

Christmas villages adorn local common room



By Tabitha Wells

There is a meme online that often refers to two types of people when it comes to feelings on Christmas: those who love it, and those who brace themselves for the onslaught of music, decor, and a month of non-stop seasonal things. For those who fall into the former category, it's often something outside of the music and the commercialism that drives their passionate love.

It is sentimental. It is a reminder of the reasoning behind the magic; the inspiration to love and pursue spreading goodness to all.

Although the discussion behind his particular feelings towards Christmas did not occur, local resident Michael Steele is one of the many who love the season. Mr. Steele has a particularly unique passion during the Christmas season, in the form of an extended collection of houses from Christmas villages.



These villages are set up in the common room of his apartment building for all the residents to enjoy each year.

‘There’s no space in my apartment to set up the houses, so I put it in the common room to share with everyone, and it just grew,’ said Mr. Steele. ‘I shared it with the residents, and they bring their families to see it. The kids just love it.’

The collection was started nearly 20 years ago, beginning with just one small village. It continued to grow after he moved to Orangeville 10 years ago.

‘I started it out with just one village, and my wife Judy was extremely happy with it,’ he said. ‘We ended up buying one or two more houses a year, and it just continued to grow.’



He added that when he moved to his current building, he had about half of what he has now. He finds the houses at different garage sales and thrift stores. The ever-growing village now spans over more than four tables, and includes train tracks, different levels, and even Santa's Village in the North Pole.

This year, it took Mr. Steele approximate 20 hours to set up the entire display, but he is more than willing to put in the time because of the response.

?It's worth every minute when you see the kids cone in here, and their eyes just go wide open,? he said. ?Their eyes light up, and it's such a magical thing to them.?