



Books are the ideal
holiday gift for all ages

Description

It's a perfect time to read A Christmas Carol and share the spirit of the season

By Irwin Rapoport

December 15, 2022

It has been quite a year, and the holiday season is now upon us – Christmas, Hanukkah (December 18 to 26), Kwanza (December 26 to January 1), and [Saturnalia](#) (December 17 to 23). This year, 2022, has been a wild ride with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its ongoing horrors, the continuation of COVID-19 and other viruses entering the scene, the impacts of inflation, the ongoing destruction of the environment, and countless other events affecting our daily lives and those of billions on our planet.

I can safely say, and no doubt many will agree, that we can all use a break and some well-deserved time with family and friends, and alone time to ponder the last year and renew ourselves for the challenges of 2023.

Last December, I penned an article entitled [This year consider the gift of reading](#) and I heartily suggest that, yet again. I have done some holiday shopping and still have a bit more to do. It shall be books for family and friends.

For the past few years, to be environmentally friendly, I no longer gift wrap my presents and hence, no need for paper or scotch tape. If we can forsake wrapping gifts, it will help in a small measure to protect a great many trees, and Mother Nature will appreciate our efforts. Surprising people with gifts, especially children, is wonderful, and there are ways to do this without wrapping them.



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The image of a well-lit Christmas tree with ornaments and gifts on the floor is classic and beloved, and there are ways to retain the sense of wonder and amazement. Of course, some people have a tradition of giving gifts on Christmas Eve, and I have experienced that. It was so nice to receive a gift in person and thank the individual who took the time to select something that would make my day.

While gifts are much welcomed, the greatest gift one can give is to be an excellent and stellar friend and be there for friends year-round. Gifts are a token of our appreciation for family and friends, and whether they are expensive or modest, it is the thought that counts. Throughout 2022, I was able to depend upon many relatives and friends – old and new – and that impresses me. I only hope I have lived up to my end of the bargain.

Getting back to gifts. I purchase books from bookshops – never online. Local bookshops in Montreal can use our support, be they those that sell new books, used books, or a combination of both. Here is a list of some of the bookshops you may wish to visit:



Image: furkanfdemir, Pexels

Westmount



Appetite For Books, 388 Victoria

NDG

Phoenix Books, 5928 Sherbrooke W
Encore Books & Records, 5670 Sherbrooke W
Librairie Saga Bookstore, 5574 Upper Lachine

Snowdon

Bibliophile Bookstore, 5519 Queen Mary

Montreal West

Bonder Bookshop, 52 Westminster North

Cote Saint Luc

Librairie Honey Books Discount Bookstore, 6132 Côte Saint Luc

Downtown

Argo Bookshop, 1841-A St. Catherine W
The Word, 469 Milton
Paragraphe Bookstore, 2220 McGill College
Indigo, 1500 McGill College
Westcott Books, 6792 St-Hubert

St. Henri

Librairie Saint-Henri Books, 516 Therien

Mile End/Plateau

S.W. Welch Bookseller, 225 Saint Viateur
Librairie Drawn & Quarterly, 211 Bernard W
Librairie Le Port de tete, 262 Mount Royal E

Many bookshops and owners of smaller and independent businesses had to deal not only with the impacts of COVID and rent increases, which is still a major problem today but inflation as well. They can use our help during the holiday season, and they will appreciate our patronage.

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As far as I am concerned, a community is not complete without a bookshop, and the more, the merrier. Books inform and enlighten us, take us to new worlds, provide inspiration, and can change lives. A literate society is an informed society, and an informed and concerned citizenry does not take anything for granted and asks questions of government, business, and the many institutions that we depend on. My article from last year extols the joys and benefits of reading, and I urge you to read it for the first time or re-read it and be inspired.



Books are my first choice, but that is just me. We all have our favourite “go-to” items, and many of us purchase different items for different people. The one thing I do know is that we can do our best to purchase environmentally friendly gifts. This [Google search](#) provides some web sites offering suggestions for gifts with minimal environmental impacts. Check them out, and feel free to share the link. We can all do our part.



Alastair Sim as Ebenezer Scrooge – Image: frame from *A Christmas Carol* (1951)

It is also the time of year to read [A Christmas Carol](#) by **Charles Dickens**, a short novel with a powerful message about redemption, how to be a better person by living the spirit of Christmas year-round and being a mensch.

[A Christmas Carol](#), a 1951 film starring Alastair Sim as Ebenezer Scrooge and George Cole as a young Ebenezer Scrooge, is considered to be the finest film version of the novel. For many, it’s not Christmas unless one watches this film on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Here is an audio link for *A Christmas Carol*:

And here is a link for the 1999 television production of *A Christmas Carol* starring Patrick Stewart:

Charles Dickens enjoyed reading this novel aloud before audiences, especially during the Christmas season. In some communities, this is an annual tradition with the funds raised donated to charities to help make Christmas more pleasant for families in need. This would be perfect for Montreal, and performances could be held simultaneously at many theatres, churches, and community centres.

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season. In some communities, this is an annual tradition with the funds raised donated to charities...'

Many churches and charitable organizations are doing everything humanly possible to prepare holiday baskets to help families and individuals. They will appreciate donations of food and money, toys for children, and presents for adults.

The holiday is a wonderful time for many, but it can be lonely for some. This is a perfect opportunity to call people to see how they are doing, invite them for dinner or a luncheon, or bring over a meal. We can all do our part to ensure the Yuletide season is a positive experience.

So with all this said, allow me to wish all Westmount Magazine readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy Kwanza and if you are celebrating Saturnalia, have a wild and crazy time. All the best and before I forget, I should like to thank everybody who helped me out with articles this year – I could not have done it without you.

Feature image: Maël Balland, Pexels

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