

Christmas Tree Lighting will also light a flame for peace: Mrs. Claus

By Brock Weir

Her Santa might be the one making a list and checking it twice, but Mrs. Claus has a few more checkmarks to make before she's ready to make the flight to Aurora this Wednesday to preside over the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Mrs. Claus will be a guest of honour once again at the Festivities, which will take place December 6 from 6.30 ? 8.30 p.m., which includes not only the Christmas Tree Lighting itself, but Ms. Claus reading ?Twas the Night before Christmas, hot chocolate, carolling, a return of Santa's reindeer and, new this year, the lighting of a peace candle.

In an exclusive interview from the North Pole, Mrs. Claus lets The Auroran in on all the details.

BROCK WEIR: It's almost that time of year again! What are you doing to prepare?

MRS. CLAUS: I'm practicing my story of course. Although I have it memorized, just like a kid I enjoy every single time the story is read. I want to make sure I have my enthusiasm up for the task!

BW: This year's event has been rebranded to include the word ?Christmas? in the title. Does that make it extra special for you?

MC: I think it definitely does. The spirit of Christmas grows and grows each year, and I think that has contributed to the name change.

BW: What's new and exciting for this year?

MC I am thrilled there is going to be a mini Christmas Market this year. Not many people know that Christmas markets are centuries old, so I think it is quite special that Aurora is trying this out this year and I really hope it is going to be a big success. I hear there is also going to be a really big surprise. We get to see them all the time since we live in Aurora, but I understand special efforts have been made this year to bring in a giant LED-lit inflatable igloo, which will kind of give people a taste as to what living in the North Pole is like.

BW:: And I hear Santa's reindeer are getting ready to make the trek!

MC: This is a great opportunity for people to see them because they are social animals, but they can't be seen on Christmas Eve. This is a great chance to see some of the kids firsthand, especially those whose houses they will be stomping on while Santa does his tricks on December 24!

BW: Is there any one particular thing you're most looking forward to this year?

MC: I understand from organizers that not only will the big tree be lit by the Aurora spirit, but there will be a new tradition incorporated into the ceremony ? a peace candle lighting. There will be one candle lit and that candle will be shared with all the people in attendance. They will all have their candle lit as a continuum from the original and then someone from the audience will be chosen to actually light the peace candle. The season of Christmas, regardless of what background you have and what part of the world celebrates it, the fundamentals of it are about peace. It is time ? and nice ? that peace gets its own singular focus.

BW: So, what's left on your To Do list before you make the trip?

MC I always pack my travelling packages of hot cocoa because you never know when you're going to need a cup. I always pack extra mitts and extra earmuffs because the weather really does change ? especially with the blessing of being able to visit Canada, I always want to prepare for any surprises along the way, like the rain Santa had Saturday's parade!

BW Aurora looks forward to seeing you next week!