

Schomberg's A Main Street Christmas marks its 20th

The Victorian look of 'A Main Street Christmas' makes it feel as if this special annual event is timeless and forever. On Dec. 6 it will reach a major milestone - its 20th anniversary.

Over the years, 'A Main Street Christmas' has grown to be the biggest one-day event in the Township of King, bringing more than 5,000 people to Main Street in Schomberg. The street will be closed to traffic from 3 to 9 p.m. so everyone can enjoy the carollers, the ice sculpturing, the reindeer and the big man himself - Santa!

The afternoon parade is a walk back in time with beautiful costumes, antique fire engines, marching bands, Mr. Scrooge and the Grinch. It is also a walk in the present with neighbours, local community groups and businesses joining in to give cheer for the holiday season.

Visitors will enjoy the Ben Show by Ben Burland, strolling costumed carollers, Steve Ruppert and Jason Vincent on stage, The Stylamanders, live reindeer, Town Crier, as well as singers in the Presbyterian Church.

A craft show with 30 vendors will run in the Community Hall.

The Santa Parade begins at 4 p.m. and includes many local organizations, dignitaries, brass bands and costume-clad residents. Santa always comes at the end riding the vintage 1920s fire truck from Schomberg Fire Hall.

While the whole day is special and wonderful, the 'Farmers' Parade of Lights' caps the night and brings awe to everyone who sees it. The massive farm tractors, combines, haybalers, and threshers - some coming straight off the fields - are decorated from top to bottom with lights that brighten the hearts of all those lucky enough to witness the magnificent sight of these massive tractors rolling down Main Street. The local farmers have always made a point of saying this is their way of giving back to the community in which they live and work.

New entertainers this year include Dan the Music Man and The Amazing Corbin who has a comedy/magic act.

There will be an ice carving demonstration from 5 to 8 p.m. on Main Street near the Schomberg Pub. The Village Blacksmith will set up his forge and anvil and give demonstrations.

King Township will be providing a free workshop to make bird feeders.

A popular favourite, the King Curling Club will bring their 'Rocks and Rings' to Main Street for everyone to try out curling.

Food vendors are mostly local community groups fundraising by selling roasted chestnuts, bacon on a bun, chilli, hamburgers and hot dogs along with hot drinks. There will also be have a Kettlecorn stand and Beavertails.

Each year, hundreds of people contribute to make the day special for everyone. Some of them work on this event for the day, some work for weeks and some for months. The crafters come to the Community Hall with their creations for sale; the food vendors representing the churches; the firefighters, Lions, and other local community groups, come with their offerings of peameal bacon on a bun, roasted chestnuts, mulled cranberry juice, hot chocolate, cookies, popcorn, sausage on a bun, and even cotton candy. The entertainers come singing and dancing and making magic. And let's not forget that all of this is made possible by the tremendous support of our sponsors, and by the residents and businesses who allow us to use their properties.

Above all, events like this need someone who will coordinate, organize, delegate, and make decisions. Now, after 11 years leading the organization of 'A Main Street Christmas,' Susanne Prince will be stepping aside.

After her initial dismay, Angela Rose, treasurer for the Schomberg Village Association, said: 'An event like A Main Street Christmas requires vision, leadership and organization. Two years ago, Susanne and her husband were overseas when AMSC was on, yet the team of volunteers were able to carry on admirably without her at the helm. How? Because she had done much of the work beforehand and had everything organized to such an extent that we just followed the instructions in the binders she had assembled and applied some common sense. I admire leaders who are collaborative and decisive - she is both. And she's the ultimate volunteer - putting in hours and hours of her own time and energy for the benefit of the community. I dare to hope we'll find someone else like her, but she will surely be missed.'

Jane Binions, secretary, Schomberg Village Association echoes those sentiments.

'Over the last 11 years 'A Main Street Christmas' has been blessed with a visionary at the helm. With a team of volunteers under her, Susanne took on the leadership of a relatively small event and created a community event that is envied far and wide. Her organizational skills, creativity, hard work and passion for her community will be a hard act to follow. As she steps down, she will pass on the reigns of an event that is run smoothly, is extremely well organized and loved by the whole community.'

Schomberg's 'A Main Street Christmas' is truly a special event - it epitomizes what the village is about - friends, family, community service, good spirit, celebration. If you would like to help carry on this wonderful tradition, think about volunteering with the Schomberg Village Association - for the day, a week, or months.

Contact Angela Rose at angela.rose002@sympatico.ca or Jane Binions at jbinions@rogers.com. More information can be found at www.schomberg.ca.