

Whitney Santa Claus Parade caps off a festive day



By Mike Riley

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The cutest little parade you ever did see, as it's called, wound its way through downtown Whitney on Dec. 17. In previous years, Tarrah Hovinga and Ramona Brown organized the Whitney Santa Claus Parade, but they are taking a year off. This year's organizers are Gloria Beauclair and Peggy Darraugh, and Beauclair says that they had 22 floats and everyone is very excited about this year's parade, which started at 1 p.m. instead of 2 p.m. as in previous years. It was prefaced by Breakfast with Santa at the Lester Smith Community Centre. Beauclair and Councillor Joan Kuiack comment to Bancroft This Week on the day's festivities. Beauclair told Bancroft This Week the community's excited about this year's parade. 'We've been putting out things like 'we're up to 20 floats,' and people are like 'wow.' There seems to be a bit more excitement and with the Breakfast for Santa to start it off, everyone gets something to eat, gets to say hi to Santa, gets their gift and then we do the parade. It feels like it's going to be a really festive day,' she says. 'We're looking forward to seeing everyone.' The Breakfast with Santa was from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and was catered by the Mad Musher Restaurant and Tavern, and primarily organized by Councillor Joan Kuiack, Councillor Laurie Siydock and Holly Hayes. Owner Steve Dunsford said there were pancakes, sausages, bacon and his famous bread pudding. Beauclair says it went fabulous. 'The kids were running all around. We had colouring pages and crayons and we had over 100 people I think. Everyone seemed very happy. The food was awesome that the Mad Musher put on and it was so delicious,' she says. Kuiack echoed this, saying it was a huge success and at the end, each child was given a loot bag which included a book or stuffed animal and candy. 'With Santa and Mrs. Claus being the main attraction, they were also joined by Bongo and Andrea to provide music for everyone. The children were invited to join them with an assortment of musical instruments so all could have fun singing and playing. Beauclair says they had a lot of volunteers helping out, which is why they were able to put on such an event, including Mad Musher Restaurant, Whitney Recreation Committee, Krystal Fuller who did all the decorating, and a young teenager from town, Izzy. She says they had about 20 floats and everyone did a great job and put a lot of effort into their floats. Beauclair told Bancroft This Week that the whole town really pulled together for this year's Breakfast with Santa and the parade. 'The recreation committee from past years as well as the new one pulled together, we got a lot of advice from people who did it in the past, and the Whitney beautification committee that decorated and put up the trees. It takes a lot of people to pull it off and the children seemed really happy. We saw a lot of smiling faces and had a huge turnout of people,' she says. Kuiack said the parade was very successful and that 21 individual floats were joined by the OPP, EMS Service and South Algonquin fire trucks to make it one of the township's best parades in its history. 'As we walked through the line of floats, everyone was happy and full of Christmas spirit despite the rain. So

many onlookers as well and we were very pleased with the community support. First place float was 'Grandma chasing a reindeer' by Wendy Recoskie and friends, second place was The Grinch Stole Christmas by Chris and Hilary August and family and third place was the Madawaska Recreation Committee,' she says. Adam was at the parade with Allison, Carley and Emily and thought the parade was great. 'It was very impressive,' he says. Dianne, who attended the parade with David, Dennis, Jess and baby Georgia, thought it was fabulous. 'We have a baby here and it did not even wake her up. It was great, really good, awesome!'