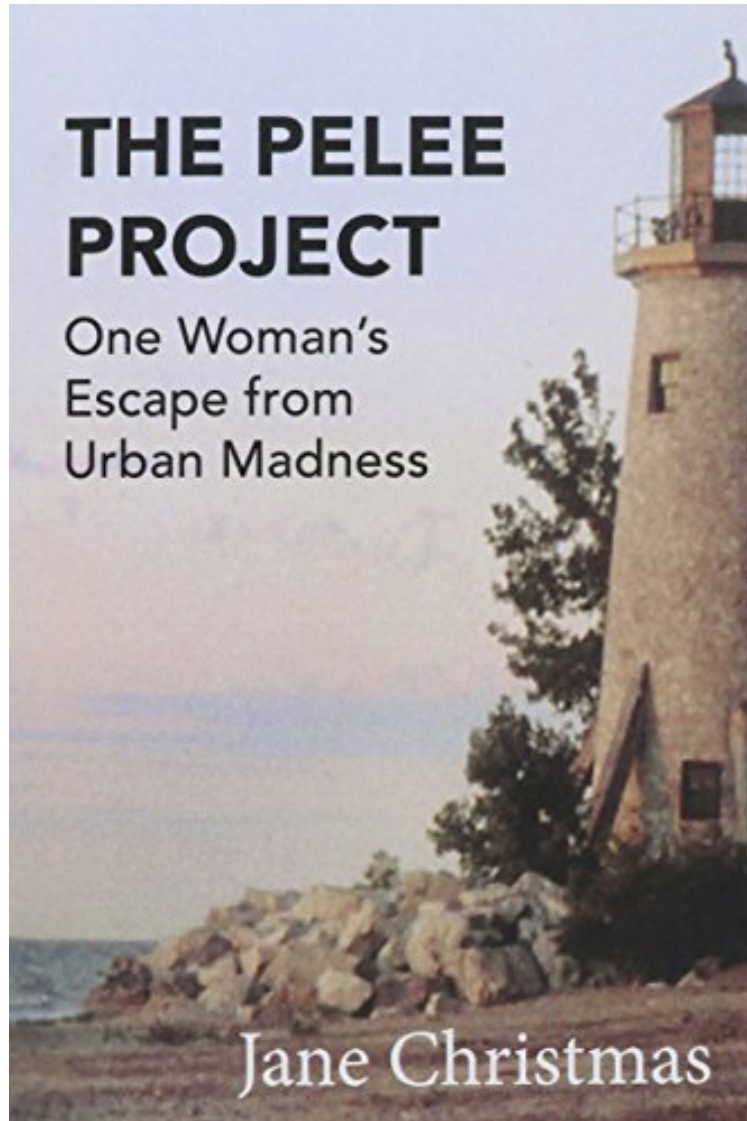


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## The Pelee Project: One Woman's Escape from Urban Madness

*Jane Christmas*

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**Jane Christmas : The Pelee Project: One Woman's Escape from Urban Madness** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Pelee Project: One Woman's Escape from Urban Madness:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Difficulties of Simple LivingBy takingadayoffHaving read and enjoyed two books by Jane Christmas this year, I tracked down a copy of her first book, The Pelee Project: One Woman's Escape from Urban Madness. Her more recent two books are travel narratives, in which she goes on well-

intentioned trips that are roller coaster rides of disastrous events and humorous encounters. Christmas's first book lacks the humor of her later works. It may be because the subject is more serious. She survives a car accident that leaves her car such a tangled wreck that when the emergency responders arrive, they assume the occupant is dead. But she walks away with no serious injuries at all, just a new awareness that she has a second chance and it is time to make some life changes. Deciding that she has too much - too many obligations, too much stuff, too many "friends," and not enough tranquility, she thinks that getting away for a few months will clear her mind. She's charmed by a small island in the middle of Lake Erie and arranges to move there for three months. She quits her job as an editor at a major newspaper but hires on as a freelance writer to report on her project in series of columns. Her older children decide to stay with their father (her ex) rather than go into exile for the winter, but her youngest, 10-year-old Zoe, is game for something different. It's interesting to find out how others tackle simplicity. There are so many options, with many people deciding to make locally-grown food a priority or perhaps frugality takes precedence. Moving to a home where you can become self-sufficient may work for you, while others may practice simple living in their urban apartment. Christmas makes spirituality a major part of her new simple life. A colleague later told her he enjoyed her articles, but admitted that he didn't like "the God bits." That makes two of us. Not only does she reconnect with the church, but she finds comfort in various new age-y self-help books. Excessive shopping and unhealthy eating were other areas that were easier to tackle on an isolated island. There were limited shopping options and cooking at home was the only option for most meals. Shopping malls and fast food were out of reach for weeks at a time. Mainly, the retreat was an opportunity for Christmas to slow down and contemplate what was most important to her and to make some plans about how to keep her priorities intact when she returned to city life. Christmas is easy to sympathize with, even if you don't always agree with her decisions. But for pure entertainment value, I'd have to recommend her other books instead -- *Incontinent on the Continent: My Mother, Her Walker, and Our Grand Tour of Italy* and *What the Psychic Told the Pilgrim: A Midlife Misadventure on Spain's Camino de Santiago*. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. *Island Living* By V. Mettler As a person who has spent the majority of her life living full time on a Lake Erie Island, I can honestly say Jane Christmas presents life the way it really is. Frozen island winters are both a delight and a challenge. I recommend this book for anyone who would like to put an island in their life. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Memoir* By Judith M. Watkins It was clearly one woman's idea of how to escape life for awhile but it is not practical for most women who have responsibilities in the world. The writing was okay but bogged down some in the middle.

Back in 2000, Jane Christmas was, like millions of others, an exhausted single working mother with a punishing agenda of work, domestic, and parenting duties. Weekdays were an urban triathlon, weekends evaporated into mile-long to-do lists. Jane found herself drained, living beyond her means emotionally, physically, and financially. She dreamed of a simpler life, but, like everyone else, worried about the consequences of disconnecting from the frenetic working world. A highway accident changed all that. After walking away from a crash that should have killed her, she did the unthinkable and booked a three-month leave of absence from her job, put her home up for sale, and moved with her 10-year-old daughter to Pelee Island, a remote community of 180 in the middle of Lake Erie. Does the absence of a pedal-to-the-metal schedule freak her out, or does it transform her from den mother to Zen mother? Jane published a 15-part series about her sabbatical in the *National Post*, and her adventure caused an immediate and huge buzz. Readers were captivated by someone who had the nerve to put the brakes on life. The Pelee Project is Jane's full memoir of her hilarious faux pas, anecdotes, and epiphanies on the island, all told in that refreshingly honest voice that attracted so many to her columns. The Pelee Project is an inspiring tale of personal transformation and self-discovery.