

Holiday Market 'pops up' at Cultural Centre ahead of Victorian Tea

By Brock Weir

If you're looking for that one unique holiday gift sure to melt even Scrooge's cold, cold heart, head over to the Aurora Cultural Centre for a veritable Christmas extravaganza.

This weekend, the Cultural Centre will be just slightly less busy than Santa's Workshop as they throw open their doors for a number of Christmas-themed activities.

First up, is the Holiday Artisan Pop-Up Market, which runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., featuring local, unique and hand-crafted items from local and exhibiting artists, followed by live performances from 1 ? 2 p.m. from the band Carrying Place, and concluding with the annual Victorian Christmas Afternoon and customary performance of A Christmas Carol by the Humber River Shakespeare Company.

'We are bracing ourselves in the best possible way,' says Jane Taylor of the Aurora Cultural Centre. 'When we marked this one down very early in 2015, we said, 'Wow, this is the day!' and now it is before us!'

The Victorian Christmas Afternoon has become a holiday tradition at the Aurora Cultural Centre, but this year there's an extra-special element. This will be the final year the Humber River Shakespeare Company will be bringing to life the classic Dickensian take of Ebenezer Scrooge and the meaning of Christmas.

Kicking the day off in grand style will be the Holiday Pop-Up Market, the latest 'pop-up' event which has become a semi-regular feature being offered by the Cultural Centre as of late. They held their first artisan pop-up market in the spring and it was a smashing success, says Ms. Taylor. With crunch time approaching for holiday shopping, it only made sense to give it another whirl.

'We're featuring seven artists represented in our gallery gift shop,' she says. 'We have ceramics and pottery, silver jewellery, copper jewellery, First Nations art (originals, cards and prints) and then the added component we have this year is we have filled our Blue Gallery as well. It is expanded from the spring market and our currently exhibiting artists in the Centre are going to be there that day as well with some expanded small prints, some extra originals, and note cards as well.'

'The public can shop local and hand-crafted right in their own community and support artists in their own community. We hear all the time people are looking for something special and unique that has been created here at home. This is what we are able to offer with our artisan pop-up. For those looking to usher in the season, it is an opportunity to see a wonderful professional show that is really accessible to kids four and up. The wonderful thing about the Humber River Shakespeare Company is not only do you get to enjoy the show, but they stay in costume afterwards and mingle with the crowd.'

Although the Scrooge costumes will be retired after this season, Humber River will be back next year with a new holiday offering. But that, at the moment, is currently under wraps. Ms. Taylor says the Centre is already planning for next year's events, promising a shift in theme, and when Humber River lets them in on their secret, they will tailor the Centre's programming accordingly.

Pop-up markets are set to continue into the new year with an event held in conjunction with a mini-concert from the Aurora Winter Blues Fest on February 6, which will coincide with the launch of a new show by the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA).

Tickets for A Victorian Christmas Afternoon featuring the Humber River Shakespeare Company are \$16 per person or \$50 for a family of four. Admission to the Holiday Pop-Up Market is free.