

Santa Claus parade falls a little short of its fundraising goal

By **CARRIE BRUNET**
The Champion

Despite falling short of their fundraising goal this year, organizers of the Milton Santa Claus Parade say Santa will come to town again next year.

In recent years, volunteers collecting donations from parade spectators gathered as much as \$8,000. That number dropped by half this year as approximately \$4,000 was collected.

Parade committee member Paul Scherer attributed the shortfall to weather conditions.

"It was rainy. Attendance was down a bit," Mr. Scherer said of the November 26 event.

He added that the disruption of municipal and federal elections in November had committee members struggling to pull everything together.

The annual cost of the parade runs about \$16,000, half of which is footed by local businesses and organizations.

Despite the lack of preparation time, Mr. Scherer said this year's parade was one of the best so far. In its 26th year, the parade had 80 participating groups, including floats, bands and dance groups.

"We had a recession in the early 1990s and the parade almost died," Mr. Scherer said.

He explained that since then, the committee tries to budget one year ahead for its annual costs.

While this year prudent financial planning will allow the parade to go on, Mr. Scherer said he's worried this might become a trend. "If this keeps up, next year will be very difficult," he said.

The parade not only provides entertainment for the town, but is a venue for the Salvation Army and the firefighters annual food and toy drives.

"The parade gets people thinking about donations," said Janice Tansey of the Salvation Army. "It helps people remember that we need the food. It's a kick start for us."

The Salvation Army was able to collect 1,200 pounds of food at this year's parade, according to Ms Tansey.

Run strictly by a volunteer group, planning for the parade starts after labour day.

"There's an enormous amount of work that goes into it, Mr. Scherer said.

"It's a source of pride for Milton," Mr. Scherer said. "When it comes to small towns, no one touches us in terms of our Santa Claus parade."

Donations can still be made to the parade fund by mailing them to the Milton Santa Claus Parade Committee, Box 440, 420 Main St. E., Milton, L9T 5G3.

Those interested in volunteering can contact Paul Scherer at 878-9124.

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Wed. Jan. 3		2:00 pm - 3:15 pm
Thurs. Jan. 4	10:30 am - Noon	
Fri. Jan. 5		2:00 pm - 3:15 pm
Sat. Jan. 6	1:15 pm - 2:45 pm	
Sun. Jan. 7		2:00 pm - 3:15 pm

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