

The Canadian Champion, Wednesday, October 4, 1989—14

There's more to Santa Parade than meets spectators' eyes



Photo by JOHN WARREN

Milton Community and Information Services (MCIS), an umbrella organization for social service agencies and information Milton, recently donated \$1,300, raised through bingo, to the Santa Claus Parade Committee. From left to right are: Paddy Johnson, chairman of the parade committee, Sue McCormack, program coordinator for CHERISH Parent-Child Centre, Shelagh Dobson, private home daycare co-ordinator for CHERISH, Lori Chapman, MCIS president, Cindy Farrell and Mavis Rogers of the parade committee, Barb Robb of the town's Department of Leisure Services, and Barb O'Keefe and Meg Barker of the parade committee.

"I lost 10 years off my life," said Paddy Townson.

Mrs. Townson, this year's chairperson of the Santa Claus Parade Committee, was referring to that half-hour of panic last November when the Milton Santa Claus Parade had begun its journey along Main Street and Santa was nowhere to be found. She eventually tracked him down and thankfully, the afternoon went smoothly apart from the downpour.

The day of the parade is the culmination of months of planning by the committee which met for the first time in early August. The group consists of 15 volunteers, many of whom return year after year, mainly because they have fun working together to organize the parade.

"We do it for the kids," said Mrs. Townson.

Even before the August meeting, Mrs. Townson had already contacted the nine bands which have to be booked as much as a year and half in advance. Some of the bands we'll be hearing include: the Burlington Teen Tour Band, the Halton Regional Police and the Milton and District Pipe Bands, the York Lions Steel Band, and three drum and bugle corps — Conqueror II, Ridge Raiders, Cadets of Dutch Boys.

The committee's budget for the year is \$12,500, over one half of which will be used to pay the bands and majorettes. Unfortunately, the committee can't wave a magic wand for this amount of materialize; they have to raise it through various means — by selling raffle tickets, for example. However, thanks to Milton Community and Information Services, they have been relieved of that particular task this year. In August, the MCIS donated to the Santa Claus Parade Committee one of its fundraising bingo nights at which the committee made \$1,300.

The committee's principle source of revenue comes from service groups, community organizations, sports teams and businesses. This entails mailing 1,500 letters requesting donations. Just by chance, a group of



young people happened to be looking for a community service project to carry out, and so it was that on one Friday last month, 25 girls from the 7th Milton Guides spent one and a half hours folding letters and stuffing and sealing them in envelopes.

Finally, committee members (and their aunts, uncles, kids, neighbours) dress up in costumes and walk the parade route selling balloons and pennants. (The younger clowns pass out candy.) The Rotary Club also assists by collecting donations dropped into buckets attached to their small motorized vehicles.

Mrs. Townson has no idea of how many people participate in the one-and-a-half-hour-long parade, but there are about 75 entries — floats, walking groups, bands, cars, horses. Those groups designing floats can decide whether or not to enter one that is in keeping with the parade's theme, which for this year is: "Home for the Holidays".

Mrs. Townson was especially impressed a couple of years ago when a neighbourhood got together to construct and ride on a float. She would like to see more of that kind of community involvement.

A few days before the parade, Mrs. Townson, Frank Reeves, the parade marshal, Wendy Ferguson, the assistant parade marshal, and the other committee members determine the order of the entries.

Traditionally, the Milton and District Pipe Band leads the parade, followed by the fire trucks that can make a fast getaway in case of fire. Steel bands spook horses, so the committee members have to make sure they're not too close to one another.

The Brampton Optimist Majorettes — 6-10-year-old girls — always look forward to marching in front of the Burlington Teen Tour Band which comes just before Santa.

There is only one drawback for Mrs. Townson. She doesn't get to see the results of all those hours of work. She remains at the fairgrounds until Santa has finally departed and then she heads for the parade's final stop.

As the date for the parade approaches, the committee meets more frequently, but once it's over, the members give themselves a breather of a couple of weeks before reconvening to discuss the high and low points of the big day.

This year's parade will be held Sunday Nov. 19 at 2 p.m. The committee and no doubt, all participants, are hoping for a warm, sunny day.

Activities for seniors

The next two Tuesdays will be busy at the Senior Citizens' Recreation Centre at 21 Charles Street. On Oct. 10, from 4-7 p.m. the Senior Citizens' Orchestra will be playing at the Thanksgiving Dance. The cost is \$3. Lunch is provided and there will be door prizes and a cash bar.

A fashion party will be held on Oct. 17 from 3-5 p.m. Family and Company (formerly Generations) will display and sell clothing for all ages — male and female — as well as toys and games. Here's an opportunity to do some early Christmas shopping.

A 10-week program begins Wednesday Oct. 18, from 9:30-11 a.m. Members pay \$10, non-members \$12. Line dancing has been a popular activity at the centre. A beginners' class starts Thursday Oct. 19 from 1:30-3 p.m. This drop-in program costs \$3 each time. For those people who love to dance but have no partners, this style of dancing fits the bill.

Upcoming tours organized by the SCRC include: shopping at Coyles, Tender Tootsies and a cookie outlet on Oct. 27; the Mum Flower Show at Gage Park and the Hamilton Parade of Stars (variety show) in November; and Akron, Ohio for a two-day stay at the Quaker Square Hilton and attendance at a performance of Peter Pan (Nov. 10-12).

ASK



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Diet Center Counselor

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