

Get Ready for the Stouffville Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade

'Old Towne Christmas' the theme for popular attraction this Saturday

By Hannelore Volpe

The Santa Claus parade is coming to Stouffville on Saturday, Dec. 5 starting at 2 p.m.—courtesy of the small but mighty Stouffville Kinsmen Club.

The parade, which this year has an Old Towne Christmas theme, will start from Tenth Line and Aintree Dr./North St. and travel along Main Street to Ninth Line.

It's a popular event. More people are coming out to the parade each year, sometimes lined up two and three deep, according to Kinsman Gary Gornik, the parade chair. Santa Claus' float, complete with sleigh and reindeer, is the most anticipated and most loudly cheered in the parade.

"Our Santa is fantastic," said Mr. Gornik.

His only complaint? Santa is losing weight.

Mr. Gornik's advice? Please Santa, "Lay off the salad!"

The Stouffville Kinsmen begin planning the parade almost a year in advance. Last year there were around 60 entries. The parades have included bands, horses and wagons, dogs wearing reindeer antlers, outhouses driven by erratic hillbillies, a Viking ship and lots of creative floats from local businesses, schools, service clubs and individuals.

The Stouffville Kinsmen have been involved with the parade over 60 years.

Schell Lumber entered its first float in 1953 and has won numerous awards for entries including a huge Dino the Dinosaur and another year a hillbilly dangling over the top of

their truck. Last year, the Glad Park Public School entry came complete with a life-size moose and Elvis rocked out on the Markham Fair entry. In 1967, the best overall float brought the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe to life. Last year, the 1st Ballantrae Scouts float won the Mayor's award for best overall entry. It featured a giant hand-crafted globe surrounded by children waving flags from many countries.

The delight of the children on the floats when they see their friends from school along the parade route is what makes it all worthwhile for long-time parade participants such as Harold and Pam Stierhof. They have been Beaver, Cub and Scout leaders in town for many years.

Although the membership of the Stouffville Kinsmen Club has fluctuated between eight and 20 over the years, "we try to make a difference," Mr. Gornik said.

The determined group not only puts on the town's parade every year, they have also been supportive of the EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church's Christmas dinner from its beginning.

When it comes time to helping cook turkeys, "if we don't have enough ovens," Mr. Gornik said, "we volunteer our neighbours' and friends'!"

The Stouffville Kinsmen also assist students with scholarships, sponsor local sports and community events and are partnered with Cystic Fibrosis Canada. Nationwide, the service organization has

raised around \$50 million for this cause over the past half-century.

A newer Kinsmen Club member, Guy Cooper, reflects the club's attitude.

"I am just happy to help out", he said. "It is very rewarding".




Past Kinsmen Santa Claus Parades have included bands, horses and wagons, dogs wearing reindeer antlers, outhouses driven by erratic hillbillies, a Viking ship and lots of creative floats from local businesses, schools, service clubs and individuals. Photos courtesy Stouffville Kinsmen Club



Adult Volunteers Needed for the Parade

This year, with the town looking to increase security along the parade route, the Stouffville Kinsmen are appealing to the community for help. Adult volunteers are needed to work alongside York Regional Police to monitor the street closures and barricades at intersections along Main Street during the annual Stouffville Kinsmen Santa Claus parade.

To help out, please e-mail: stouffvillekinclub@gmail.com or call 905-642-8178.





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