

## Bancroft Santa Claus Parade organizer very satisfied with parade went



By Mike Riley

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The Bancroft Santa Claus Parade happened on Dec. 3 at 2:30 p.m., starting at the MTO parking lot on Hwy 28, coming down Hastings St. N., across Bridge St. and ending up at the Post Office parking lot and Wattle and Daub Cafe at Riverside Park for a Christmas Market and Christmas Tree lighting ceremony afterward. Organizer Laverne Stapley, with the Bancroft Lions' Club, Tracy McGibbon, the owner of McG's Cakes on Main, and Liz Raymond, the owner of the Muse Gallery and Café, comment on this annual festive event.

Despite the driving rain the morning of Dec. 3, the Bancroft Santa Claus parade went ahead as scheduled at 2:30 p.m. that afternoon. In the half hour prior to the parade commencing, the rain had turned into light snow flurries, which was more appropriate for the occasion. Stapley recalls a very different, much snowier parade some 37 years ago.

?One year, we had snow so bad they had the snow plow and the sander in the parade. We had to stop at the bridge and let them go ahead and clear the snow and sand. They were pulling the floats up the hill. That was the second year I was in the Lions' Club,? he says.

Stapley, who is the event coordinator with fellow Lions Club member Steve Scally, says they started organizing the parade back in October to get things done like sending out request forms and leaving enough time to get them back, getting the two or three independent judges in place to judge the best floats and all the other arrangements.

The parade was well attended overall, with kids of all ages lining both sides of the street along the parade route, delighted at the myriad of floats and getting to see jolly old Saint Nick at the very end of the procession.

According to Stapley, there were 28 floats in the parade. The top prize for best float by a community group went to the 1st Bancroft Scouts, with the Bancroft Fire Department coming in second and the North Hastings High School Northern Ontario Studies class coming in third.

McDougall Insurance claimed the top prize in the commercial group category, while second prized went to the Bancroft Jets Minor Hockey Association float sponsored by Foodland, and third place was netted by Sharett Construction. The engraved trophies for all the best float finishers were presented to the winners last week.

McG's Cakes on Main had a float in the parade and McGibbon thought that this year's parade was one of the best Bancroft has had in many years. She said that her business partnered with Vance Motors, something she would like to see more of in the future; collaborations between different groups and organizations. She also wanted to shout out to her husband, Barry McGibbon, who drove the Vance Motors truck that pulled the McG's Cakes on Main float.

?It was absolutely amazing to see so much spirit, passion and creativeness put into each and every entry in this parade. Even though the weather wasn't the greatest it could be, the spirit wasn't dampened and the floats were amazing. A huge thank you to all who participated, to the Lions Club for providing the opportunity for our community to create, gather, enjoy and celebrate together and of course those who came to watch and enjoy. It's not a parade without the cheerful audience. The ladies who walked alongside my float are some of the greatest helpers around; my dear sister-in-law Linda Hoskings, a very good friend Lori Cummings, my favourite daughter Emma McGibbon and her sweet friend Mackenzie Slater,? she says.

Raymond, whose business Muse Gallery and Cafe had a float in the parade, say they had a great time being in the parade.