

# Most Rockwood merchants report brisk Yule sales

## Some say business was down from 2004

By Rebecca Ring

Several Rockwood merchants had a very busy Christmas season, while others suffered a slower one compared to previous years. Each business was affected, negatively

or positively, by factors such as weather and shopping trends.

The pet business was good. Linda Purton of *Pamper Me Pets*, said Christmas business was similar to last year, which was very busy. Biggest sellers were dog and cat toys such as

floatable Kongs, balls, and catnip toys.

Dwayne Hitchcock of *4Ds Pet Store* said they did well, with sales better this year. Toys and treats for dogs, cats and birds were very popular. He sold out of kittens before Christmas and sold lots of puppies afterward. He recommended that people wait to buy puppies until the busy part of the holidays were over because they take a lot of time and attention.

Two of three new businesses did well. *Eramosa River Café* sold gift boxes of tea and hot chocolate, gift certificates and homemade dog treats. Lynn Wass and Evelyn Russell said they received positive feedback and are establishing a regular clientele. Leah Youngblut of *The Village Sweet Shop* said business was "not bad. We are still very new." Biggest sellers were nostalgic candies, old-fashioned hard candies, fudge, chocolate Santas, and gift boxes.

Bruce Pinder of *Jim's Repair Shop* said business was about 5% slower than usual this Christmas due to a fire forcing a temporary location change. They are back in business at the regular location on the corner of Alma and Main Streets (Hwy. 7). Biggest sellers are usually chainsaws, hedge trimmers, push mowers and hand-held blowers. He said that lower visibility at the temporary location resulted in fewer of these items being sold.

Rob Gray of *Rockwood TV Sales and Service* said business "was great, up about 10% compared to last Christmas." Biggest sellers were big screen, plasma and LCD TVs, two-way satellite Internet dishes and service, DVD players, and home theatres. Service on entertainment equipment is always up at Christmas.

Doris Bozelli of *Rumours Furniture* said they were consistently busy. Orders for Christmas were taken in the fall. There is usually an eight-week turnover time.

Ann, a helper at *The Rose*

*Garden*, said "Business was better than last Christmas, especially for fresh cut flowers and framed prints. We have very good customers." She added that the *Sears Catalogue* business did very well.

Ann Snell of *Full Circle Craft Gallery* said she was disappointed that business was slower. She said weather might have played a role and she might have lost continuity with customers by being open only during the Christmas season. Some people came in specifically for fair trade items. She has a table at the *Guelph Farmer's Market* all year round. Sales there were equal to previous years.

Maija at the *Rockwood Pharmacy* said business was a little slower in the giftware department. She added "It depends on gift trends, which is mostly home décor this year." Mark Griffeth said business at *Gecko International* was slower than last Christmas. He is changing the focus of the store however, from international crafts and furniture to framing and photograph art.

Roger Knapp of *Knapp's Country Market and Nurseries* said business was about 35% higher than last year. Biggest sellers were gift baskets, preserves, pies and turkeys. He said crafts did not sell as well, adding, "People were coming in asking for a gift for someone who has everything", and consumables were the answer. The rush started about a week later than last year but "then went like gangbusters."

Richard denDrijver of

*Greenscape Nursery and Rockwood Florist* said business was slower than last year. Biggest sellers were wreaths, swags, and boughs, fresh cut flower arrangements, "theme" ornaments, and live Christmas trees. He said they will expand live Christmas tree sales next year. Sales at *Meadowville Garden Centre* were also slower than last Christmas, but steady. Biggest sellers were cut Christmas trees and poinsettias.

Ian Clark at *Wellington Fireplace and Leisure* said, "Business was great, right through fall up to Christmas. Better than last year." Biggest sellers as gifts were fireplace tools and screens, kettles and steamers.

Paul Wilson of *Rockwood True Value* said sales were down about 4% compared to last Christmas. Biggest sellers were the "Little Dipper", which is an electric dip warming pot. Artificial tree sales were about four times higher than last year, especially fibre optics. Wilson said they "missed out on gift card sales, which were very popular this year." He was expecting more business with the new households in Rockwood, but speculated that "a lot of people may be shopping at the big box stores, making it hard for smaller local businesses [to survive]."

Rockwood's landmark business since 1914, *Saunders Bakery*, was "extremely busy" according to co-owner Brenda Pettitt. Best sellers were Christmas cakes, puddings, cookies, and dinner rolls. Christmas is always busy for the bakery, but Pettitt said it was a little busier this year.

## The Rockwood MILLER



## Rockwood's Andrew Marcoux rookie with Mississauga IceDogs

By Rebecca Ring

Rockwood's Andrew Marcoux was signed to the OHL Major Junior A Mississauga IceDogs this season. He plays centre, wearing number 22. The 18-year old, five-feet 10 inch, 175 lb. rookie has two goals and three assists to his name in 42 games.

Marcoux' hockey career began in Acton when he was only five years old. He remembers his first coach, Gord, fondly. "Gord made the game fun to play. We liked him a lot." This positive early experience led him to pursue the game. He went on to play for the Acton Sabres, which became the Acton Tanners, until he reached AAA minor peewee level and played for the Guelph Storm Junior 'B' team.

His career really took off in 2004 when he was drafted by the OHL Saginaw Spirit. He did not make that team however and played tier two Junior A in Huntsville. The IceDogs soon spotted him and he signed on. He said he hopes to continue to play

for the IceDogs.

"It is a great team in a great league with lots of exposure. I'm just taking it from here and see what opportunities come." He said he hopes to be noticed by the NHL, AHL or a professional European league. When asked which team he would prefer to play for he answered, "Well, of course the hometown team...the Leafs."

Another dream is to proudly represent his country on Canada's World Junior team, which of course recently won the gold medal.

A grade 12 student at Philip Pocock Secondary School in Mississauga, Marcoux expects to graduate this year. He may go on to attend college or university, perhaps studying business or exercise science. He is managing to keep his grades up despite the long hours and serious practise hockey requires.

His hockey role model is Martin St. Louis of the Tampa Bay Lightning. Marcoux said he really admires and relates to him. He is a fellow

Canadian and "small guy" (for hockey). He added "It is great to see him play with the big guys, playing a big role, getting lots of goals and assists." He learns from St. Louis by watching how he handles himself.

Marcoux' biggest hero (and fan) is his dad, Mike. Marcoux said "He coached me a lot in Acton and has always been there for me, giving me motivation and confidence."

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