

## Santa Claus Parade is coming to town Saturday of next week

By Tabitha Wells

It's that time of year again, when the smells of peppermint and cocoa begin to fill the air, the shops and storefronts become decorated in greens, reds, golds, and silver, and lights are strung up down Broadway in preparation for the holiday season.

As mid-November approaches, excitement begins to rise as the annual Santa Claus Parade approaches. The tradition of the Santa Claus Parade in North America traces back to the late 1800s, with the first-ever Toronto Parade being held in 1905 by the Eaton's department store. The parade marks the start of the holiday season, and acts as Santa's grand entrance into the malls.

Despite being a smaller town, Orangeville has a big draw in its Santa parades. While it cannot boast the larger-than-life floats and the block long marching bands that have been the Toronto parade's claim to fame, ours has more of a rustic, small-town charm. Our parades are about community; the opportunity to participate in making it a memorable event, and oftentimes the opportunity for kids who participate to feel special for being in the parade for all of Orangeville to see.

This year, the parade is taking it one step further in the local charm with the theme of a Kin Family Christmas. Floats will be designed with the idea of a family Christmas in mind, joined by bands playing everyone's favourite Christmas Carols.

"Like the last few years, the parade will be at night, and all the floats will be decorated with Christmas lights," explained Steve Koury, a member of the Kin Club. "The decision was made a few years ago to make the move to a night-time parade, because it would allow for the decoration of lights, making everything more colourful."

He added that it was a decision made by the club, with the idea in mind that the Christmas lights and added colour in the parade would help create more of a Christmas atmosphere, for the participants as well as those watching the parade.

"One of the benefits of holding it in November is that we can still start it fairly early," said Mr. Koury.

Now that we're back on Standard Time, the sky is usually dark enough that it allows for a 5 p.m. start to the parade without taking away any of the impact of the Christmas lights.

The Orangeville parade has continued to grow over the years, changing as the town has changed, and adding new and different things, something the sponsoring Kin Club hopes to keep doing.

"We are [always] looking at adding new things, and hopefully this year's parade is bigger," said Mr. Koury. "We had some initiatives to encourage community groups and businesses to get involved, and this year we have more bands and more mascots in the parade as well."

One of the great things about the Orangeville parade is that it's not just about being a part of the community, but acts as an opportunity for the community to give back to those in need in time for the holidays as well.

This year, local volunteer firefighters will be collecting for the Orangeville Food Bank throughout the entire parade, helping stock the food bank in time for Christmas.

Currently, the Kin Club is also still looking for volunteers interested in assisting with the parade, helping at the road closure points, and helping to meet any other needs. Those in high school looking to earn more volunteer hours are also welcome.

The 2015 Orangeville Santa Claus Parade will start on Saturday, November 14 at 5 p.m., and be marshalled by local community member Bob Shirley.

Road closures will begin at 3 p.m. around town, and remain closed until around 7 p.m., when the parade is expected to end.

The parade route will be the same as it has been in recent years: beginning on Han- sen Blvd. and heading south on First Street, east on Broadway, and north on Fourth Street, finishing at Rotary Park.

Anyone interested in volunteering for the parade can contact Diane Zan by email at [dianezan@rogers.com](mailto:dianezan@rogers.com) or Cindy Williams by phone at 519-939-6224.