

Christmas carols, Christmas tree lighting, Santa bring holiday spirit to Huntley

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[HUNTLEY](#) – Bodhi Dunlap has a simple wish list for Santa this year.

“A basketball,” said the 3-year-old Huntley boy, standing at the kneecaps of his grandparents: Dorothy and Douglas Dunlap, who brought Bodhi and his 5-year-old brother, Dean, to the Town Square Saturday to ring in the holiday season during “A Very Merry Huntley” Christmas celebration.

Dean’s wish list is a little more complicated: “Those cars where you sit in them and press the button and you go!”

Carolers, free horse-drawn trolley rides and a Christmas tree lighting were a few of the things that ushered the community into the holidays Saturday.

The Merry Maskers led residents in Christmas caroling, crooning classics such as “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” and “Silver Bells.” A long line of Huntley folks waited for a free horse-drawn trolley ride around the square, where red and green garland wrapped light posts and large ornaments hung from leafless shrubs.

“This is a very lovely place to go and a very safe place to go,” said Dorothy Dunlap, 79. “We’re waiting for Santa.”

While residents waited for Santa Claus to make his grand entrance, neighborhood folks strolled around the square, sipping free hot chocolate from Styrofoam cups.

Krissy Fossmeyer spent the afternoon passing out that hot chocolate with her husband, Norm, her sons, T.J. and Ben, and her daughter, Abby. A member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Fossmeyer has been coming to “A Very Merry Huntley” for years. It’s an event that binds the community together, she said.

“I love the hometown feel,” Fossmeyer said. “This is why we love living in Huntley.”

Others chose to celebrate the holidays indoors. Dan Ziller grabbed a stool at the bar of American Legion Post 673. Patrons sat sipping their drinks and keeping warm while dozens of people walked around outside, bundled up in scarves, hats, gloves and heavy

jackets.

“They’re all starting to get festive out there,” Ziller said.

At 5 p.m., Santa rolled into the square inside a firetruck. The screams, hoots and hollers of children welcomed him.

“Santa!” many yelled. “Santa!”

Some children ran up to Santa. Others sat on the shoulders of mom and dad.

“This is Jade’s first time seeing Santa,” said 28-year-old Stephanie Mueller, who visited the square with her 2-year-old daughter and grandmother, Darlene Valkner.

“I love what Huntley has done,” Valkner said. “It keeps getting better.”

A few minutes after Santa’s arrival, he stood in a gazebo and led the crowd in a countdown to the lighting of the Christmas tree.

Families and passersby then stood in the square, their eyes lit up, watching fireworks blossom in the night sky.