

Event spurred ?shopping local? this Christmas



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

In a posting to their Facebook page on Nov. 22, Ormsby's Old Hastings Mercantile and Gallery in Limerick Township revealed that a very special Christmas event was coming up on Dec. 3. From 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. that evening, the Old Hastings Mercantile and Gallery and The Grape and Wedge in Glen Alda encouraged local Christmas shopping with prizes, holiday food tastings and beverages to get into the Christmas spirit. Donations to the local food bank were being accepted and were appreciated. According to Gary and Lillian Pattison, who own the Old Hastings Mercantile and Gallery, the Dec. 3 event went extremely well and they had about 50 customers come through their door that night. Lonita Kilbride Reed is the owner at The Grape and Wedge in Glen Alda, a specialty grocer and an events company that serves up wine and cheese tasting events. She told Bancroft This Week on Nov. 24 that they are doing this holiday event together with the Old Hastings Mercantile and Gallery and that this is the inaugural year for it. "The idea is to encourage shopping local and to get our community into the Christmas spirit. Both our businesses will be staying open until 7 p.m. and we're hoping for good crowds to travel to both our stores that evening," she says. Kilbride says that last year, due to COVID-19, families could not go out to shop as easily, and she thinks that this event will be a wonderful kickoff for the month of December activities. She says the response so far has been very positive and the momentum is building. "Sampling of many new holiday foods will be available, as well as draws and special one day discounts. Donations will be accepted for our local food bank as well. We have worked out strategies to safely space out our customers without inhibiting the holiday feel," she says. The Old Hastings Mercantile and Gallery is an 1890s era general store featuring 11 rooms filled with a wide variety of treats and treasures. Gary Pattison told Bancroft This Week on Nov. 25 that they were asked by Kilbride to be part of this evening of extended hours and local holiday shopping cheer. "Both her business and the Old Hastings Mercantile and Gallery are housed in heritage buildings (old general stores) and situated in tiny hamlets. That seemed like a nice match-up and therefore on Dec. 3 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. we will both stay open late to welcome customers, especially anyone who can't make it during regular business hours," he says. Pattison says that Kilbride will have samples, sale pricing on many items, extra loyalty points, a draw on a gift basket, and will be accepting donations to the food bank. At the Old Hastings Mercantile and Gallery, they will have complimentary homemade shortbread cookies and hot mulled apple cider and they will also have specials and sale pricing for the evening. "People will have a chance to see our store lit and decorated for Christmas, including our 'rein-moose' and Santa in his sleigh on our porch roof. We'll be handing out special mercantile coupon \$5 bills toward future purchases as well, which feature a beautiful winter painting of Ormsby by Lillian. The two hamlets are a 10-minute drive apart and we invite everyone to visit," he says. The big prize to be won that night was a chance to win two tickets to the National Ballet of Canada's famed production of The Nutcracker at the Four Seasons Centre in

Toronto, with no purchase necessary to enter the draw. Pattison will also be performing at the show, playing French Horn, and it will be his 45th year playing this show. "We've done that for years, offered ballet tickets due to my association. It's been appreciated. We've had a nice mix of winners right across the board. People who are in Toronto or people from up here who make that trip. It's been really good that way, and much appreciated," he says. On the evening of Dec. 3, Pattison said that it was nice for people to get a chance to see their store at night because they usually don't get a chance to do that. He and Lillian estimated that around 50 customers came through their door that night. "It was fun and it worked out. It was pretty steady and busy and we've been getting out our \$5 coupons with Lillian's painting and we've given those out for future purchases. It's just nice to be open at this time with the atmosphere and the Christmas cheer," he says. Ormsby resident Margaret Park, whose family owned the general store where the Old Hastings Mercantile and Gallery now is, was there doing some Christmas shopping, and said it was nice that it was open later. "By the time you get supper done, it's like, whoa," she says. "I've still got time to pop over and get some shopping done, especially on a Friday night."