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## Picture perfect parade

By MIKE BEITZ, STAFF REPORTER  
Updated 3 months ago

Organizers of the Santa Claus parade in Stratford must have been good this year.

They got just what they wanted -- a clear, beautiful evening with no rain, no biting winds and just enough snow to make it feel like Christmas is coming.

That perfect combination drew thousands downtown last night to watch dozens of floats, displays, twinkling lights, baton twirlers, costumed dogs, marching bands and men in funny hats wind their way from the Allman arena along Ontario St. and past city hall.

Dale Jones and her daughter Emily camped out on a prime piece of sidewalk at the corner of Downie and Albert streets well before the colourful event began.

"We're here every year on this spot," said Jones, who has been coming to the parade for the last 17 years. "We just love the Christmas parade."

Not content to simply sit and wait, her husband and sons were across the road near the Erie St. parking lot heaving giant snowballs at each other.

Indeed, the festive atmosphere and sense of anticipation Sunday was not reserved just for the children in the crowd.

"I'm still a kid at heart," said Bob Roth as his daughters Katie and Allie played in front of the towering Christmas tree in front of city hall waiting for the parade to start. "Part of me still believes in Santa."

"We always tell the girls it's magic," added his wife Christine.

And for the younger children in the crowd, magic was definitely on their minds as Santa made his way along the parade route.

"I can't wait to see him," said nine-year-old Jacalynn Veenstra, eagerly peering down Ontario St. to check on his progress.

"I like him because he's jolly and fat," said Emma Powers, as she and her friend Abbey Matetich sat patiently on the curb, each sporting a bright red Santa hat.

"And he's funny," said Abbey. "And don't forget the presents," added Emma.

When he finally arrived at the



From their perch on the roof of a minivan parked along Ontario Street, Paige Campbell, Keegan Campbell, Autumn Mikel and Emerson Lewis had a perfect view of the Santa Claus parade in Stratford Sunday. MIKE BEITZ The Beacon Herald

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end of the parade, Santa didn't disappoint, drawing cheers and enthusiastic waves from the young, and the young at heart.

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