

# Miracle on Main Street

*Antioch residents prepare for a change in traditions*

**By Casey Walker**

The holiday season is a time of joy, family, and traditional festivities held in downtown Antioch. Even though these events come to Antioch every year, they take extensive planning before hand.

The Antioch Chamber of Commerce usually begins planning for next year's events even before the holiday season is over. In fact, the 2008 calendar of next year's festivities has already been completed.

"We like to look where things sold out and which events generated the largest response from the crowd, and in the area's that didn't do as well, we try to tweak them to make them better for next year," said Barbara Porch, Executive Director of the Antioch Chamber of Commerce.

"The reason why we plan so early ahead of time is that it eliminates any possibility of last

minute mistakes."

The decorating begins right after Halloween and usually only takes a short time to finish.

The decorating is part of the town's traditions as well. Antioch residents can create their very own home ornaments that will be hung on the town Christmas tree located on the corner of Main Street and Orchard.

"We encourage that families make home-made ornaments every year to make the Christmas tree decorations fresh and new," stated Donna Bevan, Special Events Coordinator of the Antioch Park District.

Participants' ornaments must be made of weather resistant material and have a 10 inch long thread for hanging; all ornaments had to

be submitted by Nov. 21.

If someone had submitted their ornaments, they would not only receive the pleasure of seeing their work of art displayed on the town tree, but would also receive a certificate from the township.

"I really enjoyed [the horse drawn carriage] because it reminded me of the way things used to be, and it was overall very relaxing," commented Antioch resident Lynn Zienty.

Although these holiday celebrations are regarded as a tradition, that doesn't mean that some events never change.

One activity that is planned to change is the lighting competition, which has been a competition around the community for years on who could produce the best holiday display on their front lawns.

This familiar event may now be in the downtown business area, where holiday displays are created in their front windows; the community would have the opportunity to vote on their favorite display.

Also, the Find Frosty competition, in which younger children count snowmen found in the front window's of shops, may only be held on either one day or one week end instead of for the entire month of December, in hopes that the shorter time will cause more hype for its participants.



Photo by Casey Walker

# Gopal Zawar: New student from India settles into Antioch

**By Brittany Harrison**

Foreign exchange student Gopal Zawar has assumed the American lifestyle and joined the Antioch Community High School (ACHS) student body after arriving to Antioch from his hometown of Aurangabad, India.

"I had always wanted to be an exchange student myself," Brian Ipsen, an exchange officer from the Rotary Club, said on why he decided to be a host father.

Zawar now attends ACHS as well as Rotary meetings every Thursday. Zawar also participates in extra-curricular activities such as choir and Spanish Club.

In his free time, Zawar keeps in contact with his family back in India and continues to build a better understanding of the American culture.

"I came here to see the commercial life," Zawar said. "I had expected [America] to be all buildings. I was surprised that there is a lot of free space."

Ipsen and his family have also had to adjust to Zawar's cultural differences, such as his vegetarian diet. Ipsen also felt the language-barrier was a struggle for him both at school and at home.

"We just expect him to do his best," Ipsen said.

Zawar agrees that this experience is not for academic enrichment. "I do not expect to get all 'A's," he said with a smile.

Zawar also had the opportunity to see multiple

American lifestyles as he changed host families on Dec. 15.

"He needs to see different kinds of families," Rebecca Dunleavy said. "Every family has its own values and religions."

The Dunleavy family has been a host family before for a student from Germany.

"We are always excited to learn about other cultures," Terry Dunleavy said about hosting Zawar.

Zawar will remain with the Dunleavy family until July, in which he will return to India.



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