

Horse show gave way to Santa parade

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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During the early 1960s, the Stouffville Santa Claus parade consisted of the jolly old fellow riding in the back of a convertible from Latham Hall to the Main/Market/Mill streets area with virtually no one lining the streets to see him, according to long-time resident Jim Thomas.

That is a far cry from today's parade, which has thousands of Stouffville's young and old jammed onto the sidewalks in eager anticipation of seeing Santa.

Long before anything resembling today's parade came along Main Street, there was horse judging at the farmers' market in the 1930s and '40s at Dolly's Hall, which is now the Silver Jubilee Club, according to Mr. Thomas.

"It was quite the competition and at the same time, they brought their produce to sell," he said.

"This was the place to come buy your Christmas turkey," he said of the event held the week before Christmas.

In 1950, the annual horse show was cancelled as more emphasis was being placed on the Santa Claus parade, which started a few years earlier.

That same year, with the Stouffville Merchants Association at the helm for the parade, there were nearly a dozen floats, which included bicycles and doll buggies decorated by children.

At around this time, parade costs were about \$600 and the event attracted 2,000 to 5,000 people lining the main thoroughfare to see Santa and receive a gift bag from him.

The Chamber of Commerce took over the parade in 1954 and established the first Sunday in December as the parade date going forward — a tradition that continues today.

Later in the 1950s, the parade grew to about 20 floats and helped bring shoppers downtown.

It didn't seem to work because in 1962, downtown merchants considered curtailing it or giving it a "sharp reduction" in size.

For unknown reasons, there was no parade in 1964 and 1965.

But in 1966, current organizers — the Stouffville Kinsmen Club — resurrected it.

In a letter to the editor of The Stouffville Tribune, Kinsmen members said they wanted to provide the parade in order to foster community spirit. They didn't want money, just support.

In their first year as hosts, the Kinsmen Santa Claus parade was supported, attracting five bands, 20 floats and 30 other individual entrants. Hundreds of people lined Main Street.

"It was a good parade. We had good times," said Ross Hetherington, who was a part of the Kinsmen Club who brought the parade back to Stouffville. "It brings the kid out in you."

One parade that stands out for Mr. Hetherington took place in the early 1970s.

"It was so cold, they couldn't blow the bugles," he said, adding it was -26C.

This year's theme is Christmas movies.

Saturday's parade starts at 2 p.m. at Tenth Line and Aintree Drive. It heads north on Tenth Line then goes west along Main Street before turning south onto Weldon Road. It ends at Stouffville District Secondary School.



Santa Claus is coming to Stouffville this Saturday!

Come wave hello to Farid Wassef and his family as they ride in the parade.

Farid and his family will be collecting non-perishable food donations for the York Region Food Bank in the parade: **LOOK FOR HIS WAGONS AND TRUCK!!**

When: Saturday December 1, 2012

Time: 2:00pm start

Where: Main Street from 10th Line to Weldon Ave, Stouffville, ON.



Farid Wassef is your local Ontario PC Candidate for Member of Provincial Parliament for Oak Ridges-Markham

"continuing to care for healthy communities, families and seniors"

Together with Farid Wassef "We can build a better future"



<http://yrfn.ca/resources/food-banks/>

WEBSITE: www.faridwassef.ca • EMAIL: farid@faridwassef.ca • PHONE: 416-900-5364



The Lions Club of Stouffville

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BASKET PROJECT

December 1st to 15th, 2012

Christmas is just around the corner and once again the Lions Club of Stouffville will be collecting toys, to be distributed to families in need in the Stouffville area.

Donations of non-perishable foods will be delivered to the Stouffville Food Bank

Donations may be dropped off at the following locations.

- Whitchurch-Stouffville Municipal Offices – Lobby • WS Leisure Centre (Lobby)
- TD Bank • Scotia Bank • Pace Credit Union • Stouffville Fire Hall (Weldon Road)
- Shoppers Drug Mart (Main Street) • Global Pet Foods (5892 Main Street)
- Stouffville Toyota (Millard and Hwy 48) • Schell Lumber (Edward Street) • Stouffville Country Market (Main Hall)
- Giles Chevrolet (5914 Main St) • Stouffville Joint Venture Physiotherapy (3-34 Civic Ave.)

If you or someone you know is in need of assistance this holiday season **CONFIDENTIAL** application forms for assistance can be picked up at the following locations during business hours:

- WS Leisure Centre (Lobby) • Chamber of Commerce (Train Station)

For further information regarding donations or for confidential referrals, please contact:
Lion JOE BOLL (905) 642-3850



CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

Starting Saturday December 1st

Canadian Tire Lot located on Hoover Park Drive

Fraser Fir – Balsam – Scotch Pine

All proceeds from the sale of the trees go to assist with our community projects.

Did you know... Adding sugar or similar substances to the water does nothing to prolong the life of the tree.

For further tree information contact:
Lion Joe Coné (905) 640-2294

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