

## Growth of the Band

### Stittsville Concert Band welcomes new year, members

By SARAH KELFORD

Staff Writer

EMC News – The Stittsville Concert Band has already welcomed seven new members this year and is hoping to continue to expand its roster of 35 members.

The band currently meets weekly to practice on Monday nights at Sacred Heart Catholic High School from 7 to 9 p.m.

The Stittsville Legion Branch 618 is the band's sponsor, which allows the Stittsville Concert Band to remain as a free band for the time being.

"This is a band, we want to have fun," said band manager Christine Philipson, one of the band's founding members. "We are having fun playing music and serving the community for free."

Philipson explained that throughout the year the band plays at retirement homes, Legion events, the Legion's Remembrance Day service, at VillageFest in Stittsville and this year, some members even performed on top of Ward 6 Stittsville Kanata West councillor Shad Qadri's float during the Parade of Lights.

"We're not just a concert band," said Philipson, adding that in the future they plan to incorporate a marching contingent.

Philipson also noted that just because it is called the Stittsville Concert Band, it doesn't limit its members to Stittsville.

In fact, some members travel from as far as Kemptville and Arnprior to take part.

The band's conductor, Frank Martens, travels from Carleton Place.

"A community band is a group of like-minded musicians, creating wonderful music for the community," said Martens, who plans to retire in April from his current position as Warrant Officer with the Canadian Armed Forces and has played the clarinet for close to 40 years.

"I'm interested in conducting, especially conducting community bands," Martens noted. "I'm looking forward to continuing playing in the community and connecting with the community. We really appreciate the support from the community, especially the Legion and Sacred Heart."

Philipson noted that the concert band is a great way for high school students to get involved in the community and receive their mandatory community volunteer hours while having fun.

In addition to practicing for two hours every week, the band performs 15 or 16 concerts a year, estimated Martens.

"There is no age restriction, you just need your own instrument," said Philipson, adding that band members' ages range from ninth grade students to those who have been long retired. "The band also consists of varied experience."



EMC photos by SARAH KELFORD  
**Above, Frank Martens conducts the Stittsville Concert Band at its practice on Monday, Jan. 18. The band practices at Sacred Heart Secondary School every Monday evening from 7 to 9 p.m. Left: Lyndsay McWhinnie and Gary Graham are two of the dedicated members of the Stittsville Concert Band. Below: Chris Dixon, Karl Steadman and Luc Forget provide the percussion elements to the Stittsville Concert Band. Christine Ritchie practices her trumpet solo.**



“We have people who have never put a horn together,” added Martens. “From (ages) 13 to 95.”

The Stittsville Concert Band most recently played at Specialty Care Granite Ridge for residents on Wednesday, Jan. 27, much to the delight of residents

and staff.

If you are interested in learning more about the Stittsville Concert Band, would like to book a performance or would like to join, contact Philipson at 613-831-1575 or [c.philipson@sympatico.ca](mailto:c.philipson@sympatico.ca), or visit [www.stittsvilleconcertband.com](http://www.stittsvilleconcertband.com).