

# Air filled with music thanks to new Concert Band

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There's been music in the air in recent months.

This has been the doing of the new Stittsville Concert Band which has been filling the air of the Stittsville/Goulbourn community and area for just over the past 14 months.

This has all happened thanks to the vision of local musician Christine Philipson who founded this new band using some of the structure of the former Goulbourn Community Band thanks to the assistance of Marjorie Gillick.

In accordance with Christine's vision, this new Stittsville Concert Band is open to everyone, open to everyone who enjoys making music with an instrument. Indeed, the current band makeup includes players from grade seven right up to seniors who are hooked on sharing their musical joy with others.

"It's wonderful to see the age mixture, with the more experienced players helping mentor others," Christine says. "When a senior can help a student improve his

or her technique, everybody wins!"

The band's original members had the hope that this new Stittsville Concert Band would reach a level of performance that would allow it to entertain at seniors' homes and beyond. The Stittsville Concert Band has now performed at several seniors' residences including Granite Ridge and the Stittsville Villa, both in Stittsville.

Assisted by an executive of eight people, the founder's vision is thus well on its way to being fulfilled.

"We really want to expand the number and types of venues we can perform at, such as the Concert in the Park series here in Stittsville and the Richmond Fair," Christine says.

"The goal is to share with the community, to let them know about us and encourage other potential players to come out to have fun too."

The Stittsville Community Band's first conductor was Matt Dawber, the music teacher at Sacred Heart High School, who has since given way to the current conducting team of Frank

Martens and Karen Wiggins. Martens' extensive military background and Wiggins' vibrant energy means that the band has rehearsals that that are both enjoyable and sometimes hilarious.

"Small jokes and funny observations lighten the mood, making the practices fun for everyone," says Christine. "We even have some that bring delicious snacks after rehearsal."

Conductor Frank Martens wants to expand the band's musical repertoire.

"We're in the process of adding some more tunes such as Russian Sailor's Dance, Canadian Sunset, Eric Whittaker's October and Sleep," he says. "If our percussion section grows larger, we might play some African rhythm pieces as well."

The Stittsville Concert Band also hopes to interest some of its more experienced musicians into forming a dance band, perhaps starting with a core group of eight to ten players performing jazz and pop music and then virtually doubling in size to hand the more traditional big band era songs. Selected artists' tunes for

these groups could include James Brown, Tower of Power, Benny Goodman and Glenn Miller.

The Stittsville Concert Band has been created as a free community enterprise, meaning that there are no dues for members. Fortunately, earlier this year, the band reached a sponsorship agreement through the generosity of the Stittsville Branch 618 of the Royal Canadian Legion which involves a commitment by the

band to perform at Legion functions requiring military music support. For such occasions, the band is wearing Royal Canadian Legion golf shirts but as funding improves, the band hopes to upgrade to a blazer and tie combination for more formal events.

Community service hours are awarded to all students who participate with the Stittsville Concert Band. The band practises weekly on Mondays at 7 p.m. at Sa-

cred Heart High School.

The band's next performance is this Saturday, Oct. 3 at 3 p.m. at Village Square in downtown Stittsville when it will be part of the entertainment package at the Stittsville Village Fest activities.

For more information about the Stittsville Concert Band, please call Christine Philipson at 613-831-1575 or check out the band's website at [www.stittsville-concertband.com](http://www.stittsville-concertband.com).



JOHN BRUMMELL PHOTO

Dave Cashman, far left, president of the Stittsville branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, presents a sponsorship cheque to Stittsville Concert Band bandmaster Christine Philipson, second from left, as the band's musical directors, Frank Martens, second from right, and Karen Wiggins, far right, look on.