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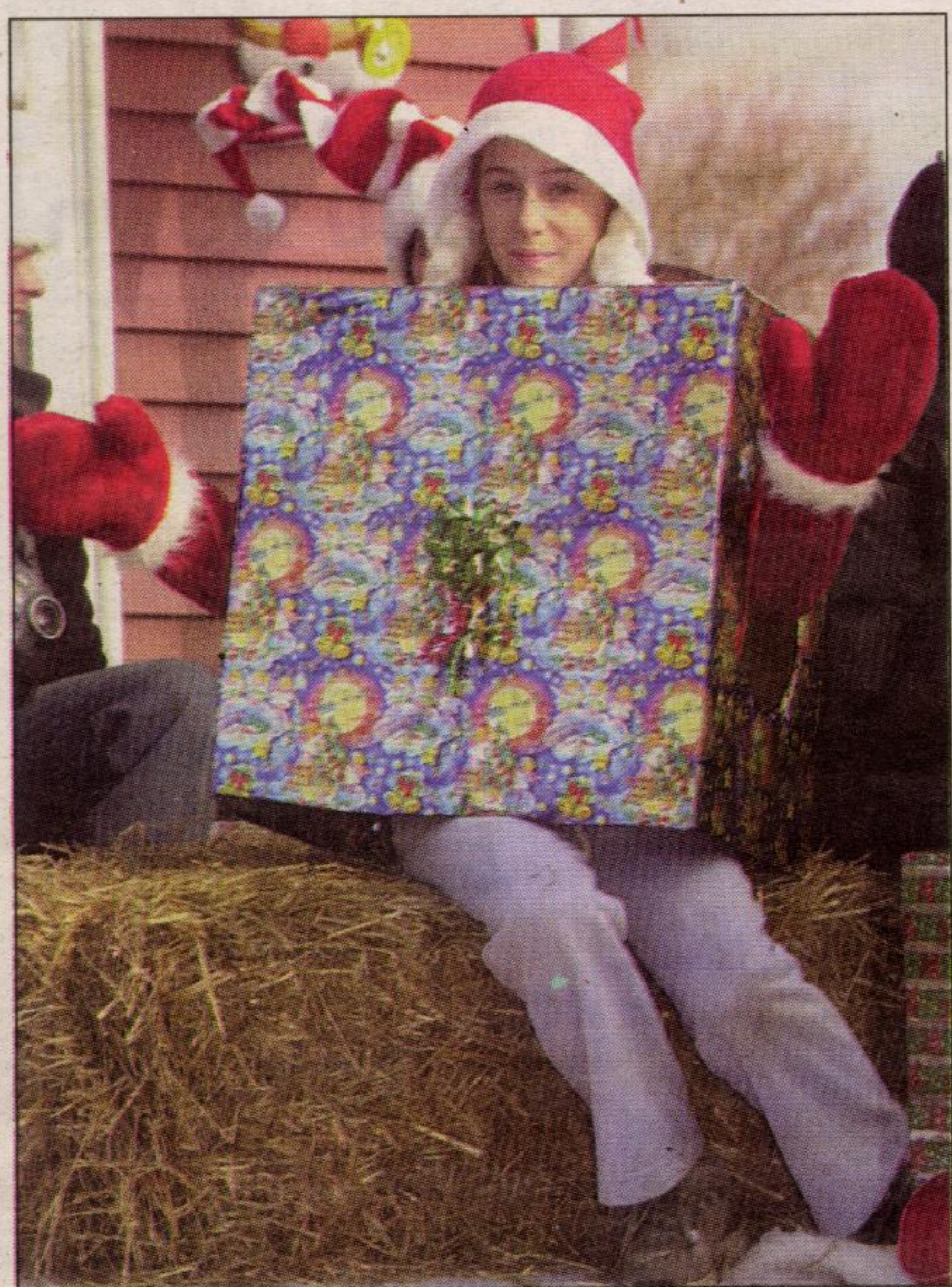
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Santa's message: I'll be back

It's unlikely Cassandra Wiseman, 11, below will fit under anyone's Christmas tree this season but that didn't stop her from dressing like a present on the LP Canada float for Saturday's Acton Santa Claus Parade. Downtown Acton was jammed with well-wishers for St. Nick, who promised to make a return to town Dec. 24.

Photos by Trish England



12-Page Gift Guide section



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Provincial hearing gets under way Quarry expansion opponents turn out in force

Environmental watchdog groups and residents say a decent public turnout at a preliminary hearing into Dufferin Aggregate's controversial gravel pit expansion proposal speaks loudly of how many desperately want it rejected.

More than a dozen people showed up at Milton council chambers Monday to participate in, or listen to, a joint board hearing of the Ontario Municipal Board and Environmental Review Tribunal that will decide the fate of Dufferin's massive quarry expansion

proposal. If approved by the joint hearing, Dufferin would be granted a licence from the Ministry of Natural Resources to extract minerals.

The two-hour hearing consisted of dry legal proceedings, determining the formal process as well as who will speak to the Dufferin proposal when the full hearing begins January 12. Five weeks have been set aside for the hearing.

Residents speaking to the board have to submit a copy of their presentation prior to the hearing.

Jason Thorne, executive director of Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE)—strongly opposed to the proposal—said the number of people who attended Monday's hearing "shows a lot of people have significant enough concerns. The impacts are so far reaching."

A public meeting will also be held, likely in the last week of January, during which anyone will be allowed to express his or her opinion about Dufferin's three-year-old proposal. The date is yet to be decided.

See HEARING, pg. 8



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