

Family closes store for parade

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The first float siblings Ron and Judy Schell can recall hearing about is Humpty Dumpty, which dates back to 1953.

Brothers Harry and Percy Schell originally spearheaded the annual float entry. Eventually they turned it over to kids Ron, Judy and Janet. Today, Judy's daughter, Melissa Hefferman, and Ron's son, Kyle, are in charge.

"I don't think I've physically watched a Santa Claus Parade. I've always been in it," Ms Hefferman said.

This year's theme is a Christmas wonderland for sports enthusiasts, she said.

The family starts planning their parade entry about a month

ahead of time.

But it's the day before the actual parade when it becomes all-hands-on-deck and the idea becomes a reality.

"I remember being upside down painting that thing," Ms Schell said of the year they created Schell Ace Lost in Space.

Although Mr. Schell has many found memories of creating and being on the floats, his fondest memories come from a few years ago when he would watch the parade with his sister Marilyn, who has since passed away.

Being in the parade is not their only tradition. Schell Lumber closes its Edward Street store during the event.

"That way everyone goes and watches it," Mr. Schell said. "You've got to enjoy it."

Fire won't stop pub from collecting toys

Thanks to a June fire, The Earl of Whitechurch's doors are still closed, but that does not mean its annual toy drive can't take place.

During the Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade Saturday afternoon, pub owner Scott Roskar will be outside the Earl on Main Street collecting new and unwrapped toys for the Stouffville Lions Club.

"Even (though) we're closed, we want to give it a whirl," Mr. Roskar said.

This is the fifth year the Earl has been collecting toys for distribution by the Lions club, according to Mr. Roskar.

"We don't want to leave that void," he said, noting patrons typically also donate a few thousand dollars to the Stouffville Lions' toy drive but because of the restaurant's closure, he is not expecting much cash to be donated.

"I still have no idea (when we will re-open). Insurance companies are taking their time, which I understand they are able to do," Mr. Roskar said. "We are working hard with the insurance companies to get open."

Hot dogs, play-by-play at clock tower

As in years past, Mayor Wayne Emmerson will provide Santa Claus Parade commentary from his post in front of the clock tower on Main Street. He said he will be joined by all

members of council.

"I think everybody looks forward to it. It's a highlight of the Christmas season," Mr. Emmerson said.

To help keep people warm while they await Santa's arrival, free hot chocolate and hot dogs will be served outside by the clock tower starting at 1:30 p.m.

This year's parade, which has a theme of A Canadian Christmas, has about 60 entrants, according to parade co-chairperson Steve Sutter. It leaves east-end Stouffville at 2 p.m. It winds up at Main and Mostar streets.

Last year there were about 50 entrants.

"It's always a great parade and everyone should come out and see their community," he said.

Letters to Santa collected at parade, post office

Canada Post workers will once again be acting as Santa's elves as they will collect letters for Santa during the parade. They will be right ahead of the jolly old fellow.

If kids forget to bring their letters to the parade, they can drop them off in the Santa Box at the Stouffville post office, 6379 Main St. or at the Shoppers Drug Mart post office, 5710 Main St.

No postage is required for letters to Santa, but kids must put their return addresses on their letters.

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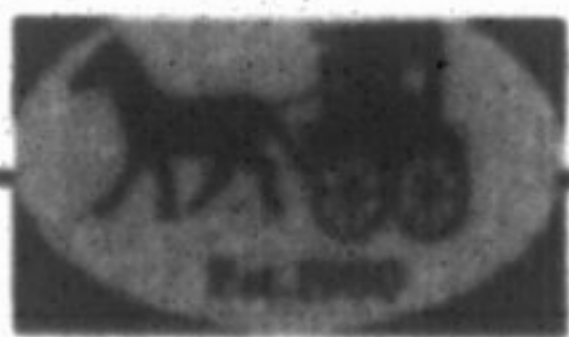
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