



STAFF PHOTO/JIM MASON

READY FOR SANTA, BOYS?

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville employees Jordan Smalley (from left), Scott Beloff and Shawn Norton decorate a utility pole at Main and Mill streets in advance of Saturday's Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade. For more on the parade, and other upcoming Christmas events, see our community calendar on page 14. Event organizers can post items on our online calendar at yorkregion.com

Look for new council in parade

Mayor Justin Altmann and his newly sworn-in council will have a "simple float" in Saturday's Santa Claus parade. It is in conjunction with the Whitchurch-Stouffville Youth Council.

This means, neither Altmann nor his councillors will provide play-by-play of the parade downtown, as has been done in the past.

Nor will they hand out free hot dogs and hot chocolate, again, something the mayor and council have done in previous years.

The Stouffville Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade starts at Tenth Line and Aintree

Drive Saturday at 2 p.m., heads south to Main Street, then west along Main to Ninth Line.

For details, contact Guy Cooper at 905-640-3560 or sirguy2008@gmail.com. This year's theme is Christmas Around The World.

One thing Altmann will be retaining, is the New Year's Eve bash in Memorial Park.

"It's community tradition. I like tradition," he told The Sun-Tribune.

Mayor Wayne Emmerson founded the family-friendly event, complete with fireworks, skating, hot drinks and food.

Christmas dinner delivery-only

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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There will no longer be a coming together of strangers gathered around the dinner table, eating their Christmas meal at EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church.

However, the same meals can be brought to you, still, for free.

Organizers of the 19-year-old event have decided to return to its original intent — having small groups of friends/family gather together on Christmas Day for a traditional dinner.

Discontinuing the sit-down meal also occurred because it became too much for the volunteers.

"You ask someone who is a volunteer to tie up their Christmas from seven in the morning to seven at night and we just can't do that," said Maurice Smith, this year's event co-ordinator.

In 2013, volunteers cooked, packed and delivered 247 full Christmas dinners to local residents and served roughly 250 meals in the gymnasium at EastRidge, according to Smith.

The newly elected Ward 2 councillor has been a volunteer, along with his wife Jane, since 2008.

"Time flies," he said.

"It's just our contribution to Christmas Day, the Christmas sea-

son," he said.

As such, he was the logical choice to spearhead it this year. It became a town-run event three years ago.

As in the past, the benchmark for receiving a meal is based on the honour system.

"I think the criteria is for people who can't provide the meal for themselves or prepare the meal for themselves," Smith said. "If it's abused, we'll have to evaluate that after."

POLICE, FIREFIGHTERS

As they did last year, meals will be brought to the Whitchurch-Stouffville fire department. Dinners will also be delivered to officers on duty at York Regional Police's substation on Sandiford Drive and any other group of people having to work Christmas Day.

Organizers are planning to deliver 350 meals.

Providing a full Christmas dinner to residents in need is not cheap. Last year, the event's founder, Norm Clements, told The Sun-Tribune it costs between \$5,000 and \$7,000 annually. The event was held at the market for several years before moving next door to the church.

All of the food is donated or paid for with money that has been donated, according to Smith, who

added, the municipality also provides a financial contribution "to buy incidentals".

The dinner includes turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, stuffing, cranberry sauce, gravy, dessert, bread and butter.

All of that food is prepared by volunteers days ahead of time.

This year, although there is already a number of people ready to pitch-in, more are needed to peel potatoes a few days before Dec. 25, bake pies at home, as well as cook turkeys.

To volunteer, call the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's service line at 905-640-1900 and leave your name, phone number and what you can volunteer for.

People wanting to have Christmas dinners delivered to them must also call the customer service line and leave their name, phone number, address and number of required meals. The deadline to register as a volunteer and to order a meal is Dec. 17.

Deliveries can only be made within Whitchurch-Stouffville and the goal is to have them at your door between noon and 12:30 p.m., according to Smith.

Organizations from outside of town can call to make arrangements to pick up their meals.

New group set to help out in town

A new Whitchurch-Stouffville community group is quickly getting into the Christmas spirit.

"Stouffville Friends For Community is a multi-faceted community group that will be participating in local volunteer initiatives helping where and when we can," said spokesperson Kim Stark. "Not only would we like to see this become a place for community minded volunteers to celebrate friendship but also give local charities a central place to source volunteers."

First on the agenda is Saturday's Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade. The Friends group will be celebrating a "New Orleans Christmas" while collecting food and cheques for the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank.

Members will be assisting at the Debaissi family's Sick Kids Hospital fundraiser on Reeves Way Dec. 13.

They also plan to re-establish the popular community spaghetti dinners held at Latcham Hall.

The group will be the second float in Saturday's parade. Food items on the food bank's wish list include single-serve pudding cups, applesauce, granola bars, and drink boxes for lunches and spaghetti sauce, salmon and tuna, canned meats, such as flakes of ham and chicken, juices, cookies and crackers. Cheques should be made payable to the "Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank".

"Our mission is to help support existing efforts, possibly start new initiatives while nurturing community," Stark said, "and finally, to be a central place of communication for sharing ideas and inspiring change"

For more information, call 416-556-0579.

— Jim Mason



1st Stouffville Scouts

Invite you to participate in our

ANNUAL STOUFFVILLE FOOD DRIVE

Please bring Non-Perishable Food Items for our

Youth to pick up along the Parade Route

Season's Greetings Stouffville

Thank you for your support