

DECEMBER 2020

the Hummm

free

Arts,
Entertainment
& Ideas



The 2020 Gift Giving Guide



p.12

December's Events

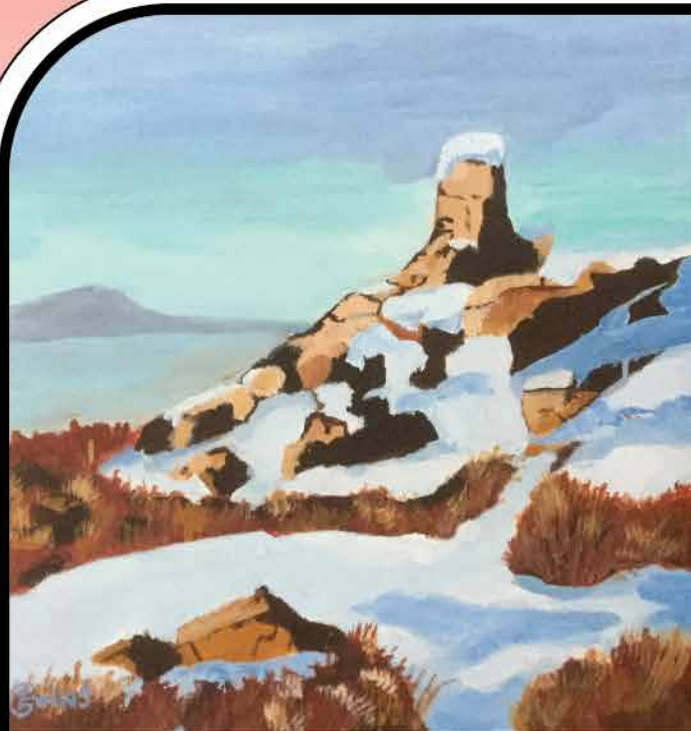


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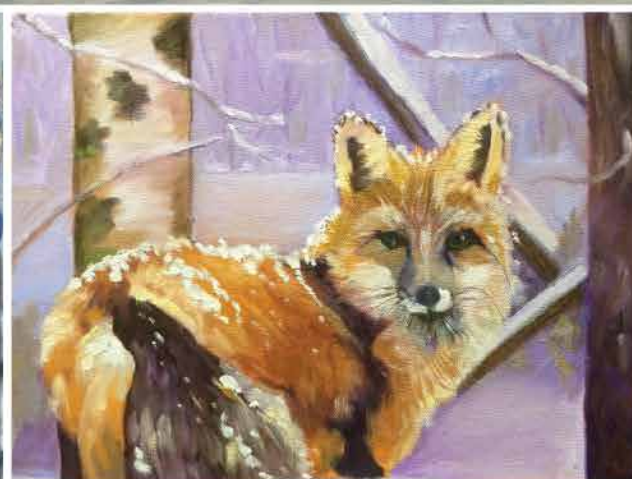
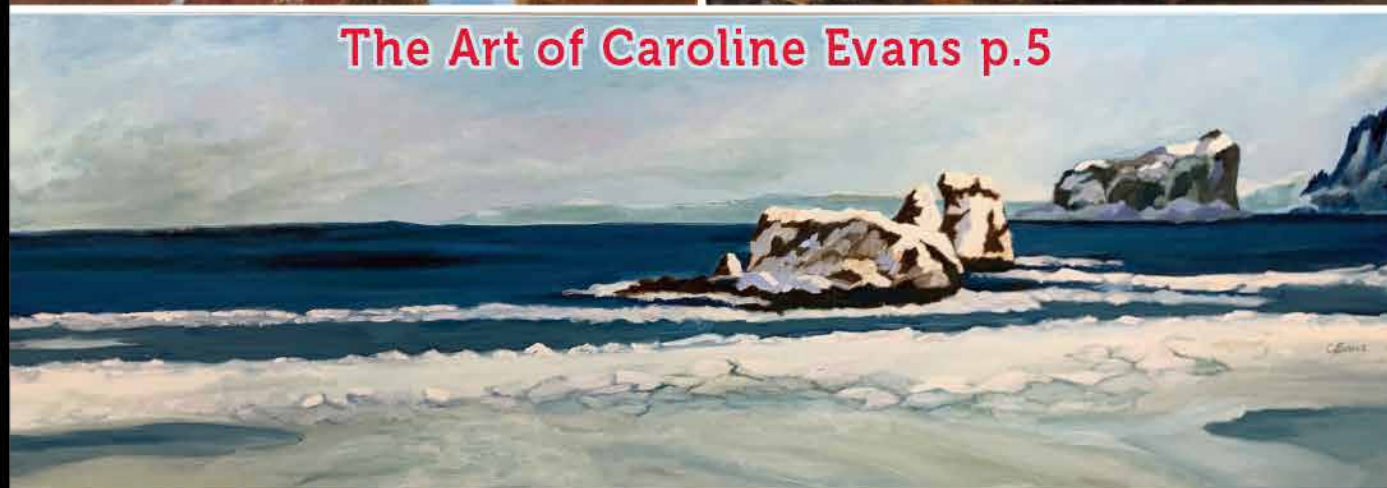


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Puppet Town



The Art of Caroline Evans 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:

- United Way East Ontario <unitedwayeb.ca>
- Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust <mmlt.ca>
- Lanark County Interval House <lcih.org>



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theHumm's Winter Edition

Just this once, we are planning a "Winter Edition" of theHumm that will come out in mid-January and cover through to the end of February 2021. This way we can give our wonderful retail advertisers a bit of a break, let our contributors take the holidays off, and spend our time publishing weekly Hummail newsletters, posting to social media, and baking & delivering Hershey Kiss Cookies (see article below if you want some).

We fully intend to return to our regularly-scheduled monthly publication timetable (and deadline of the 20th of the month for content and the 22nd for ads) with our March 2021 issue. Please visit <thehummm.com/support> to subscribe to Hummail or follow us on Facebook or Instagram, and we will do our best to keep you up-to-date and cheerful!

**Ad & Article Deadline:
Wed., January 6**



Who's Reading theHumm

Back in 2018, James McBeath wrote: "Minding our own business hiking between towns on the Amalfi Coast in Italy, we (James, Emilie-Rose, Nathalie and Samuel McBeath) found the perfect town and sign to pull out theHumm for a family read.

Thanks James — we appreciate your sophisticated humour!



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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 Ottawa. 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:

20th of the month prior to publication

Advertising Deadline:

22nd of the month prior to publication

Subscriptions

cost \$40 (includes HST) for one year (12 issues). Send a cheque with your name and address to: theHumm PO Box 1391 Almonte ON K0A 1A0

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Thumm's up this month to:

Everyone who helped theHumm make it through to the end of 2020. Our business coach Helen Antebi, patronage gal Sarah Kerr, calendar girl Rona Fraser, all of our amazing contributors, advertisers, patrons and readers — we weren't sure we would survive a year without events, but you got us through! And we appreciate you!

Humm Helpers & Hershey Kiss Cookies

Dear readers,

We're so glad that you picked up this festive edition of theHumm. We also hope you feel your spirits lift after seeing all the ways that folks in our community are working to support each other and express their creativity through this unprecedented holiday season.

In case you missed a couple of issues this fall, we are excited to share that some of our wonderful readers encouraged us to launch a subscription membership. The idea is to offer folks the opportunity to directly help with our publishing costs, in order to keep theHumm free for all. There are a few different ways in which you can help.

If You Like What We Do

If you like what we do, please consider joining theHumm's patronage campaign at \$5/month at <buymeacoffee.com/theHumm>. This platform requires using Paypal, but it accepts Canadian funds.

If You Want to Spread the Word

If you would like to have theHumm delivered to a family member or friend who may not be able to pick up a free copy easily, then we have

a subscription option at <patreon.com/theHumm> that delivers the paper to a doorstep of your choice — anywhere in Canada!

If You Love Hershey Kiss Cookies

If you really love theHumm, and Hershey Kiss cookies, and have a bit of extra cash to support the arts, then check out all of our membership levels and perks at <patreon.com/theHumm>. Do be warned that this fancy patronage system is FUN but only accepts payment in USD for the time being. We promise to switch it to Canadian dollars as soon as they make that payment option available.

We want you to know how appreciative we are of everyone who has already signed up to support in whatever way you can. And we're also thankful for everyone who picks up a copy of theHumm each month, says "I saw your ad in theHumm!", subscribes to our Hummail e-newsletter, and follows us on social media. You are all an invaluable part of theHumm community.

Together we're working to stay the course, and continuing to promote the vibrant arts, entertainment and ideas community in the Ottawa Valley. Happy Holidays from theHumm team!

Clash of the Blues Titans at the Cove

In the world of the blues, it feels a bit ridiculous to call two barely thirty-year-old musicians veterans. But in the case(s) of Jimmy Bowskill and Steve Marriner, the term is perhaps an understatement. These two musical heavyhitters started paying their dues early and they are continuing to grow and challenge themselves. A performance by either one on their own would make for a supremely entertaining evening out, but both together is a combination that cannot be missed. And that is exactly what is on the bill at The Cove Inn in Westport (twice!).

In one corner, we have **Steve Marriner**, well-known to Ottawa blues fans as a member of the rock'n'roll/swamp/blues power trio Monkeyjunk, where he handles baritone guitar, singing, harmonica, and Hammond organ duties with equal amounts of skill and musicianship. But well before his Monkeyjunk days, Marriner was making a name for himself around Ottawa as a teenage harmonica sensation nicknamed "Southside Steve." In fact, Marriner met his Monkeyjunk bandmate Tony D as a thirteen-year-old when the two would regularly perform at The Rainbow Bistro in Ottawa's Market area. At the ripe old age of nineteen, Marriner joined Canadian folk/blues legend Harry Manx and toured the world for three years. As a solo artist, he has accumulated seven Maple Blues Awards (six for his harmonica playing and one for his vocals). As a member of Monkeyjunk, he has also shared in ten more Maple Blue Awards and two Junos. So don't just take it from me, everyone agrees he's good — really good!

In the other corner stands **Jimmy Bowskill**, who was discovered at the age of eleven by Jeff Healey when Jimmy would busk outside Healey's club in Toronto. Healey invited the blues prodigy in to play the big stage, and Bowskill hasn't really left the limelight since. Recorded when he was fourteen, Bowskill's second album *Soap Bars and Dog*



Ears was nominated for a Juno. At nineteen, The Jimmy Bowskill Band toured Europe, opening for Jeff Beck and Joe Bonamassa. More recently, Bowskill joined the neo-retro, multi-platinum-selling, Juno Award-winning Canadian rock band The Sheepdogs. He also contributed his guitar skills to two songs on Blue Rodeo's most recent album, *1000 Arms*.

On December 10 and 11 you can catch these two musical giants on stage in the intimate (yet socially-distanced) Cove Inn in Westport for an evening of superb music and dining. Tickets for the show are \$70 for a served dinner and two sets of music. Contact The Cove at 273-3636 or visit <coveinn.com> for tickets, but do it soon because they will not last long!

—Rob Riendeau

www.thehummm.com

What Will 2021 Bring?

Howdy Humm readers! As we may have perhaps already mentioned, it's been an interesting year to be an "arts & events" paper. Interesting, challenging, but ultimately rewarding and pretty darn hummbling as well, thanks to the uplifting support we have received from so many people.

At this time last year we were putting the final touches on an issue that was full of fabulous events happening all over the Valley, and at the same time preparing for a

by Kris Riendeau

fun event of our own —the premiere of *Who Stole Christmas from Mississippi Mills?* — written by Rob Riendeau and directed by yours truly. This year, we offer you an issue that focuses more on local businesses, charitable organizations, and the ways in which municipalities are nurturing holiday spirit in this new landscape. There are still several artistic endeavours taking place — all with special safety precautions — that are helping to keep performers and artists engaged and creating.

As we move into 2021 and our first full COVID winter, we look forward to promoting any and all creative outlets, be they virtual or in-person. We also want to focus on the health and viability of our Valley arts & entertainment venues, events and festivals. Many of these are facing critical decisions and deadlines, without knowing what the new year will bring in terms of rules and restrictions. If you're involved with any of the above, please reach out and let us know how theHummm can help connect you with the patrons, volunteers and supporters you need to reach.

In the meantime, please have a safe and happy holiday season. Support your wonderful local businesses, volunteer for one or more of the amazing community groups in our area, and nurture your own creativity. If you like to write, see the "Winterwords" article on page 12 for a special invitation. If you like to act or help out back stage, give us a shout — Rob and I are already working on a December 2021 production entitled *The Wizard is Odd* (set in the Oddawa Valley, of course!). Who knows if we'll be allowed to put it on, but we've booked the hall just in case!

Here's hoping that 2021 brings joy, peace, creativity and community to you and yours.

Gifts for To Divert & Entertain

- Vintage board games, Almonte Antiques & Collectibles \$10 & up
- 4 and 7 course tasting menus, Black Tartan Kitchen..... \$64 & 84
- Chocolate salami (sweeten your charcuterie board), Hummingbird Chocolate.. \$26.99
- "Hamnet and Judith" — great historical fiction, Mill Street Books..... \$24.95
- All you need to create a charcuterie board, Pêches & Poivre..... \$10 & up
- Gift certificate for a stay with breakfast, Perth Manor..... various
- Crystal Art full kits with frame, The Book Nook..... \$41.99
- Gently used books, The Hub \$1-6



Gift Giving Guide Shop Directory

Here's an alphabetical list of the shops that are participating in this year's 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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SchoolBOX Virtual New Year's

Join the Party on December 31 at 11AM

SchoolBOX is planning their most casual and cozy fiesta yet! Tickets are priceless, but also free, at <schoolbox.ca/nye>. And yes, you read it correctly—it's happening at 11AM eastern standard time. I mean, this is a children's charity. So BYOC (bring your own coffee), wear your cozy holiday sweater and don your silliest New Year's glasses and hats. We're going to Zoom with the SchoolBOX teams from Almonte, Nicaragua, Wabauskang First Nation, and volunteers around the world. Expect to reunite with friendly faces from your build in Nicaragua, like Ronald Chavarria and Jazmin Lopez. If you sing anything like I do, you might want to mute your mic during a festive singalong of *Feliz Navidad!*

Terri Meekis, Marshall Moore and baby Miigwans from SchoolBOX North will log in to teach us how to wish each other "Happy Holidays" in Anishinaabemowin. And most importantly, our teams will give you a sneak peek into their plans for "making education possible" for kids in 2021 — which is, after all, what unites us all.

Almonte's Hometown Charity

In case you haven't heard of SchoolBOX, this grassroots charity was founded by Almonte's Tom Affleck in 2006 when he gave two young girls school supplies while he was working in Nicaragua. Their father said to them: "now that you have a notebook and pencil you can go to school this year". Tom

couldn't believe it was that simple. So he and his amazing mom (and lifelong educator) Jennette Affleck toured around together delivering school supplies to kids.

Soon they teamed up with Ronald Chavarria and Jazmin Lopez, who hosted the first SchoolBOX office in their home in La Primavera, one of the largest slums in Central America, and got to work dreaming up how to "make education possible" for kids. Thanks to the dedication and generosity of hundreds of volunteers, many from the Ottawa Valley, SchoolBOX has built over 117 classrooms in Nicaragua and donated nearly 700,000 notebooks to kids in need. But that's just the beginning!

SchoolBOX Goes North

In 2009 we launched a volunteer program called Indigenous Youth Empowering Students, and hosted First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth from five provinces and territories to help build schools and share their cultures with kids in Nicaragua. Terri Meekis, an Anishinabekwe, was on a build in 2012 and explained that it was really empowering to help build a school for kids as she had to move away from her own community to go to high school because her community didn't have a school of its own. In Northern Ontario. A friend-



SchoolBOX celebrated the opening of the Niisaachewan Children's Library in February 2020, with Marg Graff & Sarah Kerr representing the Valley

ship began then, but it took us a few more years to launch SchoolBOX North in 2017, after Terri returned to Nicaragua with her daughter Kiera and we worked together to create the first SchoolBOX learning center on-reserve in her home community of Wabauskang First Nation.

The Story of 2020

2020 was a challenging year on many fronts for small grassroots charities, including SchoolBOX. Although events were cancelled, borders closed, and both finances and safety were uncertain this spring, Executive Director Jon Tam led the

charge through yet another crisis and we're so thankful to him for his years of dedication. In Nicaragua, Ronald Chavarria and the team completed construction of five new classrooms and four washrooms for kids in Chinandega, Carazo and Leon. Two teams of amazing volunteers travelled from Canada, the U.S. and Costa Rica to help with the construction of these schools.

In Treaty 3 Northern Ontario, Terri Meekis and family helped reconstruct a building into a new learning centre and installed a new children's library in Niisaachewan First Nation, with the help of volunteers from Almonte, Wabauskang and Niisaachewan First Nations.

Although we had to close operations from April through August, Marshall Moore safely re-launched our healthy school lunch program in Wabauskang First Nation by September, and we've been putting the pieces together to implement new learning centre and school constructions in Northern Ontario and Nicaragua in 2021 — what will be SchoolBOX's 15th anniversary year!

There is a lot that we can look forward to — and in the meantime we hope you can join us on December 31!

— Sarah Kerr

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Caroline Evans — Art Imitates Life

Happy endings are always satisfying, and particularly welcome at this time of year when we're forced to reinvent our Christmas holidays. Quite by chance we discovered that our featured artist this month is enjoying a storybook denouement to a peripatetic life filled with adventure and challenge. Oil painter and batik artist Caroline Evans is loving every minute of her idyllic life on ten acres of wooded countryside near Perth. Her art career has been as non-linear as her location, and it too has bloomed anew.

by Sally Hansen

Her primary medium is oil paints and her favourite subject is landscapes. She is acutely conscious of time and place. Working from photographs that evoke a memory or an emotion, her beautiful oil paintings reflect her continuing love for and interest in geomorphology — the science of landforms that studies their origin, evolution, form, and distribution across the physical landscape. She describes her paintings as "...memories of places I've lived... I lived close to the sea for half of my life and I started painting big happy places. I had to capture on canvas what was so special about that particular place."

Both her education and her extensive travels as a military wife continue to shape her art. After an honours degree in geography at university she earned teaching qualifications at Bristol and then a professional Certificate in Ecology and Conservation at the University of London. She is qualified to work on a nature reserve in England, and now is using her knowledge and love of nature to rewild her new country home.

On her website at <Studiobythetay.com> Caroline writes, "I am conscious of time — time of day, weather, season, history, prehistory, and geological processes. I am conscious of place — immediate location, water pattern, vegetation, human usage and reputation, animal usage, region, continent, latitude, longitude, altitude, and gravity. I try and express these in my painting. In a way, my paintings are illustrations, teaching tools maybe. I hope they help people appreciate not only the 'beauty' they find around them, but also the workings of Nature and Humankind that have gone into the making of that view."

Like her life, her art also takes unexpected forays into new adventures. Evans has recently achieved the rank of "master" in batik classes and now assists in teaching others the time-honoured art of decorating

cloth using wax and dyes. Her batiks are spontaneous, playful and whimsical. She finds that the process itself inspires creativity and broadens her artistic horizons. Her medium of choice when she has strong emotions to deal with is acrylic paint for its speed and ease of completion.

Art Imitates Life Imitates Art

Five years ago, Evans moved into what she expects to be her permanent home — a bungalow on land bordered on one end by the Tay River, with a woodland that is a wildlife corridor populated by a wide variety of animals. The peace and space are ideal for her husband Michael who is recovering from PTSD and physical injuries as a result of two military stints in Afghanistan and several other operational deployments. He is renovating the house; she is embracing her full-time art career, and they are preserving their natural habitat and living more lightly on the planet.

For Caroline, her new home is the perfect resolution to "all those years of having to adapt to places chosen for us." Of English and Welsh descent, she was born in Hong Kong and educated in London and Bristol. She was working for the British Service Children School Board teaching military kids in Cyprus when she met a Canadian United Nations peacekeeper.



Her peripatetic adventure through life and careers seems to have been foreordained. She remembers deciding that she wanted to be an artist on her first day of pre-school. Inheritance of her grandfather's pochade box (a self-contained portable studio, designed to carry all the basic necessities to paint on location) at the age of ten furthered her intent, but



THE HUMM

ARTIST · TRADING · CARD ·

her test scores streamed her into the academic program and Latin replaced art classes.

She immigrated to Canada with three months in which to get married, and embarked on the itinerant life of the military. The couple had postings in London (Ontario this time), Québec City, Montréal, then to Germany for three years, and brought two sons back to Canada where they lived in Brantford for two years, one year in Borden, spent three years at Petawawa, and then ten years in Ottawa. In 2009 their sons remained in school in Ottawa during their parents' four-year posting in Louisiana. Caroline joined an oil painting group and had an epiphany. She decided she wasn't going to teach special needs children anymore; she was "old enough that a career change was totally legitimate."

She signed up for oil painting classes and started painting fulltime.

A short time later her painting group asked her to be their teacher. She signed up for more lessons for herself, and for four years she thrived as an artist and an instructor and put out a 16-page community newspaper. Following her husband's return from Afghanistan they spent two years in North York and started looking for a quieter, more peaceful place to live. Their home near Perth fits the bill perfectly and they are close to their sons in Ottawa.

Evans may have reached her desired geographic destination, but her repertoire of artistic interests and accomplishments continues to expand. She is now a member of both the Rideau Lakes Artists Association and the Manotick Art Association, participating in their shows and volunteering in a number of capacities. She is a founding member of Art Works! Perth, and with fellow Batik artist and mentor Jenn Raby, has started Perth Visual Voice Development. The project aims to make art-making more accessible to local people.

Art Unconfined at Strévé

Until January 15 you can drop in at 64 Gore St. E. in Perth to enjoy paintings and batiks by Caroline Evans and Jenn Raby, complemented by the beautiful painted furniture of Donna McPhail. The artworks are on display at the Strévé Design Art Gallery in the shop's second-floor mezzanine loft. The ground floor display of fashions by gallery owner Cheryl Straby is an added inducement to don your mask and admire the works of these four talented local artists. Online viewing and shopping options are noted on the back of Caroline's Artist Trading Card at the top of this page.

ADRIENNE DAGG
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WILLIAM LIAO

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WHO Caroline Evans
WHAT Oil Paint and Batik Artist
WHERE <Studiobythetay.com>, 118 Leonard Side Road, Perth, by appointment; <StudioByTheTay@gmail.com>; (647) 963-8358; Facebook: Caroline's Art Page; Instagram: Carolineevansartist; <manotickart.ca/resources>; <rideaulakesartists.com/artists>
WHEN Nov. 15 – Jan. 15, "Art Unconfined", Strévé Design, 64 Gore St. E., Perth, <strevedesign.com>
WHY "I hope my paintings help people to appreciate not only the 'beauty' they find around them, but also the workings of Nature and Humankind that have gone into the making of that view."

ARTIST TRADING CARD

2020: A Year to Fall in Love with Nature

This year we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of people visiting Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (MMLT) wilderness properties in Lanark County. Many other land trusts across North America have had the same experience. In response to the pandemic, our properties have become an essential back-to-nature sanctuary. Perhaps you visited one of our properties to catch your breath, find refuge from the lockdown, or explore a safe place with friends or family.

MMLT co-founder Howard Clifford estimates that cliffLAND (Blueberry Mountain) hosted 4,800 visitors this year, more than twice the number seen in past years. High Lonesome Nature Reserve near Pakenham has also been exceptionally busy with more than 600 people hiking the trails during the Thanksgiving long weekend alone! We want to acknowledge that visitors have shown respect for other hikers by maintaining social distancing and respect for the land by staying on the trails and not leaving trash behind. Thank you.

MMLT had to cancel most of our nature exploration events this year. Fortunately, we were still able to hold the popular Festival of the Wild Child at High Lonesome Nature Reserve in late August, which we re-imagined as a scavenger hunt to create a safe but fun outing in the forest. It drew more than a hundred enthusiastic children, along with their parents and grandparents, to share this wonder-filled day of learning.

As the cold settles in, MMLT continues to welcome visitors to our sites. They will remain open throughout the winter for socially-distanced walks, snowshoeing and discovering nature.

As a volunteer-driven organization MMLT receives no direct government funding, so we depend on the support of our donors and volunteers. We appreciate every donation and every hour given to carry out the work of managing our 2,600 acres of wilderness. It makes all the difference as we strive to fulfill our mission to protect and preserve wilderness for today and for future generations.

Need 'em... need 'em... got 'em...
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Warmest Holiday Wishes

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Give the Gift of Nature

If you're looking for a gift for someone special, something that would help to make our little corner of the world a better place, why not gift a donation to the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust? We will send holiday greetings to your loved one letting them know about your gift in their honour. See our ad in this edition of theHumm or visit <mmlt.ca> to learn how to donate, visit our properties or volunteer.

Warmest wishes from all of us at MMLT to you and your family for good health and the happiest of Holiday seasons. See you on the trails!

— Robert Betcher, President,
 Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust

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DOWNTOWN Carleton PLACE BIA

Santa is coming to Downtown Carleton Place!
Although you won't be able to sit on Santa's knee this year, you can peek inside at Santa and Mrs. Claus working in their workshop.

Thursday, December 3, 10 & 17 from 3-7PM
 Saturday, December 5, 12 & 19 from 2-5PM

Be sure to take lots of pictures from the street and post them on social media using #downtowncarletonplace to be entered into a draw for \$100 BIA Bucks!

www.downtowncarletonplace.com

Holmes for the Holidays!

Storytelling predates writing, and is an integral part of the human experience. We love to tell stories and we love to hear, read and watch stories, which is why Studio Theatre Perth is embarking on a Christmas fundraiser that builds on the theatrical tradition of storytelling. Our one-man show *An Evening with Sherlock Holmes* opens on December 10.

The show is an animated reading of two stories by Arthur Conan Doyle, brought to life by Perth newcomer and veteran actor Kieran More as the man with the razor intellect — Sherlock Holmes.

“Sherlock was a bit a showman himself, so it’s going to be a great show, and Kieran has a lot of acting chops. He has a lot of stage presence and very little ego, so he’s a delight to direct,” enthuses director Jane Stott.

The production opens with Holmes singing the praises of his good friend and chronicler Doctor Watson. He then invites the audience to accompany him on two of his famous cases: *The Man with the Twisted Lip* and *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*.

The idea for this production came from More, who has been recording audio versions of Sherlock Holmes stories and uploading them to his YouTube channel. “I had the idea, inspired by my sister’s advice, that I should use my theatre talents during COVID,” explains More.

But audio recording and a live production are two very different beasts. This live production is complete with costumes, sound and lighting effects, make-up, and a full set depicting 221B Baker Street, London. Daunting as such a switch was, More was up for the challenge.

“I was thrilled because I’m new to town, so to have an opportunity to do a show by myself was both wonderful and terrifying,” he notes.

More hasn’t actually walked the boards in some ten years or so, but he certainly has plenty of experience to draw on. He has acted in productions with Third Wall Theatre Co., with Tara Players (Ottawa), with Ottawa Little Theatre and the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Company.

For this production, he will pull out all the stops to portray multiple characters. “In one story there are three women and five men, and Kieran is able to differentiate them so well that I could see each character clearly,” explains Stott.

As thrilling as this production promises to be, it is first and foremost a Christmas fundraiser. “Our goal is to raise \$24,000 by April 2021 for the Keep the Lights On fundraiser,” says Kat Watring-Ellis, chair of the fundraising committee. “So far, through the generosity of our patrons, we have raised over \$10,000 online and another \$2000 from our first fundraiser *Nosferatu*, so we’re half of the way — or as I prefer to say — we’re almost there!”



Kieran More stars as Sherlock Holmes in *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle* at Studio Theatre Perth. Tickets are \$20 for the live performance or \$1750 for home viewing, and are available through ticketsplease.ca.

Deeply cognizant of the current pandemic, Studio Theatre Perth has gone above and beyond to ensure that all COVID protocols are carefully followed to ensure the safety of patrons and volunteers. Masks are mandatory inside the theatre.

An Evening with Sherlock Holmes opens on Thursday, December 10 at 7:30PM and runs December 11 and 12 at 7:30PM as well as Sunday, December 13 at 2PM. Tickets are available through ticketsplease.ca and are \$20 each.

Virtual Viewing

For those patrons who don’t feel comfortable coming to the theatre yet, the show will be videotaped and the online performance can be enjoyed in the comfort of your home via a YouTube link. The link will be provided to you when you purchase your ticket through ticketsplease.ca for \$17.50.

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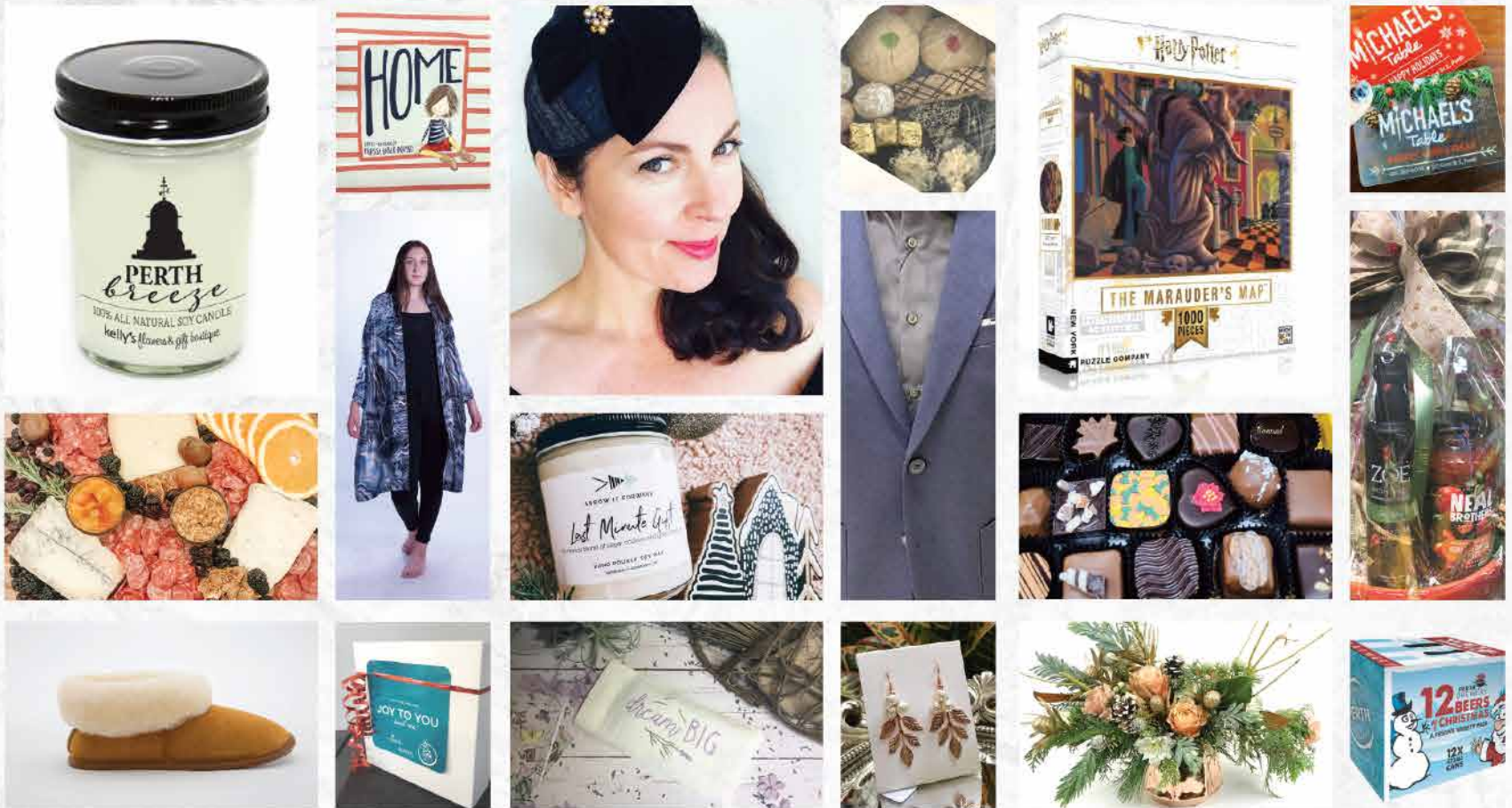


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Perth's Nine Lessons and Carols Will Take Place!

The popular Christmas *Nine Lessons and Carols* in Perth has not been cancelled — we are going virtual! The service has been held at St. James the Apostle Anglican Church for 37 years with the joint choirs of St. Paul's United Church and St. James'. The 38th service will air on Sunday, December 20 at 4PM and a link will be available on the two churches' websites. Choir directors Peter Woodwark and Brad Mills are working very hard to make it happen and have some great music planned.

The recording will show St. James' church, with the Reverend Kenneth Davis officiating at a complete service. How are we managing this? Everything will be pre-recorded by St. James' very competent video photographer, Samuel Davis. The exception is the carols, as Peter explains. "The virtual Nine Lessons



will include nine of our best ever carols, blasts from the past (as it were), thanks to Gerrit Jansen van Beek who has been faithfully recording and archiving Nine Lessons music for several years. Since these recordings are audio only, the words will be provided on screen so folk (especially choristers) can sing along if they wish. Interspersed amongst all those choir carols and readings will be five congregational carols, again with singalong words provided".

"The big disappointment musically about the pandemic," says Brad, "is that it has prevented us from meeting and singing with our choirs since mid-March. We would normally be preparing for Nine Lessons, one of our favourite choral events of the year. The plus side of all of this is that we have been moved to review the extensive list of pieces sung together by the two choirs over the last 37 years, ably maintained by

Carol Rigby at St. James. We've also had the pleasure of listening to recordings archived by Gerrit."

The prelude, played by Joel VanderZee, precedes the singing of *Once in Royal David's City*. The Reverend Kenneth Davis then bids the congregation to "hear the message of the angels and, in heart and mind to go unto Bethlehem and see the babe lying in a manger... and to pray to God for the needs of the whole world and all his people; and for peace upon the earth... and let us remember the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed, the sick and them that mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children".

The Christmas story unfolds as members of both congregations read the nine Scriptures, including the Gospel accounts of the birth of Jesus and visits by the shepherds and wise men. The lessons are interspersed with music.

The carols chosen include *O Magnum Mysterium* by Morten Lauridsen, which celebrates the great mystery of Jesus' birth in a humble stable, *Candle-light Carol*, with words and music by John Rutter, and the *Sussex Carol*, a traditional carol arranged by Sir David Willcocks. Andrew Graham will close the service with *In Dulci Jubilo* by JS Bach.

There is a bright side to this being online this year, especially if there is freezing rain on December 20. We can all sit at home and enjoy the service, and people around the world will be able to join us too. I'm sending the link to friends in Cornwall, England, who attend Truro Cathedral where the first Nine Lessons and Carols service was held in 1880.

From 4PM Sunday, December 20, click on the link at either <stjamesperth.ca> or <stpaulsperth.ca>.

— Hilary Barrett

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CHRISTMAS REIMAGINED (BUT STILL AWESOME) IN MISSISSIPPI MILLS



Celebrating the holidays may look a little different this year, but the Christmas spirit is alive and well in Mississippi Mills!

To keep everyone safe and healthy into 2021 we have made the difficult decision to cancel Light Up the Night and our traditional Santa Claus Parades. But it's not all bad news – we have some great new traditions that we're sure people will get excited about!

When we started thinking about what our holiday plans would look like in Mississippi Mills, we knew it would be extra important that we still offered a season full of the Christmas spirit. We started by breaking down what people truly love about our Christmas events and figuring out how we could deliver the same festive experiences in a newly imagined 2020 way.

So here's our list of what we think our Christmas events usually offer, and how we're planning to do that (a little differently) for 2020.

ADMIRING THE BEAUTIFUL LIGHTS AND DECORATIONS

Since we won't be hosting "Light Up the Night" or our Christmas parades, we're inviting home and business owners across the Municipality to "Light Up the Town" with their Christmas décor at home or work. We're working with some friends to offer an online interactive map. Residents will be able to enter their address to be considered in our Christmas decorating contest. We'll be awarding prizes and inviting the public to help us judge. Once the map has been populated, residents will be able to use it to create a route for their own private Christmas Night Parade. Jump in your car and take the family along to admire our beautiful Municipality and our residents' creative Christmas displays. Did we mention there will be prizes?



SPREADING CHEER TO NEIGHBOURS AND FRIENDS

2020 has already been lonely for so many people. Christmas is a time we look forward to seeing each other and spreading cheer. This year that will be a challenge. The Municipality is inviting the public to send us their "Christmas Cheer Videos". Sing us your favourite holiday carol or just send a simple hello. We want to see your smiling faces and share them with the rest of the community. We have already received some great videos from the teachers of Almonte District High School and the residents of Orchard View (you HAVE to check them out!). Send us your video and check back often to see others. We will be adding them as they come. We can't wait!

We are also happy to be working with MMTtogether, Carebridge and our local schools to send Christmas cards to those who may be isolated this season. If you are interested in volunteering to write Christmas cards or know of someone who may be lonely, please get in touch.



REMEMBERING CHARITY

The holiday season always reminds us of those less fortunate. Whether it's bringing cans for the food bank to a parade or picking a child's name off an angel tree, donating is usually such an important part of the season. For 2020 it is more important than ever to make sure we remember those in need. Local charities have been working on creative ways to make it easier for you to donate from home. Visit our Christmas 2020 website for a listing of holiday charity initiatives and information on how to give.

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

Another important benefit of our traditional holiday events is that we usually bring people downtown reminding them to support local. Whether you are buying from the farmers' market or shopping at the hardware store, you are not only supporting the local economy but also supporting your neighbours. The farmer down the road, the shop owner downtown and your local brew master each appreciates their customers much more than any large online retailer ever will. Your holiday purchases will help our local businesses survive. Put your money where your home is this Christmas!

BRINGING SANTA CLAUS TO TOWN

And – last but not least – we know that Christmas weekend in Mississippi Mills brings **Santa to town**. On a normal year he makes his grand entrance on the Light Up the Night stage and stays with us for the whole weekend. When he heard we had to cancel our events this year, Santa let us know he still REALLY wanted to come and say a big HO HO HO to all the Mississippi Mills kids. Lucky for us the Mississippi Mills Fire Department was eager to help!

We are thrilled to announce that Santa will be making FIVE trips around Mississippi Mills this year. He will be in Clayton, Pakenham and Blakeney on December 5 and in Appleton and Almonte on December 6! And as a bonus he will be riding in a Mississippi Mills Fire Truck!

Our local firefighters will be walking the route to collect donations for the local food bank along with your letters to Santa. In order to limit direct interaction between the public and the firefighters, food bins will be located along the route. Drop off locations will be available an hour before they pass. Visit our website for details, timing, and individual maps of the routes and drop off locations.

And have a very happy and safe holiday season!



MISSISSIPPIMILLS.CA/CHRISTMASREIMAGINED

An Arty Anniversary in Almonte

Sivarulasa Gallery's 6th Anniversary Show is their biggest of the year — come and see it in-person during regular gallery hours at 34 Mill Street in Almonte: Wednesday through Sunday from 11AM to 5PM. The exhibition will run until December 30.

Due to pandemic restrictions there will not be an in-person vernissage; however, the gallery will host two **Artists Talks/Virtual Vernissages** online via Zoom, where artists will join in live from across the country to talk about their works and inspiration. You can join from the comfort of your home through a video link that can be accessed on your computer, tablet or smartphone. Please email <info@sivarulasa.com> and you will be sent the link.

On Wednesday, December 2 from 7–8:30PM, artists Karen Haines, Susan Tooke, Mary Pfaff, Mirana Zuger, Jane Irwin, Wendy Robertson, Sarah Anderson, Barbara Gamble, Catherine Gutsche and Michael Pittman will Zoom in to talk about their works.



Sivarulasa Gallery is celebrating their sixth anniversary with a group exhibit featuring works by Gayle Kells (above), Dale Dunning (left), and numerous other gallery artists. View them in person, and meet the artists virtually!

On Wednesday, December 9 from 7–8:30PM, Gayle Kells will talk about her installation *Nowhere to go*, and sculptors Deborah Arnold, Sue Adams, Dale Dunning, Jim Hake and Susan Low-Beer will speak about their work in sculpture.

For more information, please visit <sivarulasa.com>.



The Hub Children's Christmas Mailbox

With our thoughts turning towards Christmas during the upheavals that COVID-19 has created this year, the holidays are taking on even greater importance.

Every Christmas season, The Hub in Almonte holds a Children's Christmas Shopping Day. At this event children up to the age of 13 visit The Hub and are able to buy gifts — any gift is one dollar — for immediate family members by themselves, and this year is no exception.

But this year The Hub is taking a different, COVID-safe approach. We have put our heads together and created a Christmas Mailbox.

Here's How It Works

An adult and child write a letter that includes a shopping list for immediate family members — parents and siblings only — with suggestions of gift items according to the interests of each family member. The shopping list should contain the following:

- the name and telephone number of the adult to be called
- the name of the family member and the age of each sibling

- the interests of each, for example “my sister likes Barbie dolls”

Place your letter inside an envelope, bring it to The Hub and put it in the Children's Christmas mailbox located just inside the front door. The Hub will be accepting the letters from November 17 until December 15.

Our volunteer elves will shop and wrap your gifts, and when this is done the parent will be called to come to The Hub with the shopper to collect your gifts. The cost is \$1 per gift per person.

Remember that this service is for residents of Mississippi Mills only, and the lists must be put in the box between November 17 and December 15. Ho Ho Ho!

— *The Hub Elves*



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December's Events

ALL MONTH

MERA Virtual Christmas Fair, [to Dec 20] <meraschoolhouse.org>

Kanata Civic Art Gallery presents *A Gift of Art* online sale/exhibit <kanatagallery.ca>

N. Lanark Regional Museum presents *Almonte's Pioneer Providers* [to Dec 18] <nlrmmuseum@gmail.com>

Sivarulrasa Gallery presents their *6th Anniversary Show* <sivarulrasa.com>

Strévé Design Studio & Boutique presents *Art Unconfined: A Fusion of Fashion & Art* [to Jan 15] <strevedesign.com>

Almonte Library Corridor Gallery presents photography by Laurette Lafleur

VISUAL ARTS

Sivarulrasa Gallery presents **Virtual Artist Talks**: Dec 2, 7-8:30PM, (Karen Haines, Susan Tooke, Mary Pfaff, Mirana Zuger, Jane Irwin, Wendy Robertson, Sarah Anderson, Barbara Gamble, Catherine Gutsche, Michael Pittman); Dec 9, 7-8:30PM (Gayle Kells, Deborah Arnold, Sue Adams, Dale Dunning, Jim Hake, Susan Low-Beer). Email info@sivarulrasa.com for zoom link.

YOUTH

See Santa & Mrs. Claus in their Workshop (from outside). Dec 3, 10, 17 (3-7PM). Dec 5, 12, 19 (2-5PM). 136 Bridge St., Carleton Place

Santa Visits Mississippi Mills: Dec 5: 1PM Clayton, 2:30PM Pakenham, 4PM Blakeney. Dec 6: 12PM Appleton, 1:30PM Almonte. Routes online. Food Bank bins & Letters to Santa bags set out. <mississippimills.ca/ChristmasReimagined>

COMMUNITY

The Granary's **Chocolate Party**, Dec 2-6, downtown CP. Samples, discounts, entertainment. granary.ca

See Santa Outdoors. Dec 5, 6, 12, 13, 12-2PM, Cedar Hill Christmas Tree Farm, Pakenham. 256-3029

Christmas Market. Dec 12, 10AM-4PM. Emmanuel Heritage Centre, Portland

SchoolBox New Year's Online Party. Dec 31, 11AM Zoom call. Free tickets: schoolbox.ca/nye

New Year's Eve Dinner at Perth Manor. Dec 31, 6-course dinner, live music, 12AM champagne toast. 264-0050x2. \$85

Hackberry Men's Shed, Mon 7PM. <lcpguy@hotmail.com> for Zoom invite

LITERATURE

Virtual Imaginary Feast. Dec 12, 7PM. Poets, writers, storytellers talk about meaningful meals. RSVP: curiousand-kindalmonte@gmail.com for Zoom.

THEATRE

Movies at Studio Theatre: **Maudie**. Dec 2 (2PM), Dec 4 (7PM) studiotheatreperth.com. Studio Theatre, Perth. \$12

Perth Community Choir Virtual AGM, Dec 9, 7PM. Details on Facebook

Christmas w/Sherlock Holmes, Dec 10-12 (7:30PM), Dec 13 (2PM) \$20 live; \$17.50 YouTube. ticketsplease.ca. Kieran More performs 2 stories. Studio Theatre, Perth.

MUSIC

The Cove (Westport, 273-3636): Wed Wings 'n Tunes w/Shawn McCullough, 5:30-9PM

Dec 3 No Principals feat. Dave Balfour, Jamie Campbell, Joe Skuce, 5-8PM

Dec 4 Young Petty Stones, 6-10PM, \$60 dinner+show

Dec 5 The Plaid Bastards: Jeff Callery + Shawn McCullough, 6-9PM

Dec 6 Subprime w/Prime Rib Special, 7-10PM

Dec 10, 11 Bowskill vs. Marriner, 6-10PM, \$70 dinner+show

Dec 12 Eric Uren, 6-10PM

Dec 13 Jon McLurg & Anthea Feaver: "O Brother, Where Art Thou?", 1-4PM

Dec 13 Mike Tremble, 5-8PM

Dec 17 Greg Ball, 5-8PM

Dec 18, 19 Miss Emily + Band feat. opener Frank Ryan, 6-10PM, \$70 dinner+show

Dec 20 Teagan McLaren: Music for a Christmas Afternoon, 1-4PM

Dec 21 Matt Dickson, 5-8PM

Dec 22, 29 Eric Uren, 5-8PM

Dec 27 Xmas or "Let's put 2020 behind us" Jazz Night w/Spencer Evans Trio, 6-9PM

Dec 28 Nolan Hubbard, 5-8PM

Dec 31 Turpin's Trail NYE w/Chinese food, 6-11PM "Midnight" Toast at 10:45, \$70 dinner+show

Golden Arrow Pub (Perth, 267-4500): 9PM, Wed Karaoke, Sat Dirt Truck w/Joel Brown

Dec 31 NYE Dinner + Party w/Joel Brown

David Francey Xmas Concert. Dec 5, 7:30PM, St. Paul's United, Perth. ticketsplease.ca \$38.50

The 2 Grands (Arnprior, 558-5050): 8PM, \$5 cover

Dec 5, 12, 19 All-request show featuring Chris (keys/vocals) & Jimmy (drums)

The Waterfront Gastropub (CP, 257-5755): Blues w/Redneck Limousine Sun 3-6PM

Nine Lessons & Carols, Dec 20, 4PM, online <stpaulsperth.ca>

Winterwords — an Invitation to Write

As we head into hibernation during this first full pandemic winter, creative outlets may be more important than ever. With this as an impetus, I'm going to take the plunge and launch an idea that is not yet fully formed as of press time. Not fully formed, but not completely ethereal either — it has already been mulled over by two dynamic and talented writers, Robynne Eagan and Sarah Kerr. Perhaps you would like to participate, or even assist?

We're calling it **Winterwords**, and it is in essence an invitation to write. It's not a competition, although there may be some prizes, and we would love to publish selected works in theHumm (either in print, online, or in our Hummail newsletter). Depending on the level of interest, it could also include what Robynne has termed the **Lockdown Writers' Café** — Zoom meet-ups or facilitated workshops, as well as online information and links to the topics, events, resources, writers' webpages, local publications, book clubs, even coffee vendors!

Themes and Things

If you'd like to participate as a writer, here are some parameters to start you off. Please write **up to 1000 words on the theme of "Back to Better in the Valley"**. Write from a personal point of view, and consider focusing on some aspect of our Ottawa Valley community. Is there something that needs to get "better" as we begin to return to "normal"? Is there something that already seems better to you? Are you feeling hopeful? Galvanized? Terrified? Cynical?

Now that we've got a theme (and a word limit — very important if we are going to publish entries in

print), let's talk about form. Winterwords is open to **essays, poetry, short stories (fiction), creative non-fiction, short plays, memoirs and songs**. If we've left something out, feel free to send us a suggestion!

The key is to keep it personal. A personal story has the ability to open hearts and change minds, and that's the kind of good stuff that strengthens communities — even when (or perhaps especially when) it challenges.

As for deadlines, the first one is **Wednesday, January 6**, because that's the deadline for the Winter issue of theHumm (see the notice on page 2 of this issue). If you send in something great and we have space to run it, we will! But if you can't make time to write over the holidays, don't despair — we've got more issues coming up after that. We will run a follow-up article in our Winter issue to keep you informed and motivated.

Want to Help?

If you are a seasoned writer (poet, songwriter...) and would be interested in facilitating a Zoom meet-up or workshop, please email me at <kris@thehummm.com>. If you have any interest in exploring this concept beyond the next few months, please consider coming on board. Robynne has some wonderful ideas about publishing chapbooks and creating a Valley Writing Award! And if you are in the position of sponsoring a prize or incentive to local writers, we'd love to hear from you as well.

I guess that's it for now. Happy holidays, and happy writing!
— Kris Riendeau

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The Love Box (dinner for 2 delivered!), Bouffage.....	\$65
Hostess and stocking stuffer locally made giftpacks, Don's Meat Market.....	\$20
Custom-made gift baskets, Foodsmiths.....	various
Sculptures & paintings by Maria Moldovan, General Fine Craft.....	\$125-520
Nannyberry shrub, Home Hospice NL Tree Sale.....	\$40
Pewter wine goblets by Colin Hamer, Riverguild Fine Crafts.....	\$120/pair
"Lake Series No.5" by William Liao, Sivarulrasa Gallery.....	\$635
Wooden Christmas tree & ornament holder, The Queens Crafters.....	\$38
The local box of Merry & Bright, The Town of Smiths Falls.....	\$40-265



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NYE at Perth Manor!

On December 31, we at Perth Manor Boutique Hotel are pleased to adapt and present our annual New Year's Eve Gala Dinner — this year in a COVID compliant environment. We weren't sure we would be planning this event this year; however, after receiving calls from last year's guests inquiring if they could reserve a table, and chatting with the health unit, we reconsidered.

We contacted our featured pianist, Valerie Leavitt, and she is on board for a return engagement — mask and all — so we began planning how to present the evening as elegantly and as safely as possible!

The evening will begin at 8PM when we will welcome guests who have reserved in advance — this evening will be by advanced reservations only and space is limited, so be sure to reserve early! Tables will be appropriately distanced, and we can accommodate parties up to 4 people. Tables

of 4 must all be in the same bubble. Masks will be required upon entry, and instead of encouraging guests to mingle by the bar as in previous years, masked staff will show guests directly to their table. Although masks are not required while seated at tables for dining, we strongly encourage guests to wear them between courses and as staff approach their tables for service. Bar services will be available table-side so guests don't need to move around to get to the bar — the bar comes to you!

Guests will be seated in both of our dining rooms — the beautiful Tapestry Dining Room (whose walls are covered in tapestry dating back to the early 1900s), and the elegant Stewart Room (named for the Stewart family that owned the Manor originally — the same Stewarts of Stewart Park fame)!

Dinner will be six courses comprised of some of our favourite selections from our recipe book, featuring a classic mouth-watering beef Wellington as the centre of attention! The meal will be served at a leisurely pace throughout the evening while Valerie will entertain all of us with a lovely mix of light classical, easy listening and jazz standards.

As midnight approaches, champagne will be served and we'll kick 2020 out the door and welcome in what can only be a brighter 2021! The evening is \$85 per person plus HST and includes dinner, champagne toast and deluxe party favours; bar charges and gratuity are extra. Call 264-0050 X1 to reserve your table!

— Linda Craig



Gifts for Outdoor Enthusiasts

- Leather mittens & gloves, Crush Marketplace.....\$60
- Wataku Headgear bamboo fleece headband, Dragonfly Boutique...\$20
- Premium ice grippers (free for folks 65 & older), Get A Grip.....\$25
- Biofreeze Cold Therapy pain relief, Hands on Healing.....\$21
- Northern acclaim honeylocust, Home Hospice NL Tree Sale.....\$70
- Donations in their name, Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust..... various
- Sassafras door mat and inserts, Reid Gardens.....\$9.99-19.99
- Animal Track I.D. tool, The Silver Shingle.....\$20
- OBOZ hikers, Vamos Outdoors.....\$179

Gifts for Over \$100

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- Original Batik art work by Jenn Raby, Strévé Designs.....\$200 & up



Perth Community Choir AGM

Although the Perth Community Choir (PCC) has unfortunately had to stay dormant through the fall of 2020, they are looking forward to the time when they can once again prepare for their next production. "In the meantime," says Board President Kristen Widenmaier, "it is important that we continue to 'keep the lights on.' One of the important jobs we must do is hold an Annual General Meeting."

This year the Annual General Meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, De-

cember 9 at 7PM. This means you can join from the comfort of your home — all you need is a device and an internet connection! Attending the meeting is easy — all you need is the free Zoom app and the direct link to the meeting, which PCC will email out in advance.

You can find all the details about the AGM and RSVP on the Perth Community Choir Facebook page. "We'd love to see all the smiling faces we've been missing this fall," adds Kristen.

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Restaurants offer indoor dining, take out and soon several will be available on Valley Eats.

Stores offer in store shopping, online shopping and specialized appointments when available.

Events

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Festival Of Good Cheer Nov 28

Festival Of Lights Starting Nov 21

Community Tree Starts Nov 21

Holiday Gift Guide



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Growing Community in Lanark Highlands

There is an old adage that says: "Life is what happens when you've planned something else." The philosophy of an enthusiastic volunteer group in Lanark Village is: "let's skip Plan A and go straight to Plan B". The initial impetus for Plan B was a perceived lack of fresh fruit and vegetables in Lanark Highlands.

by David Hinks

Once that was dealt with, Plan B has grown into a multi-faceted volunteer organization responding to many issues in the community. Director Melanie Mills observes that the goal is a supportive and inclusive community — they consider their community to be whoever shows up.

One of the pillars of Plan B is their Community Garden — they have turned a couple of acres into a way of supplying fresh fruit and vegetables to many of their activities, such as food preservation, food distribution and community dinners (there is no charge for these programs, although many participants choose to make a donation).

The Community Garden is located on Glengyle Farm on the Mississippi River just south of Lanark Village. Donna Davidson and Cliff Neudorf have made available a field some five acres in size for the use of Plan B. The community garden currently utilizes about two acres for growing and there is pressure to increase the acreage.

Cliff and Donna were garlic farmers for about twenty years (I'm sure many readers ran into Donna at the Carp Farmers' Market where she was a faithful regular selling garlic and garlic products). Donna retired a few years ago as Director of Lanark Community Programs and Cliff retired as Superintendent of Aircraft Inspection for the Federal Government.

The community garden has been in place for four years. It is organized as one big garden with everyone working together as opposed to each with a small plot. The 15 or so volunteers are a team — their inputs and experience are valued. Organizationally there are two garden directors, Cara Bouleau and Cliff Neudorf. The produce goes first to the volunteers who have worked in the garden and then to Plan B for its use and distribution. When those needs are met, any additional produce is made available to other community organizations such as Food Banks, Interval House, The Table Community Food Centre and other similar organizations.

The 2020 season total weight of produce was 9645 lbs. Squash came out to about 2050 lbs, with most of the remainder being tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots and beets. Cabbages, kale, peppers, melons, fennel and daikon radish are also grown.

An interesting sidenote is the dominance of the Plan B garden in the Great Veggie Grow-off for the last two years. The Grow-off is a community challenge to determine which Lanark County municipality has

donated the greatest weight of fresh produce from gardeners to their local Food Bank (or equivalent). For the first five years the coveted trophy was claimed by Mississippi Mills (in close competition with Carleton Place). Imagine their chagrin when for the last two years that title has been claimed by Drummond-North Elmsley (Glengyle Farm happens to be located in Drummond North Elmsley — just south of the border with Lanark Highlands).

Organizations such as The Table in Perth have organized gardening days with their team to come out several times to help, and the United Way East Ontario has organized team days with Canopy Growth. With the support of a grant from Lanark County, a very successful youth educational component was added this year.

The garden aims to adhere to organic principles and is developing its own seed saving program, sharing seeds with the community at large. They have an increased emphasis on growing their own seedlings for transplants.

The size of the garden permits working in long beds. This facilitates the use of mechanized support without compacting the growing areas; for example, beds forty inches wide allow a small tractor to straddle the beds. Mulch, landscape fabric and a white clover cover crop are all being used or tested as ways to suppress weeds and pests and reduce manual labour required from volunteers. Always the aim is to not burn out the volunteers.



A combination of acquired and green manure provides for the nutrient supply of the garden. A new hot composting system is being developed using pulled weeds.

On the infrastructure side, a cistern in an older house is being converted into a root cellar. While there has not yet been a need to store vegetables, this will facilitate plans to increase production. For more information about the garden, visit the Lanark Highlands Plan B Community Garden group on Facebook.

Plan B continues to evolve and is in the process of setting up a more formal governance structure. A temporary Board of Directors has been named. A law student from Queen's is preparing documentation to give Plan B status as a registered charity. For more information about Plan B check out their website at <planblanark.ca>, but please note that it is currently a project in progress.

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Giving the Gift of Trees

You may wonder why Home Hospice North Lanark (HHNL) is launching another fundraiser hot on the heels of our very successful Hike for Hospice, which would normally have taken place back in May. We are 100% funded through donations and targeted fundraising, and our Tree Fundraisers have always proven popular for Christmas gifts, so we need to get this moving!

Our Tree Fundraiser shopping site is open for business at <trees.hhnl.ca>, and we are hoping that the community will support our work once again. We feel good about this fundraiser because what we are offering is a product that is a great value. When you plant a tree you plant a legacy; it is a beautiful way to remember someone you love. It is also a great way to celebrate a milestone such as a new home, a child's birth, someone's birthday or anniversary. Imagine your grandchildren someday playing in the shade of a tree you planted! Then there's also the simple fact that it's good for the environment as well as the beauty and value of your property.



From left, Doug Reid and Doris Goerzen, owners of Reid's Gardens are shown here with Manager Chris Gow. These wonderful people are helping Home Hospice North Lanark with their upcoming Tree Sale.

This year we welcome a partnership with Reid Gardens in Carleton Place who have generously offered their help, including storage facilities to keep trees and shrubs safe upon delivery until pick-up. And to top it all off, they are throwing in a 30L bag of 3-Way Planting Mix and a 4.5g package of Root Rescue (mycorrhizae) with each tree purchased — a \$6 value — as a gift! We are so grateful for their big-

hearted support of our work. Reid Gardens has been a fixture on the edge of Carleton Place for over thirty years. A visit to Reid's is always high on people's list of things to do in the Spring. People come for their great variety of trees, shrubs, perennials and other garden necessities.

"Doug and I jumped at the chance to help when we were approached by Allan Goddard, retired owner of Almonte Landscape Services, about partnering with Home Hospice North Lanark," explains Doris Goerzen, owner of Reid Gardens. "We believe strongly in the work that they do for the comfort of people in our community who need palliative care. It is also such a great fit for us — selling trees and shrubs are what we do! It is our privilege to help HHNL raise necessary funds, especially in these difficult times."

Some of the trees and shrubs you can order from HHNL this year are balsam fir, common witchhazel, blue beech, northern acclaim honeylocust, emerald spire crabapple, ironwood, oakleaf mountain ash and boulevard lilac. You are encouraged to order early. In past years the most popular varieties sell out quickly!

All funds raised will help enable us to continue to offer emotional and social support to clients, their families and loved ones. We invite you to visit <hhnl.ca> to learn more about our organization. Our core service involves training and matching visiting volunteers with clients under the supervision of a Registered Nurse. At the present time visits are delivered via phone and video chat, but we have been able to continue our work throughout the pandemic. We also offer bereavement support and advance care planning guidance.

Trees will be available for pick up in the Spring of 2021, with the exact date and time to be determined. The pick-up location will be Reid Gardens in Carleton Place, 140 Pick Road, adjacent to their Garden Center.

Home Hospice North Lanark is a not-for-profit registered Canadian charity funded 100% through donations and targeted fundraising initiatives. We are a "hospice without walls." We provide compassionate in-home support — wherever home may be — for adult clients and their families who have received

a life-threatening or terminal diagnosis. Services are provided in the North Lanark area by a trained volunteer in a confidential, respectful and client-centred manner under the supervision of a Registered Nurse. Visit <hhnl.ca> for details or to request the support of a visiting volunteer.
— The HHNL Board of Directors

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The Trouble with Tradition

"Christmas will be different this year." For sure it will, but get a grip and we can re-invent the wheel.

Many can't believe that they will survive "different", because "we've always done it that way". If that were the case, my Christmas tradition would be doing the laundry, and when the kids were little, tending to all manner of Christmas crises like scalds that sent us to the emergency room or migraine headaches that led to... well, not a nice picture after Christmas dinner. I can't recall one visit to Santa that didn't end in too much candy and tears. It certainly wasn't your Joy to the World, Fa La La Christmas tradition I ever enjoyed.

by Glenda Jones

The first tradition we let go was Christmas dinner on Christmas Day. Kids were tired, Mom spent the day in the kitchen, and it turned into a circus when it was supposed to be a family meal celebrated in classic Norman Rockwell fashion. Instead we had a good meal on Christmas Eve at regular dinner time, and everyone enjoyed it, including Mom. The 25th brought leftovers in sandwiches, and not much else.

Later we all admitted that turkey wasn't on our list at all, nor Brussels sprouts, nor broccoli, no matter how it is disguised. Our dinners

went to paella, or a roast or salmon. A good meal eaten together was all that mattered. Another tradition scotched.

The gift giving was the next thing to go. We all have too much stuff anyway, and when we want something new, we go and buy it for ourselves. If we are desperate to give a gift, we'll make darn sure the recipient chooses it, and we wrap it for them. That said, we save new stuff to have on Christmas morning, especially books, CDs or crafts.

This is the year that thousands of children will not have to get dolled up in a fancy outfit they hate, stand in line to see a man they don't know, sit on the lap of a total stranger, and scream to high heaven while they get their picture taken for the sake of tradition. Children are class acts, for the most part, and totally understand that this is the year Santa is self-isolating and working in his workshop and won't be in every mall and parade. He's a busy guy, trying to keep safe so he can deliver toys at Christmas. Don't whine that this tradition isn't available. I'll wager there are kids who will not care if Grandma doesn't get that special Santa picture.

The massive Christmas visits are also off the agenda, so no parents will be driving through snowstorms with cranky kids in the back seat to get to families. Moms will be able to enjoy a non-cooking Christmas day without the angst of the good silverware polishing, the tablecloth ironing, the décor perfecting. Maybe a cool mimosa, warm slippers, and an afghan are more to her liking. Maybe kids can stay home all day and play with new toys without the admonition of sharing with multiple cousins. Maybe the usual brouhaha that breaks out after a few drinks will be avoided, and calm will descend.

We're not entirely Grinchy over Christmas traditions. In fact, our outdoor lights were strung the November day it was 25 degrees. They'll be turned on the first of December. That's a must! Our tree will go up soon after, but the decorations have been scaled back. None of the old tatty things we used to have on there. Further, I'll cover the table with cards to write, but that's more a desire to keep up with friends far away than a tradition at Christmas only. I don't write a form letter either.

Tradition is a way of keeping the family faith. However, once it becomes a challenge to keep it up, it's time to let it go. We're fortunate that for many decades we haven't been embroiled in situations that have robbed us of traditions when we need them, and we are doing our best to hang on to at least some of the peripherals that signal the season.



So what to do? We wanted to share Christmas with friends, and Jenny Doyle and Jennette Affleck came up with this plan. Dress warmly, make up a thermos of hot toddy or cider or whatever, pack a basket of good baking, and make for the woods. Find a couple of trees and decorate them with little gifts, fun things, maybe some cranberries or popcorn strings to leave for the birds. Turn this into a gift tree hunt. Then in turn, find the decorated tree, and share the excitement of opening those little gifts while enjoying your Christmas goodies together. You'll be outside, can keep a safe distance, see people you love, and savour the season all at the same time. What's not to like, eh?

Oh my, what if this now becomes the new Christmas tradition, and you have to do it every year because it was so much fun? Whether you're winding your way through the woods or curled up on the couch, we wish you peace of mind and strength of spirit. We send you love and good wishes for December and good health in 2021.

Danielle Morgan
glass artist

I am a fused glass artist from Almonte, Ontario. I have been working with glass for 15 years. I create colourful and whimsical fused glass artwork, functional bowls, platters, jewellery and seasonal ornaments.

Please visit my Facebook Page: **The Art of Fused Glass** to view a variety of Fused Glass creations.

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Merry Christmas

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An Open Letter to Humm Readers

More than 20 years ago Kris Riendeau allowed me to publish my first article, a little piece about walking my dogs. Every month since, she has given me that same opportunity, a privilege I cherish. What started out as an idea to organize the cultural life of our area has grown into an essential medium for all of us who want to share a corner of our lives. When we have endeavours that we need to advertise we turn to theHumm, and oh my, does it deliver! We see Kris and Rob, coffee mugs in hand, dropping off theHumm all over town, making connections, chatting with shop owners and readers, and never are they too busy to engage in new ideas. No two people embody the spirit of our town like Kris and Rob.

However, Kris and Rob cannot do this enormous task alone. They created theHumm for us, and now we need to give back what we never took for granted, but have enjoyed for so long. Advertising in theHumm has been the backbone of its existence and of our

cultural life. As much as we love the articles, those ads keep the paper viable. So here's what I'm suggesting: take out an actual ad in theHumm for your own pleasure. Did you see the ad in the *Gazette* by a young man honouring his father? Don't you know someone who could do with a big thank you? Have you got something of interest you'd like to share? Is there a merchant with a minimal advertising budget who'd be grateful if you'd pay for an ad?

While the Riendeaus are valiantly reinventing their unique enterprise, I'm suggesting that we readers step up and offer encouragement in any form we can. If we want to pick up that friendly little newspaper once a month, we need to get as creative as they are, and come up with advertising dollars to match. TheHumm is too valuable to all of us to simply let it fade away. The time will come again when we need it, and wouldn't it be awful if we didn't have it?

— Glenda Jones, AKA *The Reever Reporter*

Gifts for Cooks & Gourmets

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- 4 and 7 course tasting menus with wine pairings, Black Tartan Kitchen....\$94 & 129
- Holiday gift box (preserves, sauces, luxury baking), Bouffage.....\$50 & up
- Locally produced chicken, beef, pork and lamb, Don's Meat Market.....various
- Danica mango wood bowl, Foodsmiths.....\$2.49-3.99
- Untempered baking chocolate, Hummingbird Chocolate.....\$29.99
- Locally made charcuterie board & 20% off a cookbook, Mill Street Books.....various
- Funky and useful kitchen gadgets, Pêches & Poivre.....\$8 & up
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See page 26 for great gifts for GARDENERS

Joanne Beaton



'Tis the Season!

'Tis the season for giving and this year more than ever, our local charities and organizations are counting on our support. Many organizations have not been able to do the same fundraising that they would have in the past and are relying on the community to come through for them.

The first Tuesday of December has become known as Giving Tuesday, following Black Friday and Cyber Monday, and it's the perfect day to make a donation to the local charities and organizations of your choice.

Ken and I have been supporting the **Almonte General Hospital Foundation** for several years now, and we feel blessed to be able to contribute to such an important cause in our community. While we have rarely made use of the hospital services ourselves, all 8 grandchildren were born there, and we take great comfort in knowing that Almonte has such an outstanding hospital for our community.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and much health and happiness in 2021!



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The Taste of Longing

Your Invitation to an Imaginary Feast

In November I became the literary publicist for *The Taste of Longing* by Ottawa writer and historian Suzanne Evans. The book is a beautifully written account of the life of Ethel Mulvany, a force of nature born on Manitoulin Island. The focus of the book is about her time spent in Changi Jail during WWII. The book is a tribute to resilience and how imagination and community can help one get through the darkest of times.

The moment I virtually met Suzanne and she shared her story about finding Ethel's *Starving Prisoner of War Cookbook*, her decade-long research process of writing this meaningful literary biography, and how she wanted to host intimate virtual imaginary feasts, I knew we were a perfect match.

At the beginning of 2020 I had no idea what was in store. I had just hit my stride and was running a small performance venue, creative space and gathering place called Curious & Kind in the heart of Almonte. It was a place for the community to harness their own artistic practices and to come together to make things, and write, and sing, and tell each other stories. It was a place for intergenerational sharing and it had been my dream of twenty-five years.

In March, when the first case of COVID hit Ottawa, I shut down the physical space having watched what had happened in Seattle, where my long-distance romantic partner was still living at the time. An infuriating optimist, I thought it would be temporary and I moved Curious & Kind online, posting a daily creative challenge and running a weekly virtual storytelling show called The Iridescent Robot Storytelling Club. These things sustained me, and allowed me to connect with a community beyond Mississippi Mills, but I was missing my very own small community. (There is more to the story, and you can read more about it at <thehummm.com>.)

In September, I decided after seven months of Curious & Kind being shuttered that I needed to talk with my landlord. After a heartfelt and teary conversation, he honoured my decision to let go of the physical space even though I had four more years left in our agreement. He reminded me that we could not have predicted a global pandemic and that he still believed in me. Those words buoyed my spirit, and he quickly found a tenant to take over the space we had renovated together.

I decided to get off social media, feeling like a failure. I wasn't ready to grieve publicly. In October, I saw a post from my friend looking for someone to manage one of the freelance publicity jobs she'd been offered. I decided to put my hat in the ring. My friend, who has known me for fifteen years and supported Curious & Kind, sensed that this partnership was perfect for me.

... and that is how I met Suzanne, and how everything I'd done in my career had led to this moment, and this book. Every night I read a chapter of the book out loud to my partner. Getting to know Ethel slowly and watching her surmount and deal with both mental health concerns and being interned as a prisoner of war — it has helped put my own struggles into context. Ethel and

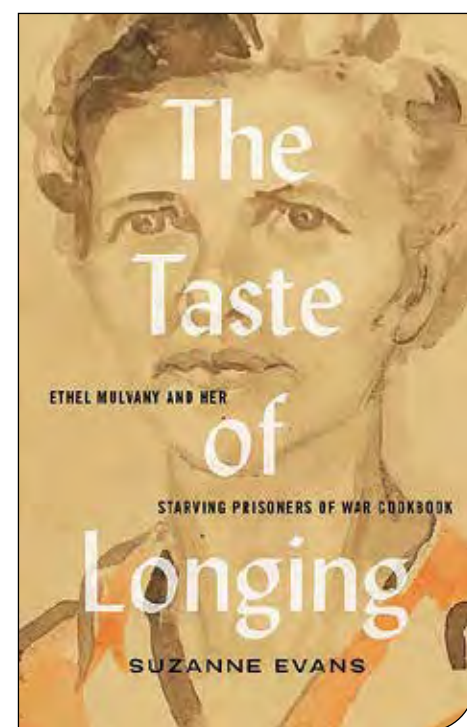
Suzanne have given me a sense of renewed purpose.

On Saturday, November 21 we held our first Imaginary Feast, which was recorded for CKCU, and it was transformative. Suzanne and I were so heartened by the connection that arrived between folks who were, until that day, strangers. We put out a call for people interested in telling stories about their own meaningful meals or important recipes in the Millstone, and the response from people in the Ottawa Valley was immediate and enthusiastic. We have four more upcoming virtual Imaginary Feasts, to be held on Zoom, including three intimate ones on December 2, 7 and 16 from 7–7:30PM. If you're interested in participating we'd love to have you come share with us, meet Susan, and hear more about Ethel and her life.

On December 12, we have planned a virtual Imaginary Feast for those who would like to come to the table to watch a selection of poets, writers and storytellers talk about their meaningful meals, desserts or culinary traditions. That will be a ticketed event, but no one will be turned away due to lack of funds. Ethel would have wanted it that way, and Suzanne and I agree. For more information, or to RSVP, send an email to <curiousandkindalmonite@gmail.com> with the subject Imaginary Feast and the date you're interested in attending.

... and please consider picking up a copy of *The Taste of Longing* by Suzanne Evans at your local bookstore (I happen to know that Mill Street Books ordered a dozen in advance, so reserve your copies quickly). I would love to hear what you think.

With resilience and love,
— Danielle K.L. Grégoire, former creative director of Curious & Kind, community coordinator and dreamer



On December 12, you are invited to a virtual Imaginary Feast! Zoom in to the table to watch a selection of poets, writers and storytellers talk about their meaningful meals, desserts or culinary traditions. *The Taste of Longing* is available at Mill Street Books in Almonte.



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MERA'S Christmas Fair Goes Virtual for 2020

MERAs 18th annual Christmas Fair is moving online. From November 15 through December 20, visitors to <meraschoolhouse.org> will be able find special gifts for those they love. Even though the MERA Schoolhouse will be empty for this year's Christmas event, the much-loved offerings of art, weaving, pottery, wood turning and other crafts will still be available.

"The fair has always been more than a fundraiser," explains Elaine Wilson, a potter and MERA board member. "People flock here to see our local artists and craftspeople showcase their work. We are so happy to be able to offer it on the website so that one-of-a-kind gift you looked forward to discovering can still be found."

MERA is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting community involvement by providing access to arts, crafts, recreation activities and events



at the McDonalds Corners Schoolhouse. With a program that includes music, pottery, dance, quilting and fibre arts, as well as visual arts and crafts, MERA is a popular community hub.

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See page 3 for great gifts to **DIVERT & ENTERTAIN**



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Another Kind of Gift

Core Gift Discovery with Bruce Anderson

While completing my Bachelor of Social Work at Carleton University I have had the privilege of completing one of my field practicums at Carebridge Community Support, located in Lanark County. As part of my practicum, I participated in Bruce Anderson's Core Gift Discovery Master Facilitator Certification workshop. This workshop taught me about core gifts, and how we each have one that is unique to who we are and is meant to be shared.

After learning about them, how they manifest in our lives, how to uncover the core gifts of others, and the ways in which they can help promote positive relationships amongst individuals and communities alike, I now view myself and the world through a different lens. The concept in its entirety is profound, and I am still learning the ways in which they exist in communities and within individuals, and although I have yet to fully understand the intricacies I can confidently say that the use of core gifts will be able to positively influence my future career in social work. In the meantime, I want to encourage others, regardless of their professions, to explore their own core gifts, as I am certain that it will help ameliorate the relationships amongst individuals in our communities and create more positive daily interactions.

Introducing Myself Through My Core Gift

My core gift is helping others to experience love. I give it by helping others to have fun, to be inclusive, and to acknowledge the community of individuals standing behind them that are rooting for their success. Like everybody, my core gift is constantly evolving alongside my life experiences — particularly those that have been difficult — and it is meant to be given. It has been just over a month since I participated in this workshop and discovered what my gift is, and already it has given me a better understanding of who I am and how I got to where I am, and has given me insight into who I am meant to be in the future. Each day I have given thought to my core gift, as it helps me better understand my life's purpose.

Whether I knew it or not, it has been influencing my life and the paths that I have chosen to take, and I give credit to it for guiding me towards my degree in social work. I have come to realize that my desire for helping people to experience love and feel included has translated into my desire to help marginalized people and communities, particularly people with disabilities. Throughout history and even in today's society, people with disabilities are constantly being overlooked as society fails to accommodate their differences and has even gone as far as to

remove them from our communities. I want to help people with disabilities and their families to be more engaged in their communities and overcome societal barriers that prevent them from fulfilling their own life's purpose and dreams through providing them with the necessary supports to do so. Furthermore, I want to help those outside of the disability community to acknowledge the strengths and the core gifts of individuals with disabilities so that they can help foster more welcoming communities. This is my life's purpose and I believe that through a career in social work practice, I will be able to share my gift to promote a positive change in society.

My Future in Social Work

Throughout my degree, the strengths-based approach to social work practice has been a common topic in many of my class discussions. This approach suggests that through the identification and understanding of one's strengths, rather than deficits, social workers can work with individuals and communities to help them develop their strengths so they can use them as a means of overcoming barriers and promoting positive change. This approach to practice differs from that of the core gifts approach. Strengths are considered to be the things that we are good at — but we don't necessarily get excited about them and it can take a lot of energy to exercise these strengths. On the contrary, while our core gifts are not necessarily things that we are always good at, the giving of them excites us; it gives us energy and a sense of purpose. Through the implementation of the core gifts approach in my future social work practice, I hope to get the people I will be working with excited about change and give them a feeling of hope. While gifts and strengths cannot be used synonymously, I am interested in exploring the ways in which these two approaches to social work practice can be used simultaneously.

Core Gifts in the Community

I would like to encourage anyone who is interested in learning more to participate in Bruce Anderson's Core Gift Discovery Master Facilitator Certification workshop, or to reach out to local organizations, such as Carebridge, and ask to speak to a facilitator who can then conduct a core gifts interview for you. By learning about our core gifts, what they are, and how

they impact our lives and interactions, we can then learn to control them to ensure that we are using them in a positive manner. In turn, I believe that through embracing core gifts as a community, we will see a positive shift in the mental health of individuals, as the recognition of gifts on a community and on an individual level will provide people with the power to heal through finding hope and a sense of belonging.

This year has not been easy for most people; with COVID-19 restricting our ability to engage as a community, many people have been struggling with mental health. Considering the impact of the pandemic, and with the holidays approaching, perhaps among the best gifts for us to give and receive this year are our core gifts. When going through a difficult situation, we may feel a loss of hope and as though we do not belong. By discovering our core gifts, we can use them as a guide for ourselves and other community members to move forward and regain these feelings of loss. This holiday season, I hope to share my gift

Considering the impact of the pandemic, and with the holidays approaching, perhaps among the best gifts for us to give and receive this year are our core gifts.

with those who may be feeling lonely and are unable to see their friends and loved ones. I can do this simply by picking up the phone and calling these people for a chat, to check in with them, and to let them know that they always have somebody to call when feeling lonely. By doing so, hopefully I can restore their sense of hope and belonging in the community, as they know somebody is looking out for them.

I would like to thank Bruce Anderson for leading this workshop and giving me a better understanding of core gifts and how my own has guided me to where I am and will get me to where I am meant to be. Furthermore, I encourage anybody who is interested in exploring them to participate in his workshop. I have faith that by building awareness and increasing the use of this approach in community, particularly around the holidays, we will be able to foster more welcoming and inclusive communities and help improve the overall mental health in our communities as we fight the current pandemic together.

— Maggie Dimock

GET A GRIP THIS CHRISTMAS!

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or jtorrance@unitedwayeo.ca 613-253-9074

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Handmade Gifts

Fraser fir wreaths, Cedar Hill Christmas Tree Farm.....	\$45-95
Fused glass inukshuk, Danielle Morgan, Glass Artist.....	\$30
Perth BIA gift certificates, Downtown Heritage Perth BIA.....	various
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Unique brooms by Raphael Kerem, General Fine Craft, Art & Design.....	\$50-195
Reversible striped wool toque, MVTM Gift Shop.....	\$90
100% leather wallets and purses, The Queens Crafters.....	\$5-100

Gifts for Health & Wellbeing

Turmeric Zinger kombucha in refillable Boston round, Artizen Kombucha.....	\$15
Hand Sanitizer 30ml spray for when you're out and about, Dairy Distillery.....	\$4.50
Vybe EMF-blocking energy pendant, Dandelion Foods.....	\$29.95
Premium ice grippers (free for folks 65 & older), Get A Grip.....	\$25
Common witchhazel, Home Hospice NL Tree Sale.....	\$45
Donations in their name, Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust.....	various
Glerup slippers, Vamos Outdoors.....	\$89



The Power of Saying Hello

Smiths Falls native Mark Quattrocchi has just launched a book entitled *The Cycle of Life: The Power of Saying Hello*. It's about his bicycle journey around the world (covering 40 countries over two years), and he describes it as a "motivational, adventure, travel book". It's a journey with purpose that helps others find their own. After watching his captivating TEDx Talk, we decided that we needed to hear more about this enthusiastic author, his ambitious trip, and his new book.

by Kris Riendeau

theHumm: In 2014 you set off from the elementary school you had been teaching at in Southern China, with only your bicycle and what you could carry on it. At the point of departure, what was your greatest hope and what was your biggest fear?

Mark Quattrocchi: I had a good number of hopes: meeting people, seeing the beauty of the world, writing, taking photos, and — as a certified teacher — using my bicycle ride as a vehicle to raise funds to build schoolhouses around the world. However, my greatest hope was first and foremost to safely complete the intended journey, which was to cycle from China to Canada. The route would take me from China to the tip of Africa, where I knew I would have to get a boat or plane across the Atlantic Ocean to South America, and then cycle the rest of the way home to Canada. That was the original plan.

My greatest fear was the daily question mark: where I would sleep each night and how I would navigate from country to country on a bicycle. I questioned myself often, doubting if I was prepared enough for such a journey. In time it wasn't the physical aspect that became the most difficult, it was the mental battles.

What ended up being the most positive or transformative part of your journey?

The most transformative part of the journey would have to be the relentless kindness of people from all walks of life that I met along the way. The kindest countries ended up being the places you only hear about in the news for all of the wrong reasons. The kindest countries I experienced were Sudan, Afghanistan, Colombia, Mexico and Kyrgyzstan. By opening myself to the experience, I was able to see the world as it truly is and was welcomed into lives of people throughout the world. These were the unexpected, beautiful and sometimes difficult learning experiences that live most vividly in my memory.

How would you describe what happened to your "comfort zone" over the course of the two-year trip?

At first I was always in what I call the "challenge zone," as I tried to figure out how to navigate the world and effectively meet people in an organic way. Over time, by taking the steps to connect with the people I was cycling past every day, it allowed those nervous moments to turn into my fun new norm. Cycling from one country to the next became almost easy by the time I was halfway through the journey, and the little things that would inevitably go wrong (like poor weather, a broken bicycle, finding a camp for the night or having a hungry stomach) fazed me much less. I knew it would inevitably work itself out if I was in the present moment.

What advice would you give someone who was thinking of travelling (once it's safe to do so)?

Once it's safe to explore beyond our own homes, towns, cities and borders, I encourage others to take that trip they have always wanted to take if possible. I think COVID-19 has really made us appreciate that freedom of movement. Canada is a country with one of the most powerful passports in the world; travel from a logistical standpoint was always very accessible under normal circumstances. Travel is one of the best educations that I've ever had, and it doesn't mean you need to go on a cycling journey around the world or even beyond our borders to learn. However,



After completing a two-year cycling journey through 40 countries, Smiths Falls native Mark Quattrocchi has returned home and published a book!

when you do travel either locally or globally, what I do ask is that you travel just outside of your comfort zone and simply say hello to people. Look up a few words ahead of time in the local language and introduce yourself. You never know where this will take you.

Now that you've moved back to Smiths Falls, what are your plans for the near future?

It is so great to be back in the Smiths Falls area where I grew up. I'm looking forward to slowing the pace from my life in Toronto in order to be the best father and husband that I can be. As a public speaker, I plan to continue to deliver presentations digitally on a regular basis to audiences all over the world, as well as giving public speaking lessons and workshops, with the hopes of in-person events returning in the future. The local community has done so much to support me, and it is my goal to also give back locally to pay that kindness forward.

What's going to help you get through this first full COVID winter we're facing?

Spending time connecting with family. Just because we are not getting together in-person doesn't mean we can't still have meaningful connections with people. I also plan to do a ton of reading — I think this is a great opportunity to get caught up on all the books you meant to read for the last few years. I think planning for the future is also quite exciting during this reset period of my life.

The Cycle of Life is available locally at the Garden Market and Arlie's Books in Smiths Falls, the Book Nook and Heritage Bikes in Perth, Mill Street Books in Almonte, Novel Idea Bookstore in Kingston, and the Merrickville Book Emporium. It's available on Amazon in paperback and eBook, or through Mark's website <markqspeaking.com>. It includes direct links to photos throughout the journey for each chapter. The book can also be purchased by emailing Mark directly at <markquattrocchi@hotmail.com>. If finances are a barrier to reading the book, Mark will do what he can to support people. It has also been donated to the Smiths Falls and Perth public libraries.

Gifts for Do-It-Yourselfers

- Gift certificates, Almonte Butcher Shop.....various
- Make your own kombucha kit, Artizen Kombucha.....\$60
- Seed sprouting kit & organic seeds, Dandelion Foods.....\$20 & up



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On Hope

Notes from Climate Network Lanark

My anxiety regarding the recent US election was deep-seated and gut-wrenching. To remain hopeful I kept repeating to myself Dr. Martin Luther King's wonderful quote, made famous by Barack Obama: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

Whew.

Then I happened to hear a CBC interview with Canadian researcher, teacher and author Dr. Elin Kelsey on her new book *Hope Matters*. The subtitle is "why changing our thinking is critical in solving the climate crisis." I found this idea truly inspirational. I read all I could about Elin Kelsey's work, ordered the book, and an idea coalesced around what our Climate Network Lanark (CNL) offering for the December Humm ought to focus on.

Hope, of course!

So where to begin: CNL has so many folks, on ten working groups, reporting on and organizing around so many initiatives that address local climate issues: all most compelling.

I decided to ask Gord Harrison, one of the founders of the organization, to relay why he remains hopeful and continues to dedicate his time to the work of our local climate issues.

Gord Harrison: To answer your question, I need to start with what I learned about hope when educating young people about climate change and how, in 2018, with the direness of UN reports on the climate crisis, I lost hope and — spoiler alert — found it again through action...

Education on Climate Change Begins with Critical Hope

My career spanned 47 years, the first few in the classroom, the bulk working for environmental non-for-profits in community animation and education.

My last job — and the best — was with Pembina Institute. The Institute is a leader in research and advocacy on climate change and clean energy, and I had the privilege of leading their education team. In time, we hived off the education program to create GreenLearning Canada, an independent charitable organization <greenlearning.ca>.

Albert Einstein is widely credited with saying: "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results." GreenLearning took this to heart, knowing that if we keep teaching in the same way over and over again, we can't expect young people to grow up to live with a connection to and caring for the Earth and all living things.

The climate crisis can create a fear and anxiety that is paralytic, I know. GreenLearning pioneered an approach to educating young people on the climate crisis and engaging them in solutions built on critical hope, the inquiry method, place, community and solutions.

Critical Hope

"Of all the dangers we face, from climate chaos to nuclear war, none is so great as the deadening of our response." — Joanna Macy

Toxic positivity — the opposite — says, "Don't worry, everything's going to be okay." Hurumph! Toxic positivity blocks us from honestly examining the crisis and robs us of agency in creating change. Critical hope, on the other hand, enables students — all of us — to squarely face and critically examine the crisis and open ourselves to exploring new ways of doing things, to creating change.

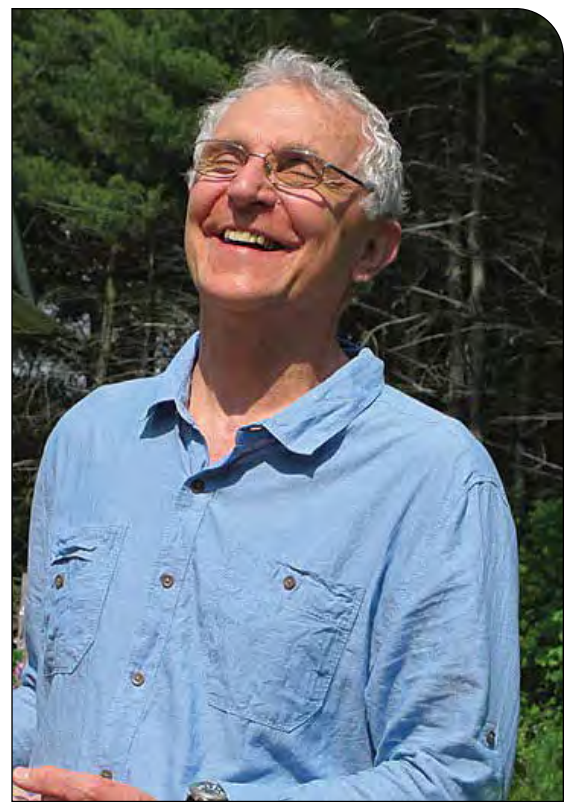
GreenLearning's keystone program, Climate Change Where I Live (CCWIL), fostered critical hope and engaged students in real action. Key facets of CCWIL include:

- Inquiry-based learning — an approach to teaching and learning that places students' questions, ideas and observations at the centre of the learning experience. The teacher becomes more of a facilitator.
- Place — connecting students to where they live, examining the local impacts of climate change.
- Community as textbook — students out in their community, working with people and experts to understand the issues and examine solutions.
- Collaboration — several classes in a virtual space, sharing their findings and working with experts to shape solutions; moving from local, to region, to province...
- Solutions — throughout the process students examine solutions and identify and implement actions.

So how does this connect with CNL? I retired in 2017, and in 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stated that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society. Without my tether to amazing teachers and students, and feeling that global response was tepid, I felt despair.

So I read books by Joanna Macy and others. The one thing that kept floating to the top was "take action, do something". In her book *The Work That Reconnects*, Macy says: "In the face of overwhelming social and ecological crises, this Work helps people transform despair and apathy into constructive, collaborative action. It brings a new way of seeing the world as our larger living body. This perspective frees us from the assumptions and attitudes that now threaten the continuity of life on Earth."

I'm a member of the Lanark County Stewardship Council, and in February of 2018 we held a meeting of groups and individuals concerned about and working on climate change. The response was overwhelm-



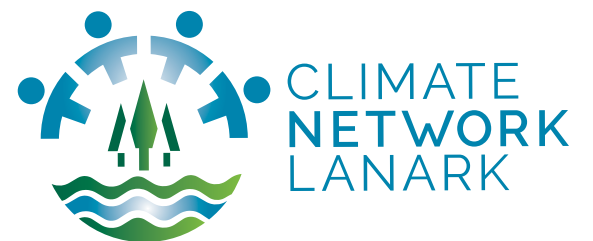
Gord Harrison has spent most of his career working for environmental not-for-profits, and is one of the founders of Climate Network Lanark

ing and there I met Sue Brandum — together we launched Climate Network Lanark.

The Network "keeps me going". Not surprisingly, some of the same ingredients that made CCWIL so powerful make the Network vital and compelling. These include working with people who squarely face the crisis and use this as a wellspring to act (critical hope), and also working with people ready to do the work and to engage the broader community to understand local issues and take action to reduce our GHG emissions by 55% by 2030.

Finally, we each need to find and fan the embers that give us hope. For me, it's doing something in my community, it's family and friends, it's the music of J.S. Bach (with its tremendous forward impulsion), it's walking in the snow, it's *Reconciling Ways of Knowing* (a series of webinars on Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western Science, see references), and it's this special place — Lanark County.

— Submitted by Chandler Swain



I live my life in widening circles
That reach out across the world.
I may not complete the last one
but I give myself to it.

— R. M. Rilke

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LANARK AND RENFREW COUNTIES

LCIH Virtual Holiday Giving Campaign

Lanark County Interval House and Community Support is thinking creatively this year — they're taking their annual Angel Tree campaign online! The virtual Angel Tree website allows people to choose how they would like to support LCIHCS, whether by giving gifts or monetary donations, from the comfort of their own home. At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate effect on women and incidences of gender-based violence are on the rise, the need for donations is high.

"We have seen a 75% increase in crisis calls due to the pandemic," explains Executive Director Erin Lee. "Incidences of violence in our community are on the rise and the pandemic has worsened these unfortunate realities."

The Angel Tree gives people the chance to purchase some holiday gifts for a child, teen or woman in the community who is in need. For those who are uncomfortable doing in-person Christmas shopping this year, an option is available to provide a donation directly to LCIHCS which will be used to purchase holiday items. LCIHCS Resource Development Coordinator Cathie McOrmond says fundraising has been a particular challenge this year. "Fundraising needs are more significant and necessary, but also more challenging

now because of COVID," she says. "All non-profits are struggling with fundraising now. We have had some challenges, but have been working extra hard to think creatively and shake it up. We are really excited to host a virtual option this year."

Those interested in supporting LCIHCS's Virtual Angel Tree can visit <lcihvirtualangeltree.com>. Donations of new, unwrapped toys and gifts can be dropped off at IDA Drug Mart in Carleton Place or Metro and Giant Tiger in Perth through to December 12.

"Gratitude is a word I've been using more since the pandemic began — we have been blown away by the support from the community," says Lee. "Those contributions have gone directly to things like day-to-day safety and gift cards for food. Donations to our holiday giving campaign will be used to relieve the stress of families and mothers in need so they will know Christmas will still happen and that their kids will have smiles on their faces on Christmas morning."

Lanark County Interval House and Community Support has been offering emergency and on-going programs to women and children living in or escaping from domestic violence for over 40 years. For more information about the agency, please visit <lcih.org>.

Gifts for Parents & Grandparents

- Gift cards, Black Tartan Kitchen..... various
- Batik wooden salad bowl, Fine Batiks.....\$55
- Premium ice grippers (free for folks 65 & older), Get A Grip..... \$25
- Gift certificates for from-scratch foods, Good Food Co..... various
- Boulevard tree lilac, Home Hospice NL Tree Sale.....\$75
- Gift certificates for a shopping spree, Mill Street Books..... various
- Donations in their name, Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust..... various
- Gift certificate for a stay with breakfast, Perth Manor..... various
- Woodstock chimes, Reid Gardens..... \$45 & up
- Gently used ladies' wear, The Hub..... \$4 & up
- The local box of Merry & Bright, The Town of Smiths Falls..... \$40-265
- Donations in their name, United Way East Ontario..... various

Gifts for \$100 & Under

- Gift card, Bouffage..... various
- AG Haircare 3-piece gift set, Static Salon..... \$45-60
- Original floral artwork by Donna McPhail, Strévé Designs..... \$95
- "Promised Land" by Barack Obama, hardcover, The Book Nook.....\$55

Gifts for Coffee & Tea Lovers

- Pottery mugs by Carolynne Pynn Trudeau, Bittersweet.....\$35
- CP BIA Bucks, Downtown Carleton Place BIA..... various
- Mugs and teapots by various potters, General Fine Craft.....\$35-250
- The Coffee Basket, Ottawa Valley Gift Baskets..... \$79.95
- Gift certificate for a stay with breakfast, Perth Manor..... various



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The Importance of Indie Bookshops

An author friend of mine wore a T-shirt the other day that read: “Some of my best friends are books.” I laughed when I saw this photo of her on Instagram, but then I thought, *how true*. And for a book lover, it genuinely is. In troubling times, a good book can be as comforting as a tender or affectionate hug. Insightful books about grief, loss, anxiety, depression can often be every bit as helpful as a good therapist or a kind, caring, cherished friend. Once we own them, books are always available to us too — they don’t have business hours, they don’t catch colds, and they don’t close for holidays. Books can be among our best, most enlightening teachers. A well-written book can entertain us when we’re most in need of escape, of solace, of hope. The best of books — like the best of friends — contain the power to enchant and delight, to make us laugh and feel deeply, to challenge our beliefs, to broaden our thinking, and to remind us we’re not alone.

I’ve long held this odd belief: if booksellers ruled the world, our planet would be a kinder, gentler place. If you’ve shopped at Almonte’s beloved **Mill Street Books** and chanced to meet its owners Mary and Terry Lumsden, you’ll know precisely what I’m talking about. They are the best of people.

Mary says that it’s an absolute pleasure to be part of such a wonderful community, and that means much more than just offering a wide selection of books as well as some vinyl records, CDs, puzzles and games, as they do. Mary says they really enjoy “hosting book launches and lectures; collaborating with other businesses and the local library on special events; supporting and promoting local activities; and acting as town ambassadors while welcoming newcomers.”

The shop truly is a little community hub. Like most independent bookstores, Mill Street Books is also carefully curated and visually charming. They pride themselves on providing the best possible customer service too. “We know our books,” Mary explains, “and provide thoughtful recommendations. We fill special orders and like to learn people’s preferences. We also like to keep informed about our community.”

Speaking of thoughtful recommendations, Mary has a few for gift giving this holiday season. For fiction lovers, she highly recommends *Hamnet & Judith* by Maggie O’Farrell and *Greenwood* by Michael Christie. For those who love poetry, Mary suggests *The Lost Spells* by Robert Macfarlane, and for young readers, *Skunk and Badger* by Amy Timberlake. For even younger children, Mary gives a nod to Johnny Lambert’s *Ten Little Reindeer*. For those who love a good murder mystery, Mary suggests *Moonflower Murders* by Anthony Horowitz, and for those history buffs who enjoy excellent non-fiction, Erik Larson’s *The Splendid and The Vile*.

Like almost everyone who owns a small independent business, Mary will tell you it’s been a challenging year for Mill Street Books. But they’ve adapted, she believes, “and we weathered the year very well,” she adds, “thanks to lots of folks determined to support local business.”

Thankfully, a lot of customers also took to the shop’s website <millstreetbooks.com> to order books.

“We were lucky to remain open filling orders using our online shopping,” Mary notes. “And since reopening we have shorter hours and limit the number of people in the store, yet find customers are grateful to access a smaller shop again and are respectful of safety protocols.”

Almonte has been quite busy lately with day trippers looking for a small-town friendly experience. The good folks at Mill Street Books have been happy to oblige.

Similarly, **Arlie’s Books** in Smiths Falls has been happily satisfying book lovers’ needs since 1981 — always from its location at 32 Market St. N.

“I think that we have become a place of history and nostalgia for multiple generations,” says owner Kerri Edwards. “Many of my customers tell me stories of how 30 years ago they were coming to my store with their parents or grandparents and are in awe of the fact that they are now bring their own children and their grandchildren to Arlie’s.”

“We offer a sense of community,” she adds. “We are often involved in local sponsorships and fundraisers.”

Kerri thinks that her shop’s “personalized, go-the-extra-mile” customer service sets them apart from Amazon and other big bookstore retailers.

“I quite literally walk around with ‘wanted lists’ from customers just in case I’m somewhere I can scout for books on my time off,” she says. “I’m handpicking books for customers, I’m making deliveries, and I’m listening to their stories — about books and their lives.”

When it comes to book recommendations — for the holidays, or for a summer vacation, for that matter — Kerri likes to suggest practical, thoughtful books that will offer people an “experience” and not “just a gift.” She calls her approach a “to-go-with book” gift idea.

For instance: If you’re buying your daughter a crockpot, she says, come to Arlie’s and check out all the wonderful crockpot cookbooks that would go well with that.



“I want people to have experiences,” she says, “So I’m excited to sell books on foreign language instruction, a book on candle making, a book on how to raise chickens. These are more than books; they are experiences and skills. I’m an eternal student with random and never-ending interests, and I like to inspire customers to be the same.”

Kerri knows, of course — as most people do, and especially during this pandemic — that people are

tempted to shop online or at big box stores. But she believes not supporting your town’s small businesses would be a terrible mistake.

“I think that people need to understand that once the little guy is eliminated, choices for products are too,” she says. “Small stores find and sell you what you want. If small stores are eliminated, big box stores set the price, and you have no alternative but to pay the asking price for what you need. If small businesses are lost, we are all at the mercy of the big stores. In short, small local businesses offer good pricing, more varied products, and *way* better customer service.”

Kerri adds, “I think the whole book experience is magic.” Books themselves, she means, but stories and experiences too.

And Kerri would know. Arlie’s Books — which, incidentally, was named after Kerri’s grandmother, I’ve read — has been run by her family for thirty-nine years now.

“I get a lot of satisfaction knowing that I’m helping people escape, explore, or feel something when they buy books from my store,” she says. “That is one of the best things about being a bookseller.”

Take it From an Author

“Without word of mouth and the good ole grapevine, books like mine would get swallowed up in the mass of books out there,” says Carol Bruneau, author of *Brighten the Corner Where You Are: A Novel Inspired by the Life of Maud Lewis*. “This is why indie booksellers are crucial: they extend the kindness of friends. They are a central part of a writer’s community.”

— John Pigeau

Gifts for Art Lovers

- Fused glass “Under the Northern Sky”, Danielle Morgan, Glass Artist.....\$40
- Perth BIA gift certificates, Downtown Heritage Perth BIA.....various
- Large silk basket with lid, MVTM Gift Shop.....\$300
- Etchings by Franc van Oort, Riverguild Fine Crafts.....\$70-250
- Gallery gift certificates, Sivarulrasa Gallery.....\$100
- Caroline Evans original oil and acrylic paintings, Strévé Designs.....\$150 & up
- Robbie Craig glass Christmas ornaments, Cedar Hill Christmas Tree Farm.....\$24
- Blown glass paperweight, Chris Van Zanten.....\$60



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Stuck in a Slump?

How to Renew Your Zeal for Reading

In chatting with people both inside and outside of the library, I have found that many readers report that they are not reading as much as usual even though they have more leisure time. These readers have experienced difficulty concentrating during the COVID crisis. Psychologists suggest that the increase in anxiety because of the pandemic is making it hard for some people to focus. This lack of focus could lead to an increase in the consumption of more passive pursuits such as watching Netflix or other digital platforms.

by Karen Schecter

Reading is a proven stress reliever! A University of Sussex study found that reading can reduce stress by up to 68% (Lewis, D., 2009, Galaxy Stress Research. Mindlab International, Sussex University, UK). In comparison, listening to music can reduce stress by 61%, having a cup of tea by 54%, and taking a walk by 42%. It is apparent that people need to get back to reading.

Another issue sometimes faced by dedicated readers is the dreaded “reading rut” — when no book seems to hold your attention and you cannot remember the last book in which you were totally immersed. There are strategies to break free from this reading slump. Here are some of my favourite approaches:

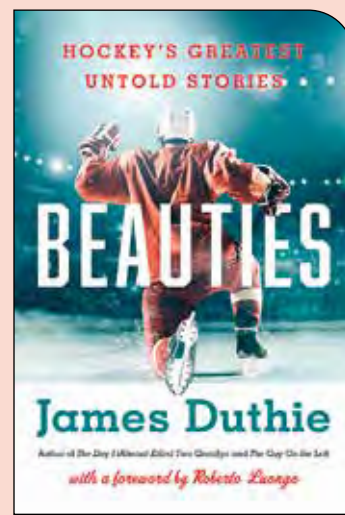
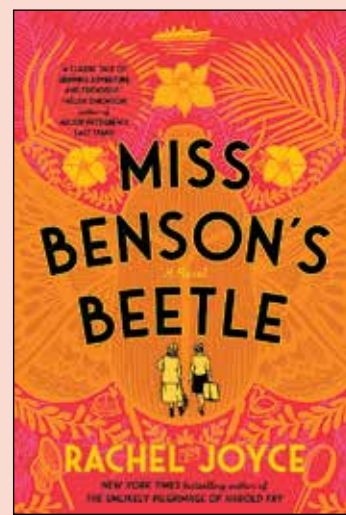
- Visit local libraries and bookstores. Wander the aisles and search for a title to catch your attention. Some of my favourite authors were discovered by

random browsing. I would never have found them by relying only on reviews or recommendations from friends. I call this “book serendipity”.

- Pick some short books to read. Getting stuck in a 500-page book you aren’t enjoying is a sure way to continue in your slump.
 - Pick a book that will make you feel good. It can be funny, light or even engage your intellect. At the beginning of the pandemic, our library had many requests for related books such as *The Plague* by Albert Camus or *Contagion* by Robin Cook. Not so much now...
 - Ask a friend. There is nothing booklovers enjoy more than talking about the books that they have read and loved.
 - Re-read a favourite book or author.
 - Join a book club. You will read books that may be out of your comfort zone, but you may discover a whole variety of books that you just love.
- If you are currently experiencing a reading slump, know that you *will* find a book that will break the cycle of inactivity, and you will love reading again.

Recommended Reading-slump-busters

- *The Love Story of Missy Carmichael* by Beth Morrey
 - *Miss Benson’s Beetle* by Rachel Joyce
 - *The Forgotten Daughter* by Joanna Goodman
 - *Beauties: Hockey’s Greatest Untold Stories* by James Duthie
 - *V2* by Robert Harris
- *Karen Schecter is the CEO at the Smiths Falls Public Library*



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- Blown glass oil lamp, Chris Van Zanten.....\$49
- Soft bamboo socks, Crush Marketplace.....\$14
- Traumacare pain relief cream, Hands on Healing.....\$24
- Bee-Glo candles, Riverguild Fine Crafts.....\$7-30
- “Beaded Gloves” by Cathy Ross, Sivarulrasa Gallery.....\$700
- Candles from Waterfall in Carleton Place, The Queens Crafters.....\$6-20

Gifts for \$25 & Under

- Canada 2020 United Nations commemorative \$1 gift set, Alliance Coin....\$22.95
- Vodkwo Cream 250ml stocking stuffer, Dairy Distillery.....\$10.90
- Hummingbird Chocolate sampler gift box, Dandelion Foods.....\$22.95
- Treasure Keeper / Batik cosmetic bag, Fine Batiks.....\$10
- Premium ice grippers (free for folks 65 & older), Get A Grip.....\$25
- TheraBand foot roller, Hands on Healing.....\$20
- Delicious milk chocolate candy cane bark, Hummingbird Chocolate.....\$9.49
- Hand-stitched bookmarks, MVTM Gift Shop.....\$3
- Gently used shoes, The Hub.....\$2-6



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— Mississippi Mills Public Library Board and staff

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OR Give a Monetary Donation through the **North Lanark Community Health Centre** and we will ensure local seniors receive a gift in time for Christmas.

Donate at www.nlchc.on.ca/donations.html

Make cheques payable to: North Lanark Community Health Centre (memo: Angel Tree for Seniors) and mail to North Lanark Community Health Centre, 207 Robertson Drive, Lanark, ON K0G 1K0

 For more info please visit the Facebook page or call Sarah 613-259-2182.



Smiths Falls Makes the Season Merry & Bright

Riding high on the success of their summer/fall PICNIC program, the Town of Smiths Falls will be continuing to focus on local businesses with their **Merry and Bright Christmas Box** initiative. By partnering with local retailers, they are helping them offer fantastic packages of gifts and goodies that will appeal to anyone who "loves local". Businesses will select their own items to put in the custom-stamped boxes, and then the Town supplements each box with a complimentary collectable gift, a Smiths Falls Christmas postcard, a Visitor Guide, a Walking Tour Guide, and a Christmas bow!

Becky Allen, Coordinator of Economic Development and Tourism, explains that the Town is very

excited about promoting hyper-local tourism this holiday season. "We wanted to use our resources to encourage the community to shop locally and support our own retail stores this Christmas," she says. "The boxes are turning out to be incredible! Everyone will hope to get a Merry & Bright Box under the tree this year!"

Merry & Bright boxes are now available, and you can find details and sign up for your boxes on Facebook or Instagram or at smithsfalls.ca/experience.

Order your Merry & Bright Christmas Box, and then come for a visit to experience all that Smiths Falls has to offer. Be sure to check out the newly renovated downtown!

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Grief, Holidays, and COVID

We are all experiencing some form of isolation and loneliness in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, but for those walking with the death of a loved one this time of holidays and celebrations can be particularly difficult. This year, many people have not been able to be at the bedside as loved ones died, or have not been able to have traditional mourning rites such as visitations, funerals, celebrations of life or the comfort of the hugs and presence of friends and family.

Grief at the best of times is heavy work. We cannot go around it... the only way to deal with grief is by going through it. Everyone we meet is walking with a story of loss in some form or another. You might not expect the young woman in her early 30s to be full of sorrow or you may expect the aged man at church to be used to loss... but grief knows no boundaries, or limits, particularly during a pandemic. Long-time losses also bubble up in us during annual holidays where memory-making and gathering with those we love is the norm. Fond memories can comfort, but they also touch the sorrow of not being able to share just one more time with our loved ones.

If you are dealing with grief, especially if it is recent, you may want to consider how to enter into this time of holidays and traditions. Here are some basic tips to help:

Contact your rabbi, minister, priest or imam to ask for spiritual guidance in the faith tradition you identify with.

Ask staff at the funeral home who cared for your deceased for any resources they might provide for grieving families.

If you are gift-giving, shop early and try doing it online if you are not up to being out in stores. Buying local is always wonderful and many vendors and stores are allowing online shopping with pick-up or delivery. Your budget may have been drastically changed with your loved one's death, so be honest with yourself when considering buying gifts for others. Perhaps an item of your loved one's would be appropriate to gift to another: a tie, a scarf, a book....

Family and friend gatherings are limited this year due to the pandemic, but you may still be invited to a small get-together within your bubble. When you answer the invitation, feel free to say: "At this time I will say yes/no, but that may change as the date comes closer..." Always leave your options open. If you drive, take your own car so you can leave if you need to, or go with someone who accepts that they will drive you home at any time if you feel the need to leave.

You may find comfort in holiday traditions or you may need to change them up. You may not feel like decorating, or perhaps you will create a space — an altar so to speak — dedicated to your loved one to remind yourselves and others they are not forgotten. Hang their stocking and stuff it with pieces of paper where you and others have written fond memories and favourite characteristics of the deceased. You might set a place at the table with a lit candle to

honour their memory. Play songs your loved one enjoyed or that bring them to mind for you. Say their name! Tell their stories, laugh at funny memories and cry if you feel like crying. They say that tears are drops of love with nowhere to go...

Visit their grave, perhaps leaving a flower, a golf ball, or something that resonates with you and them. Buy yourself a gift from him/her, donate a gift in their name, make their favourite recipe and share it with others... find ways to bring them into your holiday experience in a meaningful way.

Eat and drink in moderation, go for walks, call a friend who might also be feeling alone or sad at this time, reach out to family, friends or someone who has been walking with you in your grief when you just need to talk.

The anticipation of a traditional holiday without your loved one is often harder than the actual event itself... and trust that in time you too may once again look forward to these times of familiar rituals, shared times and a festive atmosphere.

If you are living in Lanark County and grieving a loved one you might wish to consider joining a peer facilitated bereavement group. They meet in person (social distancing and masks) or online. Contact Rebecca Bowie, Coordinator, Hospice Palliative Care Services, Community Home Support, Lanark County (CHSLC) at 267-6400 x28.

There will be a Ceremony of Remembrance at 2PM on December 9 and at 7PM on December 16 at 40 Sunset Blvd in Perth. COVID precautions will be in place and pre-registration is required to ensure proper social distancing. Masks are required. To register to attend, please contact Rebecca at 267-6400 x28 or <rebeccab@chslc.ca>.

If you are interested in joining our team of volunteer peer facilitators for small groups, please let Rebecca know as we are looking at a training opportunity in the new year.

— Patti Koestag is a volunteer with Lanark County Home Support

Gifts Made in the Valley

Fulton's maple syrup (500 ml), Almonte Butcher Shop.....	\$15
Sculpted clay reliefs by Richard Gill, Bittersweet.....	\$40-900
"Almonte Maker" gift basket, Dairy Distillery.....	\$85
Fused glass red cardinal, Danielle Morgan, Glass Artist.....	\$12
Shamrock Gardens sauces, jellies & chutneys, Don's Meat Market.....	\$8
Walnut or butternut charcuterie boards, Dragonfly Boutique.....	\$100-170
Beeswax candles, Foodsmiths.....	\$4.49-36.99
Sterling silver twig bar pendant, Kehla Jewellery Design.....	\$300
"Almonte, Spirit of Place" by John McQuarrie, Mill Street Books.....	\$28
The Lanark County Sampler, Ottawa Valley Gift Baskets.....	\$66.95
Whitewater Eco-Soy candles, Reid Gardens.....	\$19.99-29.99
Wool scarf with appliquéd flowers, Strévé Designs.....	\$89
Locally-made bookmark stocking stuffers, The Book Nook.....	\$4.99 & up
Hand-knitted dog sweaters, The Queens Crafters.....	\$25-70
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The local box of Merry & Bright, The Town of Smiths Falls.....	\$40-265



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Artistic Birdhouse Auction

Get started on your most creative entry, Functional or Decorative, with a special section in each for children under 12.



The auction will be held over the first two weeks in April.

Entries will be on display in various Almonte locations, with an open book bidding process.

Proceeds will go to the Cliff Bennett Nature bursary.

Need ideas? Gilligallou is there to help with books, kits, and information.

All entries will be accepted: fun, colourful, useful, attractive as garden ornaments or avian havens.

You're only bound by your imagination! Watch theHumm for more details in January.



Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists

Textiles Return to Victoria Woollen Mill

In 1857, James Rosamond built a four-storey stone building, later known as No. 2 Mill. The Rosamond Woollen Mill remained one of the largest woollen mills in the country until the First World War. The Rosamond family continued to operate the mill after the war, but by this time the mill was not a major part of the woollen manufacturing industry. The Rosamonds were leaders in the community as well as the textile field. The mill remained in operation for 120 years.

This fall, the textiles industry returns to Almonte. **Darrell Thomas Textiles** has chosen 7 Mill Street Unit #101 as their new home, and the grand opening of our new store took place in November. Darrell has established and grown this business in Ottawa for the past twenty years, but now feels that Almonte would be the best place to showcase their beautiful designer textiles and buttons.

Darrell Thomas Textiles originally opened its doors on September 18, 2000, and quickly became well known for providing the most beautiful and original dressmaking textiles in Ottawa. Darrell and

Thomas opened this store with the purpose of providing the sewing community a boutique with well curated textiles and interior accessories.

We opened our first store in the 240 Sparks Street shopping complex, which is located in the downtown core of Ottawa. At this location we sold high quality textiles for clothing as well as a selection of home couture articles such as pillows, throws and pillars. But after four years we found that we had outgrown our premises and decided to look for a new home.

We moved into a larger space on Bank Street. At this location we refined our collection of fabrics and focussed on quality textiles. At this location we also realized that we did not need a busy main street or shopping mall to do our business. After five years on Bank Street, we decided to expand into larger premises.

We quickly found a new home at 153 Preston Street — a charming building with a lot of style. At this location, not only did we sell high quality dressmaking textiles and designer buttons (43,000 in stock), but we also featured sewing classes. We also launched our ready-to-wear collection. Darrell Thomas Collection was launched to have timeless



Darrell Graham, owner of Darrell Thomas Textiles, is delighted with his new home in Almonte's Victoria Woollen Mill

clothing pieces made with the best fabrics. Clothing may be purchased from the racks or ordered in another fabric from our store — the possibilities are endless! Our atelier is also quite popular for professional alterations for men and women.

Our business is built upon a reputation of trust and honesty. We hope that you are as passionate about our new store as we are. If you are in Almonte, please feel free to drop by.

We look forward to serving you!
— Darrell & Thomas, Founders



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- Holly Yashi earrings, Crush Marketplace.....\$43-99
- Fused glass bear clock, Danielle Morgan, Glass Artist.....\$60
- Madame Butterfly mug, Good Food Co.....\$18
- "La Portinaia (maquette)" by Jim Hake, Sivarulrasa Gallery.....\$120
- Wigs cut and styled by Stefan Kaleb, Static Salon.....\$59
- Covid-themed metal ornament, The Silver Shingle.....\$22

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Puppet Town

Back in September of 2018 we received an email from Fred Forse that said: "I am a photographer and writer from the UK who has been staying in Almonte for the past two months. Having visited *A Puppet Retrospective* at the Mississippi Mills textile museum, I'm fascinated by the tradition of Noreen Young making puppet lookalikes of well-known locals."

by Kris Riendeau

Fast-forward to November of 2020, when Fred contacted us again about the launch of his new book: "A small Canadian town called Almonte (population: 4,752) has a 30-year tradition of making lookalike puppets of its residents; today there are more than fifty of these uncanny latex homunculi, displayed strategically around town in shop windows, behind cash registers and on mantelpieces in private homes. *Puppet Town* documents this tradition with a selection of portraits of Almonte townsfolk alongside their puppet lookalikes, accompanied by interviews. Together they form an oral history that traces the origins of the lookalike puppets, why they're desirable, and how, over time, they grew into a local phenomenon."

I don't know about you, but we sure were intrigued, so we contacted Fred to find out more.



theHumm: We locals are almost blasé about the lookalike puppets, but you really saw them with fresh eyes. What was it about Almonte and Noreen Young's creations that inspired you to undertake this project?

I heard about the lookalike puppets long before I saw them. My partner Jenni had been living in Almonte for a while, and told me over the phone that she'd seen a puppet in the bakery that looked exactly like the baker. That was curious. Then she

told me that there were more of them all over town, of all kinds of different people. Now that, to me, was bizarre — and immediately fascinating.

When I came to stay in Almonte for three months, my visit coincided with *A Puppet Retrospective* of Noreen Young's career at the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum. Seeing all of the lookalike puppets collected together was wonderful and — having seen a few of their human counterparts around town — uncanny. Each was a work of art in its own right, but to an outsider like me they told only half the story; I wanted to see each lookalike alongside the person it was based on to fully appreciate how Noreen had captured their characters, and to speak to each owner about their relationship with their puppet. I hoped doing so would uncover the story of how Noreen Young, Almonte, and the people who live there had collaborated to produce this utterly unique collection of art.

Having photographed some amazing parts of the world, do you often find that locals overlook things that you find unique or captivating?

The "fresh eyes" you mentioned are definitely something I feel when I'm somewhere I haven't been before. I rarely feel the need to take photos in my own neighbourhood or town, but as soon as I'm somewhere new everything seems much more interesting. Locals are always going to find even the more unusual aspects of their culture quite normal, and that certainly came across in the way a lot of people spoke about their puppets.

But for me, this was the first time I have felt compelled to carry out an in-depth photographic project on a particular subject, so I feel incredibly lucky and grateful that so many people were willing to give up their time to pose in front of my clunky old camera and answer questions on a subject that to them must be an everyday part of Almonte life.

Did you find any commonalities among the puppet owners you interviewed? Did any of them (full disclosure — "them" includes Rob and Kris at theHumm) seem to have an unusual relationship with their "mini-me"?

Perhaps the most noticeable thing was that nearly everyone referred to their puppet as "him" or "her", never "it" — and this tied into something Noreen told me about each puppet developing their own identity over time. Some people would even chat to their puppets while they posed.

Another thing that springs to mind is a few people mentioned that their spouses were decidedly not fans of their lookalike. It must be disconcerting when your other half brings home a highly detailed doppelgänger



UK photographer and writer Fred Forse has published a book about puppet maestro & maker Noreen Young (above) and her look-alike creations (like Dale Dunning & mini-Dale, at left)

— or has it leap out from under the bedcovers, as was the case with one particularly mischievous puppet owner.

Something that surprised me was the number of owners who haven't operated their puppets — I don't think I could resist. On the other hand (quite literally), there were those whose puppets sprung immediately to life on their arms — I found myself having a conversation with Gloria the Gopher when I met Noreen, obviously, but Sean Isaacs' puppet was also a very lively and talkative chap!


After speaking with Noreen and several puppet owners, what impressions of Almonte did you take away with you?

First and foremost, I came away with the impression that Almonte being called "The Friendly Town" is not unearned; everyone I spoke to was more welcoming and helpful with my project than I could have possibly imagined, and the time I spent with each person was truly memorable and enjoyable.

I gained so many insights from talking with everyone, but two things in particular stuck with me. TheHumm's very own Rob Riendeau explained that Almonte is in the unusual position of not being located on a highway, so people never find it on the way to somewhere else. "People end up here either accidentally or deliberately — but they're not just driving by. When you get here it's a revelation." And Shaun McLaughlin summed Almonte up like this: "It embraces artistic expression in any form; a place where any good artistic idea will flourish."

Almonte is a special place in many ways, and the puppets are just one of them — but they represent two of the most unique and wonderful aspects of the town: its celebration of artistic endeavour and its truly individual sense of community.

To find out more about Fred (and to order his book!), visit <fredforse.com>.

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Wings 'n Tunes with **Shawn McCullough** (Acoustic Country/Rock,) 5:30–9
No Principals feat. Dave Balfour, Jamie Campbell & Joe Skuce (Acoustic Folk) 5–8
Young Petty Stones: Music of Neil Young, Tom Petty + The Rolling Stones (Westport/Yarker/Delta/Hudson) 6–10 \$60 + HST + Gratuity ****SOLD OUT****
The Plaid Bastards feat. **Jeff Callery + Shawn McCullough** (Acoustic Country/Rock Duo, Brockville/Westport) 6–9
Subprime (Classic Rock 'n Roll) with Prime Rib Special \$35 +HST. Music is 7–10
Bowskill vs. Marriner Jimmy Bowskill of The Sheepdogs vs. Steve Marriner of MonkeyJunk (Acoustic Blues Mastery, Toronto) 6–10 \$70 + HST Dinner + Show
Eric Uren (Acoustic Rock/Folk) 6–10
Jon McLurg + Anthea Feaver play the music of "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" 1–4
Mike Tremble (Acoustic Rock/Folk, Toronto) 5–8
Greg Ball (Singer-songwriter, Kingston) 5–8
Miss Emily + her band feat. Opener **Frank Ryan** (3 x Maple Blues Award Winning Soul, Kingston) 6–10 \$70 + HST Dinner + Show
Teagan McLaren: Music for a Christmas Afternoon (Kingston) 1–4
Matt Dickson (Acoustic Classic Rock, Perth) 5–8
Eric Uren (Acoustic Rock/Folk) 5–8
XMAS or "Let's put 2020 behind us" **Jazz Night** feat. **Spencer Evans Trio** 6–9
Nolan Hubbard (Acoustic Folk/Pop) 5–8
Eric Uren (Acoustic Rock/Folk) 5–8
Turpin's Trail NYE with Chinese Food! 6–11 "Midnight" Toast at 10:45. \$70 + HST Dinner + Show. \$30 + HST Take-out Chinese Food!

The Little Humm

A Calendar of Kindness

Finish this Year with a Bit of Cheer!

Well, here we are heading into the holidays and this final stretch of 2020, a year that not too many of us are going to grumble about saying goodbye to. Because what a year this has been. Our personal values, resiliency, and the strength of our community have all been tested in a way that most of us have never had to face in our lifetimes. And yet, it has

by Sarah Kerr

been remarkable to see the small acts of kindness that have connected us, from a distance, through this pandemic. Folks offering up patience and compassion to strangers, reaching out to seniors who are alone, painting rocks and creating public art to lift spirits, dropping off food for frontline workers and being gentle with ourselves through stressful times have all made such a difference.

As we enter the holiday season, I'm seeing a heightened gratitude for the little things that we still *do* have, even as we cancel or postpone some of our favourite traditions. The joy of going as a family to cut your tree, a brief chat with a neighbour from a distance, sledding on that first big snowfall! Even though things might feel tight financially or you feel disconnected and unsure as to how you can give this year, as the young Anne Frank reminds us in her journal: "You can always give something. Even if it is only kindness."

I'm sure you and your families have wonderful acts of kindness up your sleeves (or stockings), but I've decided to share one of our family traditions that was introduced to us a number of years ago, called a Kindness Advent Calendar. It is simply a guide that we use alongside our daily chocolate to encourage our kids to spread kindness and cheer. As a friend reminded me over an outdoor bonfire, kindness can be shared with neighbours near and far (like sponsoring school supplies or shoveling a walkway), our planet (getting a real tree, donating toys or using reusable wrapping), and also with ourselves (pajama days, baking and sledding). It is through small, simple acts each day that we fill up a season of giving.

I've tweaked our calendar this year to include some special socially-distanced alternatives to holiday

cheer here in the Valley – like the Mississippi Mills Community videos or Light up the Town – which are really exciting modifications. Santa is even going to be touring around villages in a Fire Truck accepting letters and food bank donations in full PPE – I mean, how safe can you get?! But most of the activities are timeless classics that can be done at a safe distance. And if it all feels like just too much, you can simply offer up a smile or a wave through a window. As Aesop says, "No act of kindness – however small – is ever wasted."

Wishing you and your family a very safe and kind holiday season!

Details and Deadlines for Kindness Activities around the Valley

- (Dec. 1) Carebridge Cards to seniors – drop off cards to 8 Tatra Street in Almonte by December 7
- (Dec. 3) Mississippi Mills' Light Up the Town – official judging for the lights contest is December 12 <mississippimills.ca>
- (Dec. 4) Interval House Virtual Angel Tree – drop off gifts in Perth and Carleton Place until December 11 <cihvirtualangeltree.com>
- (Dec. 5) Santa visits Cedar Hill Christmas Tree Farm <cedarhillchristmastreefarm.com> and Pakenham <mississippimills.ca> at 2:30PM on December 5
- (Dec. 7) Foodbanks – drop off donations in Arnprior, Renfrew & Burnstown <renfrewcountyfoodbanks.ca>; Almonte & Carleton Place <lanarkcountyfoodbank.ca>; Perth <thetablefc.org>; Smiths Falls <smithsfallscommunityfoodbank.org>
- (Dec. 9) Jennifer Kelly's Glass Kits (Carleton Place) are available online <jenniferannekelly.com/kits>
- (Dec. 11) Sponsor school supplies for kids in Nicaragua <schoolbox.ca/supplies>
- (Dec.12) The Hub's Children's Christmas Shopping accepts lists from kids in Mississippi Mills until December 15 <facebook.com/TheHubAlmonte>
- (Dec. 19) Buy a school lunch for a First Nations student <schoolbox.ca/lunch>
- (Dec. 20) Send caroling videos or cheer <mississippimills.ca>

Gifts for Lovers of Sweet Treats

- CP BIA Bucks, Downtown Carleton Place BIA.....various
- Perth BIA gift certificates, Downtown Heritage Perth BIA.....various
- Rich and irresistible sea salt chocolate caramels, Hummingbird Chocolate.. \$20.99
- "Just Chocolates", Ottawa Valley Gift Baskets.....\$80.95

Gifts for Lovers of Vintage Treasures

- An original "Henry VIII" Royal Doulton, Alliance Coin & Banknote.....\$195
- Estate jewellery, Almonte Antiques & Collectibles.....various
- CP BIA Bucks, Downtown Carleton Place BIA.....various
- Vintage silverplate flatware cheese markers, Good Food Co.....\$44

Gifts for Husbands

- Matching bra and panty set with sparkly crystals and lace, 8008 Lingerie.....\$200
- Sports jerseys and memorabilia, Almonte Antiques & Collectibles.....\$5 & up
- Malpeque Fine Iron Products' "bug away", Dragonfly Boutique.....\$88
- BBQ gift bag, Fulton's.....\$25
- Sterling silver rings, Kehla Jewellery Design.....\$395-475
- Donations in their name, United Way East Ontario.....various
- Secrid leather wallets, Vamos Outdoors.....89 & up



Kids' Kindness Advent Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Kindness is a gift everyone can afford - unknown		1 Call your grandparents to say "I love you" or make a card for Carebridge	2 Make a bird feeder or get one at Gilligallou & feed the birds	3 Decorate your house and help Light Up the Town*	4 Pick up a gift for Interval House's Virtual Angel Tree*	5 Get a real tree at Cedar Hill Tree Farm and wave to Santa* in Pakenham!
6 Drop off diapers & wipes for a baby in your neighbourhood	7 Pick out your favourite meal and donate it to your food bank*	8 Draw or paint a picture for someone who is sick or sad	9 DIY Homemade Ornaments - or try Jennifer Kelly's Glass kits*	10 Mail a card or package to someone far away	11 Sponsor school supplies for a Nicaraguan child with SchoolBOX	12 Drop off your Hub Children's Christmas Shopping List*
13 Buy the person behind you a hot chocolate or coffee	14 Watch a holiday baking show & try to make the treat at home!	15 Try a Reverse-stocking: donate your gently used toys	16 Write thank you cards for your teachers	17 Drop off cookies to the staff at the hospital	18 Candy cane bomb your street (all cars or mailboxes)	19 Give a school lunch* to a First Nations student on-reserve
20 Film & send your family's video of Christmas Cheer or Caroling!*	21 Wrap gifts with reusable materials (cloth, old Humms, art)	22 Shovel your neighbour's walk or a senior's driveway	23 Stay in your PJs all day & watch Christmas movies	24 Invite a friend or family member to go sledding (6ft apart)	25 Merry Christmas!	*see facing page



Season's Greetings!

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LANARK COUNTY INTERVAL HOUSE AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Virtual Angel Tree

Make this a memorable holiday for a deserving woman or child in our community by ensuring they have some gifts under the tree.

Spreading holiday cheer is easy: visit our Angel Tree website to find your sponsor, purchase some gifts and drop them off!

WE WILL BE ACCEPTING DROPOFFS AT IDA IN CARLETON PLACE, GIANT TIGER IN PERTH, AND METRO IN PERTH UNTIL DECEMBER 11!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE USE YOUR SMART DEVICE TO SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT LCIHVIRTUALANGELTREE.COM



FUNDRAISING@LCIH.COM 613-257-3469 EX. 64



Prices vary from
\$40-\$265

the local box of
**merry
& bright**
SMITHS FALLS



BONUS!

Every box includes Smiths Falls proud gifts! 'Famous Facades' mug, guides and vintage holiday postcard.

BONE APPETIT

\$40

- PET LOVER BOX
- Treats, Chews, Toys and Accessories for your choice of Cat or Dog.

THE RAILWAY MUSEUM

\$40

- THE CHOO CHOO BOX
- Classic Train, Engineer Hat, Bandana, Train Noise Maker, 2 Station Postcards, Train Whistle, Engineer Teddy.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

\$50

- SIMPLE LUXURIES BOX
- Soy Candle, Buffalo Plaid Gloves, Wine Glass and Naked Bee Lotion.

TAYBOO

\$50

- THE KAWAII 'CUTE' BOX
- Holiday Slime, Apron, Tote Bag, Stickers, Bath Bomb, Colouring Kit & \$15 Gift Card – all custom-designed!

SPISE FINE FOODS

\$55

- THE LOCAL NOSH BOX
- 2 Jars of Gourmet Jam, 1 Jar of Local Honey, 1 Bag of Urban Hippie Granola, Mighty Valley Coffee.

MICHELE'S DOORWAY TO SPLENDOUR

\$60

- THE SPLENDOUR BOX
- Natural Deodorant, Body Butter & Lip Balm, Scarf, Gloves & Spinner Ring.

THE ARTS HUB

\$65

- THE LOCAL MAKERS BOX
- Local Coffee, Tea Cup Candle, T-Shirt & Bath Bomb.

4 DEGREES BREWING

\$70

- THE BREW BOX
- 6 Pack of Beer, Beer Glass, Branded Toque, Mighty Valley Coffee, Local BBQ Sauce.

PRETTY THINGS ON RUSSELL

\$80

- THE PRETTY BOX
- Scrunchie, Hand Rescue, Cleansing Cloth, Candle, Hankie, Collectible Sticker, Mask & Trinket Dish.

STRANDS

\$87

- THE AVEDA BOX
- Aveda Rosemary Mint Shampoo & Conditioner, Essential Oil, Paddle Brush and more.

GLOBAL CULTURE TRADING POST

\$88

- THE GLOBAL EXPERIENCE BOX
- Nepali Mittens, Essential Oil, Two Candles, Silk Bag with 4 Semi-Precious Stones, Zen Acres Tea, Two Sets of Incense and Book!

PEARL'S GEM

\$90

- CREATIVE HEARTS BOX
- Pint of Fusion Mineral Paint, Fusion Brush, Tea Cup, Bath Salts & Decor.

GEMMELL'S FLOWERS

\$90

- THE HOME INDULGENCE BOX
- Sugar Scrub, Honey Lotion, Artisanal Candle, Inspirational Necklace, Geode Earrings, Plant, Lavender Wrap & more!

MODERN THYMES

\$100

- WINTER SAVER BOX
- High Quality Vitamins, Probiotics, Soy Candle, Local Coffee, and more!

PICKLED PIG

\$100

- GOURMET FOODIE BOX
- A Selection of Local Delicious Preserves, Sweets and Gourmet Food Items.

ELIZABETH INTERIORS

\$100

- THE DECOR BOX
- Various Curated Decor Items including Frame, Blanket Scarf, Mesh Tote and Scented Candle.

SMITHS SHOES

\$265

- THE BLUNNIE BOX
- Pair of Blundstone Boots, Blundstone Protective Spray, Wax, and more!

Shop Smiths Falls this Christmas with the Merry & Bright Box!

Visit one of these participating businesses to purchase a unique Merry & Bright Box. There is a box for everyone on your list and you can feel good about supporting a Smiths Falls small business. Make this Christmas a merry one for all!