

Parade set to march through downtown Sunday

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus...

He's not here yet, but kids of all ages are getting ready to welcome the man in red, who'll be the grand finale as usual at Sunday's Milton Santa Claus Parade.

The parade will start at 2 p.m. This year's theme is A Musical Christmas, which will be reflected by the floats and, of course, the participating bands.

"We hope to get people in the spirit through music," said parade committee member Mike Ricker.

The parade will start at Bronte Street and Dawson Crescent and proceed north along Bronte to Main Street. From there, it'll travel

east along Main Street to Ontario Street, and will conclude at E.C. Drury Secondary School.

Mr. Ricker said there's nothing like the enthusiasm of Milton residents to make all the work worth it for volunteers.

"The excitement of people along the route — that's why we put it on," he said, adding he hopes residents new to Milton will come out.

Many groups and businesses in town are hard at work preparing their floats with hopes of taking home one of the float awards. This year, the floats will be judged by a panel of youths.

"Because the Santa Claus parade is for kids, whether little kids or big kids, we thought, 'Why not get the kids judging?'" Mr. Ricker said.

Parade organizers are pleased to have the Hamilton Police Pipe and Drum band performing this year. The band took third place in the world championships and the drummers won

first place in the drum world championships.

As usual, members of the Milton Fire Department will participate, collecting non-perishable food along the route for the Salvation Army's food bank.

Members of the Rotary Club of Milton will also walk the parade in their Rotary vests with brightly marked pails to take up a donation to help defray parade costs.

Although people have been generous in their volunteering so far, Mr. Ricker said additional volunteers are always welcome — either to help out on Sunday or to join the committee for next year's event.

Assembly marshal Colin Best said he's still looking for some adults to act as parade marshals. Security is being stepped up this year in light of an incident last year in which unauthorized people were collecting money.

This year, marshals will walk alongside the floats and keep their eyes open for any unpermitted collecting as well as unlicensed food vendors.

The marshals will be needed from noon to 4 p.m. and should be able to walk the 2.7 km route.

Parade chairwoman Laura McKee is asking everyone at the parade to watch for anyone collecting money who doesn't have a parade committee ID badge or who isn't wearing a Rotarian vest.

"If the whole town could do this, that would be great," Ms McKee said.

Anyone interested in volunteering is asked to call Colin Best at (905) 878-3623, parade chairwoman Laura McKee at (905) 878-6347 or volunteer chair Alma Gildea at (905) 878-9838.

Stephanie Thiessen can be reached at sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



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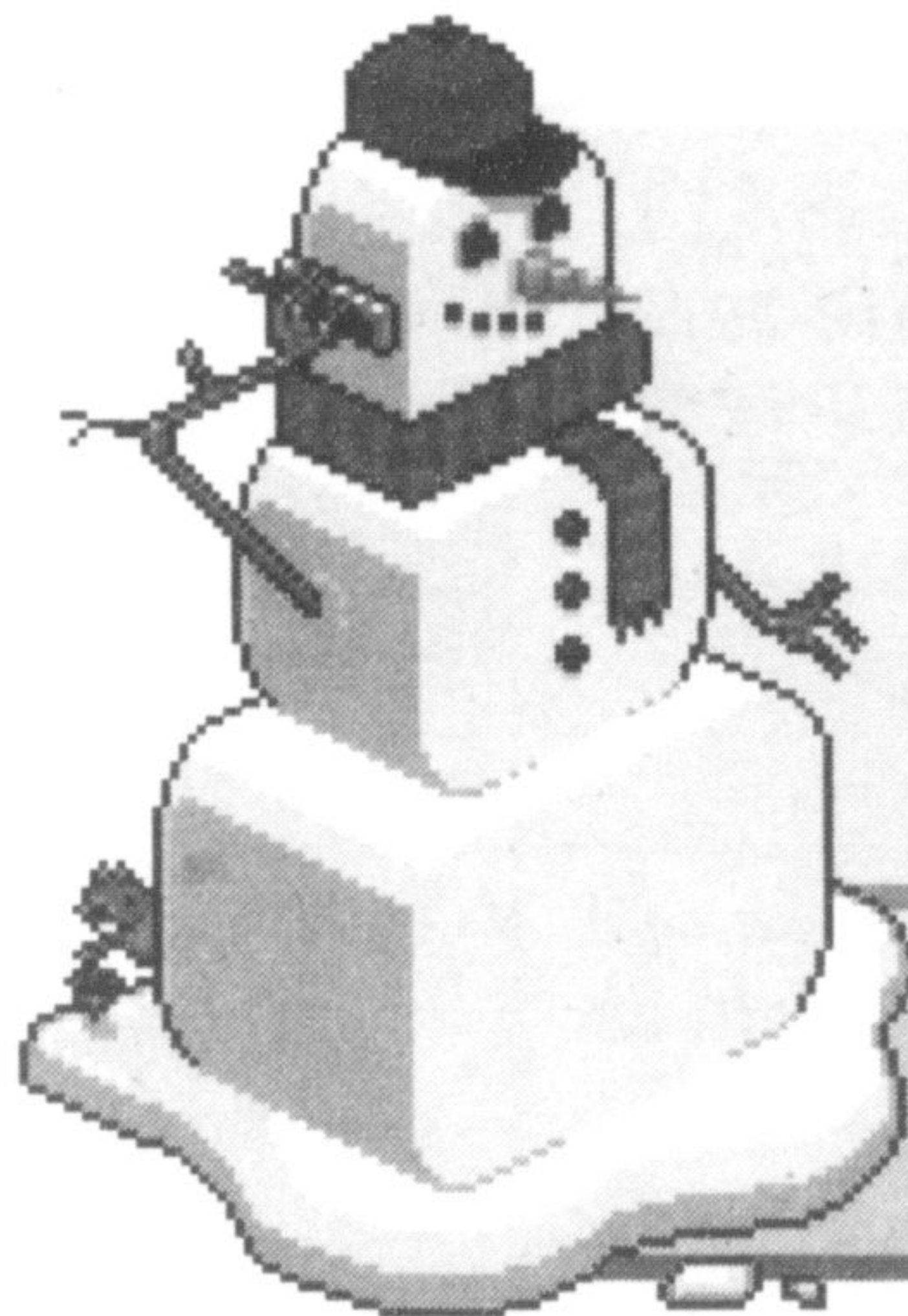
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