasa Gallery.....\$400
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- Krimson Klover sweater, Vamos Outdoors.....\$245 & up





# Funds Are Supporting Lanark County Students

The board members of the Elizabeth Kelly Foundation (EKF) are pleased to announce two programs they have funded to benefit students in Lanark County. One is a new bursary program for high school students heading to college or university, and the other is an ongoing grant program which provides STEM learning for young people at all Lanark libraries.

## The Bursary Program

It began in the spring of 2024 as a pilot program that granted bursaries to two high school graduates at each of the three high schools in Almonte and Carleton Place. The bursaries covered 50% of the tuition and tuition-related fees for the first year of the successful student's post-secondary education. The total granted exceeded \$15,000. Next year EKF will revise the pilot program and expand it to offer bursaries to two students at each of Lanark's seven high schools.

The bursaries will be awarded to students who have been accepted at a college or university and who are chosen by the EKF board members from a list of students recommended by the guidance staff at their high schools. The guidance staff will be asked to recommend students whose marks, motivation and personal circumstances support the award of a bursary. Congratulations to the six students in Almonte and Carleton Place, who were awarded bursaries at their graduation ceremonies last spring!

For information and to apply for an EKF bursary for the spring of 2025, please contact the guidance staff at your high school.

EKF's other bursary initiatives, which also benefit Lanark county students, include support for the Cliff Bennett Bursary offered by the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists, and the Elizabeth Kelly Foundation bursary at Algonquin College.

## The STEM Grant Program

STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Four years ago, STEM programs were initially offered at the library in Almonte as a pilot project funded by a \$20,000 grant from EKF. After two years the program was expanded, and it is now offered at all the libraries in Lanark County. EKF has continued to provide annual grants of \$10,000 so that the total granted to date exceeds \$60,000. One year ago, Lanark County matched EKF's annual contribution.

This year, the following free programs for children aged 8 to 14 were offered at Lanark's five libraries:

- LEGO spike robotics: 40 participants in five sessions (one at each library) in March 2024
- LEGO spike robotics, artificial intelligence and virtual reality: 320 participants in 40 sessions across all five libraries in the summer of 2024
- LEGO sumobot league: 40 participants in 25 sessions. Teams from all five libraries in the fall of 2024

The funding also covered the cost of training two new STEM instructors last summer.

For information about future STEM programs, and to register, please contact your neighbourhood library.

## Gifts for Kids & Teenagers

- Children's books by **Natasha Peterson**, Arts CP Art Hub.....\$12  
8-week art course in **cartooning, painting or drawing**, JB Arts.....\$320  
Unique building block, model kits and train sets, Spark Books & Curios.....\$10-120

## Gifts for Local Food & Drink Lovers

- Back Forty holiday food & drink gift basket, Back Forty Artisan Cheese.....\$130  
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FOR HOSPICE  
January 1, 2025  
We are calling upon a minimum of 100 brave souls to take an exhilarating plunge into the Tay to support our essential services.  
If you are not able to plunge, tag a surrogate, or donate to a solo plunger or team.  
20/20 VISION FOR HOSPICE  
Each plunger rally 20 supporters to donate a minimum of \$20 each.  
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Saturday, December 21, 2024  
  
RIVER CITY  
JUNCTION  
Tuesday, December 31, 2024





**DENTISTRY**  
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*Wishes you a Merry Christmas!*



**We Look Forward to Serving You!**

Eden, Melanie, Courtney, Dr. Ghai, Meagan, Kelly, and Akshay

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