

Elves are helping Santa prepare for his Saturday arrival in Aurora

By Brock Weir

Santa's made his to-do list, and before he sets off for Aurora on Saturday to take the lead in the annual Santa Under the Stars parade, his merry team of elves are making sure he checks it twice!

Aurora's Santa Under the Stars Parade makes its way down Yonge Street this Saturday, November 24, from 6 ? 8 p.m., beginning at Orchard Heights Boulevard and travelling south to Murray Drive.

Ahead of the big day, Sugar Plum the Elf granted The Auroran a rare phone interview from the North Pole to let us in on some of the secret preparations that are being made.

While it was unclear at press time whether Sugar Plum would be one of the lucky elves to join Santa on his journey this time around, she had her fingers and toes crossed that everything would align to make sure she made the trip.

BROCK WEIR: Thank you for your time, Sugar Plum. What are you and the elves doing to help Santa get ready?

SUGAR PLUM: There are many, many elves in our home. Some of us have the important job of making sure his suit is ready to go because quite often he's too busy eating cookies to really be mindful of those details, so we have a whole crew on suit duty. Then, of course, we have to have the crew look over the sleigh because we need to make sure he has reliable transportation to get all the way down to Aurora and back. We need him back here because he has a little bit more work to do between his parade in Aurora and his big day.

BW: Have you heard any juicy rumours about what might feature in this year's parade?

SP: Communications at the North Pole come in via snow globe, so some of us actually get to hear what's being said and that gets translated down the pipe. From what we understand, there will be an increase in marching bands this year. We love our music because that's how we build our toys so quickly: we have to have a tune to make them to! Some of the names we've heard are the 140 Air Cadets, the Cardinal Carter Marching Band, the Barrie Pipes and Drums, the Uxbridge Pipes and Drums, the Legion Colour Party, and there might be more.

BW: How about community groups and businesses?

SP: Well, Santa mentioned that some really clever pet retailers, like Ren's Pets, might be involved. Some of the things they want to do is apparently pretty innovative! We even here there might be some dogs dressed up this year. I also hear your Council is going to be in a horse-drawn wagon, so there will be horses and dogs! There's also quite a collection of dance groups too and the elves who have been to the parade before say they're always excited to see the Spectrum Baton groups, the Irish Dancers, and more.

BW: You haven't been to this parade before?

SP: Not yet. We all have to do some games to see who gets into the sleigh. It is always the dream that one day I can ride in the sleigh myself and get to see the action.

BW: Why is it so important to you?

SP: All the other elves say they can't believe how many people come out to actually watch the parade. Being elves, it would be amazing to see the thousands and thousands of tall children and tall adults line the street waiting for Santa's arrival.

BW: If you do get to come this year, what kinds of sights would you like to see along the parade route?

SP: I hear there's magic on every street corner, but particularly around the Library, Park Place Manor, and inching up the hill towards Murray. No matter what the weather is, nothing impacts the magic. There's also lots of businesses along the route and I wonder if an elf has ever shucked an oyster or seen how a planter is actually made, like in Caruso's.

BW: Well, we certainly hope you get to make the trip! If you do, I would think living in the North Pole you're prepared for the cold?

SP: We don't get cold in the North Pole because we've got jolly energy. We're too busy making toys, singing, and dancing to feel the cold. Maybe if I get to jump into the sleigh I will be able to feel the cold you might feel. However, I would think a good Christmas Carol would cure any chill!

BW: In addition to whichever members of the Elf Team get to make the trip, will there be any other helpers along the route?

SP: Yes, Santa is always grateful for the Salvation Army through the Northridge Community Church, which will be way ahead of him. They will accept letters for him so they won't have to go through the rotating postal strike. The letters will go directly to us. As well, they will also collect additional toys and amenities for families. We do our share on Christmas Eve, but the Salvation Army Northridge also does a huge community effort as well, so the parade is able to help them too.

BW: It sounds like a huge team effort! We hope to see you waving from the sleigh on Saturday!

SP: I hope so too!