Blackburn Area News And Reports
BANAR
Vol. 59 No. 3 February 2026

WINTERTIME IN BLACKBURN HAMLET

The winter months are full of fun, snow, skating and beautiful nature spots in our community.



This year's Hockey Day in the Hamlet was a snowy but fun-filled day for all ages.
Read more on page 8.

The BANAR is proudly produced by the Blackburn Community Association.

Hôpital Vétérinaire du Hamlet

The Hamlet Veterinary Hospital

Dr Bernard Vincelette, DMV & Dr Annie Séguin, DMV

Dr Amber Covello, DVM & Dr Jonathan Harris, DVM

The Ugly truth about anesthesia-free dental cleaning



Have you heard of anesthesia-free dental cleanings for pets? Pets remain awake, making it convenient for owners at a reduced cost. Sounds too good to be true? It's because it is!

These cleanings only address visible tartar ABOVE the gumline. They were approved by an Ontario court judgement because they specifically made no claim of medical benefits and are for cosmetic purpose only.

What is the problem?: Most owners choosing this option will get a false sense of security that their pet's mouth is healthy because the teeth are white. Unfortunately, the damages under the gumline will continue and the underlying periodontal disease can worsen overtime. White teeth do not mean that your pet's mouth is healthy.

In contrast, veterinary dental cleanings under anesthesia offer several advantages. A thorough examination of the entire mouth is performed, including x-rays to detect hidden dental problems. Specialized equipment allows for comprehensive cleaning both above and below the gumline, removing plaque and tartar effectively. This allows detection and treatment of serious dental issues before damages to other teeth occur.

Anesthesia-free dental cleaning is NOT a medical procedure and is not a substitute for regular home dental care or professional veterinary cleaning and COHAT (Comprehensive oral health assessment and treatment). A COHAT focus on early detection and treatment to prevent irreversible damage to your pet's oral health and keep your pet healthy. For more info visit the AVDC website: https://afd.avdc.org/category/for-pet-owners/

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President's message

While we're still in the grips of the cold winter months, the days are getting longer and Spring is just around the corner. The cold weather was on our side earlier this year for the annual Hockey Day in the Hamlet, where kids and adults alike got together for a day of hockey, winter activities, warm drinks and community spirit. A big shout out to our rink crews and volunteers for keeping Blackburn's rinks ready for all the skaters not just on Hockey Day, but all winter long!

Looking back at 2025, it was a very busy year for the BCA, with a record number of events held across our community. It was so great to see hundreds of our community members come out to these events. From seniors breakfasts and children's events to annual favourites like the FunFair, the pancake breakfast, the Garden Tour and the Spring Clean-Up, there really was something for everyone.

A busy calendar of events would not be possible without the tireless effort of the BCA, countless volunteers, our partners and sponsors, and of course, all of you who come out and take part! We're lucky to live in such an active, vibrant community and I'm excited to see what 2026 has in store. You can check out all the upcoming events at blackburnhamlet.ca.

We invite you to come out to the Blackburn Community Association Annual General Meeting on March 12. Refreshments will be served, and there will be updates on projects around the community, as well as the election of the 2026 Board of Directors. Find more information on page 7.

As always, if you are interested in getting involved in the community, we welcome new volunteers at any time. Reach out to any BCA member, visit the website or come speak to us at any of our events. We'd love to have you!



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Websites

www.BlackburnHamlet.ca
www.BlackburnFunFair.ca

Facebook

- Blackburn Hamlet Community Association–BCA
- Blackburn Hamlet Community Association

Instagram

@blackburn/hamlet

Blackburn Community Association (BCA)

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Events

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Cancer Chase: David Purchase	cancerchase@blackburnhamlet.ca
Christmas Market: Don Kelly	safety@blackburnhamlet.ca
Community Closet: Camille-Emmanuelle Purchase	enviro@blackburnhamlet.ca
Discovery Café: Barbara Whittaker	barbara@blackburnhamlet.ca
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Garage Sale: Lynn Lefevre	enviro@blackburnhamlet.ca
Garden Tour: Cynthia Hosiak	gardentour@blackburnhamlet.ca
Hockey Day: Don Kelly	safety@blackburnhamlet.ca
Santa's Pancake Breakfast: Don Kelly	safety@blackburnhamlet.ca
Spring Cleanup: Camille-Emmanuelle Purchase	cleanup@blackburnhamlet.ca
Volunteer Appreciation: Don Kelly	president@blackburnhamlet.ca

Board meetings

The BCA is a grassroots, volunteer-run organization that supports and advocates on behalf of residents, businesses and groups in Blackburn Hamlet, Ottawa, Canada.

The BCA Board of Directors meets 9 times a year on the third Thursday of the month from 7:30 to 10pm. The January to March meetings are held virtually. From April to June and September to November, meetings are held in person. All meetings are open to Blackburn Hamlet residents. Check the BCA website or contact secretary@blackburnhamlet.ca for more details.

Board meetings follow an agenda, so if you have any questions or topics that you wish to raise, please advise the secretary at least five (5) days prior to the meeting.

The next BCA meeting will be held virtually on **Friday, February 19, 2026 (online only)**, at 7:30 p.m.

BANAR delivery routes

A carrier is currently needed to deliver BANARs to our local businesses. Availability during business hours, and access to a vehicle or wagon is preferred. Individuals interested in this route or to be on the waitlist for other routes can contact **Joanne Smith – joanne@blackburnhamlet.ca**

BCA Membership!

NEW ☐ RENEWAL ☐ DATE _____

Your $10 annual membership helps support BCA activities such as the BANAR, representation to various levels of government, Fun Fair, Hockey Day, Santa's Breakfast, as well as numerous initiatives for youth, seniors and local groups. One membership covers two adults and their dependents living at the same address. Please either fill out and mail this form or provide the same information in an email to membership@blackburnhamlet.ca.

Add to BCA e-newsetter distribution: **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

Add to BCA volunteer list: **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

PAYMENT METHOD:

☐ E-Transfer to treasurer@blackburnhamlet.ca. Please add a memo with your name and either your email address or phone number.

☐ Cheque made out to Blackburn Community Association or Cash, mailed to BCA Membership, P.O. Box 47062, Ottawa, ON, K1B 5B0

All memberships expire on June 30 each year.

ADULT NAME(S): _____

HOME ADDRESS including postal code: _____

PHONE(S): _____

EMAIL(S): _____

BANAR

The BANAR is published and delivered 5 times a year to Blackburn homes and businesses to celebrate community and provide information on local programs and events (circulation 3,500).

Article Submissions

Articles (300 words maximum) can be emailed in the body of an email or attached as a Word document. High resolution photos (i..e, 300 DPI) can be submitted as email attachments.

Advertising

Ads can be purchased by individual issue or for the year (i.e., 5 consecutive issues).

First time advertisers who purchase a subscription of ads marked with a star (*) receive a free half-page profile (225 words plus photo).

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3.65 W X 4.25 H*	$80	$360
3.65 W x 1.75 H (smallest ad)	$40	$180

Note: Tax will be added to the invoice. A 10% discount is applied to yearly subscriptions.

Contact: Jaclyn O'Shaughnessy at banar@blackburnhamlet.ca

The BCA does not endorse or guarantee products or services sent in for the BANAR or take responsibility for the print or web quality, copyright infringements of photos, artwork or text provided by advertisers for the BANAR or BCA website.

PAYMENT, ADVERTISING, ARTWORK, AND ARTICLES ARE DUE BY THE DEADLINE DATE

April BANAR Deadline: March 25, 2026

April BANAR Delivery: April 18, 2026

For BCA updates go to BlackburnHamlet.ca

BCA Board Highlights Winter 2025/2026

Highlights from recent BCA Board activities include:

- The City of Ottawa will be repaving Innes Road through much of the Hamlet this year as well as part of Northpark. They will also be replacing the Bearbrook rink asphalt surface and rink boards this year.
- The BCA provided a $500 grant to the 1st Blackburn Scout Group to help offset their costs of purchasing new tents and a $500 grant for a Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Canada book gifting program in Blackburn Hamlet.
- The BCA held a record 70 community events throughout 2025. Some activities were aimed at children, youth or seniors and many were aimed at whole families to participate.

More details can be found in the BCA Meeting Minutes on our website at https://blackburnhamlet.ca/about/meeting-minutes/

Community Hall Rental

Did you know you can book the Community Hall at 190 Glen Park Dr. for your events?
Scan the QR code below or visit **blackburnhamlet.ca/hall** to learn more.

BCA SAFETY CORNER

Don Kelly, BCA Safety



Keep your homes and families safe by testing and replacing your smoke and CO alarms!

Winter can be a particularly dangerous season for both home fires and carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. To protect your home and the safety of the occupants, the following safety information is provided. Remember that non-compliance with the Fire Code Regulations could nullify your insurance. Your goal should always be to "Keep Your Home Fire and CO Free."

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM

Carbon monoxide is often called the "silent killer." It is a colourless, odourless, tasteless and poisonous gas produced by the incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels like gasoline, natural gas, wood and charcoal. The common signs of carbon monoxide poisoning include headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion and drowsiness.

Starting on January 1, 2026, the Ontario Fire Code Regulations have been updated with stricter carbon monoxide alarm placement regulations. Previously, CO alarms only had to be installed adjacent to each sleeping area, however, **as of Jan. 1, CO alarms are required** on each floor of the home, including those without sleeping areas. These regulations apply to every house with a fuel-burning appliance, a fireplace or an attached garage, as well as those with a full-burning heating appliance not located in the home.

For apartments and condos, CO alarms must be installed if the unit has a fuel-burning appliance or fireplace, or if it is located directly above, below or beside a garage or service room. Likewise, if the unit is heated by a fuel-burning appliance not contained in the unit, it should have a CO alarm. While your landlord may be responsible for ensuring the building meets Fire Code requirements, it's in your best interest to confirm that a working CO alarm is installed on every level of your unit.

One of the most common causes of carbon monoxide build-up is poorly maintained appliances. It is recommended that you have your fuel-burning appliances inspected annually by a qualified technician. While carbon monoxide build-up can happen anytime, the risk is greatest during the winter when heating appliances are in use. After a heavy snowfall, always ensure the outside vents are clear of snow.

SMOKE ALARM

Most fatal fires occur at night when people are sleeping. A working smoke alarm will detect smoke and sound to alert you. Effective March 1, 2006, it is the law for all Ontario homes to have a working smoke alarm on every storey and outside all sleeping areas. This covers single family, semi-detached and town homes, whether owner-occupied or rented.

The smoke alarm should be installed between each sleeping area and the remainder of the building or where a sleeping area is served by a hallway, install the alarm in the hall. Always install the smoke alarm on or near the ceiling in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions. Test your smoke alarms regularly by pressing the test button. Install a new battery in each alarm at least once a year. A good rule of thumb is to **change your batteries when yo**u **change your clocks in the fall.** All battery-operated smoke alarms are required to emit a warning sound, usually an intermittent "chirp" when the battery power is low. When there is a chirping sound, replace your battery immediately. **Never wait.** Remember that smoke alarms do wear out. If your alarms are more than 10 years old, replace them.

BCA Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The BCA AGM will be held in-person at the Community Hall (190 Glen Park Drive) on Thursday, March 12, 2026. Doors open at 7:00 PM for refreshments and voter registration. The meeting starts at 7:30 PM. Participation is open to all residents of Blackburn Hamlet, however, only residents who have renewed their BCA membership at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting are eligible to vote (https://blackburnhamlet.ca/about/bca-membership/).



Thanks to our 2025 Board of Directors!

The main areas of discussion at the AGM will be:

1) Vote to approve the 2025 AGM Minutes
2) Presentation of our 2025 financial statements and 2026 budget
3) Vote to appoint Kelly Huibers McNeely Chartered Professional Accountants as Accountants for the 2026 financial year
4) Vote to approve changes to our updated not-for-profit purpose statement
5) Review of our 2025 activities
6) Election of the board (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, 11 Directors)

You will find all documents for this AGM on our website at https://blackburnhamlet.ca/260312.

We look forward to your active participation in this year's AGM!



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HOCKEY DAY IN THE HAMLET 2026

Don Kelly, Event Coordinator

This year, the BCA's annual Hockey Day in the Hamlet was held on Saturday, January 17, at the Norman Johnston outdoor rink. The event coincided with the Hockey Day celebrations happening across Canada. Our event was highly successful and had one of the largest attendances of young hockey stars that we have seen in many years.

The BCA is grateful to our community partners, Metro and Tim Hortons, for their continued support and generous donations. Also, a big thanks to the Jeff Miller Team at BGM Real Estate for their outstanding support in the serving of hamburgers and hot dogs to our many hungry participants. I would be remiss if I did not say thanks to the many volunteers: Brent, Paul, Mathieu, Norm, Wayne, Nancy, Clara-Maude and Barry, to name just a few, who without their incredible support, events like this cannot happen.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to our Community Police Officers (CPO), Constables Bradley Burleau and Marcus Cibischino, who spent time with us interacting with everyone while helping in the handing out of gifts. It has been through their time and effort in community events like this that our CPOs have been able to foster a strong partnership within our community and to its residents.

The BCA shouts out a Bravo to all participants for making this an extraordinary day for celebrating the hockey spirit!



Thank you to all our volunteers and supporters for making this year one of the best!

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SENIORS CORNER

Shirley Sheppard, Director

Seniors Action Committee members:
Barbara Whittaker, Connie Mattey, Elena Leggiadro, John Moores, Marion Hall

Seniors Breakfast Get-togethers
Our monthly breakfasts continued with between 28 and 38 people participating at each breakfast in November, December and January. Garth Hampson entertained us once again with his wonderful voice at the breakfasts in November and December with an appropriate song of the month and led the singing of Happy Birthday to those celebrating. In January, missing Garth's presence that morning, participants sang Happy Birthday to those with birthdays that month. In January, Laura Dudas graced our presence at the breakfast and it was lovely to have her join us and say a few words.

Several bags of non-perishable food donations were collected, along with cash donations totaling $321.15 from the three breakfasts.

The breakfasts take place at 9:00 am on the first Wednesday of each month at Halibut House, 2672 Innes Road. Seniors (55 and over) are welcome to join us on the following dates:

- March 4
- April 1

To help our friends at the restaurant prepare, and as the breakfasts have become quite popular, it is important that you call Shirley at 613-841-7691 to register by the Monday preceding each breakfast.



Thank you to everyone for the gracious donations to the Snowsuit Fund.

Seniors Walk & Talk Outings
On November 19, seven people participated in a beautiful walk at Petrie Island where we saw very friendly chickadees, several ducks and also Canada's national animal, the beaver.

Walk & talks will resume in March (weather permitting) or April at the latest. We had hoped to be able to use a sports dome for the very cold months but that wasn't possible. We will resume as soon as the weather permits. Updates will be on the Blackburn Hamlet Facebook page and on posters in the neighbourhood prior to each walk.

Movie Event
On November 25, seniors were invited to the theatre at Aspira Bearbrook Retirement Living to watch a Christmas movie *(It's a Wonderful Life* with Jimmy Stewart) which was very enjoyable.

Christmas Let It Snow Potluck Dinner and Karaoke
Attendees enjoyed a delicious variety of foods, a Christmas quiz with prizes and a number of great door prizes. The committee did a wonderful job of decorating the Hall and with the very capable assistance of one of our talented seniors, Jack Arsenault, and also with the conscientious and capable assistance of the BCA Secretary, Lynn Lefevre, who was able to help remotely as she couldn't attend in person. We had a great selection of Christmas songs and music for the karaoke utilizing the BCA equipment. Garth Hampson led in the singing with his amazing voice and seniors showed off their seasonal singing skills. We had a young student vol-

unteer, Autumn, (granddaughter of one of our seniors) who was lovely and a great help to the committee in decorating, setting up, taking donations, etc. $121.00 in cash was collected and given to the Snowsuit Fund. That amount was augmented by a further donation – a cheque from the BCA for $500. Thank you to all those who prepared various aspects of this event, brought food, participated and contributed in making this a very successful event. As always, thanks to the BCA for its ongoing support of our activities.



Delicious food was brought by participants to be shared by all.

Lunch at Portugalos – Friday, February 27 at 12pm

Mark your calendars and join us for delicious food and great company. The cost will be $25 plus tax & gratuity. Lunch includes soup or salad, main course and dessert. Please ensure you call Shirley to register by February 24 to help the restaurant prepare as space is limited. Please provide your choice of main course (peri peri chicken, salmon, bifana {pork} sandwich or vegetarian pasta).

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DISCOVERY CAFÉ NEWS

Barbara Whittaker, BCA Director

Discovery Café lectures take place at 7:00 PM at the Blackburn Community Hall, 190 Glen Park Drive, on the fourth Thursday of the month (September to November and January to May). Admission is free, people of all ages are invited, and refreshments will be served.

The last two Discovery Café lectures raised many thought-provoking questions about our water, its safety and the impact we're having on it. In November, Dr. Banu Ormeci explained the work she and her research team has done on the rivers around Ottawa and how they reached the conclusion that the rivers were safe for swimming. She also made the case for greater recreational use of our rivers and why it is so important to look after them. In January, Geneviève Haché explored how "forever chemicals" are impacting our Great Lakes' aquatic life cycles and, by extension, us.

Please join us for these upcoming Discovery Café sessions:

February 26, 2026 – The Future of Wireless Communications Networks: A Foresight towards 2050 – Dr. Halim Yanikomeroglu
Mobile communications and the Internet are among the revolutionary technological achievements of the 20th century, with transformative impacts on our lives and society. With a quarter of the 21st century behind us, the two paradigms with separate origins have become tightly intertwined. Most people access the Internet through their mobile devices and today, Internet access implicitly means mobile Internet, making connectivity essential everywhere. The immersed connectivity of humans, robots and all sorts of devices is expected to become part of our natural lives.

Humanity will demonstrate its full potential in every dimension (economic prosperity, wellbeing, equal opportunity, environmental, and more), when communities get access to ultra-high-speed connectivity in a sustainable, reliable, resilient, intelligent, green/clean/eco-friendly, secure, ubiquitous, and affordable manner.

To that end, in this seminar, we will explore how wireless networks are expected to evolve towards 2050 with terrestrial and non-terrestrial (space and near-space/stratosphere) segments.

Dr. Halim Yanikomeroglu is a Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University, Canada, and the Founding Director of Carleton-NTN (Non-Terrestrial Networks) Lab. His research covers many aspects of communications technologies with emphasis on wireless networks. He is a Fellow of several scholarly societies, has served as a Distinguished Speaker for the IEEE Communications Society and the IEEE Vehicular Technology Society, and has coauthored 700+ peer-reviewed research papers.

For Dr. Yanikomeroglu's complete biography, please visit the BCA website at blackburnhamlet.ca/260226.

March 26, 2026 -- Sleep Update 2026 – Dr. Christopher Skinner
By popular demand, Dr. Christopher Skinner will be returning to Discovery Café, this time to tackle the vitally important topic of sleep. During the session, Dr. Skinner will review the different types of sleep disorders and how these affect daily life; share strategies to recognize and diagnose various sleep disorders; discuss treatments—both pharmacological and non-pharmacological—for sleep disorders; and discuss what can be done to improve your sleep.

Dr. Skinner received his B.Eng (Electrical) from the Royal Military College, and his medical degree from Queen`s, and has served as both a Flight Surgeon Base Surgeon with the Canadian Forces. He received his specialist certification in General Internal and Neurology and qualified as a Diplomat of the American Board of Sleep Medicine in 2005. For Dr. Skinner`s complete biography, please visit the BCA website at blackburnhamlet.ca/260326.

Mark your calendars and watch for more information about Discovery Café in the BCA e-newsletter, on the BCA website, on the Facebook page and on posters around the community.
If you have any suggestions for topics or speakers, please email barbara@blackburnhamlet.ca.

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A Note of Gratitude

Terri Bolster

Mid morning on Sunday, January 11, I was struck by a vehicle on Diceman near Beechmont. I sustained a broken arm and several broken ribs. The shock of the impact resulted in a complete loss of memory of the incident itself, but I learned later that several Good Samaritans came to my assistance to reassure me and keep me comfortable until first responders arrived. I have yet to determine the identity of the kind gentleman who brought blankets from his car to cover me.

In the aftermath of the incident, we were overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from friends and neighbours. I cannot begin to express how grateful and blessed I felt to be surrounded and supported by all of you. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for helping me navigate the most physically and emotionally challenging experience of my life.

Blackburn
FÊTE FORAINE FUNFAIR

FunFair volunteers needed!

The annual Blackburn FunFair is already looking ahead to the summer and wants to grow its volunteer sponsorship team. Come help make a difference by contacting local businesses asking for financial donations or Silent Auction items for this year's fair. Volunteer some time at your own pace and convenience in the spring of 2026 to help our community grow!

Sponsorship not your thing but interested in helping out in other ways? New volunteers are always welcome!

Reach out to Event Chair Steve Vesely for more information at chair@blackburnfunfair.ca.





Blackburn Ladies Softball League Is Back for Another Season

Kimberly Francoeur, VP,
Blackburn Ladies Softball League



The Blackburn Ladies Softball League (BLSL) is returning for its 55th season. The season will span from May until October, with games on Monday and Wednesday evenings.

Each summer, BLSL welcomes ladies of all skill levels to play orthodox-pitch softball. Ladies register as individuals and the executive creates balanced teams.

In 2025, the executive created 6 teams, and the standings were close. The final rankings were only known on the last night of play!

The league offers a recreational environment built around friendly competition, skill development, sportsmanship and inclusion. BLSL offers practices throughout the season, so players can learn new skills and hone their existing ones. The league also offers social activities year-round, including an end-of-season banquet.

The league is preparing for another successful season in 2026. Registration for the season is now open and the league is excited to welcome new players. If you are interested in the league, contact the league vice president at blslvicepresident@gmail.com or register today at www.blackburnladiessoftball.ca/registration

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YOUTH CORNER

BCA Kids & Youth Winter Poetry Contest (Ages 8–17) Calling all young writers and creative minds in Blackburn Hamlet! The BCA is excited to invite kids and youth ages 8 to 17 to take part in our Winter Poetry Writing Contest. Participants are encouraged to write an original poem inspired by winter. Poems can be funny, thoughtful, imaginative or heartfelt—there's no wrong way to express yourself!

Prizes: first place winner will receive a cash prize of $75 and five follow-up winners will each receive $35.

Theme: Winter

Deadline: 11pm on March 13, 2026

How to Enter: Participants must live or attend school in Blackburn Hamlet. Stories must be submitted as a Word file labelled as follows: First Name_Last Name_School_Postal Code (e.g. Melanie_Mathieu _GlenOgilvie_K1B 3C7).

Send to:
youth@blackburnhamlet.ca

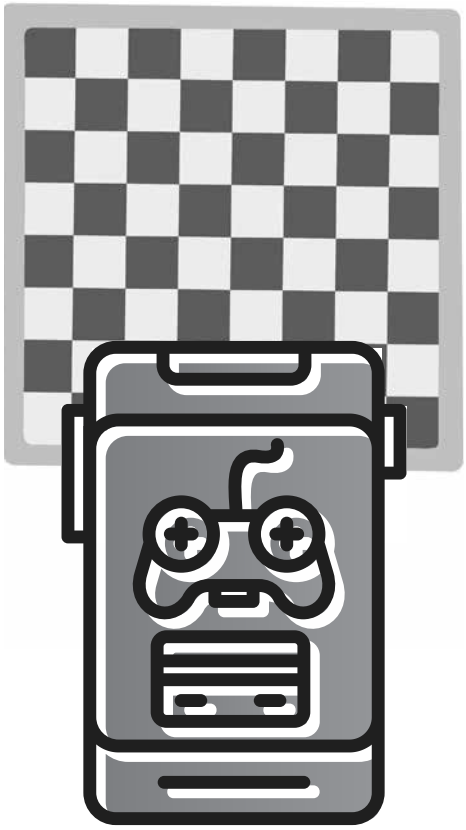
Share your creativity and let your words shine this winter!

Snowperson Contest!
Winter fun is calling! Build your best snow figure, snap a photo of your chilly creation and send it to youth@blackburnhamlet.ca by Sunday, March 6. Include your name(s), age(s), address (this information is for the contest coordinator only) and name of your snowman!



You could **WIN 1 of 3 $50 gift cards to Tim Hortons**—a sweet way to keep you and your family warm and cozy after playing in the snow!

Bundle up, get creative, and show us your best snowy character!



Games and Goodies
For: Kids, youth and their families
When: Saturday February 28
11:30am to 1:30pm
Where: Blackburn Community Hall

Kids, youth and their parents are invited to join us at the hall where there will be a variety of board games available to play, as well as a few video games! Refreshments will be provided.

March Break Madness!!!

Kids and Youth Karaoke
Saturday March 14 from 12:30 to 3pm at Blackburn Community Hall

Grab the mic and shine! This karaoke event is for kids and youth of all ages. No experience needed— whether singing solo or with friends, it's all about fun! Kids 10 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

Kids and Youth Zumba class
Monday March 16 from 2 to 2:45pm and Wednesday March 18 from 4:30 to 5:15pm
Blackburn Community Hall

Kids Zumba (Ages 7+) is a high-energy dance party full of fun music that combines aerobic exercises with fun and easy-to-follow moves! Parents are welcome to join in with their kids. Children 10 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Come dance, laugh, and move together!

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The Community Christmas Tree Brought Us Together

Don Kelly, Coordinator

The annual lighting of the BCA Community Christmas Tree was held on Saturday, December 13, in front of the Blackburn Pharmacy, at the corner of Innes & Southpark. This year the event was held earlier than in previous years to allow more families to attend with their younger children. Although we had a lower attendance than in previous years residents were able to share quality time in the celebration of the Christmas spirit. There were gifts and treats for the kids and hot chocolate served with marshmallows.

Our Councillor, Laura Dudas, and Lou Frangian, owner of the Blackburn Pharmacy, did the official lighting of the tree and the surrounding decorations. It was a joyous occasion and the BCA thanks everyone for their support of this community event.

We hope many more of our residents can join us this December as we once again celebrate the festive season. See you there!



For another year, a beautiful tree and holiday decorations were on display outside the Blackburn Pharmacy!

A Look Back at the 2025 BCA Christmas Market

Don Kelly, Event coordinator

On November 8, 2025, BCA held its annual Christmas Craft Market, an opportunity for local vendors to display their artisan wares. 22 vendors provided the community with a wide assortment of items, ranging from food products to jewelry, household essentials and more. Attendance was down from previous years but still sales were brisk and vendors were pleased.

Again this year, Vendor tables were split between the Community Hall and the Blackburn Arena Event Room. Proceeds from vendor fees went to the Ottawa Hospital in support of mental health programs. The BCA is appreciative to the Ottawa Hospital Foundation for administering the payment process.

The BCA would also like to extend a special thanks to the many volunteers who helped with the event, and a special thanks to Angie Jodoin, Michelle Levac and Nina Ryan for their outstanding support.

We hope to see you all at the 2026 event.

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Annual Santa's Pancake Breakfast was a Big Success!

Don Kelly, Coordinator



Many of Santa's helpers came together to make this event a big success!

On December 6, the BCA held its annual Santa's Pancake Breakfast, with over 300 people attending. An extra sitting was added to accommodate this very popular event. Still, some folks were not able to be accommodated and we are sorry for that. The BCA must follow the Fire Regulations for the Hall, which has a restriction on the number of persons in the building at one time. The BCA will look at this issue and try for a better result for the 2026 Breakfast.

Our guests consumed over 600 buttermilk pancakes, 500 sausages, boxes of mixed fruit including bananas and clementines, a variety of juices and gallons of coffee. Treats and gifts were handed out to children of all ages. A special thanks to Chef Paul and his crew for their incredible presentation and delivery of the food. This year, Mona Fortier, our new Member of Parliament, joined forces with Councillor Dudas to serve many of our guests and chat about the spirit of Christmas. Also contributing to the mighty task of serving 300 people were Sara Antonini and Kimberly Little of Metro, Karl Frangian (Blackburn Pharmacy) and Tammy Bedard (Aspira Retirement Residence). The BCA is appreciative of their strong community support.

Once again, the main attraction for the kids was Santa Claus! Santa was able to find time in his busy schedule to make an appearance at all 4 Sittings to meet with the children, hear what they wanted for Christmas and hand out treats. There was a Canada Post mailbox where the children could write a letter to Santa and have it mailed to the North Pole.

This year's decoration of the Hall was exceptional with a true reflection of Christmas and a spirit of joy and goodwill. The efforts of Angie Jodoin, Michelle Levac and Nina Ryan for such a wonderful display is greatly appreciated. It cannot be overstated how important the role of volunteers are for our events and it is with this thought that the BCA extends an exceptional gratitude to all of the volunteers who participated in this year's event.

See you in December!





Tables and tummies were full of pancakes and joy all morning long.

Keeping the Hamlet Blooming:

Thank You to Our 2025 Watering Crew



Watering Crew: (Top) Chris Dillon, Don Kelly, Mary Comerton, (Bottom) Lisa Margeson, Monica DeRomer, Susie Wilson. Julie Williams, Garth Hampson

Miriam Hampson,
BCA Director of Beautification

The BCA would like to thank a remarkable group of volunteers who gave their time (and sweat!) to keep the four BCA gardens thriving and looking great through the spring, summer and fall of 2025.

18 dedicated volunteers made up the 2025 Watering Crew, committing themselves to the vital task of keeping our public gardens healthy through a particularly hot and dry spring and summer. Their efforts ensured that residents and visitors alike could enjoy vibrant, welcoming green spaces all season long.

A special thank you goes out to Monica DeRomer, Christine Varley, Don Kelly and Garth Hampson, who have been with the watering crew since the very beginning—when the BCA Beautification Initiative was revived 5 years ago. Their long-standing dedication, consistency, and community spirit have truly helped shape the beauty we see around us today.

I would also like to recognize Julie Williams and Alana Fong for lending their creative energy—and plenty of muscle—to help me re-design two of the BCA gardens this year. Their vision and hands-on work brought fresh life to these spaces, making them more vi-

Continued on next page 21

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ABOVE: Watering Crew: (Top) Mary Comerton, Christine Varley, Frank Bedard, Garth Hampson, Miriam Hampson, Christina McNiven, Debbie Jolley, (Bottom) Tammy Bedard, Monica DeRomer. Missing: Alyna Reesor, Andre Demers and Jaclyn O'Shaughnessy, Karen Barrington and Os Hoch

Continued from page 20

brant, sustainable, and enjoyable for all.

To every member of the Watering Crew (past and present): thank you for helping the Hamlet bloom. Your contributions have left a lasting impact, not just in flowers and foliage, but in the heart and entry points of our beautiful community.

BELOW: Garden Crew: Julie Williams, Miriam Hampson, Alana Fong



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Councillor's Update

Laura Dudas

There is an old joke that Ottawa really only has two seasons: winter and construction. Although we may be in the middle of winter, the freeze-thaw cycles, with their sudden melts and quick refreezes and the damage they cause to our roads, naturally turn our thoughts to the season ahead.

After years of fighting to get the section of Innes Road in Blackburn Hamlet (from Bypass to Bypass) repaved, the work is on the books, and fully funded, in 2026! This has been a long time in the works and could not proceed until the required work that tore into the old asphalt, from cathodic protection work (hole drilling to preserve the water pipes) to road cuts from developments, was complete. Add to that the initial assessment and engineering work needed to commence a repaving job that was done last year, and, pun intended, the road is paved for construction to start in the coming months.

This was the last stretch of Innes Road on my radar, with the remainder in our community, extending from Blair to Prestwick, already completed over the past several years. This roadway is a vital artery in our community, and I am very pleased that we will finally see the entire corridor renewed.

Much of our community was built in the 60s and 70s, with some areas even older

Much of our community was built in the 60s and 70s, with some areas even older, which is why I have focused so heavily on infrastructure renewal. Visible projects like Eastpark Drive's resurfacing, the expansion at Lois Kemp Arena, the new Blackburn splash pad, and extensive sidewalk and pathway replacements are only part of the work. Less visible but equally important upgrades have included new sewer culverts, new cathodic protection systems for our drinking water systems, and improvements to street lighting and wastewater infrastructure. These may not be as exciting or visible, but they are essential to keeping our community one of the best places to live in Ottawa.

Beyond Innes Road, other renewal projects will also continue in 2026. Sections of Northpark Drive will be repaved, with the ironworks also replaced; the pathway from Agnes Purdy Park to École Sainte-Marie will be rebuilt; and the Bearbrook Outdoor Rink will be levelled and resurfaced along with new side boards.

It may still be winter, but we are heading into a busy construction season as we give many aging pieces of infrastructure a much-needed refresh. As a Blackburn resident myself, I know how much pride we take in our community and how important it is to keep it well maintained.

There is always more to do, and I will continue pushing for greater investment. I am always grateful to everyone who shares their ideas and thoughts on what you would like to see renewed or added in our community.

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5 Outdoor Activities to do in Blackburn Hamlet in Winter

Jaclyn O'Shaughnessy

The days are cold, the snow is deep, but there are so many ways to have fun outdoors during the winter in Blackburn Hamlet! Bundle up and check out this list of 5 things to do outside:



A creation by Nathan O. and his mom.

Make a snowman! Get creative with accessories, give it a name, and snap a photo! Kids can enter the BCA Snowperson contest until March 6. Get more info on page 16.

Go sledding! There are lots of hills around the Hamlet, so grab your sleds, your friends and your warm clothes and go for it!

Lace up your skates at one of our awesome outdoor rinks, or the Blackburn Arena!

Walk (or snowshoe!) around the snow-covered trails, forests and fields. Breathe the fresh air and see if you can spot some of the many wintry birds and animals who hang out here all winter.

Make ice cream in the snow! Find a clean area of snow, grab a metal bowl, some whipping cream and your choice of flavour or sweetener, and get mixing! The longer you stir, the thicker the ice cream! You can find countless recipes online.



Sisters grabbing their sleds and heading for the hills!



What's Happening at the Blackburn Hamlet Library?

Stop by and check out what your library has to offer, from new books, express items, museum passes, online databases, magazines, and so much more. Feel free to register or drop in for one of our programs!

Family Storytime / Contes en famille
Stories, rhymes, and songs for children ages 0-6, accompanied by a parent or caregiver.
Wednesdays at 10:30 am.
Winter Session runs from January 14 – March 4, 2026.

Babytime / Bébés à la biblio
Stories, rhymes and songs for babies and a parent or caregiver. 0-18 months.
Tuesdays at 10 am. Winter session runs from January 13 – March 3, 2026.

Contes, comptines et chansons pour les bébés et un parent ou gardien. 0 à 18 mois.
Les mardis à 10 h 30. La session d'hiver est du 13 février 3 mars, 2026.

Sensory Storytime / Contes sensoriels
This program features open play, a short story time, and the chance to connect with other families. A family member or caregiver must be present for the duration of the program. This program provides a welcoming environment and respects the needs of children from 18 months to 6 years who live with developmental disabilities and/or autism, or who show signs of a developmental delay.
Saturdays, February 14 and 28, 2026 – 10:30-11:30 am
Saturdays, March 14 and 28, 2026 – 10:30-11:30 am
Saturdays, April 11 and 25, 2026 – 10:30-11:30 am

Chess Club
Join us for open games of chess every Tuesday from 3:30 to 5 pm. Whether you are a beginner or more advanced, this is a relaxed environment where everyone is welcome. Bring your own board or borrow one of ours. Drop-in program. Age 7+.

Homework Help / Aide aux devoirs
Get help with reading, math, science, French, English, etc. Led by United for Literacy volunteers. For students in grades 1 through 10. Please note: A parent or caregiver for children participating in Homework Help must remain in the library while their child is being assisted.
Tuesdays from 6-7:30 pm. Winter session starts January 13, 2026

Reçois de l'aide avec la lecture, les maths, les sciences, le français, l'anglais, etc. Avec des bénévoles de Littératie Ensemble. Pour les élèves de la 1e à la 10e année. Notez bien: Les parents ou gardiens doivent rester dans la bibliothèque pendant la séance de leur enfant.
Les mardis de 18 h 00 – 19 h 30. La session d'hiver débute le 13 janvier, 2026

Blackburn Hamlet Book Chat:
Share the enjoyment of good books in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. Third Monday of every month. New members welcome.
Monday, February 23, 2026 – 2-3pm – *The Foulest Thing* by Amy Tector
Monday, March 16, 2026 - 2-3pm – *The Company We Keep* by Frances Itani
Monday, April 20, 2026 – 2-3pm – *Spare* by Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex

Club de lecture français pour adultes
Joignez-vous à nous pour des discussions conviviales à propos de livres en français.
Le jeudi, 19 février 2026 – 15 h 00 – 16 h 00 - Houris par Kamel Daoud

Groupe de conversation en anglais / Conversation group
Vous avez déjà une base en anglais et vous cherchez un endroit avec une ambiance décontractée et amicale pour pratiquer vos habiletés de converser en anglais? Joignez-vous à notre groupe de conversation en anglais! Recevez des conseils, rencontrez de nouvelles personnes et gagnez de la confiance à converser en anglais.
Les lundis de 18 h 00 à 19 h 30. La session débute le 12 janvier 2026.

Group de conversation en français pour adultes / Adult French Conversation Group
Participez à notre groupe de conversation, dans une ambiance amicale et décontractée, afin d'améliorer vos habiletés à converser en français.
Les mercredis de 18 h 30 à 19 h 30. La

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session débute le 14 janvier, 2026.

Participate in our conversation group so that you can improve your French language conversation skills in a relaxed and friendly environment.
Wednesdays from 6:30 – 7:30 pm. Session starts on January 14, 2026.

Spanish Conversation Group
Fun and friendly environment to practice your Spanish skills. Various levels are welcome, meet the volunteer and let us know what you're learning goals are! Adult drop-in program.
Fridays from 3-4 pm. Session starts on January 16, 2026.

BH Technology – Question & Answer Sessions
Our BH Tech group will be available to assist you with basic tech questions, as well as point you in the right direction for topics we do not handle. Please bring your own device and library card.
Monday, February 2, 2026 – 3-4 pm
Monday, March 2, 2026 – 3-4 pm
Monday, April 13, 2026 – 3-4 pm

Knit and Crochet Club / Club de Tricot et de crochet
Bring your knitting or crochet project (or needlepoint, cross-stitch, etc.) and share tips and tricks, ideas, and conversations with fellow enthusiasts. For adults of all abilities.
Every Thursday from 6:30 - 8 pm

A Morning of Fun and Games for Adults! Une matinée de jeux et de plaisir pour adultes!
Do you love playing cards like Euchre? Chess? Any game goes! We will provide an assortment of games, but you're welcome to bring your own board games, too.
Join us every Monday from 10 am-12 pm

Watercolour Connect / Aquarelle
Join us for a watercolour painting session, no experience necessary and supplies are provided.
Wednesday, February 25, 2026 - 2-3:15 pm
Wednesday, March 25, 2026 - 2-3:15 pm

Coloring For the Mind – Adult Coloring Club / Art-thérapie - Club de coloriage pour adultes!
Coloring can have a calming effect on the mind and promote wellness! Join us for a fun and relaxing adult coloring session. All supplies are provided. No registration is required. This is not a course.
Wednesday, February 11 - 2-3:15 pm
Wednesday, March 11 – 2-3:15 pm
Wednesday, April 8 – 2-3:15 pm

My First Job in Canada / Mon premier employ au Canada
Learn how to land your first job in Canada successfully. This workshop will review job search strategies, resume writing, and interview preparation. Offered by YMCA of the National Capital Region.
Monday, January 26, 2026 – 2-4 pm

Apprenez comment décrocher votre premier emploi au Canada avec succès. Cet atelier passera en revue les stratégies de recherche d'emploi, la rédaction de CV et la préparation aux entrevues. Offerte par le YMCA de la région de la capitale nationale.
Le lundi 26 janvier, 2026 – 14 h 00 à 16 h 00

Fun with fonts – the art and science of typography
Dive into the fascinating world of typography with Chris Taylor, President of the Ottawa PC Users' Group. Chris will demystify the terminology of typography and
Continued on page 26



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explore its rich history. Learn what makes a typeface readable or distracting, how to effectively combine multiple typefaces, and the emotions different fonts can evoke.
Saturday, February 28, 2026 – 2-3:30 pm

Artificial Intelligence (AI) – fun and useful tips
Artificial intelligence (AI) tools have exploded over the last few years. They can: supercharge your web searches & help you find the most relevant information; generate images & videos from text prompts; summarize web pages, YouTube videos, & PDF files; help you accomplish tasks in your programs; assist with creative writing; and more. Chris Taylor from the Ottawa PC Users' Group will show you how easily it can be done and how to avoid dreaded "AI hallucinations". And you can do it for free.
Thursday, January 29, 2026 – 1-2:30 pm

A Blackburn Story – Fill in the Blanks!

To play: Before reading the story, select words at random according to the list below. Then use the selected words to fill in the story – the funnier the better!

WORD LIST:
1. _____ (adjective)
2. _____ (verb ending in "ing")
3. _____ (plural noun)
4. _____ (noun)
5. _____ (repeat noun from #4)
6. _____ (noun)
7. _____ (noun - animal/creature)
8. _____ (plural noun)
9. _____ (verb, past tense)
10. _____ (verb, past tense)
11. _____ (adjective)
12. _____ (place in Blackburn)
13. _____ (adjective)
14. _____ (adjective)

One _____ winter day in Blackburn Hamlet, I was _____ down Innes Road with my _____. Out of nowhere, a _____ came around the corner. The _____ was tall, wearing a green _____ and walking a _____ on a leash.

We walked together to the library, where I stopped to find a book about _____. Then, I _____ to Bearbrook Park and _____ on the swings. When I got _____, I went to _____ and had lunch. After lunch, I went home for a _____ nap. It was a _____ day in Blackburn Hamlet!


Bearbrook Park playground.

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