

God Rocks! in Oakville

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Band members from God Rocks, a group that combines Christian values with contemporary music, released their latest *God Rocks!* video in Oakville on December 4. As part of the launch of the video, the band performed at The Meeting House on Speers Rd. in Oakville before a large audience of children and their parents. The day's events also included dog tricks performed by Chanda-Leah with the assistance of her owner, Sharon Robinson of Hamilton. The little canine is featured in the Guinness Book of World Records for performing the most tricks by a dog. The dog is also an honorary member of the God Rocks band which includes Janet Elgie, otherwise known as Church Granny, and her son, Jordan Elgie, known as Splinter. Todd Neilson who goes by the name Chip, is also a member of the band along with Sheryl Stacey Neilson and Tyler Seidenberg.



God Rocks' canine member Chanda-Leah gets some tender loving care from her fellow band members. From left to right: Oakville resident Tyler Seidenberg (drums), Jordan Elgie (bass), Sheryl Stacey Neilson (keyboard and vocals), and Todd Neilson (guitar and vocals).



Janet Elgie of Mississauga is a mother to God Rocks band member Jordan Elgie, the bass player with the band. But she also performs a comedic role on stage as Church Granny for God Rocks.

That's Entertainment in Oakville

BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Now in its seventh year the Oakville Seniors Spectacular Variety Show features the talents of performers 50 years of age and older. The show is sponsored by seniors centres in Oakville. Nancy Beddoe, the Town of Oakville's recreation supervisor for seniors' services, says the show started out on a small scale in its first year, but it quickly outgrew its venue at local seniors centres. By the second year of the show, a decision was made to find a larger location. "We realized that we had such a good thing that we tried to get the Oakville Centre."

The show is held every year now at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts and this year there will be two performances, the first on Wednesday, December 29 at 7 pm and the second on Thursday, December 30 at 2 pm.

Doug McConnell, the show's producer, says the dance numbers will include everything from belly dancing to clogging, jazz, and tap. And the show will also feature a lot of other entertainment. The cast this year includes approximately 135 entertainers, among them singers, magicians, storytellers, musicians, comedians and speciality acts.

In keeping with the show's theme of *That's Entertainment*, the opening number will feature the song of the same name. Following that number, the program will include a line up featuring 27 acts and various types of music.

Initially talent for the show came from the Oakville area, but in recent years the show has drawn people from communities outside the area. This year Richard Elliott of Ajax, who is a classical guitarist, will appear as one of the per-

formers.

Nina de Vaal, director of recreation and culture for the Town of Oakville, says the show draws a large crowd every year and the program is one that should appeal to a variety of age groups. "I'm told that this year's show will be bigger and better than ever and is guaranteed to be great entertainment for the entire family."

Tickets are available at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts Box Office, 130 Navy Street in downtown Oakville, from noon to 5 pm Monday to Friday and on Saturday from 2 to 5 pm. To order tickets by phone, people can call 905-815-2021. Tickets are \$15 each plus handling charges.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Organizers of the Oakville Seniors Spectacular Variety Show are busy making preparations for their annual show at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts this month. The show, which includes performers 50 years of age and older, is sponsored by seniors centres in Oakville. Director Norma Marsh (left) works closely with Doug McConnell, the producer. Doug's wife, Shirley McConnell (second from right) is also involved with planning the event along with Nancy Beddoe (right), who works as the Town of Oakville's recreation supervisor for seniors centres.

recreation & entertainment

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN HALTON

On The Way To Bethlehem ~ A Review

BY LAURA COOK

This year's annual nativity performance entitled *On The Way To Bethlehem* took place at Country Heritage Park in Milton on Friday, December 3 through Monday December 6. Set up in the form of various stations, the performance began when the audience pulled into the highly organized parking lot. Greeters dressed in full costume signaled cars into their various spots and led audiences into the welcoming area in the barn. Entering the barn, viewers were greeted again by various players who instructed them where to find the hot cider and snacks, as well as where to wait for the group leaders.

Being led on a walking version of the nativity story was much like reading a story in the first person. Although the narrator (or in this case the audience) was able to recognize that the story was not about themselves, the content became much more realistic when the audience are actually moved through the mind of the narrator or character's space. Walking in the steps of Mary and Joseph had some drawbacks, especially on Saturday evening when the wind was high, however, for the amounts of children and livestock that were present at the performances, the shows went extremely smoothly.

As audiences were led amongst the various stations, a greeter narrated the purpose for the movements using numerous passages from the Gospel of Luke. Accompanying these narrations from the leaders were painted wooden panels placed at the foot of each station displaying the passage and reference to the Bible. The vignettes began at the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary and finished in an actual stable complete with livestock, and a live baby Jesus.

Audiences had a pretty good idea what to expect going into the performances since the actors stayed very close to the original story. As a result of the storyline being so familiar to most people, the age range of the audience also varied appropriately. Young children and older adults may have found

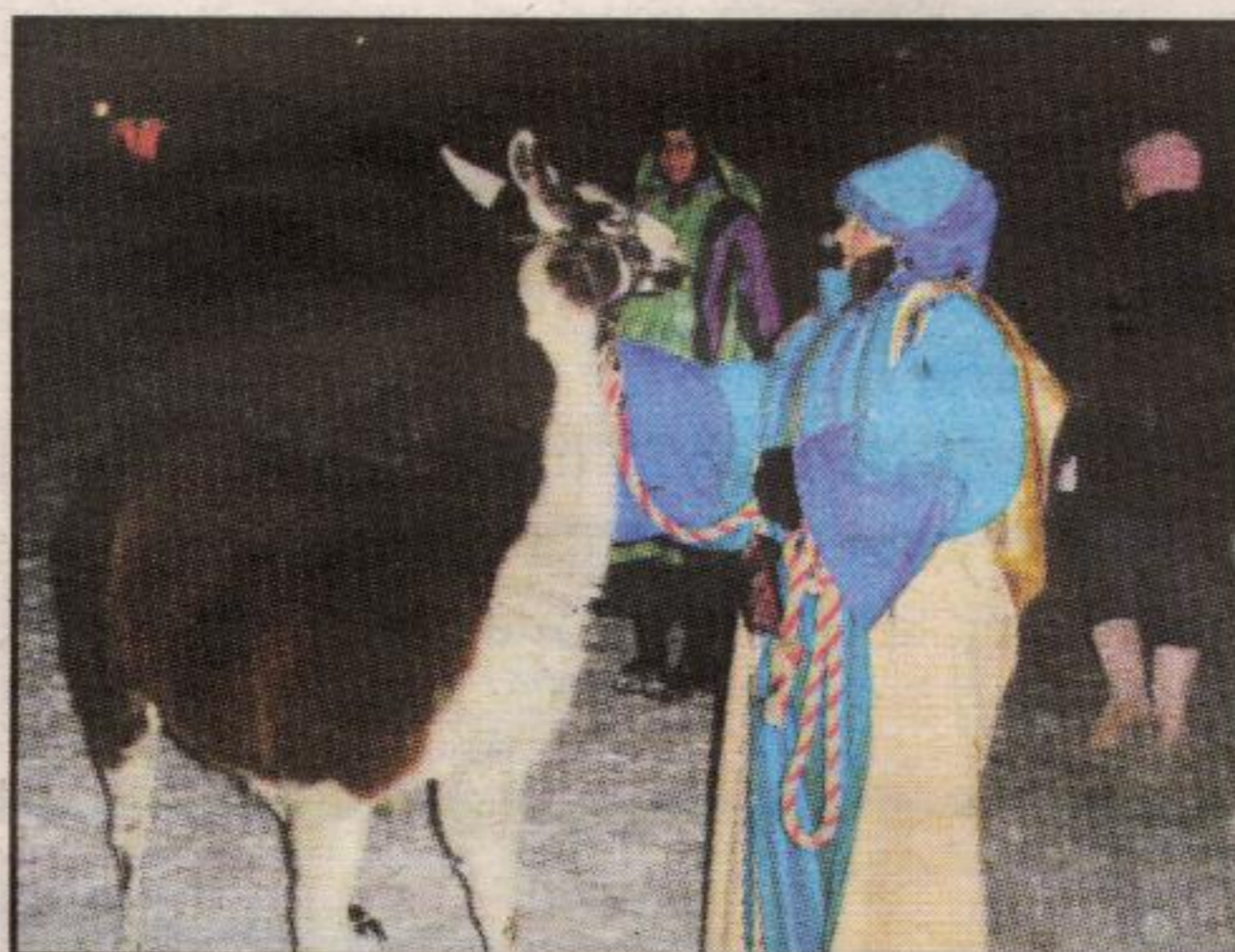
venue. Although the outdoor setting wreaked havoc on the voice projection of many of the actors, group leaders narrating between the scenes remedied this by wearing a small device that enhanced the volume of their voices so that the entire group could hear them. Lighting also contributed to the realism as gas lamps lit the pathways and some stations even had contained pit fires. Overall the performances were an effective and realistic portrayal of a classic story that brought together various groups of people to perform, direct, sing, build, and participate.



The Nativity pageant at Country Heritage Park is a popular annual performance that draws thousands of onlookers from around the Halton and surrounding areas. *On The Way To Bethlehem* is a cooperative project of Milton Area Christian Churches working together to perform the story of Jesus' birth. The church sponsors this year included: Boston Presbyterian, Grace Anglican, Hillcrest United, Holy Rosary Roman Catholic, Knox Presbyterian, Milton Baptist, Milton Bible, Nassagaweya Presbyterian, St. George's Anglican, and St. Paul's United. It is evident that a considerable amount of work was put into the performances this year that resulted in a very well-orchestrated event. Although the string of four performances of *On The Way To Bethlehem* is over for this year, audiences can look forward to another run of the show next year between December second and fifth.

Applause goes to the many sponsors that make the performances possible including:

Country Heritage Park, Bergsma's Home Decor, Bishop Reding High School, Carefree Mini Storage, Carlton Cards, Cation Excavating Limited, Cayuse Creek Ranch, Chudleigh's, Creative Memorials, Dare Food Ltd, Don MacRae (State Farm Insurance), D & S Signs, Durante's, Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf (Secondary), Edward Jones (Milton), Fabricland, Fifth Wheel Truck Stop, First Professional Collision & Paint, Ford Motor Co, Gallinger Ford, Goodfellow Inc, Gordon Foods Ltd, Grace Church Bell Choir, Hershey's, Home Hardware, Home Hardware Social Club, H T C S Hauling-Towing-Cartage, Kidd's Sheepdog Training, Kwik Kopy Printing (Milton), Luxottica Canada Inc, Lyons Automotive Repair, Magna Karmax Heavy Stamping, McKersie Kocher Funeral Home, The Canadian Champion, Milton District High School, Milton Boy Scouts, Milton Choristers, Milton Chrysler Dodge, Milton Drycleaners, Milton Hydro, Milton Toyota, The Halton Compass, Oshawa Zoo, Page One Services, Richardson Chev-Olds Ltd, Robert W. Lawrence, Slessor Motors, St. John's Ambulance, Timber Preservatives, Unisource, Water Depot, Zak's Pharmacy.



the trek between stations somewhat difficult in the recent rain on Saturday, however, the stations were close enough to hold the audience's attention and not lose the premise of the story. Much like the age range of the audiences, the actors and actresses also varied in age with some older adults playing the characters of the wise men or Kings while others were in their teens or younger. This youthful cast created a realistic portrayal of characters such as Mary, who is said to have been in her early teens at the birth of Christ. Despite the ages of the characters varying within the different vignettes, the ages of the main characters all stayed consistent throughout the performances in order to create a more realistic portrayal of the story.

The walk-through nature of the show enabled large crowds to witness the story without the headache of a large indoor