

Santa Claus pays an early visit to a Georgetown family

By LAURA SALVERDA
Special to the Independent/Free Press

It was a Christmas to remember. The sun shone, the food flowed, and the temperature never sank below 25 degrees — Celsius, that is.

For Pat Waskalik, Christmas '93 was just a little early that's all.

"My sister Marlene in Sudbury always said, 'the only way we will ever get together at Christmas is if you have it in July,'" Waskalik said. And so she did.

The four long months of preparation showed. The Delrex Blvd. house in Georgetown was overflowing with Christmas goodies, including her treasured Dickens' village.

The outdoor decorations included an iron reindeer, Santa and sleigh and what would Christmas be without snow? Since the real stuff was a little out of season, plastic snow had to do.

"Last night (last Friday) lots of people were stopping and staring. Some even came to the door to find out what was going on.

"There was a group of young people walking by and one of the boys came over and felt the snow. It's really attracting a lot of attention," she continued.

Hundreds of tiny lights were strung around the outdoor orna-

ments and across the front of the house.

"My son-in-law got up there on the roof last week when it was about 30 degrees outside and strung up the lights. It was pretty hot up there, but he stayed up and finished the job," Waskalik said.

Waskalik was overwhelmed by

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— Pat Waskalik

the generosity of her friends and relatives.

"They all thought it was such a fantastic idea, and they have all done so much. One of my friends brought dinner over last night for nine, because she knew how busy I was," Waskalik said. "Now is that a good friend or what?"

The Christmas party also turned

into a Lennon family reunion with Waskalik's relatives on her mother's side.

"We are reuniting my mother, Verna Beaton, with her remaining brother and sister, Don Lennon and Eva Newton. They came from a family of eight and there are only the three left.

"Some of these people, haven't seen each other in 30 years," she said.

And they were all coming. Some from the local area, and some from as far away as Vancouver and Connecticut.

Waskalik sent stockings to everyone to fill with "innovative and inexpensive items." And she had Christmas gift bags overflowing with little treasures for everyone to take home.

"Half of the fun of doing this was finding Christmas things at this time of year," she laughed.

From snowman doorknob covers to "Beary Merry" pencils, her search was definitely a success.

"We have Santa Claus coming (aka family friend, Ed Smellie) and after dinner we will be carolling," Waskalik said.

As she sat before her Christmas tree, opening a present from her best friend, Waskalik was close to tears.

"Having friends like this makes you want to cry," she said as she held up a little sugar spoon.

"You know, Christmas does something to everybody. It brings out the stuff that is hidden all year long. Like carrying things for peo-

ple or opening a door for someone. It's not the gifts. It's just the little things that people do for each other. Everybody is so nice to each other. Everybody is so nice to each," Waskalik said.

"That's what it's all about."



A family reunited last weekend and celebrated Christmas at the same time. Pat Waskalik entertained relations from all over North America and in the process reunited many relatives who hadn't seen each other for more than 30 years. From left, Don Lennon, his sisters Eva Newton and Verna Beaton, and Verna's daughter Pat Waskalik with grandchildren, Heidi Bennett, 10 and Joshua Bennett, 7.
Photo by LAURA SALVERDA

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