

Santa could have some extra helpers in this month's parade



By Brock Weir

It's just over two weeks until Santa Claus makes his way down Yonge Street, and this year he could be joined by some extra helpers.

To help make up for the Community Cultural Celebration, the final event in the four-event program planned to mark Aurora's 150th birthday, getting rained out, elements and performers from the showcase could be incorporated into this year's parade.

"We had discussed enhancing the parade, just like we did in the Canada Day Parade," said Aurora 150 Committee Chair Alison Collins-Mrakas, after the Committee nixed the idea of holding a fifth event with a portion of the over \$100,000 they have left in their budget to celebrate the milestone anniversary.

"If the money was there, the first thing I would do is get a hold of the First Nations presentation," agreed Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "I think it would be neat to have them in the parade."

Committee members concurred and are planning to bring in, pending Council approval, performers from the Cultural Celebration, including showcases representing the traditions of the Falun Dafa, along with dancers keeping the heritage of Crete alive, into the mix. This would be funded to a maximum of \$2,000 out of their surplus.

"If these Cultural groups are in the parade, there might be other groups that have something more to offer," said Ms. Ware. "Sometimes it takes something you can identify. If you had someone with a Greek background and all of a sudden you saw the Cretan dancers, it might be a hype for you if you saw a connection. You can create a connection with different groups that maybe you were not connecting with currently."

Despite the rain, Committee members, and 80-100 who braved the rain, saw the Cultural Celebration as a success so much so that the Committee is recommending to Council that elements of the Cultural Celebration be maintained for future years as a regular community party at Ada Johnson Park.

Whether or not dancers and performers will join the parade, one thing is for sure: Santa arrives in Aurora on Saturday, November 23 and will make his way down Yonge Street from Orchard Heights Boulevard to Murray Drive between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.