

The city's second nighttime Santa Claus parade was ready to go. The previous year the parade committee had decided to change the start time of the parade to the evening simply to be different from other cities. The move proved to be highly successful and would be continued since the number of spectators at the parade had jumped significantly with the time change. The parade started at 6 p.m. at the Karl Homuth Arena on Hamilton Street. From there it followed a 3 ½ kilometre route down Waterloo Street and then along King and Bishop Streets before returning to Hamilton Street. The parade featured 23 well-lit floats, 15 bands and various costume characters in addition to Santa Claus himself.

The Preston Springs Retirement Home was purchased by Tender Loving Care Centres of Newmarket and was about to receive a \$525,000 facelift. Workers had begun painting and renovating and were about to implement plans to add a high efficiency heating system to the building. In addition a sprinkler system was to be added to the three floors where it was still needed. The following spring was to see work begin on rejuvenating nearly three acres of hillside parkland behind the building. At the time the seniors' home had 30 residents for its 72 rooms but it was expected that the renovations would make the home more attractive to area seniors and their families.

15 years ago – 1994

Mayor Jane Brewer won re-election to the mayor's chair grabbing 51 per cent of the votes in a 4-way contest. In the election that saw four of the six incumbents returned to council Mayor Brewer's 9,579 votes easily outpaced her opponents, Rick Cowsill (7,813 votes), Alan Denney (749) and Bill Wellsman (707). The election ballot invited local voters to express their opinions on a new city administration building, a seventh ice surface and the development of a new centre for the arts. While the results of this plebiscite were not binding they would be a part of future discussions of the issues. Of the 16,129 voters who responded to the question about the new civic administration building for Cambridge 63 per cent favoured a new building in the downtown area as the most economical alternative. On the question of an additional ice surface 51 per cent of 17,320 respondents favoured a new ice surface and only 47 per cent of 17,422 voters favoured developing a new arts centre.

The roller coaster ride for workers at the Inglis plant on Pinebush Road reached its final downhill run when the company announced that production at the local factory would be phased out by the second quarter of 1995. The plant had been owned by McGraw-Edison in the early 1970's before it was taken over by Canadian Admiral Corporation. That company closed the plant in 1982 and it remained empty until 1984 when Inglis purchased the facility and eventually moved its Toronto operations to the site. For a time the local plant seemed to prosper although the workers had to make a number of adjustments to ensure that the local operation remained solvent and then came the news of the closure. It was reported that automation at the company's American production facility was the main reason the local plant was closing. The highly automated American

factory could produce 12,000 parts in a single shift while the local plant could produce only 1,200 making the locally produced product significantly more expensive. The news of the closure came only one month after the company had been named one of the winners of Ontario's first Economic Renewal Award recognizing businesses that were making a significant contribution to the province's economy.

10 years ago – 1999

The message conveyed to a public forum called to discuss \$236.3 million in new and updated health care programs and services planned for the region's hospitals was that financial support from the communities was essential for the work to proceed. While the province had committed \$148.6 million to the projects it would not hand over any of the funds until the hospitals' joint executive committee (JEC) could demonstrate that the remaining funds could be raised in the community. The committee had already requested a \$40 million commitment from regional council and was working on a feasibility study to measure the community's capacity to provide the other \$47.7 million.

Widespread Y2K related concerns among residents of the region led various regional agencies and emergency response organizations to band together to urge citizens to remain calm. Earlier in the year "experts" had raised concerns of extensive computer problems and possibly catastrophic failure of computer systems resulting from the turnover in the date from 1999 to 2000. The local agencies pointed out that they had tested all their systems and were convinced all precautions had been taken to ensure an uneventful turnover from 1999 to 2000. There was, they claimed, nothing to fear and local citizens were "encouraged to stay calm." Everything, they implied, was under control. Just in case, however, "you might wish to be more self-reliant for a day or two. Plan for this as you would for any potential weather emergency".