

It's here, it's here! It's finally here!

This weekend is one of my favorite weekends of the year. Like Ralphie's father in A Christmas Story waiting to receive his "major award," I look forward with anticipation to what has become my official kick-off to the holiday season.

The annual Holiday Arts Fair is this Saturday, November 21 from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. This year, the event again features 100 artists, 20 of whom will be new to the show. There is artistic jewelry, handmade clothing, beautiful hand-carved items and tons of Christmas decorations, centerpieces and wreaths, just to name a few items. This year's new products included salsas, soaps and lotions, wild life prints, beauty products and much more. Truly, you can find many unique and personal gifts for others (and yourself).

I always find several items that allow me to put some checks on my Christmas shopping list. Not only will you find high quality items at the fair, but they are often one-of-a-kind gifts that you will not find anywhere else. Why give your shopping dollars to companies overseas when you can be supporting people here in our community? Not to mention, the recipient of your gifts will feel very special when receiving these handcrafted items.

In addition to the shopping opportunity presented by the Holiday Arts Fair, three other important things can be found at the event on this day: food, friends and music! Having grown in popularity over the years, you will greet many people from the community and have a chance to catch up. You can do so while enjoying something to eat or drink prepared in the cafeteria by the Edinboro Fire Department volunteers or grab some of the chocolates, baked goods or other delectable items sold by the vendors. This year we have a full schedule of music from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. featuring our talented student musicians at the middle and high schools.

Don't forget that while attending the Holiday Arts Fair is great fun for you, it is also showing your support for our students as the proceeds from the fair goes to scholarships provided by the General McLane Foundation.

This weekend is also the weekend of the high school's annual musical production. Always a high quality spectacle, I eagerly anticipate seeing a production performed expertly by our students, making me so proud. As I outlined in last week's Lancer Letter, this year's production is Sweeney Todd, a very difficult show with a complex theme. You can catch the show the night of the Holiday Arts Fair or on Friday or Sunday.

This year, the weekend has yet another added attraction. The Edinboro Historical Society is hosting their Holiday Christmas House Tour. Held every other year, the Christmas House Tour will include the residence of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania's president (known as the Commonwealth House) located at 214 Meadville Street across from the campus and the historical society's Doucette House Museum located at 126 Water Street. This year's tour is called Christmas Through the Year. Both houses were decorated under the tutelage of Pat Crist and feature "A Scottish Christmas" at the Commonwealth House and "Christmas Through the Year" at the Doucette House Museum. You can hit the house tour after coming to the Arts Fair (the tour is from noon to 4:00 p.m.) or you can spend ALL day at the Holiday Arts Fair and catch the tour on Sunday from noon to 4:00 p.m.

A weekend filled with holiday spirit, good friends and food and quality entertainment! If you're bored this weekend it's your own fault. And, if you find yourself running around on December 24th trying to finish that Christmas shopping list, you want have any sympathy from me!

See you at the Fair!