

Kelly family found the magic in Christmas

By Rebecca Ring

The Kelly family found there is indeed magic in Christmas. In 2003, Cathy Kelly decided to resurrect the tradition of caroling door-to-door. She convinced her reluctant husband Danny, along with about a dozen friend and family members to start out in a Rockwood neighborhood, ring doorbells and sing traditional carols on Christmas Eve. Then the unthinkable happened. Just before Christmas, on December 18, her brother-in-law fell at work and died the following day. Needless to say, the family no longer felt like

celebrating Christmas.

Kelly says she was faced with a dilemma. Her two sons were only seven and eight years old at the time and had been incredibly excited about Christmas. "We tried to explain to the kids that Christmas wouldn't be the same that year, but we would do our best," she says. She did not know whether it was wise to proceed with the caroling plans, but decided that "maybe something magical would happen, and it did."

She and her family were reminded that Christmas is much more than presents, tinsel and candy canes. They set out to see how their

caroling would go. "One lady came out with her dog, put on her coat and joined in," says Kelly, "Others came out with cookies and brandy. Everybody was into it more than we expected." The sense of community and true Christmas Spirit helped to warm and heal her family that year. It is now an annual event.

"It is hard for many people this time of year," she says, "Some are alone, or have lost a loved one or health and fell like there is nothing to celebrate. Others get caught up in the stress of buying gifts, spending too much or doing too much, so this year we are inviting anybody and everybody to join us on Christmas Eve."

This year they are not going door-to-door, however. They invite everyone to meet at Valentino Park, near Bernardi Crescent from 7 to 8pm, to sing carols, drink hot chocolate and eat cookies and maybe skate. She hopes to have the outdoor rink at the park ready by then, which she and Danny help to make.

"When we are children we believe in the magic of Christmas, then we tend to go through a period of non-belief. But as we mature and grow, we see that it is there," she says, "It is celebrating just being here, to give if we can and to be thankful for what we receive at Christmas and all year."



LOOKING FOR LOVE: These adorable kittens are some of many rescued cats and kittens looking for a forever home. In the meantime, they are given lots of loving care at foster homes (including Acton and Rockwood) and their shelter, Cats Anonymous. Check them out at the open house and craft sale, Dec. 9, 10am to 3pm, 063055 Dufferin Rd. 3, Marsville, or visit www.catsanonymous.ca. - Rebecca Ring Photo

Keep cars locked, secure - OPP

Wellington OPP and their municipal police partners are pleading with motorists to always keep their vehicles locked and secure.

With the onset of the Christmas shopping season, police are encouraging everyone to be vigilant in securing their items.

Every day, someone makes it easy for a thief to steal his or her vehicle.

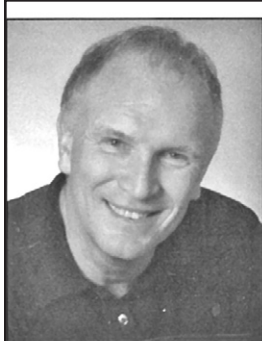
Stolen vehicles present a significant problem for police as many of the offenders are usually high on drugs and are looking for quick cash to support their addiction.

Car thieves will engage police in pursuits and often time will stop at nothing to get away, police say. In some circumstances, they have injured and even killed people in their attempts to flee from police.

Police urge drivers to adopt the following tips to help prevent car thefts:

- Never leave your vehicle running and unattended
- Always lock your vehicle and pocket your keys
- Always park in a well lit area
- Never leave valuable items in plain view
- Always attempt to lock valuables in the trunk out of view
- Park your car in a locked garage whenever possible

It only takes thieves about 30 seconds to steal your vehicle. Don't make it easier by leaving it unlocked or even worse, running, police plead.



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New traffic calming sign on Main

Slow down

Rockwood has a new traffic calming sign on Main St. N. When driving south into the village, where the 50 km zone begins, the sign lights up warning speeders to slow down and displays a picture of people to remind drivers of pedestrians and children at play. The sign has two purposes: to calm traffic and to record traffic speed data. Public Works Manager Ken Gagnon initiated the installation due to the success of a similar sign in Eden Mills. According to Mayor Chris White, the sign resulted in a decrease in average speed by almost 10% to install the sign on their road (#27) in order to collect traffic data.

New car/dog wash

Drexler Construction has begun building a car wash on Station St. Mike Newark,

Ring Around
ROCKWOOD
with Rebecca Ring



Guelph/Eramosa's Chief Building Official, says the plans include an automatic vehicle wash, two manual-wash bays and one self-service bay where auto owners can do minor work on their vehicles. There are also plans for a dog wash station where dog owners can wash their pets.

Christmas open house

All are invited to Cats Anonymous Christmas Open House and Craft Sale on Sunday, Dec. 9, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Check out the kitties and get unique gifts for four-legged and two-legged family members and friends. The sale will include cat & dog gift bags, catnip mats, handmade crafts, gift

baskets, refreshments and a raffle. All proceeds go to support the non-profit cat shelter, which takes in homeless cats and kittens, including hard-to-place cases, and cares for them until they find good homes. The shelter has a no-kill policy. Its coverage area includes Wellington County and Halton Hills. The newly renovated shelter is at #063055 Dufferin Rd. #3 in Marsville, across from East Garafraxa Public School. For more information, or to adopt a feline friend, call 519-855-6850 or visit www.catsanonymous.ca.

Parade of Lights dinner

Stone United Church is hosting a chili dinner to cel-

brate Rockwood's famous Christmas Parade of Lights on Thursday, Dec. 13. The dinner is at 5PM at Rockmosa Community Centre.

Operation Santa Paws

The Upper Credit Humane Society asks the community to remember its homeless dogs, cats and other pets this Christmas. Drop off donations of canned cat or dog food, pet toys, blankets, towels, paper towels, laundry soap, bleach, pet beds or dog collars at the shelter at 5383 Wellington Rd. 24, and place them under the Christmas tree. Monetary donations are always welcome as is volunteer help. Calendars and Christmas cards featuring photos of shelter animals are also for sale. For more information, visit www.uppercredit.com, call 519-833-2287 or e-mail adoptions@uppercredit.com.

Plan cosmetic pesticide bylaw

By Rebecca Ring

Like more than 125 municipalities across Canada, Guelph/Eramosa is moving forward in developing a by-law to regulate the non-essential/cosmetic use of pesticides due to potential health and environmental effects. Cameron MacLean, a member of the township's Environmental Stewardship Committee, outlined by-law development plans to council and asked for support to move forward, which was given unanimously. Councillors Roger Knapp and Reta Moyer were absent.

The committee reviewed the possibility of eliminating non-essential/cosmetic use of pesticides in the township as part of its mandate for "the protection and stewardship of lands and natural resources." A sub-committee and staff reviewed the pesticide by-laws of other municipalities, including Toronto, Waterloo and Guelph. They found de-

tails differed depending on local need, public response, financial resources, etc.

MacLean told council that the committee recognizes the need for public input to develop the by-law and to determine the potential impacts on residents, local business, and other stakeholders. He also stressed the need for on-going education and awareness strategies for alternate methods of lawn care and pest control.

"The focus is to restrict the non-essential/cosmetic use of pesticides in residential

areas, initially through education and awareness," he said. "Enforcement would be a last resort."

Implementation will be in phases over the next year to allow time for public notice, retailers to use up existing stock, and lawn care companies and others affected to adjust accordingly.

The next phase is an initial public consultation process and preparation of a draft by-law. The committee and township staff will identify and contact stakeholders with potential financial or

direct impacts, such as golf courses and retailers, and determine the parameters of the by-law.

Councillor Doug Breen asked what the scope of the by-law is expected to be in relation to agriculture and farming. MacLean assured council that the by-law would not affect these areas at all.

"We want to get this thing right," said Mayor Chris White, "We would need to phase this in. The purpose is not to be punitive but just to get toxins out of the environment."

The McGuinty government promised to ban the cosmetic use of pesticide throughout the province as part of the Liberal campaign and in the Speech to the Throne. White said that provincial legislation could take years so the municipal by-law will likely precede it. The committee plans to present a draft by-law to council by the end of this winter.

Parade of Lights...

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range of farming equipment from yesteryear and today with antique and modern equipment involved.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will ride in style as usual for the finale of the parade atop a massive combine.

Storey points out that a sample of the beautifully lit parade floats can be enjoyed at the group's website www.rockwoodfarmersparade.org. The website also contains exact directions to the village of Rockwood and the exact parade route.

SEE YOU AT THE PARADE OF LIGHTS NEXT THURSDAY, DEC 13