

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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Don McDonald, Publisher

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Merry Christmas

Here's to a Yule that's brimming with fun in the season's special and joyful mood. Our best to you and yours this Holiday Season.



Santa's spirit alive here

There's a great myth about Santa Claus being spread around the world. This myth could have wide spread significance for millions.

To the masses, there is no such thing as Santa. He is a figment of a child's imagination, and is a toy manufacturer's dream. Yet, to a handful of people, Santa is very real, and will live forever.

Until a child reaches the age of ten or 11, he or she is brought up to believe in the jolly old man who will give them whatever they want at Christmas if they are good. For a few years they are pretty sure there is no such person as Santa, but don't say anything out loud just in case they are wrong, or just in case mom or dad won't get them anything if they voice their belief.

Once the myth of Santa is shattered, suddenly the Easter Bunny is no longer real, the tooth fairy absolute nonsense and summer holidays become numbered.

But little do most people know, Santa Claus is alive and living in the hearts of thousands, maybe even millions of people.

The fact billions of dollars are spent each year on friends and relatives shows that St. Nick touches everyone's hearts, even if just a bit.

But, the real spirit of Santa comes out of the thousands of people who donate money, gifts or food to special funds launched at Christmas to give a little cheer to the poor and less fortunate. He is especially strong in the hearts of volunteers in those organizations who donate their spare time at one of the busiest times of the year to gather and distribute the donations. Many work on Christmas Eve getting the last of the care packages to the needy families in hopes of giving those less fortunate a Merry Christmas.

Yes, Santa is alive, but not just at Christmas time.

Santa was alive in Terry Fox during his nation-wide marathon to raise funds for cancer. And Santa was alive in the millions of people who donated money and cheered as the young cancer-victim trudged across the country.

Santa was alive in all those who gave money to the Italian ear-

thquake relief funds, and he was alive in all those who organized the telethons, fund raising campaigns etc.

Proof of Santa's existence has been shown many times here in Acton in the past.

Last year, when a young mother and her young daughter were killed while on a Christmas family holiday in the United States, Santa was alive in the many people who gave to a special fund for the surviving husband and daughter.

The town hall restoration committee members have a large chunk of Santa in their hearts as they work to raise funds to save a part of our heritage. All the people who put out \$100 for Actario tickets look through Santa-coloured glasses.

And then there's the hard workers on all the sports groups—hockey, baseball, soccer, figure skating, to name a few, all unpaid volunteers, doing a job they feel must be done. There's ho ho ho in their hearts.

And leaders of other groups in town, the scouts, brownies, guides, cubs, beavers, CGIT, youth groups. They are all special people for giving of their time and talents.

There's the Rotary, the Optimists, Lions, Walker's Lodge, Y's Men, Y's Menettes, Opti-Mrs., Legion members and all the other charitable organizations in town.

There's the Heart Fund, the Cancer Society, the Red Cross, the CNIB campaigners and many others. All volunteers, all showing that the Santa spirit is in all of us, year round.

The word Santa does not have to go hand in hand with the word Christmas. It goes hand in hand with generosity, caring, humanity, and love. Santa is not a myth, but a human quality.

So the next time your child says they don't believe in Santa Claus you tell them—he is very real, very much alive. And someday, he'll see, whether it is from the giving or receiving end. But he'll see that in spite of all the wars and hatred, and in spite of all the sickness and starvation, Santa is very much alive in the world. Someday it's just a little harder to be sure than others.—H.J.M.



On the Leavell

With Helen

In the whatever happened to department: former Free Press sports editor Denis Gibbons has recently been appointed news editor of the Burlington Post, a sister paper of this newspaper. Denis got his journalistic start here in Acton. With the birth of the Georgetown Independent, Denis became as well known in that town as at home for his sports knowledge and writing ability. Just over two years ago, Denis was named sports editor of the now defunct Kitchener paper. A while back, he was given the same title at The Post.

Congratulations Denis on your promotion.

Janis Fread was the lucky winner of the Theta Phi Sorority's recent draw. Her prize—a \$100 voucher from Loblaw's. She has regional Councillor Dave Whiting to thank for pulling her ticket.

Having Christmas visitors? Let me know and I'll pass the news along. Students home for the holidays, parents visiting offspring, it's all news. Give me a call here at the paper, 853-2010.

A big welcome to town is extended to Herb and Tera Jackson, mom and dad of Councillor Terry Grubbe. They're up from Sarnia for holidays. Welcome is also extended to Ken and Eleanor Fox and son Steve, from the Boston area who are visiting with daughter (and sister) Janet Fleming and family.

I love Christmas, with all the bright

lights, colorful trees, gaily wrapped presents, and all the emotions that go with the season.

In spite of this being such a happy season, there is always a certain amount of sadness. No other time of the year reminds you more of a lost loved one who you can't share the day with. And no other season emphasizes the poverty right on our own doorstep.

But this is the season when families get together to exchange gifts, share love, and enjoy each other's company the way it isn't shared the rest of the year.

The love in one's heart to squeeze just a few more dollars out of an empty wallet to get that extra something for someone close is overwhelming.

Even those who do not believe in any sort of religion can still enjoy Christmas. The church aspect is extremely important, but just the chance to show your love is important to everyone.

I wish all my friends in Halton Hills a very Merry Christmas, but I want to extend special greetings to my family in Collingwood, and Gord's in Brampton and Mississauga, without whose love Christmas would seem like just any other day.



Members of the Second Acton (Trinity) cubs gave gifts to Santa Friday night, a novel twist. Santa then passed the gifts on to the Acton Salvation Army to be distributed to the needy. Here Rosemary Kenny helps Scott Holmes and Joey Brillinger give gifts to Santa.



Adam Franklin can't take his eyes off Santa, during Sunday afternoon's Christmas party at the Legion.



Jason Neely shows concentration as he tries to knock over the pins in Sunday's Christmas party at the Legion.

Back issues

10 years ago

Tuesday, December 22, 1970

Santa arrived at the Beardmore party by snowmobile with charming helpers Anita Thibodeau and Rosemary Bird and had a bagful of gifts for about 260 children. Company president Norm Braida and his wife welcomed guests.

Pete Morrison and Brad Timbers have been named to tri-county all-star hockey teams.

Halton Sheriff Andrew Frank is retiring after 13 years.

A slave auction helped raise funds for the high school Christmas assembly. Highest price of \$6 went for Wally Rowley and his pet hamster. Other teachers up for auction included Sue Burns, Kathy Ott, Ken Ellis and John Cristello.

A crowd of about 200 enjoyed what must be about the 10th annual Christmas concert of Acton Citizens Band. Guests were the Legion Choralliers. Tables were set up cabaret style.

20 years ago

Thursday, December 22, 1960

Below zero weather failed to deter about 110 youngsters who waited anxiously for Santa's helicopter to touch down at Acton park Saturday. He made his annual visit on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce retail section. He drew the name of Mrs. Robert Foyers from the drum and presented her with \$60 in the merchants Free Living draw. Corp. Ray Mason fought to restrain the throng of children. At the arena, Santa handed out candy canes and apples.

The Robert Little auditorium was packed for the Home and School meeting which featured a musical program; this year it was M.Z. Bennett school's turn to give a Christmas concert. Glenn Banks was in charge. President Bill Wilson asked parents' support for the Home and School's plan to start libraries in the schools. The goal is \$1,000.

Postmaster G. McKeown says the sale of two cents stamps is higher than last year by 10,000.

50 years ago

Wednesday, December 24, 1930

The annual At Home of the high school in the town hall was one of the most meritorious. The program was in charge of Rev. P.A. Sawyer. Diplomas were graciously presented by the chairman of the board Mr. E. Beswick to Misses Marjory Garden, Helen Ostrander, Doris McDonald and Mildred Hollinger. Miss Hollinger took all her subjects outside of school while working at Mason Knitting Company. The medals won at field day were presented to Margaret Chalmers, Mae Bruce, Stewart Lantz and Wallace Swackhamer. A special prize for the encouragement of athletics went to Barbara Taylor. Miss Doris McDonald was valedictorian. A musical program ended with the school song and yell. Lunch was served, followed by promenades and dancing with music supplied by the Misses Mason.

The Christmas entertainment at the Baptist church was a double affair, supper and entertainment, presided over by superintendent E. Coles.

Omar Gidney won the huge candy cane in Harold Wiles' windows with the closest guess of its weight.

75 years ago

December 21, 1905

The annual Christmas entertainment by St. Alban's Sunday School was held in the town hall. Instead of a cantata the program consisted of dialogues, choruses, instrumental solos and stereopticon views. Mr. George Hildebrand operated the picture machine. Much of the success of the entertainment was due to the rector, Mr. Wilson.

The Christmas entertainment of the Methodist Sunday School included stories told by Mrs. A.T. Brown, Misses Clara Moore and Marie Goodeve and Mr. H.P. Moore, music by the orchestra, presentation of diplomas and the distribution of the usual Christmas treats. The graduating class comprises Dorothy Nelson, Nora Kenney, Leonard Atkinson, Gordon Rice, John Coleman, William Robertson and Bertie Taylor.

There seemed to be more homecoming at Christmastide this year than usual. Many young people enjoyed skating both afternoon and evening on Fairy Lake.

100 years ago

Thursday, December 23, 1880

The public schools will close for vacation today. Examinations today.

Remember the poor at Christmas time. The post office will be closed on Christmas Day from 10 a.m. to four p.m.

Skating rink opens on Christmas afternoon.

A shooting match will be held at Nicklin's mill on Christmas Day.

Dame Rumor says that five members of Acton Brass Band intend joining the ranks of double blessedness this winter.

The entertainment in connection with St. Alban's Sabbath School in the Temperance Hall was well-attended.

A very successful entertainment was held in the Baptist Church.

Our readers write

Warn of obscene caller

Dear Sir,
I would like to warn parents in this area that there is a sick young man making obscene phone calls.
Last night his victim was my eight-year-old daughter whose name and age he asked before beginning his sick quest-

ioning, etc.
Please warn your small children, boys and girls, not to give out any information on the phone and to promptly hang up on any such caller.
The Halton Regional Police are aware of this call and others.

Name withheld

Photo by IVA KNECHTEL