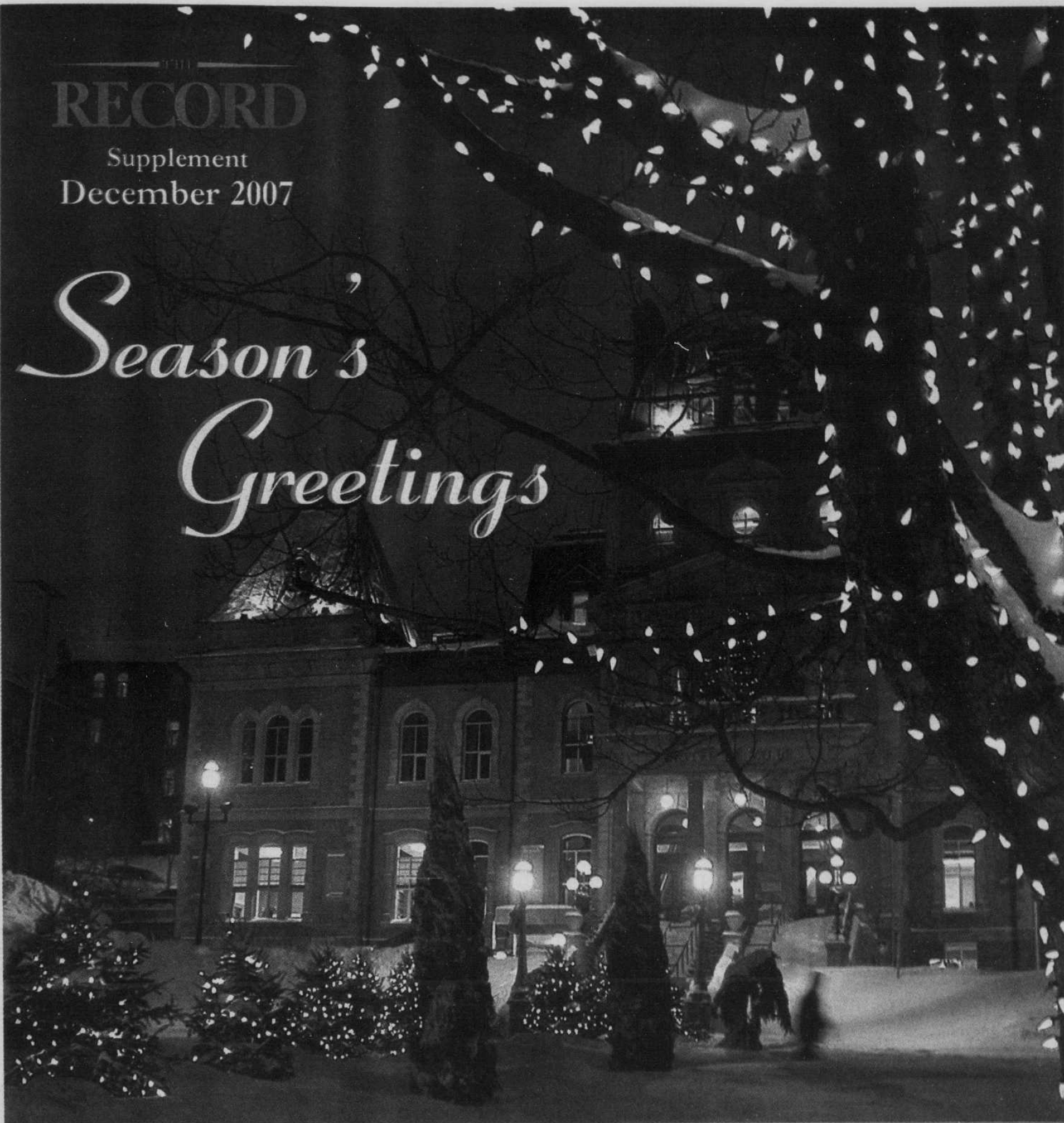


RECORD

Supplement
December 2007

Season's Greetings



*The Christmas season is a special time to share with family and friends. Enjoy these special moments, take time for yourself and be careful on the roads.
Merry Christmas & Happ New Year!*

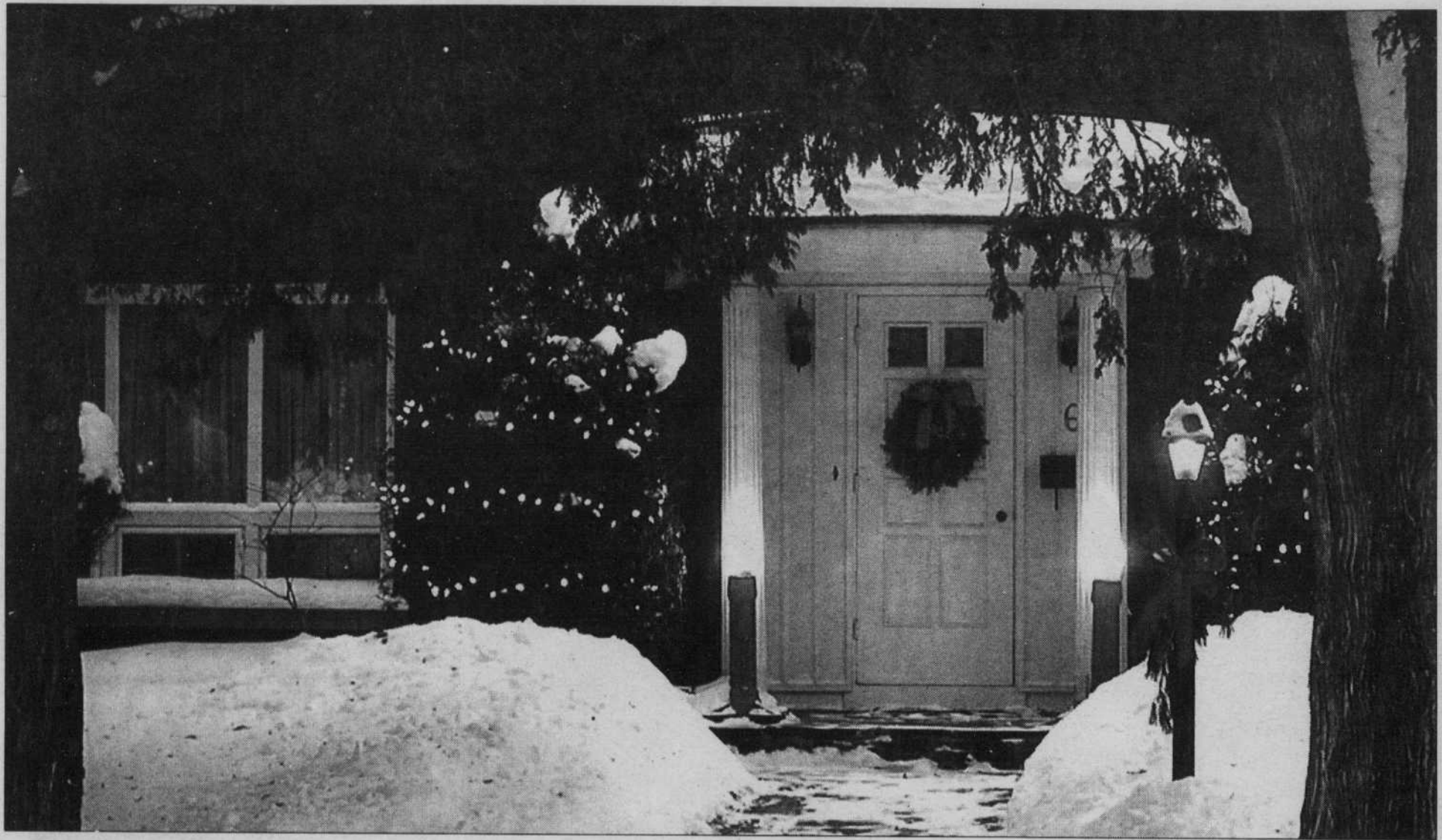


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PERRY BEATON

Welcome to The Record's Season's Greetings pullout section. Within, you'll find ideas for Yuletide and winter fun, a Christmas story for the kids (that's on page 8), tree care tips and a story on what a Townships tree grower is doing for the troops in Afghanistan. And sprinkled throughout are Townships scenes (there's nothing like a drive to see the lights and decorations carefully placed by home owners — as above!). On our cover, Sherbrooke City Hall on Wellington Street is lovely at night, Merry Christmas from everyone at The Record.

We would like to extend good wishes for this happy holiday season to all our friends and clients.

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3,000 Christmas trees given out

For the families left behind

By Jen Young
RECORD CORRESPONDENT

With hundreds of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, a Sherbrooke tree grower has spearheaded an effort to give Christmas trees to the soldiers' families.

"It's the least we can do," says Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association President Larry Downey. "Over 3,000 trees have been donated for families of men and women in Afghanistan. It's a gift to the men and women fighting overseas that shows our support and gratitude."

Downey, who has been producing Christmas trees in the Sherbrooke area for decades, says that dozens of Eastern Townships tree merchants have donated balsams and scotch pines from East Hereford to North Hatley, and he just finished filling his second semi-truck with the evergreens to be delivered to the Valcartier Canadian Forces Base last Friday.

Coupled with the donations from across Canada, thousands of families will be hanging balls and tinsel on fresh greenery.

"Last we year we delivered Christmas trees overseas to the bases where the troops were in Afghanistan, but it didn't work because there was a fear of importing new bugs and diseases," Downey says.

"So this year we decided that the families still on the bases waiting for their soldiers to come home deserved our support."

The trees have been allotted to families of troops in Bagotville, Montreal and St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, as well as CFB

PLEASE SEE TREES ON PAGE 4



COURTESY

The Christmas trees were chosen, wrapped up for transport and piled onto a trailer.

Have a nice Holiday Season!

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TREES:

CONT'D FROM PAGE 3

Edmonton, CFB Trenton, Ontario, and CFB Halifax in Nova Scotia.

Downey says the association is simply doing what it can, and he hopes that others will follow.

"My son gave his name last year to the army, but he was refused because of a foot problem," Downey says. "Had he been accepted, he would be over there right now. This mission affects all of us in many ways. It's sad to say, but sometimes you need war to find peace. We are giving trees because we can, but other big companies can do the same. They can organize something with what they sell or produce and send that to troops or families. This is a big mission and we have to support our professionals."

The majority of the trees were distributed in Valcartier, where Sherbrooke residents with loved ones overseas were also invited to go and pick up a tree.

For more information on the initiative visit www.apanq.qc.ca.

Overseas Gifts



COURTESY

Lennoxville-based Corporal Gary Hadley (pictured in the tuque) helps unload Christmas gifts bound for members of the Canadian military at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan. Hadley is on a six-month mission at the base, serving as a traffic technician with the National Security Element. The Canadian military now counts 2,500 troops stationed in Afghanistan since 2002 as part of a NATO-led mission.

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Keeping your tree greener, longer



JEN YOUNG

Experts say a bit of the trunk should be sawed off. And think H2O!

Water!

By Jen Young
RECORD
CORRESPONDENT

The lights are on, the tinsel is dangling, and the angel is placed. But how long can you expect to see your tree perky and green?

Experts predict that within a couple of weeks the branches will begin to drop, as will the needles, and the lavish green will turn to brown. But local sellers and producers say there are ways to keep it attractive longer.

"The most important thing is a fresh cut," said Lennoxville's Chuck Neville, who has been selling holiday evergreens, grown in Stan Hope, for 15 years.

"If you go out and cut your own tree then you are fine, but if you buy your tree from a lot then it has been cut for at least a few weeks. From sitting around, the trunk gets hard, making it hard for the tree to drink once you get it in the stand. So, cut it a good inch."

He says he's heard of many tips over the years. One being to add sugar or Pepsi cola to the water, but he

swears that the only sure fire method is to make sure the tree is never without water.

"Just make sure the water is always there," he says. "You could also add a small amount of bleach to the water so it doesn't create bacteria because the tree needs clean water."

Seventeen-year producer and vendor Paul St. Pierre agrees that fresh water is of the utmost importance, but he also makes other suggestions.

"Years ago they used to put molasses in the water and they swore by it," says St. Pierre from his King Street tree stand (in Sherbrooke), where he sells trees he grew himself. "I'd say a fresh cut is the most important thing and they say that cutting on an angle helps, but you can't cut the trunk at an angle or your tree won't stand in the tree stand."

St. Pierre says that more water, by any method, is good.

"I never heard of it before, but it would surely work," he said referring to the old wife's tale of completely soaking your tree in water, allowing it to absorb as much H2O as possible. "The trees drink from their bark and their needles, just like a plant, so that would work."

"My trees were all frozen this year and that helps because when they start to thaw the bark absorbs the water. Ideally, the tree should be fed like a plant with a spray bottle, but that's impossible once you add the ornaments and electricity. Not the best idea, but soaking it before you decorate it would work for sure."

St. Pierre says a tree's location and environment inside the house also play a role.

"It cannot be too warm," St. Pierre warns. "They need to stay cool. Never place them in too warm an atmosphere. So, never put them up near sources of heat."

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Selling ice cream in winter

How's about vanilla?

By Nick Fonda
SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

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DANVILLE

Intrigued, on a bitter day in early December, by a sign reading "Ice Cream", a visitor pushed open a red storefront door on Danville Square just to ask a question.

"I could certainly offer you an ice cream cone," answered Daniel Rommelaere, "I always have at least a little on hand. At this time of the year I couldn't offer you much choice. I make the ice cream myself on the premises and I don't use preservatives so I only make as much as I'm going to need."

Rommelaere, who followed a three-year course in his native Belgium to learn to make chocolates and ice cream, opened his ice cream parlour and chocolate shop, named La Céleste Praline, in December of 2006.

How Rommelaere came to the

Eastern Townships is a story in itself.

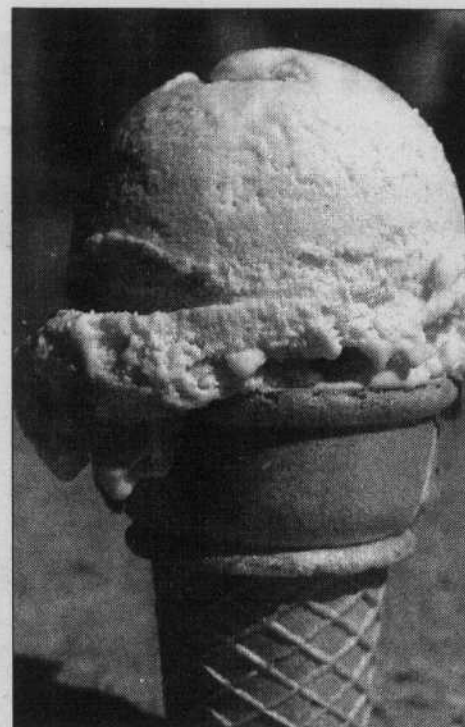
"Like many Europeans, I came to Canada with some romantic ideas," he explains. "The sheer space of the country is beyond imagination. I arrived in 2001 and opened a small shop, like this one, in Inverness. It was the only shop in the village. In the summer it was okay but in the winter, the moment there was snow, it was as if the world had stopped. There would no cars on the road at all."

Despite the isolated location, Rommelaere's skills with chocolate and ice cream drew faithful clients. Summer tourists, stopping out of curiosity, would taste his goods and leave satisfied.

"In 2004 listeners of Radio-Canada were invited to vote on the best ice cream in the province," Rommelaere recounts. "I didn't win, but I came in second. The fellow who won has an ice cream parlour in Old Quebec. Considering my location, I thought second place was pretty good."

It was location which prompted Rommelaere to move to Danville.

"In July of 2006 we came to Danville to deliver some chocolate. We came in on Highway 255 and as we came down Water Street and onto the Square, the first thing we saw was this big picture window with a for rent sign," recalls Rommelaere. "That was July and we opened the first day of December. It was that quick."



— at the crossroads of Highways 116 and 255 — and a larger population base provide Rommelaere with a busier shop.

"Many of the clients I had in Inverness, buy from me here," he says. "Plus I have many new clients from here, and there's much more traffic in the summer. I'm glad to be in Danville."

The imminent arrival of Christmas is one of three peak times of the year for La Céleste Praline. "Easter, Christmas

and Valentine are the three busiest times of the year," says Rommelaere. "Together those three periods account for about half of our yearly business. In the summer about half of our sales are from ice cream."

"There are a couple of different ways of making ice cream," he explains. "The recipe I follow calls for 100 g of milk, 30 g of cream, 20 g of sugar, 10 g of milk powder and 10 g of inverted sugar and the flavouring. If I am making vanilla ice cream, for example, I would also add a stick or two of vanilla. I stir my ingredients together and heat them to 95 C for three minutes. I then let them rest for a full day."

"The next step is to put them in the ice cream maker which can churn out two liters of ice cream in 15 minutes. I let it freeze overnight and it is ready the next day."

The visitor, although somewhat tempted by the ice cream, looked out at the cold December sky and opted to buy some chocolates instead.

Did the Belgian chocolate actually diminish the wind chill? Or did the Belgian chocolate simply distract one from the wind chill? This question may require more research. Much more research.

La Céleste Praline is located at 27 Grove St., on the Square in the heart of Danville. For more information call 819-839-1415.

The fields and forests that carpet the rolling hills around Danville provide Rommelaere with the Canada he sought. Danville's location

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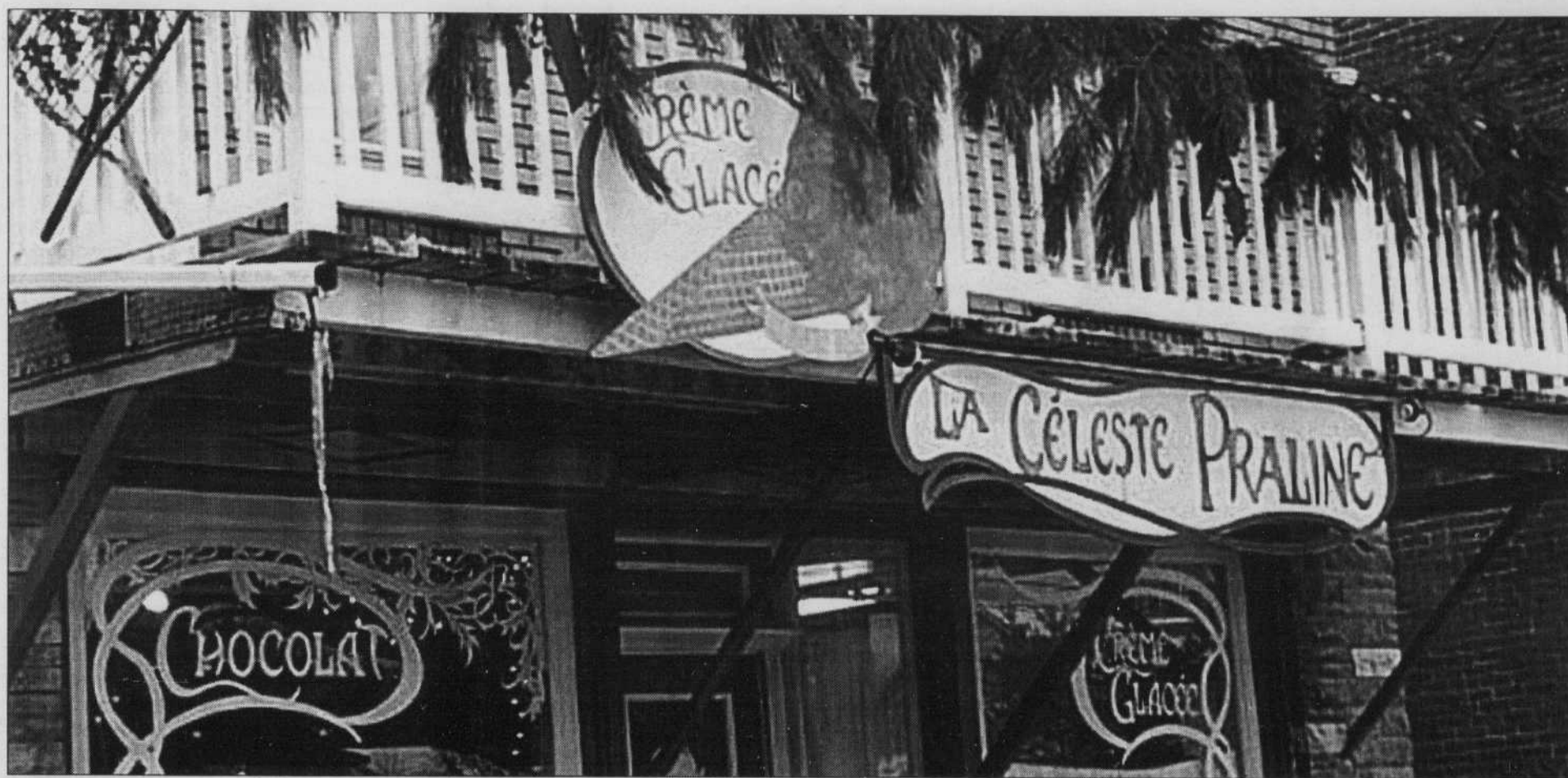
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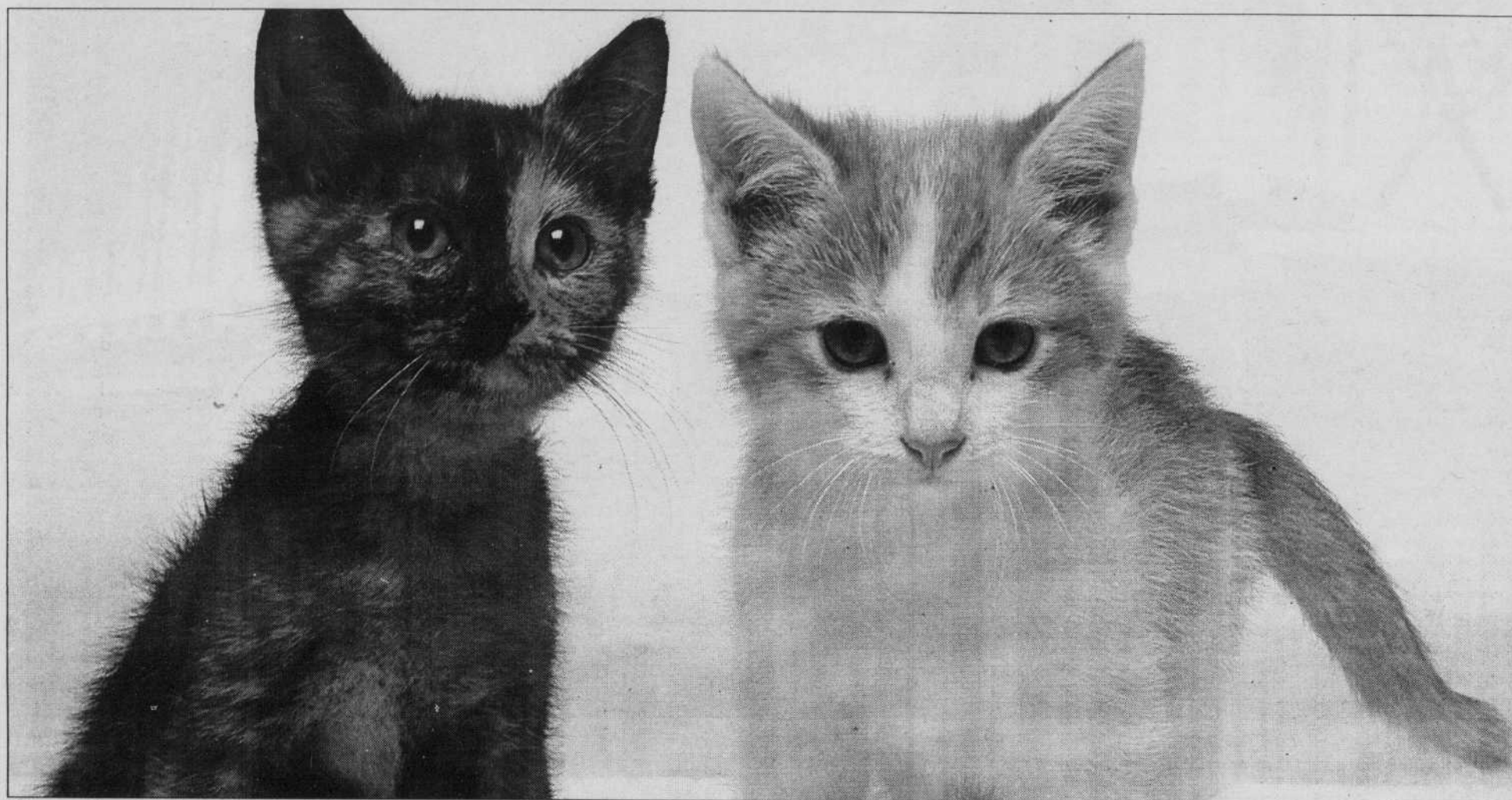
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Kittens discover Noël

Owl helps

By Klaus Bremer
SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

Soft white flakes had been floating down out of big fluffy clouds all afternoon; silently, piling up one on top of the other; turning the outside world into a wonderland of white. Mohrle and his sister Missi Girl, two little kittens, with their tiny noses pressed against the cold glass of a big

window in the sunroom, sensed that something special was about to happen.

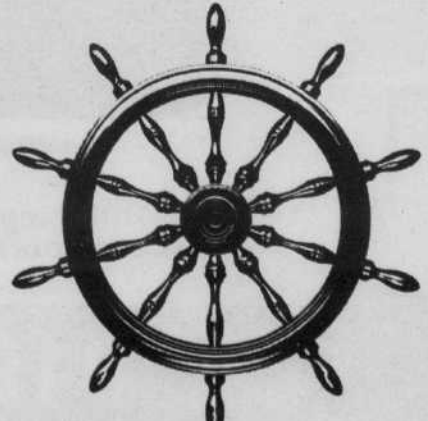
The kittens had only recently arrived. They'd been adopted by Mr. B. and Miss Emma to keep Woodstock company, who was alone since little Maxwell had gone to cat heaven.

Mohrle was shiny, like ebony, with short hair save for a few white ones on his chest and lower belly. Missi Girl's coat was a fluffy grey and white. She

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was absolutely adorable.

Mohrle remembered Woodstock's explanation of snow being like feathers. But he still could not wrap his mind around the difference between feathers and the cold feeling he experienced when he first kicked the snow around on the deck.

Woodstock had acted mysteriously all day. He kept mumbling, "It's that time of the year again. A time of sharing."

Missi Girl said to Mohrle, after he had pestered her for an answer, "Be patient, wait and see what happens." Mr. B. was busy getting all kinds of goodies out of the basement and carrying boxes full of things into the woods. Earlier on, in the morning, Barnie the Owl had come by and, in a hushed tone of voice, talked to Woodstock, occasionally glancing over to the two little kittens.

As soon as Mohrle would perk up his ears, the owl continued in a quieter voice and looked away disinterested.

"You don't fool me," Mohrle turned to face Missi Girl: "They're up to something. I can't stand the suspense any longer. I'm going to ask." He stretched, yawned and sauntered into the living room.

Woodstock was looking out of the front window, the one looking down the driveway. Like he was expecting someone. "Tell me, Mr. Woodstock, sis and I were wondering, what's with all the commotion? Mr. B. taking stuff into the woods and you talking to Barnie. — About what? What's going on? Can you tell us?" A big smile appeared on Woodstock's face, "No need to call me Mister, my dear little friend, it's Christmas!"

"Christmas? What's Christmas?" Woodstock looked Mohrle straight in the eyes and replied, "Christmas is the time all of us celebrate. People give gifts to each other."

"Gifts? Gifts of what? And why?"

"Oh, things like neckties and pearls and diamonds, video games and iPods, you know, people stuff." Woodstock cleared his throat.

"I should explain. People, like Miss Emma and Mr. B., celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior. He was born to Mary and Joseph a long time ago. The night he was born there appeared a very, very bright star in the stern sky. It happened in Bethlehem. I'm not sure where that is. I think it's around Sherbrooke, or somewhere in New Hampshire, but don't quote me on that.

"The story goes that Joseph and his wife Mary were on some sort of a trip. The ruling military made everybody go to their place of origin or some such thing. To be counted. I have no idea what that was supposed to do, but anyway, here they were. So, these weary travelers got to this town called Bethlehem, yeah, that's the name of it, it was late at night and all the Hilton's, Best Western and other hotels were full. The

only place they could find to stay was a manger on some side street. They didn't care. It was warm and had a roof. Sheep and the other animals didn't mind them.

"Anyway, these wise men saw the star in the east, loaded up on gifts, followed the star and when they found the little baby in that manger, gave him the gifts. Apparently they had quite a time with all that commotion, finding the manger. There were no roadmaps or GPS devices in those days," explained Woodstock.

"Ever since people exchange gifts on that day. They wish for peace on earth and goodwill towards men. They have lots of parties. Everybody gets together to celebrate. This is done every year. For all Barnie and I know, since time immemorial."

"What's immemorial?"

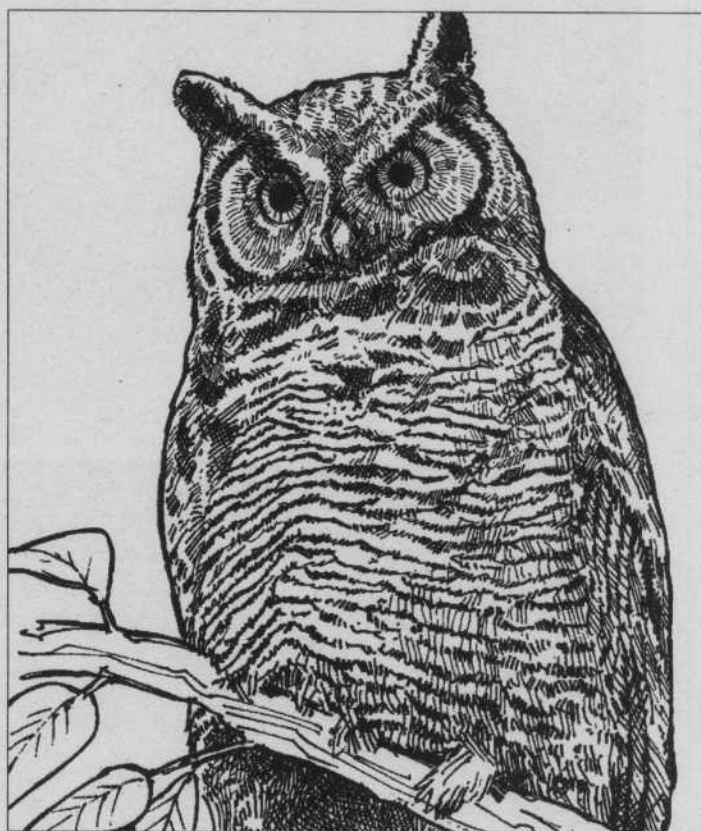
"I think it means a long time ago."

"Wow, that's really something," said Mohrle, now more confused than ever.


"Well," Woodstock continued, "we animals do things a little differently. Tonight is Christmas Eve, that's the night Jesus was born. Tomorrow is Christmas, the day they say the wise men bring gifts. On that day all of us go into the woods and celebrate goodwill and friendship and have a feast."

The little black kitten, with eyes as big as saucers, looked at Woodstock. And before he could ask another question Woodstock said, "Yes Mohrle, you and your sister will come into the woods with Barnie and me and you will meet a lot of new creatures. Creatures

PLEASE SEE KITTENS ON PAGE 10



The owl had something to say, as well.



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KITTENS:

CONT'D FROM PAGE 9

both of you have never seen before. We will eat all kinds of goodies, talk to each other and no harm will come to anyone. You will meet birds and deer and squirrels and woodchucks." He paused, "I wonder if we can get that little guy out of his cave? I must ask Barnie," and continued, "In any case, you'll see."

"Deer, squirrels, woodchucks? Eat all kinds of goodies?" The little black cat went back into the sunroom and repeated what he had heard to Missi Girl.

"See, I told you, I knew something special was coming. Who is Jesus Christ?" Missi Girl was asking.

"Gee — I don't know, I forgot to ask. But I think he must be very special for people to celebrate his birthday. I think Woodstock knows, but Barnie knows for sure. I'll ask him when I see him." With that he jumped on a chair, curled up and started to nap.

Bright sunshine flooded the house early. Woodstock gathered his two little charges and went outside on the porch. The snow had stopped falling during the night, but a great amount of it had piled up. Barnie was waiting for them across the yard sitting on a branch. "Follow me," said Woodstock and stepped off the porch, almost disappearing in the white stuff. "Okay, guys, no fear, right behind me." And he forged ahead. The snow was higher than Mohrle and Missi Girl were tall. Mohrle could only see Woodstock's tail in front of him.

Deep into the woods they went. At least that's what Mohrle thought. Finally the little party arrived at a clearing and Mohrle could see much better. He sat down in amazement. Mother Nature had decorated the pine trees beautifully with white snow. Bright red cardinals and blue jays sitting in the branches added colour and snow crystals sparkled like thousands of diamonds in the sun. Missi Girl and Mohrle looked around with big eyes. They had never seen anything so wonderful.

Barnie flew in silently, settling just above our three friends on a protruding tree branch. Suddenly they realized — they were not alone. Graceful, larger creatures had come into the clearing — deer, Barnie explained. They met Speedy and Nosy, the two mischievous squirrels Woodstock had warned them about. Cardinals, chickadees, juncos, mourning doves and blue jays, birds they knew, were all present.

Barnie introduced them to ravens and crows. But these kept a distance. Even though it was Christmas. Rabbits, mice and other little creatures kicked up clouds of snow, while flitting through the fluffy white groundcover without fear.

Barnie had been unable to awaken Charlie, the woodchuck; he was out of it. No amount of hooting would rouse him out of hibernation. They feasted on apples and peanuts, corn and carrots. The woodpeckers had the time of their lives with lard. There was such an abundance of sunflower seeds, the chickadees and blue jays went wild. Not to mention Speedy and Nosy, who stuffed themselves as if they had been on a starvation diet all summer and fall.

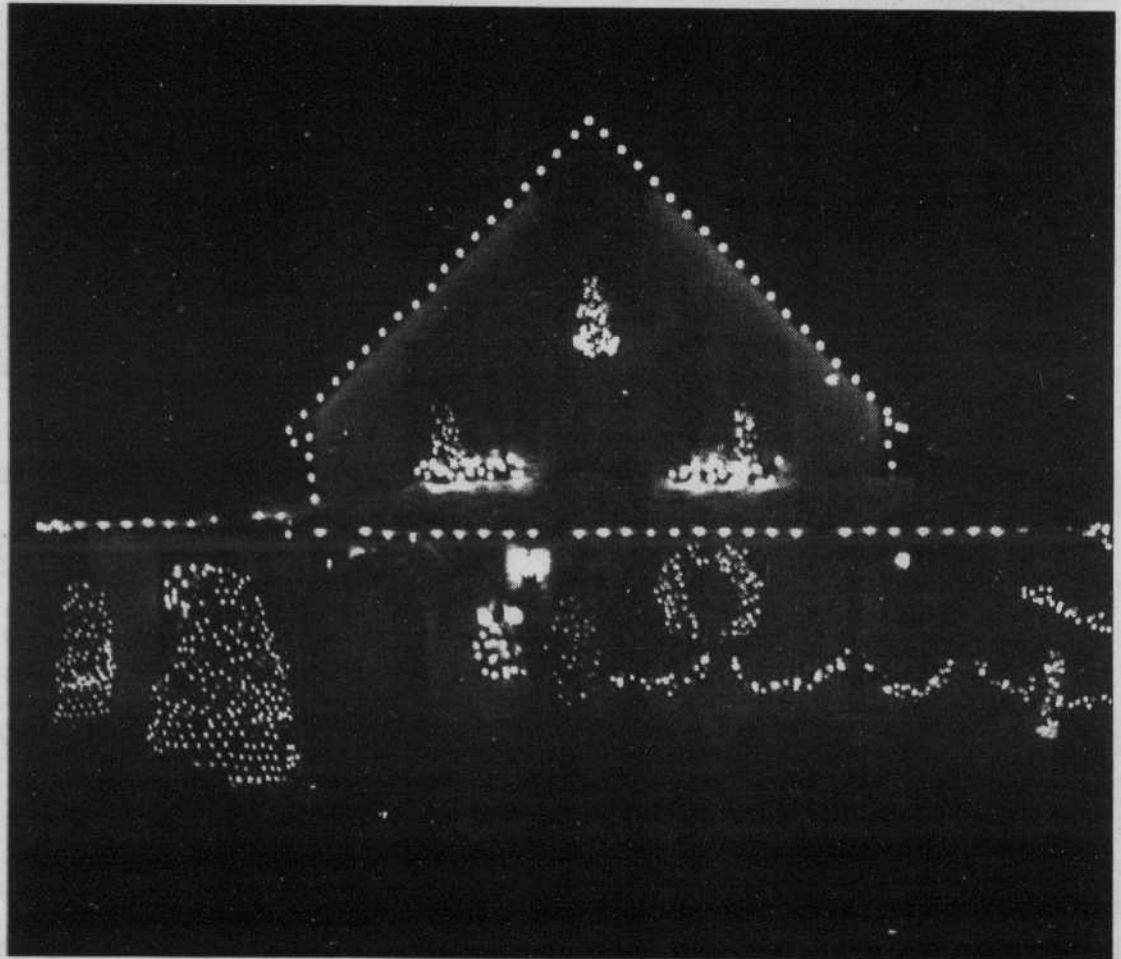
R.A. Coon, who was expected to deliver some sort of festive speech, came late to the party. His excuse: too much snow. However late he was, he told a beautiful story of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint who looks after all animals. R.A. Coon went on to say that in the book of Genesis it is written that God made a covenant with all living creatures.

It was beautiful and very touching. Missi Girl sat wiping a tear out of her eye. Mohrle had become very quiet and looked up to Barnie.

Barnie nodded. "That was a great speech, a great party." And just before they went home Woodstock remarked, "Why can't it always be like this? Everybody getting along with one another.

"I wish a merry Christmas to all."

The Lights



JUDY MANSBRIDGE

The sights in Cookshire-Eaton include these decorated homes. Record photographer Perry Beaton says the best time to take pictures of Christmas lights is just at dusk, when there's still a little bit of sun left.

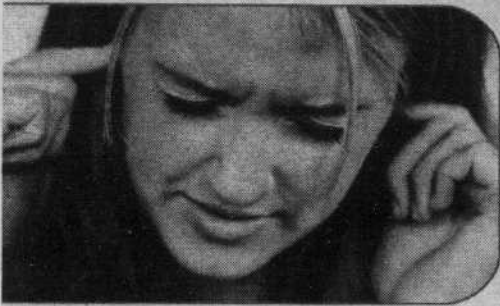
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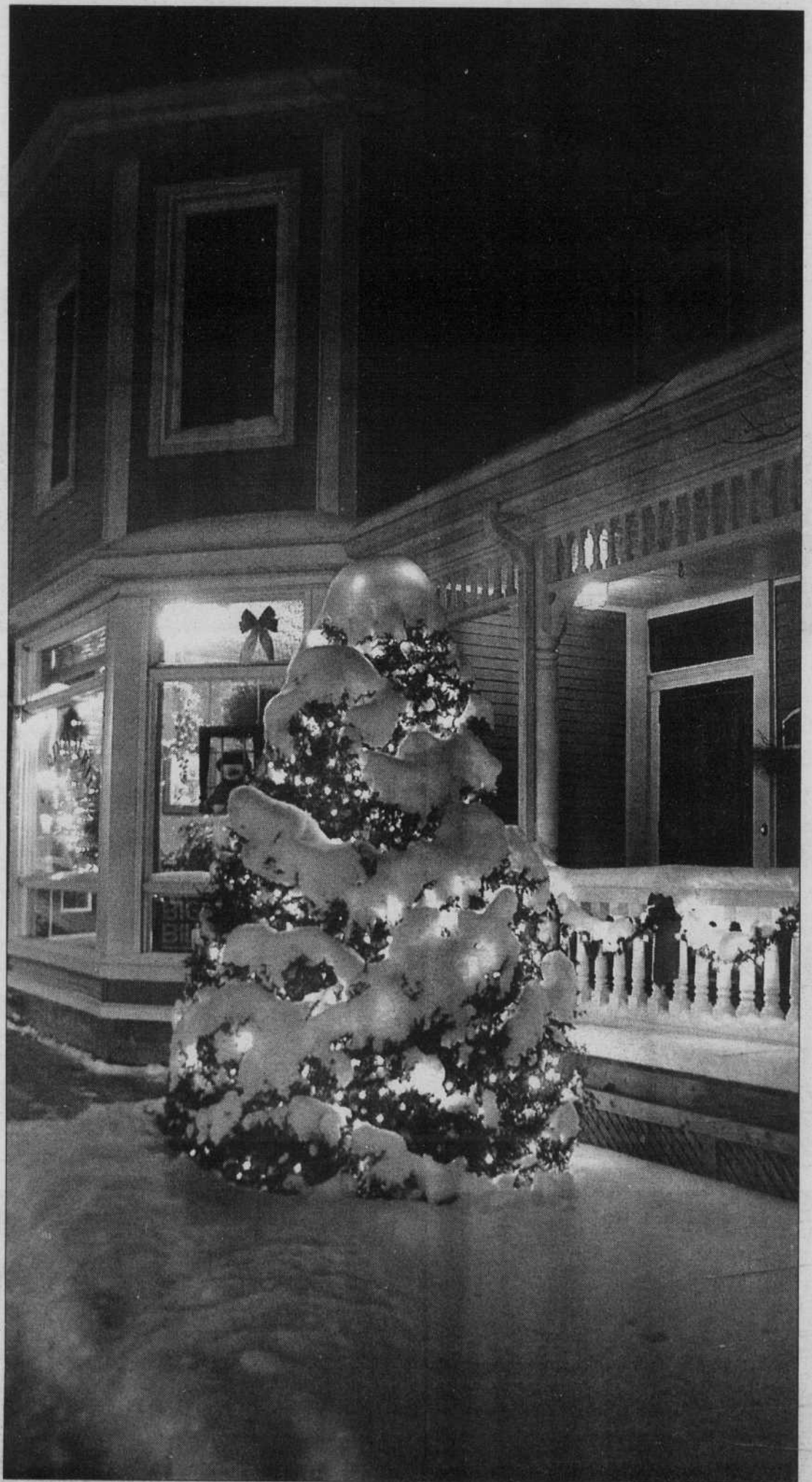
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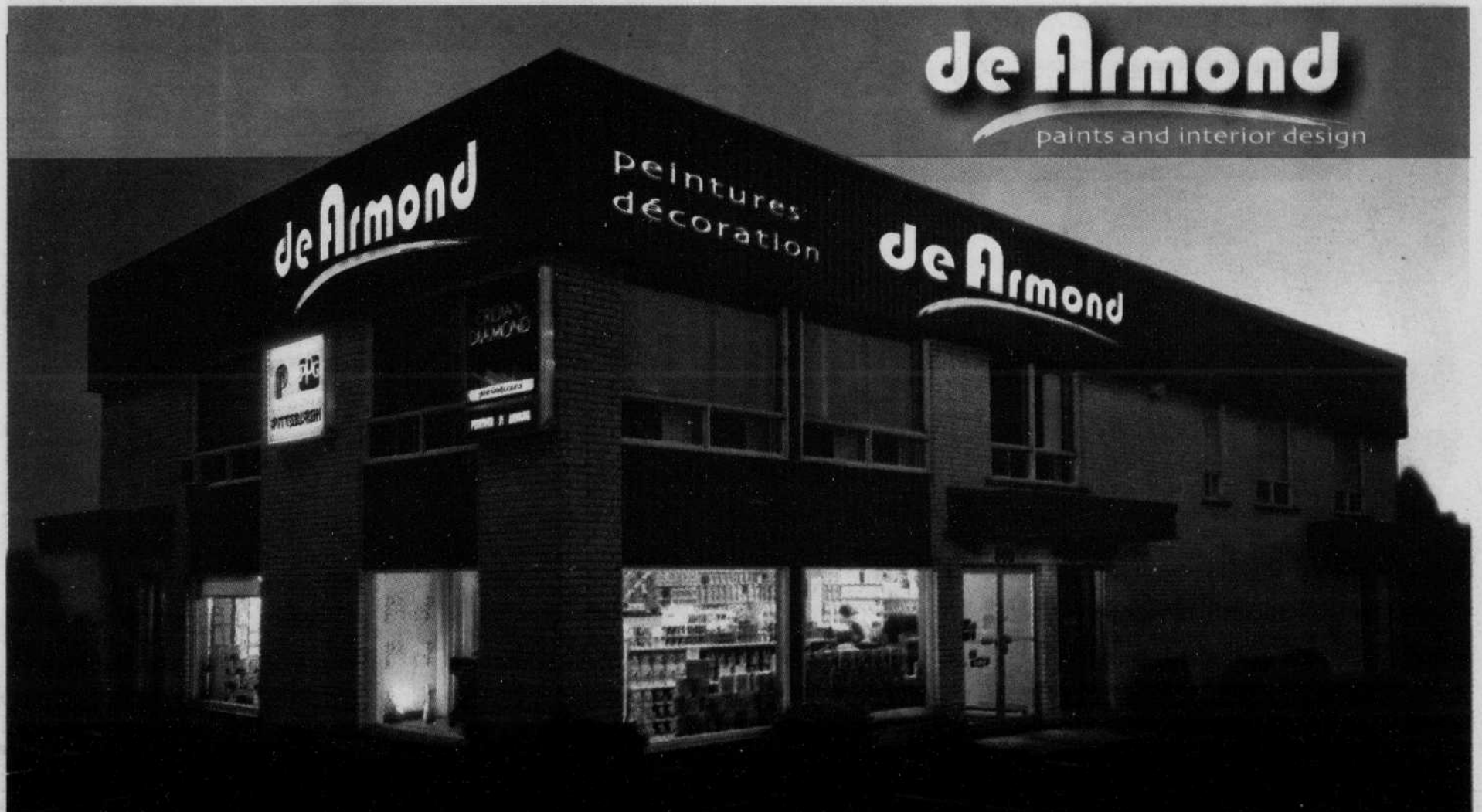


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The perfect winter drive

Discovering — or rediscovering — Richmond

By Claudia Villemaire
RECORD CORRESPONDENT
RICHMOND

Tourist brochures and travel folders say little about the Richmond region. Their focus is on the big stuff — mountain ski slopes, fancy accommodations and country inns, fine wining and dining and such. But whoa!

Exchange the salt spray and excessive speedsters and choose instead the gentle curves and hills of roads where once stagecoaches trundled, travellers reached their destinations astride a fiery steed or simply donned snowshoes and silently walked through quiet

woodlands and across frozen waterways.

This region has a different kind of magic. History is around every corner. Heritage homes, constructed of locally produced brick and capped with roofs of slate, mined just a few miles from town.

Hills and valleys all seem to lean toward the St. Francis river where early settlers began the arduous task of taming the land, clearing the forests and developing the rolling fields where, even in winter, remnants of a summer's crop still peeks through the first layer of sparkling snow. The Craig Road was the first attempt at connecting Montreal and Boston with Quebec City.

Still well travelled, this historic trail, once the official stagecoach link between larger centres, still tempts the

PLEASE SEE DRIVE ON PAGE 15

Window Dressing



DAVID ANDERSON

Waterloo's shoemaker shop.

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December 25-26: CLOSED
December 31: closing at 4 p.m.
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France Bonsant m.p.
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DRIVE:

CONT'D FROM PAGE 14

passerby with views of now infamous CJM asbestos mine.

Just before slipping down the long hill that leads to Danville, sister town to Danville, Vermont, a magnificent view of the Mont Smith mountains bursts into sight, the Danville Pinnacle peaking among the smaller mountains — once a copper mining area, now simply part of a panoramic view of the region. Looking down into the valley where a small river twists and turns across the valley floor — fertile fields, spiffy farmsteads, slopes of hard and softwood trees present a scene guaranteed to calm in some small way the hurry and stress of holidays.

If one crosses the century-old steel bridge in Richmond, turning left at Chemin Melbourne, the old highway once again follows the river's curves, hinting at a bit of history here and there. The footing for the covered bridge the ice swept away over a century ago is still visible. Under a mile from that left-hand turn, the traveller, headed for Racine or historical Valcourt, birthplace of the Bombardier snowmobile, will pass St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, once the star on the back of the centennial \$2 bill. Approaching the 150 year mark, this church, also built of brick manufactured at the Richmond brick yard, is basically unchanged. The wide planks, straight-backed pews with small doors on each one, the hand-carved decorations, are still in full view. The sinners' bench is still up front and the music director's box or lodge is also intact at the back.

Going back into Melbourne village

and keeping a straight line past our original corner, we can once again follow the river's winding ways towards Kirkdale and Ulverton. This road will eventually lead to Route 55 on-ramps all the way to Drummondville for the traveller whose time for sight-seeing is limited. But if the schedule allows, one can admire the Holy Trinity church in Kirkdale where the flying buttress style of construction makes this Anglican church a rare and precious example of the pioneers priorities a century ago. Again, bricks have stood the test of time, stained glass windows and hand carved interior decoration give this holy place special distinction — well worth slowing down a bit to admire on the way to Ulverton.

Across a river flat where it's said one man and his team of horses drowned during a spring flood a century ago, the curious traveller finds the road rising just a bit. Around the first curve, a vista of heritage homes unfolds. Here we find the stage coach inn where weary travellers could find a hot meal and perhaps a bath and probably a feather bed for the night. The stable where horses rested is still standing and several homes were built from lumber cut and sawed right in the village. At the bottom of the hill, we cross the Black River, once the byway for boat and canoe travellers that opened into

PLEASE SEE HISTORY ON PAGE 16

Snow Fall



PERRY BEATON

Every homeowner can pop a few lights around a tree.



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HISTORY:

CONT'D FROM PAGE 15

the St. Francis and could whisk folks down past Drummondville and eventually to Trois Rivières in a matter of days.

There are fine restaurants and accommodations aplenty. Maybe the glitter is missing but it's aptly replaced by the mists of history, rising as day breaks, bathing church spires and tree tops in rainbow-hued white clouds. The sparkle of fresh snow on cross country trails touted to be one of the best cross country ski clubs in the province are also located in the hills just outside town.

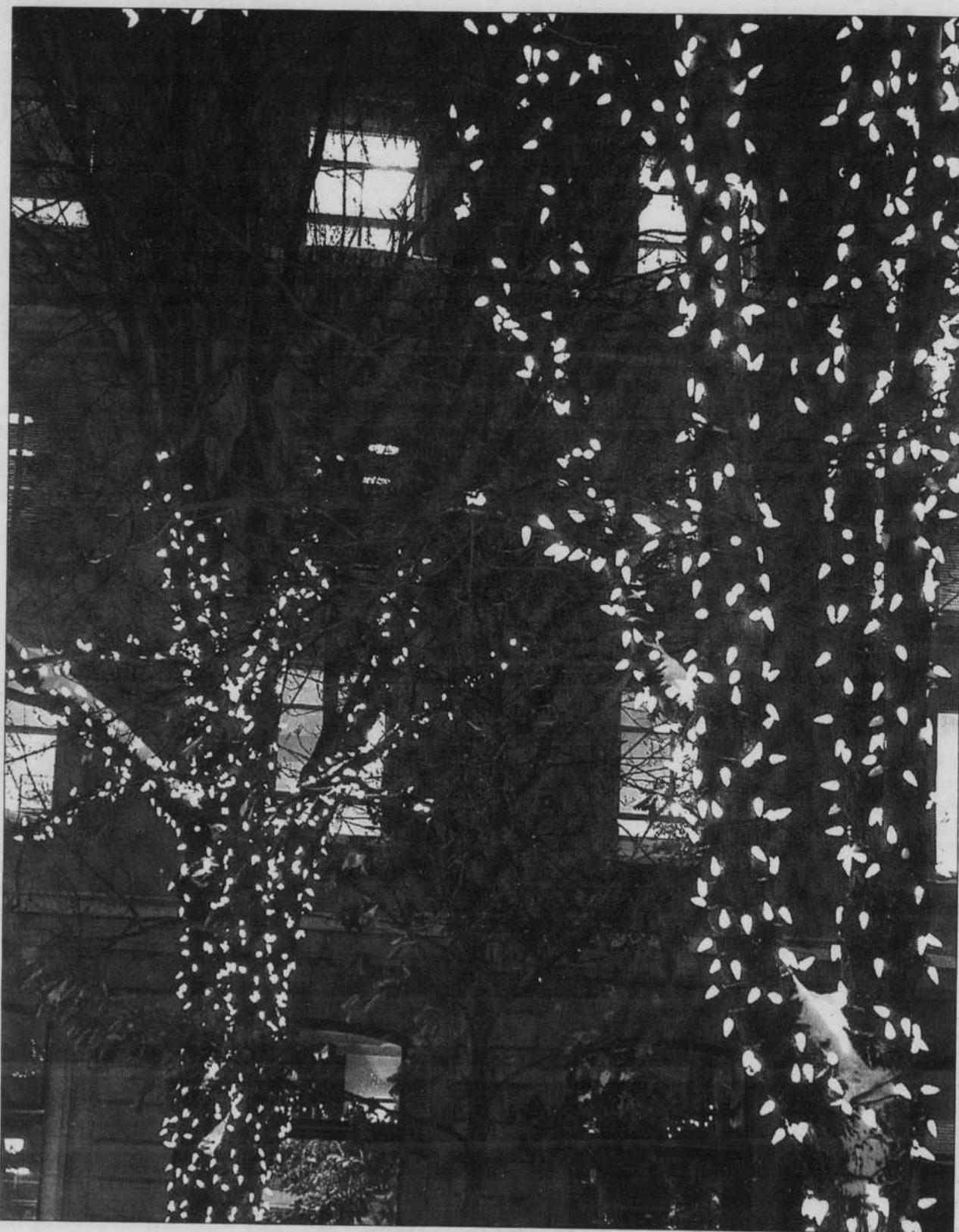
There are small, intimate art exhibitions scheduled during the holidays, concerts galore, Christmas teas and sales of handicrafts and home cooking.



Posters, notices and newspaper news of the region are always available and should provide all the information to any traveller willing to slow down and venture a detour letting the imagination picture this area as it appeared to those first hardy folk who began the development we enjoy today.

Bright Lights, Big City

PERRY BEATON

The lights at City Hall in downtown Sherbrooke.




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Getting out as a family this holiday

Lennoxville skating, sliding and more

By Jen Young

RECORD CORRESPONDENT

This is a real white Christmas with enough flakes to make perfect snow angels and frolic with the family. And enjoying the snow is a sure fire way to spend some quality time together.

"If you go outside and play in the snow you end up loving winter and there are numerous things to do together as a family in the borough," says Lennoxville chief of recreation and leisure life Sarah Channell. "Building a snow fort, skating, and sliding is a memorable part of every childhood."

SKATING

Borough council has yet again arranged a special holiday contract with the Bishop's University arena that will enable families to skate for free.

The \$5,800 agreement allows residents to use the indoor arena on Thursday, Dec. 27, 28, 29, and 30 from 1 to 5 p.m.

"Bishop's has been very generous since this is a very busy time of year for them," Channell said. "They donate two hours and the borough pays for the other two."

Starting Jan. 6 the free skating is available every Sunday from 12:45 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.



FILE

Residents get cheaper rates at Montjoye.

The outdoor rink at Atto-Beaver Park on St. Francis Street is being flooded. With the sudden early week snowfall, Channell says employees have found the flooding difficult, but they still expect to open the heated shack and have the ice smooth by Saturday, Dec. 22.

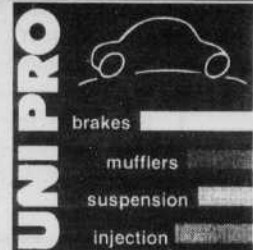
The rink is always open, however the shack is unlocked and rink

PLEASE SEE FUN ON PAGE 18

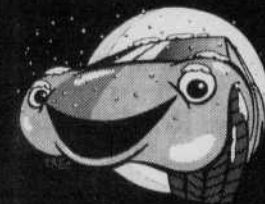
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FUN:
 CONT'D FROM PAGE 17

employees are on hand only Monday to Friday from 1:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays and from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Sundays throughout the winter.

These times are tentatively set and over the holidays skaters will need to have their own snow removal tools handy.

"On the 24th and the 31st the rink will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on the 26th and the 2nd of January from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. The shack will be closed on Christmas to give employees a chance to spend the holidays with their families, but the ice is still there to use. People who want to go and skate when the shack is not open, they just need to bring their own shovel to clean off the ice."

SNOW FORTS AND SLIDING

If skating isn't in the cards, the contract recently signed between the borough and Lennoxville Elementary School gives families a place to pull out those sleds, or offers some wide-open spaces for fort building.

The borough handed over \$5,000 towards new play equipment for children to use while in school and in return, residents may use the grounds outside of school hours. School hours are 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; classes end Friday and start up again Jan. 8.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING, SNOWSHOEING

The CHARMES agency has been working overtime packing down the bike trails, used in winter months for cross-country skiing. With all the snow CHARMES employees have been on the paths frequently with snow mobiles and three-wheelers, packing down the snow for smooth skiing. The main trail, which runs all the way to North Hatley, begins on Winder Street behind Paradis Garage and stays open free of charge throughout the winter months (providing ice does not become a problem).

The Johnville Bog, situated on the North Road in Johnville, is open throughout the holidays from sun up to sun down, offering kilometers of



groomed trails through the woods for skiing and snowshoeing, also free of charge to everyone.

MONTJOYE DISCOUNTS

Sherbrooke residents get a discount when skiing at the Montjoye ski hill in North Hatley. Borough offices offer 20 per cent discounts off ski passes. Channell says residents only need to present themselves at the borough office with a photo ID. The office is closed from the 23rd to the 2nd of January.

Skating in Sherbrooke

An early start to winter this year means many outdoor skating rinks in Sherbrooke are already open and in good enough shape to lace up your skates and enjoy.

The city notes the promenade along Lac-des-nations, the ice ring in André Viger park in the Jacques Cartier borough as well the skating rink in Parc Nault in Brompton borough are open. The Sylvie Daigle won't be available this winter, however.

In the Mont-Bellevue borough, several rinks are open including the ones in parc Alfred-Élie-Dufresne; parc Andrew-Sangster; parc du Belvédère; parc Paul-Marinand parc de Marie-Médiatrice (accessible from Jolliet Street).

Skating rinks in other parks, including Galt, Alguéric-Bussière et Arsène-Goyette, will be ready this week.

Outdoor rinks in other boroughs are not open yet, but should be in the coming days. All should be open in time for the Christmas holidays.

For information about rinks in your neighbourhood call your borough office. Here they are: Brompton, 819-846-2757; Fleurimont, 819-565-9954; Jacques-Cartier, 819-822-6060; Lennoxville, 819-569-9388; Mont-Bellevue, 819-563-3993; Rock Forest-Saint-Élie-Deauville, 819-564-7444.

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By David Ellis
SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

I remember back last winter when I had a conversation with a gentleman from Montreal. We were both in Granby participating in the Royal Canadian Legion's annual dart tournament. In between playing in the event, the two of us were standing at the bar enjoying a beer while chatting.

"You say you're from Stanstead? Isn't that the quaint village in the Eastern Townships nestled along the Vermont border?" the chap asked me.

I replied yes and went on to tell him that Stanstead was turning into a happening place. With the addition of new housing projects and industry in recent years, the town has created a prosperous opportunity for local residents and out-of-town job seekers. I also related how the village always comes together many times during the year to promote area businesses, restaurants and tourist

Stanstead? He's loving it

Restos, shopping and nativity scenes

attractions.

This brings me to what Stanstead has to offer during the festive holiday season. The village is the gateway for U.S. and Canadian travellers who venture to the higher populated cities of Sherbrooke, Quebec City and Montreal. But Christmas also seems to bring out the best in Stanstead. For example, the many area restaurants serve different types of menus to cater to holiday shoppers who stop on their way to their buying excursions.

The granite museum on Notre Dame Boulevard in the Rock Island sector is a great place to visit to learn about the local industry. The Colby-Curtis museum on Dufferin Street also has its own unique aura of the village's yes-

teryear. At night, a December drive through Stanstead reveals how the residents from Fairfax to Railroad to Woodside streets are all in the holiday mood, decorating their houses with colourfully adorned Christmas lights and nativity scenes. The breathtaking winter views of Lake Memphremagog and the white-capped ski mountains of Jay Peak, Orford and Owl's Head can be seen from Stanstead. The Yuletide spirit is everywhere throughout.

The local economy depends on tourism. Experiencing what Stanstead is all about makes people come back time after time. Friendliness, courteous and charm from storekeepers to restaurateurs to

private citizens adds to the impact that Stanstead has to welcome everyone from far and near.

"I've been to Stanstead on a couple of occasions," the gentleman added, "I've always been greeted warmly by everyone there."

"Always" something different about Stanstead. The new shopping centre on Fairfax is booming. Dufferin is going through some positive reconstruction. Rock Island and Beebe sectors are sprucing up. The town is definitely thriving. Socially and culturally. Just in time for the holidays," I said.


After we finished our drinks and said our good-byes, I couldn't help but to smile with a sense of pride. I was proud to say I am a Stanstead resident. To be a part of what the town is all about is a joy in itself. Believe me.

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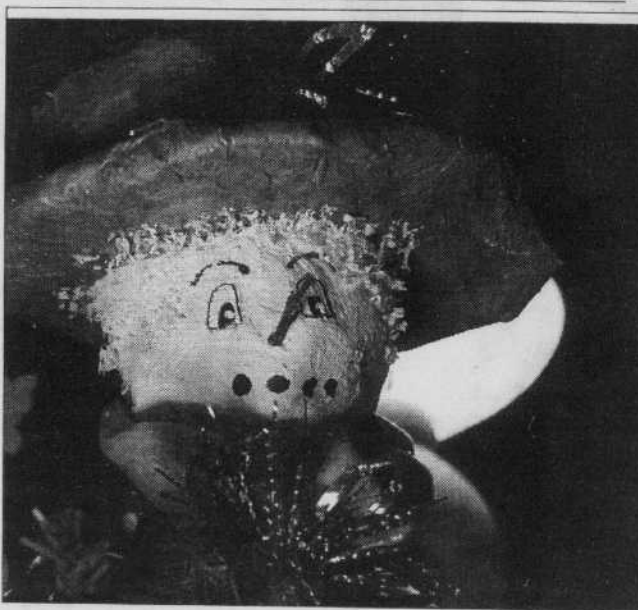
*Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year 2008*

*Rejoice in the Spirit of Christmas which is Peace,
The miracle of Christmas which is Hope,
And the heart of Christmas which is Love.
All of us join in wishing each and everyone
A happy Holiday Season and a peaceful New Year.*



Vicki May Hamm, Ward No. 5, Alain Vanden Eynden, Ward No. 4, Denise Poulin-Marcotte, Ward No. 3, Stéphane Simard, Ward No. 2, Michel Bombardier, Ward No. 1, Marc Poulin, Mayor, Jocelyne Mongrain, Ward No. 10, Serge Gosselin, Ward No. 9, Gilles Robinson, Ward No. 8, Gilbert Kurt Boucher, Ward No. 7 et Jacques Laurendeau, Ward No. 6.

Wintery Resident



DAVID ANDERSON

This snow lady resides in Waterloo.

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Happy New Year!**

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JEN YOUNG

Family-run sleigh ride business Milby Meadows Farm has received more bookings than last year and they point to the early snowfall.

Snow makes for sleigh rides

'Already getting calls,' says Harrison

By Jen Young
RECORD CORRESPONDENT

Mother Nature's early delivery of snow this year has old and young praising the white stuff — as well as tuning up the snow mobile — and it also has the folks at Milby Meadows Farm working harder than ever readying their horses, sleigh, and equip-
PLEASE SEE SLEIGH ON PAGE 22

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SLEIGH:

CONT'D FROM PAGE 21

ment for the season. According to owner Bob Harrison the early snow has already led to large numbers of bookings.

"We didn't have any snow last year until January," says Harrison, who began the business with his wife two decades ago. "Last year we got more rain than snow and it's no fun going on a wagon in the rain. Our season didn't start until January last year."

Bob and Jean Harrison have lived in Milby for the better part of their lives. Both have always loved horses and began their continuously expanding sleigh ride business as newlyweds. Over

the years, as their family grew, so did their business. The couple has spent decades competing in local fairs and horse shows, and have a room filled with ribbons and trophies to prove it in their Milby home. But, for Jean, the sleigh rides in particular are a special service the family farm provides.

"We just love the horses. They are a part of our family," said Jean. "We started offering the sleigh rides to everyone because we wanted to give our friends, neighbors, and everyone a chance to enjoy the horses too. It's nice to help families get together and do something together over the holidays. I love seeing old friends and meeting new people every year. Our community has been very supportive of us, and the horses, and this way we can give them something in return."

The couple — with the help of their sons Jeff, Jamie and Jody — offers winter scenic rides through wooded trails behind their Route 147 Milby home, but their business has grown, with the family packing up the horses and gear for rides as far away as Montreal, which demands much preparation and work. Though they are prepared to head out of town, the couple prefers inviting riders to their home trails.

That takes work, too.

"I worked all last week on trails but now I have to start all over because I can't even find them anymore," Bob Harrison says. "I pull a sled and drag three fence posts. I have to do that at least two or three times a week, especially if it's still snowing. It makes like a Skidoo trail and it has to be that way because the horses need good footing. They need traction to pull the sleighs."

There are two types of seating arrangements, each accommodating 30 individuals. This year's abundant snow will make it easier to use the sleigh, but if the white stuff disappears then the couple can also use a wagon. Regardless of what type of sled is used, it's the Harrisons' award-winning horses, considered part of their family, that will do

the hardest part.

Leading this season's jingle-belled rides will be eight-year-old Major, who stands 17.2 hands high and has been part of the Harrison family for nine years, and five time Grand Champion winner new mare Christie, who stands taller than Major at 18 hands and was welcomed into the family last March.

The Harrisons pride themselves on their horses. Bob brags of Jake and Reno's accomplishments since they've been around for the past five years and Harrison also looks forward to what Olivia, who was purchased in November from Indiana, will do after she foals. All the horses are expected to one day pull the family business sleds.

Each outing begins with a safety speech.

"You know, the obvious things, like don't jump off," he said.

The couple also asks that customers bring their hot chocolate, snacks or goodies in plastic containers to avoid any breakage.

Rides, which cost \$50 for 15 individuals and last at least one hour, are available throughout the holidays, as well as throughout the winter months. Reserve early by calling 819-346-2177.

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Sled doggin' it

'Dogs are doing what they were meant to do'

By Jen Young
RECORD CORRESPONDENT

It's the love of the canines, the feel of the fresh air, and the yearning to introduce people to the sport of sled dogging drove Eastman's Magali Halte and husband Bastien Lefevre to open their own activity centre last year.

"We've been sled dogging for 10 years," says Halte in between readying her outdoor trails for another season of Nordik Adventures, which will begin Wednesday, Dec. 26. "This is our second year offering it professionally. Last year we rented space in East Hereford and this year we decided to buy land where we live."

Not only has the couple made sure that their 32 pure-bred, and three cross-bred, huskies have settled well into their new home, but they will also be focusing on big expansions this year.

"We don't just do sled dogging," Halte says. "We are also working on the construction of the auberge and sugar camp."

Halte says the dogs are the most precious part of their outfit.

"I love animals. Especially this breed of dog," she says, referring to her blue-eyed huskies. "We started with dogs that were abandoned at the SPA. People tend to get huskies because they are beautiful with their blue eyes, but they are very similar to a wolf and people

don't realize that. It is in a huskies' character to be hyper.

"Sometimes they tend to eat cats and rabbits, but it is important that a husky get a lot of exercise. To us, the most important thing was making the dogs happy."

All 35 of the couple's huskies thoroughly enjoy a day of work, which consists of pulling two passengers at a time through snowy winter trails. Each sled is pulled by five to seven dogs, depending on the terrain and the weight of the two passengers.

"It takes about two years for a dog to become a really good sled dog," Halte says. "The older ones teach the younger ones. My husband is usually the guide for people who come out to sled dog, and I work behind the scenes. When people come they can be the driver or the person sitting, but either way sled-dogging is becoming more and more popular. It's like a day cross-country ski-



ing through the woods. There is no motor running, like ski-dooing, and you are close to nature. The only thing you hear is the sounds of the dogs running

through the woods."

Despite the couple's ambition to construct more attractions, Halte says they plan on staying a small business.

"We don't want to get too big," she says. "We want to stay small because there are more advantages to the customers that way. This way we can take the time to make sure that visitors take the time and get the attention they need."

Visitors have the option between a \$65 ride for an hour and a half, or \$95 for half a day — or a full day, which includes meals at the auberge, for \$150. All visits must be reserved by calling 819-823-4747.

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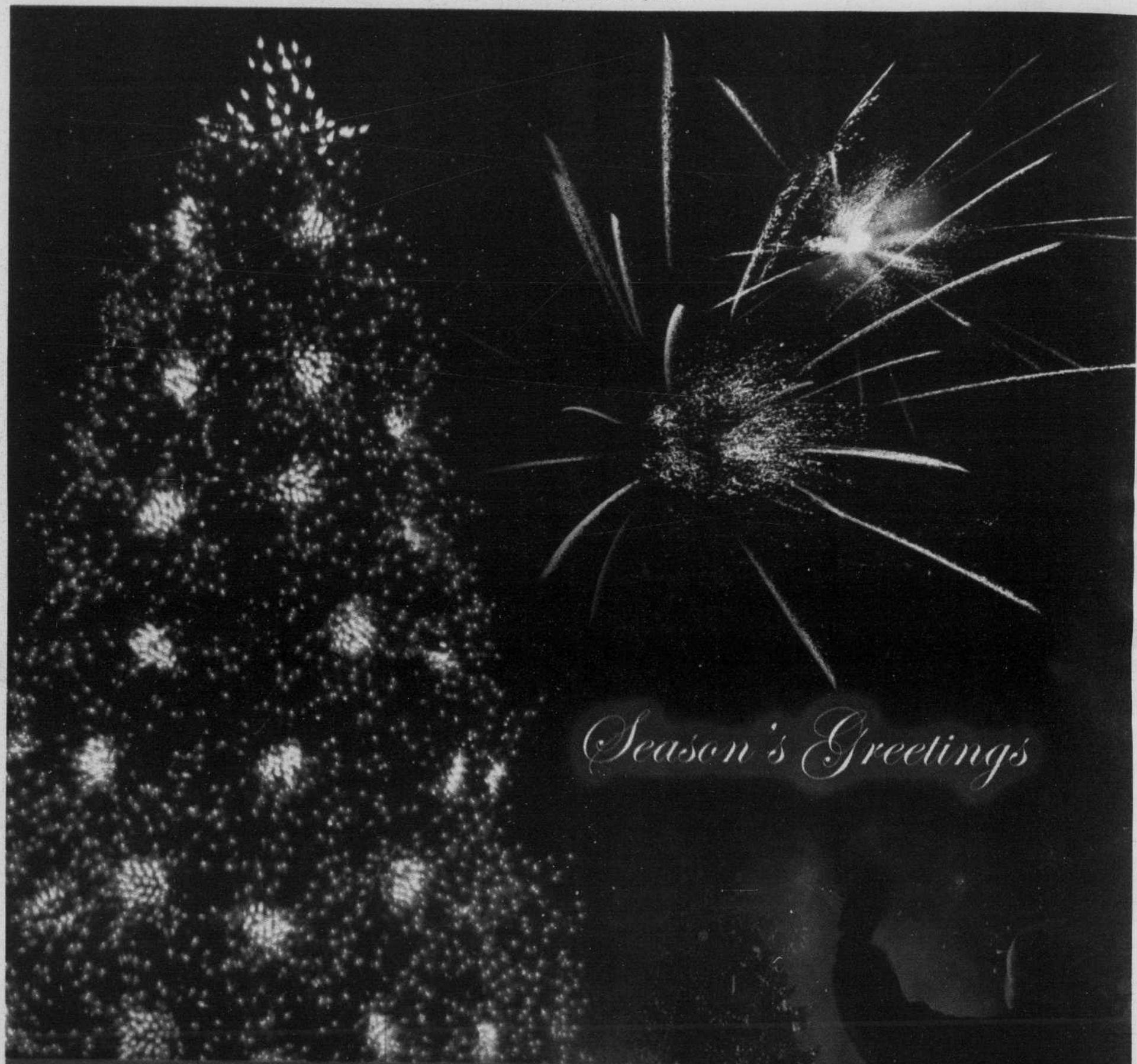
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