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WE PUT LOCAL NEWS FIRST

# Simcoe Reformer

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## Show takes flight

**CALVARY CHURCH CHRISTMAS PAGEANT A TRADITION FOR 18 YEARS**

Daniel Pearce  
SIMCOE REFORMER

Last year it was a full-sized moving train that belched smoke and had a tooting whistle. This year it's a replica of the Wright brothers' first plane that swoops to the front of the stage at the end of the show.

The congregation of the Calvary Pentecostal Church is putting on its 18th consecutive Christmas pageant, a one-hour long play that they research and write (this year's production includes nine original songs), and have their kids perform for more than 3,000 people.

They look for originality: a story that will engage the 2,900 area school kids who are bused in to see the show, has historical significance, and ties in with religion and Christmas.

So what do Wilbur and Orville Wright have to do with Christmas?

Plenty, it turns out. Their father was a bishop in a protestant religion, and the brothers' famous flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, was on Dec. 17, 1903.

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Clayton Shelley plays Wilbur Wright and his cousin Chantelle Shelley plays Orville Wright in the Calvary Pentecostal Church's annual Christmas pageant held this week at the Ireland Road church.

## High fuel cost has silver lining

**SOME MERCHANTS REPORT CUSTOMERS ARE SHOPPING CLOSER TO HOME**

Daniel Pearce  
SIMCOE REFORMER

Higher gas prices, higher heating bills, higher property taxes. They're burning a hole in your pocket, and making some local merchants richer.

Richer? It's a little early to tell for sure. But it seems as if the added cost of driving out of town to shop — and perhaps driving there again after Christmas to do an exchange — is encouraging people to spend their money closer to home.

With the Christmas shopping season only about two weeks old, Simcoe merchants report having both slow and fast starts.

And in both cases they attribute higher fuel and living costs for their fates. Some say it's forcing consumers to be more careful and cut back on

spending while others say it's making people think twice before driving to a mall in Hamilton, Brantford, or London.

"Our traffic counts are up. Our customers' spending is up," says Joe Cruz, manager of the Bargain Shop in downtown Simcoe. "People don't want to travel. They don't want the hustle and bustle of a mall."

John Astles of Astle's Men's and Ladies' Apparel says, on the other hand, that customers are "being a bit cautious" this December.

"I think there's a lot of stress and strain because of gas prices and home heating prices. For every \$50 they put into the furnace, they don't get discretionary things like nice clothing."

The cold snowy weather  
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## CEO offers assurances to Stelco employees

TORONTO (CP) — Stelco Inc.'s chief executive gave assurances to the steelmaker's 7,000 employees Thursday, as he prepared for a creditor vote Friday that could seal the firm's future.

"I know the uncertainty and concern that a number of you have expressed to me in recent days," CEO Courtney Pratt wrote in a letter to employees. "We can't predict what may happen between now and Monday."

Stelco's goal throughout its 24 months of bankruptcy protection has been to come up with a restructuring plan that its stakeholders will support and that its creditors will vote in favour of, Pratt said.

"We're working as hard as we can to reach this goal before the vote is held."

On Dec. 9, debtholders owed more than \$600 million will gather at a conference centre near Toronto's Pearson International Airport to vote on Stelco's plan. It outlines how the Hamilton-based steelmaker intends to start over with new financing from the Ontario government and Tricap Management Ltd.

There was still no indication Thursday that Stelco's bondholders, who hold enough debt to sway the vote, had been won over. That group has repeatedly threatened to vote down the plan. Late Wednesday, Stelco rejected a rival refinancing plan the bondholders submitted.

If creditors approve, Stelco's plan Friday, it will go to an Ontario court for approval, and

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## Hellyer: council's decision may have been hasty

**NORFOLK TURNED DOWN OFFER OF MORE COPS**

Samantha Craggs  
SIMCOE REFORMER

Peter Hellyer wishes he'd had a moment to explain before Norfolk council turned down the offer of three new police officers for the local Ontario Provincial Police detachment.

The chair of the Norfolk County's police services board says he worries council made the decision without knowing the whole story.

"Two officers would have focused on local high schools, a liaison between police and youth that Hellyer says oth-

er areas have with much success. The third would have focused on domestic violence cases, following up with victims and doing the substantial work surrounding each incident.

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services would have covered 100 per cent of the salaries for the entry-level officers (about \$35,000 for two years). The county would pay any incidental costs related to the positions. Council turned down the three new officers Dec. 6, saying it was an expense not needed on the tax bill.

But Hellyer worries the decision was made without enough current information.

"I would have liked the chance to present our case," he says.

Norfolk County, Hellyer says, has the largest number of youths on probation and parole in southwestern Ontario. Other communities with officers in schools have seen a dramatic reduction in youth crime. Brantford, for example, has four officers in high schools.

Norfolk also sees four or five domestic violence occurrences every weekend. The current officer dealing with the cases has been taken from the front line, so a new officer would actually be replacing an officer to bring Norfolk's force to full complement again, he says. With the government offering to pay 100 per cent of that salary, "this has to be thought through a little more."

Councillors also mentioned the possibility of severances when they declined the offer. Hellyer says there is enough turn-over in the force that vacancies could be found through natural attrition.

"There was no rush on this," he said.

Mayor Rita Kalmbach, a member of the police services board, was vocal against accepting the new officers. She said in an interview yesterday she hasn't heard anything to change her mind. She worries the officers could be integrated into the OPP contract, already \$10.2 million with a tendency to expand without warning. She also

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## Shopping like Bob and Doug will cost you \$458.75, eh

Kate Schwass  
SIMCOE REFORMER

Forget the turtle doves, ladies dancing, swans-a-swimming and a partridge in a pear tree — give us hosers, golden tuques, back bacon and a beer in a tree for Christmas.

The cost to fulfil Bob and Doug McKenzie's Twelve Days of Christmas (which only has eight days because the song was too long and the brothers didn't cover days nine through 12), and buy each item only once, costs about \$458.75.

The figure isn't exact because with things like eight comic books, the price would vary between \$3.25 to \$4.50 depending on what you buy (we used prices from Marvel, DC and Dark Horse Comics).

To buy all 113 items for your sweetheart (repeating the items in each verse), it

would cost a grand total of \$1,754.54.

That's a beauty, eh?

It's a heck of a lot cheaper than buying items in the traditional holiday classic. That bill rings in at \$18,348 US, American-based PNC Advisors said in their annual Christmas Price Index.

All of the items in The Great White North version of the song (we don't need leaping lords) can be found locally, except maybe the golden tuques. Have you ever tried to find a golden tuque?

Making more than a dozen calls (and hearing salespeople laugh at the other end each time we asked for a golden tuque), we were told there were taupe, brown, beige and even one black tuque with a gold band around it, but no



To buy all 113 items for your sweetheart (repeating the items in each verse of Bob and Doug McKenzie's Twelve Days of Christmas), it would cost a grand total of \$1,754.54.

### Bob and Doug's list

- Eight Comic Books — about \$3.50 to \$4.50 each, \$29.24 for eight different titles
  - The Trophy Haven in Simcoe
  - Seven Packs of Smokes — \$8.30 for a king size pack of Players each, \$58.10 for seven packs — Mac's Convenience in Port Dover
  - Six packs of 2-4s — \$35.50 for a case of 24 Molson Canadian bottles, \$213 for six cases — the Beer Store in Port Rowan
  - Five golden tuques — \$9.99 each, \$49.95 for five — Bizou in the Simcoe Town Centre
  - Four pounds of back bacon — \$4.99/lb, \$19.96 for four pounds — Van Maele's Country Food Market in Langton
  - Three French toasts — \$4.25 for an order (\$5.50 if you add sausage or bacon), \$12.75 for three orders — Chubby's in Delhi.
  - Two turtle-necks — \$6 each, two for \$12 — Main Station Apparel in Waterford
  - One beer in a tree — \$63.75 — beer — \$4.75 for a domestic pint — Simcoe Arms
  - Norway Maple tree — \$59 — Nanticoke Nurseries and Garden Centre near Windham Centre
- Total if you buy the items from each verse only once: \$458.75  
Total if you repeat the items from each verse: \$1,754.54  
These prices do not include GST and PST.

# Calvary church christmas a tradition for 18 years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"On the day they flew, they sent a telegram home. At the end, they said 'We'll be home for Christmas,'" says church member Steve Shelley, who wrote *The Amazing Christmas Flying Machine*, his tenth Christmas production for the church. "To not have been home for Christmas would have been devastating for the family."

Along the way to the first powered flight by humans the audience

is taken through the brothers' struggles and setbacks as they experiment with kites, then gliders, and finally a motorized aircraft.

"They're disappointed. They face failure. They were ready to give up at numerous points," says Pastor David Kingston. "The show teaches kids to keep on going. Don't give up on your dreams."

The Wright brothers' dreams, Kingston notes, were developed in childhood when their father gave them a helicopter-type toy for

Christmas but not fulfilled until adulthood.

The show is also an opportunity for the 45 kids from the congregation who perform to have a learning experience. "It's good for our kids," says Kingston. "It helps them grow."

They have to learn lines, work together, attend rehearsals (which start in September), and perform several times in the church's packed 650-seat theatre.

"It's fun and scary all at the same time," says Mackenzie Sheridan, 9,

who plays the captain of the ship that takes the brothers to the Kitty Hawk beach.

The highlight of the show is the two-thirds-sized replica of the Wrights' historic plane — reconstructed by the congregation from drawings — that is suspended at the back of the stage.

On Thursday morning, a glitch prevented it from performing its show-ending stunt. It made little difference, however. During the curtain call, the cast tossed tiny store-bought

Styrofoam planes from the stage and into the waiting hands of hundreds of wildly cheering school kids.

It's called living with life's little disappointments.

Public performances of *The Amazing Christmas Flying Machine* will be held at the Calvary Pentecostal Church on Ireland Road in Simcoe on Saturday at 3:30 p.m. and on Sunday at 6 p.m. Admission is free.

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## Shopping like Bob and Doug will cost you \$458.75

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all-gold tuque. Instead, we found the next closest thing: a yellow tuque (the Fitzhenry and Whiteside Canadian Thesaurus says yellow is a synonym of gold).

Inflation has also hit the song, eh.

When SCTV's McKenzie brothers (Rick Moranis as Bob and Dave Thomas as Doug) released their 12 Days of Christmas in 1981, a pack of Player's cigarettes was \$2.73, Imperial Tobacco media relations says. Now, to buy the same pack, it's \$8.30.

Erik Niklas, a 29-year-old single hoser who moved to Vancouver, B.C., from Columbus, Ohio recently, created the BobandDoug.com website.

While he was too young to see the McKenzie brothers in their prime, he says, "they've been iconified because

they're so purely Canadian."

He says an Ohio radio station plays the classic tune each year.

"I think some of the gifts are not understood by non-B&D fans though, like (the words) two-four, back bacon (which is called Canadian bacon in the States) and tuques, but I think the spirit of the song is there even if you don't always understand what they're talking about," Niklas says.

Linsley Rivait runs a Rick Moranis fan site from her Windsor home. She was also just a young child when the album came out, but she says their version of the Twelve Days of Christmas resonates with Canadians.

"The McKenzie Brothers' Twelve Days of Christmas still strikes a chord with Canadian listeners because it's just plain funny. Even now, after we've all heard it so many times,

when we hear it around Christmas we just lose it," Rivait says. "Canadians know how to poke fun at themselves, so seeing Bob and Doug, these bumbling idiots on SCTV, portray every Canadian stereotype is just funny. Their humour isn't dated, so it still stands up as funny, even today."

Some people may ask, why didn't the brothers cover the other four days in their song and why am I only getting eight days of gifts instead of 12? When they counted up their days, there was Christmas Day, Christmas Eve, Boxing Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

Doug explained, "Uh, there's two Saturdays and Sundays in there, that's four. (Added to the five listed above) That's nine, and three other days which I believe are mystery days."

## High fuel silver lining

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

has also helped, say some merchants. It gets shoppers thinking about buying boots, coats, and sweaters — and thinking about the holiday season.

"I think people are in a little better mood, especially because the snow came early," says Dave Smyth of Smyth's Shoes and Outdoor Store.

"People seem to be more in the Christmas spirit. There's not as much doom and gloom in the news as last year," adds Smyth, who says his business is up by about five or 10 per cent from last year.

Sales at the Canadian Tire on Queensway East "seems a little better than last year," says store manager Paul Blair. "The last three or four weekends have been very busy."

Across the highway, business at Zellers is up "marginally," says manager Ed Janzen. "Customers are spending more than

last year."

John Wright, manager of Budd's in downtown Simcoe, says business has been "so-so" but adds "it's a little too early to tell" how the season will pan out.

Mark Halmo of Halmo Jewellers says business "is off to a slow start." He suggests people are spending their money on technology, such as upgrading cell-phones and televisions, rather than traditional items.

A couple of stores down from Halmo, Mark Boerkamp of the Source — which sells electronic items — says business "is extremely busy. It's a little nuts."

People are also shopping early this year, says Boerkamp. "Consumers are getting smarter. They know if they wait until the last minute you won't get your pick."

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