

Courting Beauty

The Gardener's Courtyard is a treasure trove for fine collectibles

By DEBORAH QUAILE

At the Gardener's Courtyard owner Dawndeanna Murphy makes friends of her customers and visitors, enthusiastically and wholeheartedly welcoming them into her treasure trove of fine collectibles. Her warm family atmosphere from home spills over into work, a place where children can enjoy a chocolate after patiently waiting for their parent, or a regular customer is offered a 15 per cent discount in appreciation for their valuable contribution to the community-rooted business.

"I enjoy talking to people - the personal interaction makes me feel good. Come in," she invites, pausing here and there to show off some of the most unique items. There are treats for all senses at The Gardener's Courtyard, from the rich perfume of beeswax candles, the trickle of soothing water fountains, to satiny soft bears or furry pets. New products are constantly arriving, especially collectors' items from the Bradford lines.

Bubbling with ideas and enthusiasm, Ms. Murphy has expanded business with a website for mail order sales. The site provides customers with colour photos of products, detailed information and discounted pricing. For those who cannot get to the shop, the site is easy to maneuver and ready for business any time of day.

Even her quiet moments at the store are filled with work, as Ms. Murphy stitches handmade quilts from baby to twin size. They make great gifts for Christmas, and can be special ordered.

"I'm looking forward to Christmas and the new year. There are lots of special items coming in now for all the autumn and winter holidays, from Halloween to Christmas."

In fact, it's like Christmas all year at The Gardener's Courtyard. The cheerful glow of twinkle and icicle lights brightens the ceiling, and a hanging tree displays ornaments. Around the rest of the room are items for any age group, from Avril Scott's children's clothing (up to size 5) to Lena Liu or Thomas Kinkade collectibles. A selection of Harry Potter ware is situated beside the front door, and farther inside are planters, books, fairies, votives and musical dolls. Outside are garden metal sculptures by Indigo Design Canadian artist A.P. Thurston.

Intriguing resin playing boards beg for outdoor games enthusiasts - who could resist playing tic-tac-toe with frogs and dragonflies, or toads and turtles? The back-to-school crowd might appreciate a furry backpack clip-on, or a plush pet water bottle cover. Younger children love the "Godzippa" or "Hippazippa" lines - fun pajama bags for overnight jaunts at grandparents' or friends' homes.



What customers eagerly await each year is the Big Birthday Bash during the entire month of September when The Gardener's Courtyard offers from 20 to 75 per cent off items throughout the store. Purchasers of in-store Bradford items will receive a 30 per cent discount. This is the fourth annual sale featuring specials at the door, free treats for the kids, a barbecue by the Emporium, music, a clown, and a kids' craft table on weekends. If you're buying a gift for a far-flung relative, it's important to note that every item can be shipped free of charge in Canada. And if they're looking for a personalized present, customers can have gift baskets made up for babies, children or adults, and gift-wrapping is free - a particular boon in the onset of the upcoming holiday season.

Ms. Murphy's spirit of giving, honesty, and attention to detail is evident in every nook of The Gardener's Courtyard, a store where the bottom line is not the end of the line. In an effort to assist various local groups to raise money, Ms. Murphy donates 15% of special sales to parents or workers of organizations that meet certain sales amounts, such as Milton District High, Animal Aid, the women's shelter, Milton Gymnastics and Brookville School.

In part, she takes her philosophy from a favourite children's book about Miss Rumphius, a retired schoolteacher. In the tale, the teacher wanted to give back some beauty to the world, and threw handfuls of wildflower seeds as she took her daily walk. Little by little as years passed, the flowers grew and bloomed, and re-seeded to provide even more loveliness to the countryside. After the teacher died, local children were amazed at the wonderful contribution that the teacher provided.

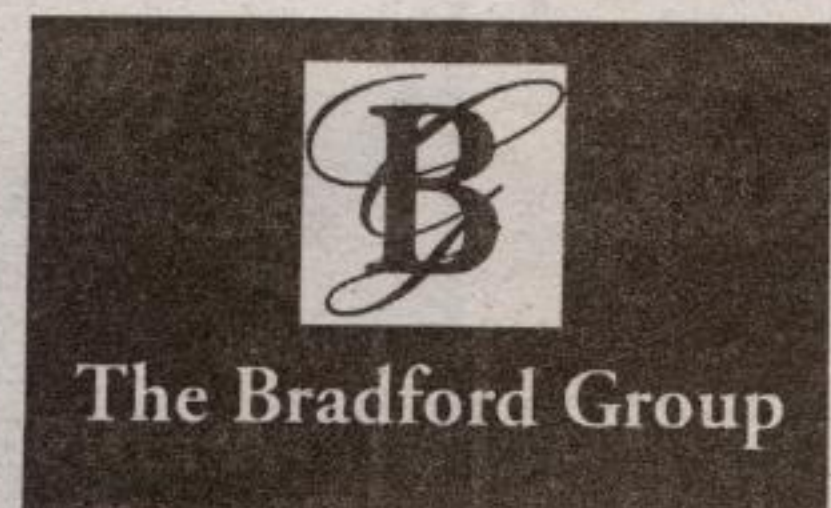
"That's how I feel," Ms. Murphy relates. "I want to bring beauty here, to show more gratitude for life."

4th Birthday Celebration at The Gardener's Courtyard

Save from **20** to **75%** off the entire stock!

BBQ from the Emporium every weekend - \$2 hotdogs and hamburgers
Sale runs September 1 to 30, 2002

Kids' Craft Table, Clown, Music and Prizes! Other vendors included in our celebration! Enter our FREE draw for a doll!



- Garden Sculptures - Waterfalls & Fountains
- Unique Wall Plaques & Thermometers
- Sundials & Stepping Stones - Collectibles, Musicals & Giftware
- Candles & Fragrances - Collectible Bears & Dolls
- Fairies - Angels - Harry Potter and so much more!

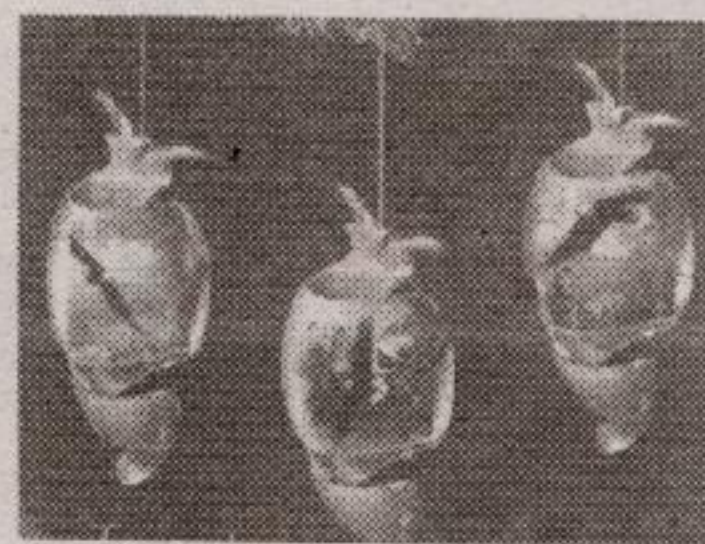


The "Bless Our Home" Collection

Limited Edition Ornaments from...

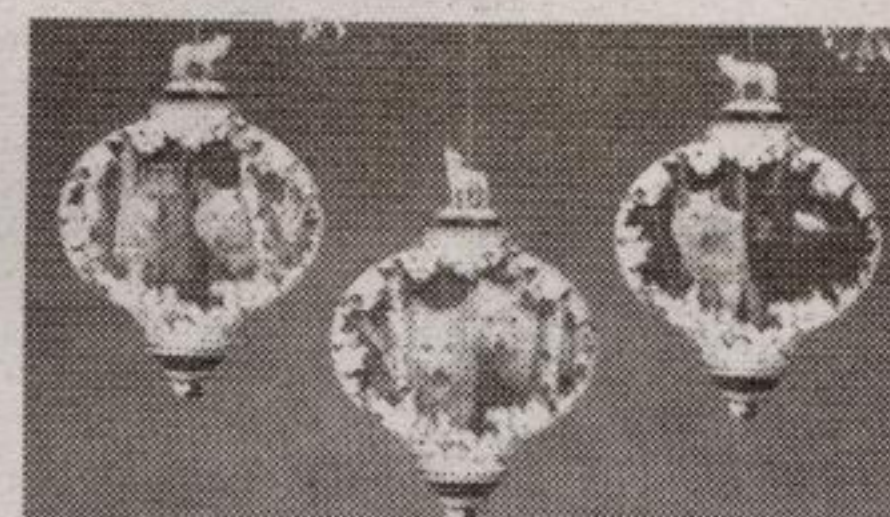


The Bradford Editions
A Division of The Bradford Exchange



On Eagles' Wings

In-stock Bradford Exchange products are 30% off (excluding Thomas Kinkade Items)

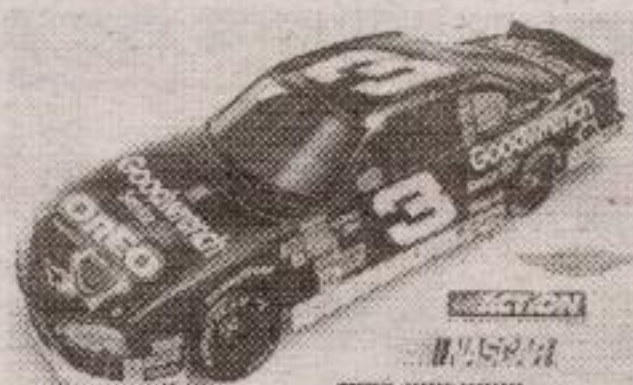


Spirits of the Forest

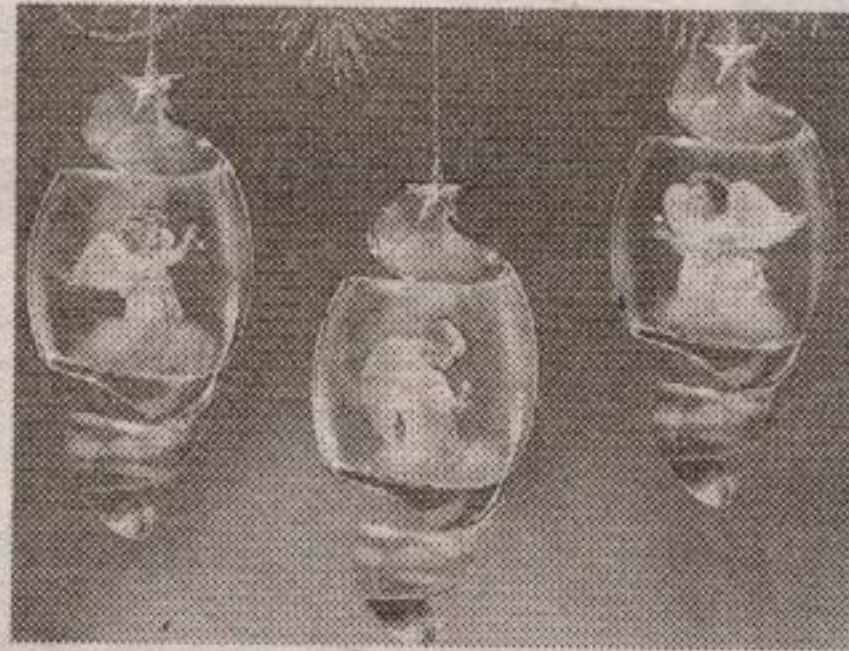
Spirit of the Night



Tinkerbell's Fairy Dust Dreams



Dale Earnhardt Collectibles



Starlight Blessings Ornaments

Gathering Roses



Angel Toes



Cherry



Precious Moments Communion Dolls



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