



Mrs. Snowlady Helps Everyone

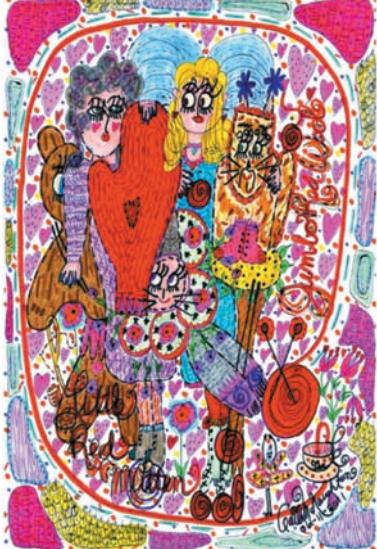
By Gail McNaughton, August 31, 2011



Mrs. Snowlady came to St. Thomas by train and got off at the CASO Station. She left Mr. Snowman behind tending to other snow jobs. She rested in a refrigerated boxcar as a mail-order wish from a city in need. She would help teach great lessons of the heart.

She was gently unloaded and transported to Pinafore Park, after taking the long way around town where she saw Jumbo, St. Thomas City Hall, the Elgin County Courthouse, Elgin County Railway Museum, and the area where Alma College once stood. She was given a special home in St. Thomas down by the bandshell in Pinafore Park during the Festival

of Lights. The Mayor from City Hall came to greet her and gave her the key to the city and a warm welcome.



The Weekly News quickly spread the word, and people came to visit her from far and wide. Many children danced around her.

Little Ruby Red Slippers visited regularly. Her family was having a tough time and she needed mittens. She felt safe and warm with Snowlady who she named her "Grandmother". The next time she visited, there were the mittens all snugly and just her size, and she grinned from ear to ear, cherishing this gift from heaven.

As the days passed, a heat wave occurred. Snowlady was in trouble. She was melting. Ruby Red Slippers went to find her friends and asked them all to help. Not understanding, friends brought food—bananas, oranges, bread, cheese and milk.

When they saw the quickly forming pool of water, they brought sandbags, and the staff at the Timken Centre made ice to pack around Snowlady.



Meanwhile, others took the food and gave it to people who could use it for Christmas Dinner. This gesture of goodwill became contagious. Everyone in St. Thomas was helping either with Snowlady's meltdown or bringing food, clothing, toys and household treasures to the doorstep of City Hall.



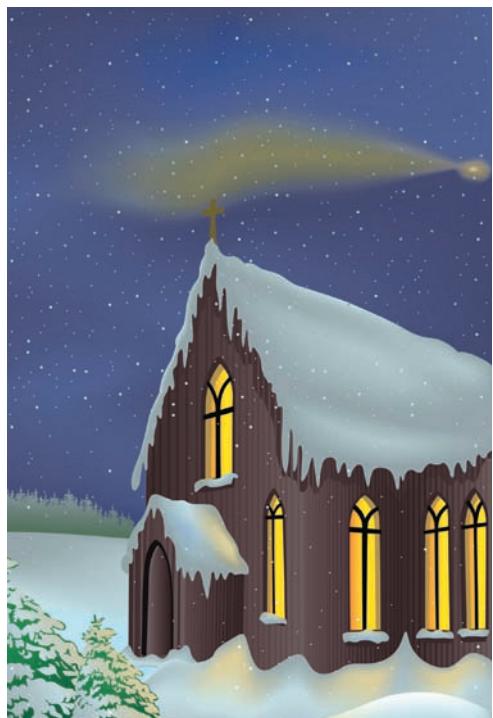
A party was held with hot chocolate and lots of Christmas icing sugar and gingerbread cookies.



As if the thaw wasn't enough, a storm was now brewing, as the weather had been so unpredictable that year. Usually, people didn't want more snow. With snow usually came the howling winds and bitter cold.



It was Christmas Eve, and in church people prayed for snow. Time was of the essence—Snowlady was still hanging in there, but drooping more minute by minute.



Candles were lit in the park and especially around Snowlady. Boys and girls danced around her and sang her songs and others came to keep her company.

Ruby Red Slippers brought her dog, Fleecy, who was a gray, black and white one-year-old Golden Doodle. Fleecy darted up the sandbags and licked Snowlady's cheek. Fleecy wasn't surprised when Snowlady blinked her eyes. It was their secret.



It was midnight. The snow swirled down from the heavens above. Snowlady started to grow, filling out her form, and the men took the sandbags away in the morning.



The church bells rang for it was Christmas Day. Turkeys were put in ovens. Presents were unwrapped. There was a feeling of community. There were carollers, neighbours and families, singing in groups. Some neighbours were exchanging Christmas baking. Little children helped shovel the walkways and snowball throwing was part of their mischief. There was such a happy spirit of goodwill that it was contagious.



Snowlady was so happy and back to her old self. Children brought her candy canes and candy apples and placed them in a big basket at her feet. People helped themselves to the cider provided by the Rotary Club. Fathers and Mothers pulled sleighs filled with laughing children and yelping pets. Some skated on the rink—not normally there—that had formed from Snowlady's run-off.



Fleecy visited once again with Ruby Red Slippers and made eye contact with Snowlady. Both smiled in deep affection. It was time for the secret to be unveiled.

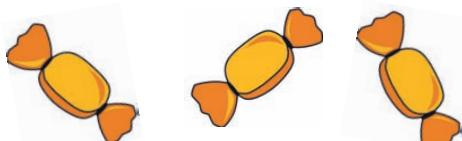


To Snowlady's grateful and adoring friends and fans, she released herself from her snow perch and off she went and skated with the group. People were in awe. They were astonished. They were joyous. The City of St. Thomas had "hatched" its very own Snowlady Angel. She must have been an angel to have been able to do that—she had been three large balls of snow piled on top of one another. Now they saw blinking eyes and feet that had been hidden in the bottom snowball.

Snowlady had brought them all together and, in her own way, she had helped everyone to be in a generous spirit. This kindness spread and people never forgot Snowlady. They passed along this spirit and St. Thomas became known as the City of Hope and the City that Helps.

Ruby Red Slippers admired her red mittens for now she knew where they came from. The townsfolk knew who had put the basket at the base of Snowlady for she was encouraging them to share what they had.

Fleecy and others shared in a toast to Snowlady, drinking icicle punch and sampling Christmas cake and maple syrup toffee.



Everyone said farewell, knowing that they could visit again. Furthermore, they knew in their hearts that St. Thomas was a terrific place to call home and a place that made a difference in the lives of so many.

To this end, Mrs. Snowlady would keep her vigil in the park until the spring thaw, and the townspeople would save a piece of her magic and recreate her just before Christmas every year during The Festival of Lights. This would remind us all to be nice to one another and help other people—just like Snowlady helped everyone with her generous spirit, basket of food, mittens, and the element of magic and surprise.

