

# MERRITTON MATTERS

Spring 2012 • Volume 8, Issue 1 • [www.merrittonmatters.ca](http://www.merrittonmatters.ca)



BY BOB HOMER PHOTOGRAPHY

## ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:

- Start Me Up Niagara
- Not My Merriton (sic)
- New Adopt-a-Street Sponsors
- Vince DeLuca, Bob Asham and Jesse Miller – We're Proud of Them!
- Goodbye Cosy Grill
- Saying Goodbye to Paul Papineau and Ted Dodman
- Niagara Inflatables
- Richard Braithwaite Spaven
- Another Habitat for Humanity Home?

## Mailing Merritton Matters

Do you know people who live out of town who might like to receive the Merritton Matters? If so, please call Pat McCabe at 905-684-2590 to arrange for copies to be sent to them.

CHECK OUT THE MERRITTON MATTERS WEBSITE AT [WWW.MERRITTONMATTERS.CA](http://WWW.MERRITTONMATTERS.CA)

# THE MERRITTON COMMUNITY GROUP

The Merritton Community Group (MCG) is dedicated to the development and enhancement of the distinctive heritage community that is Merritton. Our group is open to anybody who subscribes to this mission and wants to contribute to the community and economic betterment of Merritton. At our January 17<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, we elected a new executive.

## Merritton Community Group New Executive

CHAIR – Carolyn Damiano  
 VICE CHAIR – Morag Enright  
 SECRETARY & TREASURER – Sheila Morra

## WHO WRITES THE MM ARTICLES?

The Editor/Writer is Lorraine Giroux. Contributions have been received, with much appreciation, from: Tom Barwell; Geoff Crane; Ernie Jukes; Adrian Petry; Bill Stevens; and Phyllis Thomson. If you have an article or suggestions for articles, please send us an email to [merrittonmatters@hotmail.com](mailto:merrittonmatters@hotmail.com) or mail to 19 Wanda Rd, St Catharines, ON L2T 1S5.

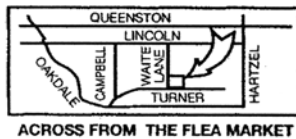
Lana Pesant is our graphic designer. Pat Durocher and Tony Morra handle the advertising for this paper. You can call Tony at 905-227-8988 or email the editor for more information.

**The Labour Day Parade committee is trying to line up entrants for September. They are looking for bands, floats etc.  
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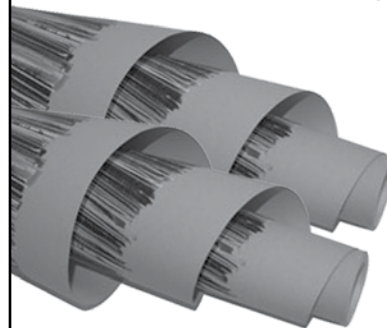


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# SAYING GOODBYE

## PAUL JEAN JOSEPH LUCIEN PAPINEAU

During a time of need, Elm Street United Church benefitted from Paul Papineau's touch. Unfortunately, he died too soon on December 24th, leaving behind his wife Gail (McIntosh), son Brian (Shelley) and daughter Sheri (Tim Becker). Back in 2002, when the church was suffering because of dwindling numbers, Paul transformed the appearance of the church with gallons of paint. Parishioners knew that he was an amazing man, both for his contributions at the church and because of his life story, overcoming a childhood accident that left him with only one arm. In the 1980's, he was St. Catharines' Mr. Softball and inducted into the St. Catharines Standard Intermediate Fastball League Hall of Fame. He coached local fastball and hockey teams and raised thousands of dollars for the Niagara Children's Centre.



## TED DODMAN

The figure skating community will miss Merritton native Ted Dodman who died on December 6th. Ted worked tirelessly on committees to advance skating and was inducted into the Thorold Runway of Recognition in 2007.

In the late 1990's, the Merritton Skating Club Board took part in the running of a Synchronized skating competition at the Jack Gatecliff arena. We all benefitted from Ted's expertise and his many years of experience in organizing Niagara and Western Ontario skating events. He worked right alongside us to make sure the skaters were the focus and that everyone walked away satisfied that the competition was run fairly.

## COSY GRILL

After 45 years, it's a sad goodbye to Gilbert and Lilly Wong and their iconic restaurant. Cosy Grill opened in 1967 serving everything from breakfast to fish and chips to late night snacks, seven days a week. They became a very popular Chinese restaurant shortly after opening. The cost of upgrading to fire codes at the 148 Hartzel location proved too much so they reluctantly closed on February 29th.

Living above the restaurant has meant that it was treated as their home. Many people have commented on the Wong's beautiful rose garden that lies behind the restaurant.



## BLOOMIN' BUSY FLOWER SHOP

Pat Durocher has decided it's time to retire even though we really don't want to see her go! Bloomin' Busy Flower Shop has proudly served our community and all of St. Catharines since 2003 when Pat bought a former dog grooming shop, known as the Poodle Parlour, and turned it into a quaint country cottage. Why Hartzel Road? She lived in Merritton and wanted to locate her brand new business right here at home. With a commitment to offering only the finest floral arrangements and gifts with service that was friendly and prompt, she was a definite asset to the Hartzel Road core.

Her business thrived and she was nominated as a Woman in Business in 2007. Pat won first place two years in a row for best orchid arrangements at the Niagara Region Orchid Society show and her floral arrangements were always sought after. When Dunn Florist at 106 Queenston Street decided to close shop due to a retirement, Pat bought their business and brought it to her Hartzel shop.

Not only is she a successful businesswoman, but she's an integral part of our Merritton Community Group. She was the co-chair of the first Merritton Garden tour and has also worked many hours contributing to our success in the Merritton Labour Day Parade and Carnival. Pat helps every issue of the Merritton Matters get to you through her participation in our organization committee and leading the coordination of the advertising.

## Cosy Corner Fish and Chips

By Phyllis Thomson

Does anyone remember Cosy Corner Fish and Chips? This fish and chip shop sat at the corner of Queenston and Haynes Avenue, 'way back when. It was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Calvert, a British couple, who also owned the red brick apartment building on the other corner of Haynes and Queenston. I remember it well as I used to work there in the summer and on weekends for a time while I was going to high school. They had a little restaurant at the front of the store and I recall on Saturday nights in the summer, it was packed to capacity – many of the customers coming from 'across the river' to enjoy the fish and chips. Mr. Calvert would do the cooking and he would stand all day at the deep fryers and there was no airconditioning at that time so it couldn't have been an enjoyable job. Take-out orders constituted the bulk of business and on a Friday especially, I was kept busy wrapping the orders in layers of newspaper for the waiting customers. I think what interested me most was the little old man who sat on a chair down in the basement, peeling potatoes. He would come in the side entrance and go right downstairs and virtually disappear – I don't recall ever seeing him upstairs in the store, but you always knew that he was down there somewhere in the dark cellar, peeling away.

When the Calverts retired, their son took over and I don't know when the business closed. Fortis Restaurant now occupies the store and Vidals has the building that was once home to the Calverts.



# PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

## VINCE DeLUCA

Congratulations to Vince DeLuca on being the 2011 co-winner of the St. Catharines Sportsperson of the Year. Vince is a former staff member at Merritton High School and currently the head of guidance at Laura Secord Secondary School. His co-winner was Jim Wallace, a sports writer and copy editor at The Standard. This award was in recognition for their hard work on the St. Catharines High School Basketball Tournament.



Vince launched the Stride for Pride event at Merritton High School and then, when the school closed, ran it at St. Catharines Collegiate. Now the current incarnation is the Walk/Run for Miracles which is a fundraiser for the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre.

## BOB ASHAM

An advocate for accessibility and affected by a spinal cord injury himself, Bob Asham was the lead medal bearer for the Rick Hansen 25th anniversary relay run in the St. Catharines portion, rolling into the Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Complex on Sunday, November 13th. The anniversary ride replicated Hansen's ride across Canada to raise awareness for spine injury research. Bob's significant role was partly in recognition for his work on the mayor's advisory committee on accessibility and as an ambassador for the Rick Hansen organization.

Bob has been a baseball and hockey coach in Merritton. He was the Niagara Metros 'AAA' Baseball Club Metro's first team captain and a star player in the 1980's before his hockey accident.

# Young Merrittonians



## STEVE PRIOLO

Steve Priolo, son of Merrittonians Sam and Betty Priolo, is a very solid defender for the Buffalo Bandits. The 6-5 player was drafted to the lacrosse team and was a First Team All-Star for the St. Catharines Jr. Athletics team. He played basketball and lacrosse while attending Holy Cross, one of the most dominant high school lacrosse teams in Canada. The fact that he's an accomplished

basketball player too will come as no surprise to those who remember the thrill of watching his father Sam who tore up the high school courts in the mid 1970s and was an outstanding player for Merritton's championship teams.

## DANIEL'S CAMPAIGN

Kudos to Daniel, a Grade 8 Connaught student who began a campaign to have people donate blood during the months of February and March. He found out about the plight of another child at the school who had benefitted from blood donations while fighting leukemia but Daniel was too young to donate himself. So, determined to help, he took on a project of encouraging blood donations as part of his 'yellow belt' in the school's Mental Karate program. Daniel issued his challenge to all schools in the District School Board of Niagara and a flyer and video was sent out to get the competition started. We'll keep you posted as to which school wins.

## JESSE MILLER

Many of you might have been lucky enough to see forward Jesse Miller play for the



Niagara Ice Dogs this season. Maybe it was the final exhibition game where he scored the only goal for the Ice Dogs against Erie. We can just imagine that you pointed at him playing and remarked that you had seen him at the Merritton arena before he moved his high energy game to the St. Catharines Junior B Falcons. With his hometown proudly listed as Merritton on the Falcon website, we're just as proud of him!

Several former Merritton High School students, including Pat Leahy, are hoping to submit George Korince's name as a candidate for the St. Catharines Sports Hall of Fame. If you have any photos from George's sports activities while he was at MHS or yearbooks from 1961-1965, please email the editor.



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# WELCOME SIGN DONOR CELEBRATION

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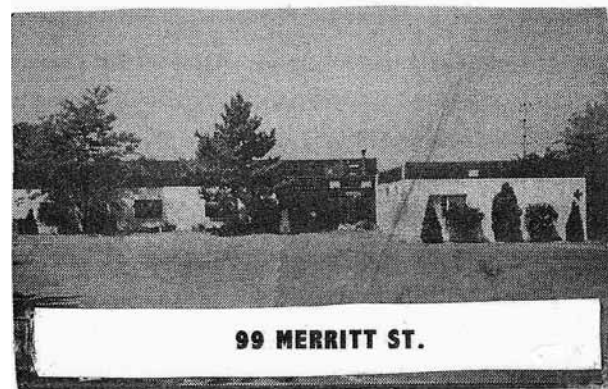
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# 2011 NIAGARA COMMUNITY DESIGN AWARDS

We noted with interest that Tony Continelli of Premium Building Group received an award on Wednesday, January 25, 2012 for Leadership and Legacy at the

2011 Niagara Community Design Awards. This award recognizes Tony as a pioneer through his use of Smart Growth Principles. He has been involved with numerous projects with a focus on infill projects and the creation of singles, towns, semis and low-rise apartment buildings. The PBG group has been the contractors for the project at 99 Merritt Street. In a previous edition of Merriton Matters, we announced that both federal and provincial government funding programs would work together to create an affordable rental property for seniors and that the \$4-million project, located at 99 Merritt St., would be designed for 38 units. Some of Tony's other notable developments include Queen's Court on Queenston Street, High Pointe on Wellandvale Road, Spring Garden Creek Villas on Parnell Road, Woodfield Lane on Glendale Avenue, and Up on Niagara on Niagara Street. Tony's projects pay particular attention to landscaping elements and consideration of the end user in infill projects in existing neighbourhoods.

The Niagara Community Design Awards honour projects that show creativity and vision, use land efficiently and enhance the built environment. The Merriton Cenotaph received recognition previously. The revitalization of the cenotaph included work done by many in the community and the current site is a much more attractive landmark, fitting into a historically significant area.



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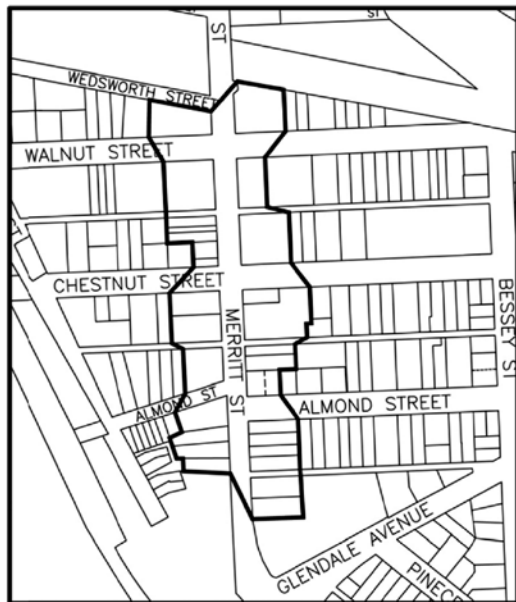
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# Parking in Old Downtown

There will be a public meeting on April 30th, 2012 at 6:30 p.m., in Council Chambers, 3rd floor, City Hall, 50 Church Street. At that time the City Council will consider an application to amend the Zoning By-law which proposes to exempt a specified area in the Old Merritton Downtown Commercial Core from the parking requirements of the by-law.



Did you know there is a small, abandoned underground parking garage by the old Lybster Mill? More about this in a future issue!



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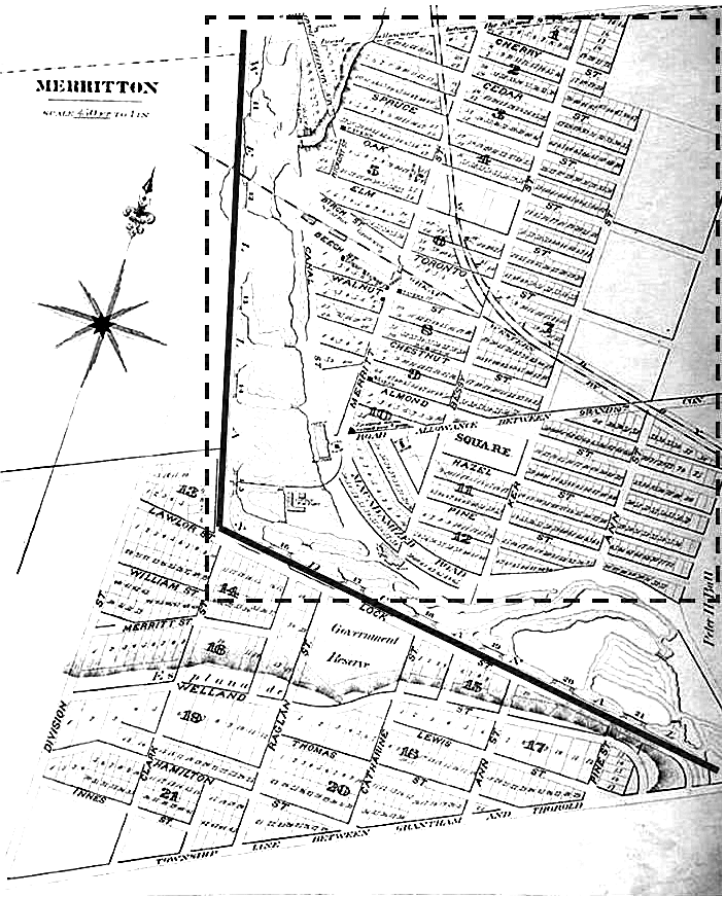
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This map from 1876 shows the 'elbow' (solid line) that the canal & escarpment created for the pocket (dashed box) of industrial and residential development.

Canal ponds and a residential area developed in a walking-distance radius from the factories. It was a perfect neighbourhood for factory employees as it was a 5-10 minute walk to the canal for anyone who lived between the railroad and the canal. The walk to work was further enabled by the lanes (for example, Almond Lane) included in the urban plan, allowing for short cuts and pedestrian routes.

When the factories shifted operations from seasonal to year round operations with the implementation of steam and gas in the 1870's and 1880's, the community of Merrittton began to take shape. Between 1875 and 1885, the service industry in Merrittton exploded with new business. Once families began to settle, the face of Merrittton began to change. The demand for schools and churches such as St. James Anglican Church, built in 1871, and St. Patrick's Catholic Church built in 1883, began to grow. The 'boom' was physically represented in Merrittton's urban space on Merritt Street which presented a 'commercial, downtown' feel with banks, local pubs, community halls, schools, hotels and many shops – much as it does today.

Remembering this important land mark and urban feature is important, especially for Merrittton, as the community partakes in gentrification projects to renew the industrial landscape. Even though the canal and railroads are mostly gone, the landscape is still defined by that original barrier, the Welland Canal.

Though my current focus is on my studies in the Masters of Public History program at the University of Western Ontario, there are a lot of different directions my research can take this story of the canal. I am excited for my research to continue and for the next chapter detailing the canal's special relationship with the community of Merrittton to be revealed.

# The Canal's Impact on Merrittton

By Adrian Petry

*"A fall of more than three hundred feet...is such as probably no country in the world can equal in a similar space. And there is no doubt that considerable manufacturing towns will eventually spring up on the canal. The unlimited supply of water power for turning machinery...offer advantages such as few places in the Province possess for similar undertakings."*

W.H. Smith, 1851

I've always been obsessed with canals. And 'obsessed' is very much the right word. It does not hurt that I grew up alongside the Rideau Canal in Ottawa. I wrote papers here and there for different classes while at Brock University, tweaking theses and research work to make the Rideau or the Welland Canals relate to whatever the class was about. The historiography of the canal pushed me away from the classic story of Mr. Merrit's Ditch. My research focused on how the canal, aided by the railway and the escarpment, impacted Merrittton's urban development. The land on the south side of the canal was reserved for Welland Canal Company use when they built the long line of locks descending the escarpment known as Neptune's Staircase. The company constructed large canal ponds so they could control water levels and boat traffic easily. All of the canal ponds were constructed on the north and east side of the canal locks, effectively acting as a water barrier, creating a pocket that now holds the north east part of Merrittton.

As a pocket, Merrittton was isolated from the rest of the community because there was only one way to cross the canal, at Lock 15, now Glendale Avenue. Because of this isolation, the community had a unique development generated by increased industrial activity in the pocket. Factories established on the banks of the

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## Cenotaph Names

Have you ever taken the time to wonder about some of the names on the Cenotaph? Bill Stevens of the Historical Society of St. Catharines contributed an interesting article on one of the people listed on the cenotaph.

# LEST WE FORGET – Richard Braithwaite Spaven

By Bill Stevens

The fourth name down on the right side of the Merritton Cenotaph reads “Richard Spavin”(sic). Who was Richard Spaven? In March of 2001, I received an e-mail from Mrs. Kate Stirk who lives in York, North Yorkshire, England, and after a few exchanges of e-mails Kate sent me a parcel containing discs with about 60 photographs. One of those photos was of Richard Spaven, her husband’s great uncle. Richard had taken many photos as a young man living in Merritton and sent them home to show his family where he lived and what he did for a living here. Richard was born in Thornton le Clay, a small village 5 miles east of York, North Yorkshire, England. His parents were Richard and Margaret (Braithwaite) Spaven, and they had 8 children. The family business appears to have been building, carpentry and bricklaying. There are other Spavens in the village also in this line of business, possibly uncles and cousins. His father and grandfather were builders and joiners and Richard became a bricklayer.

Richard and his brother Robert both came to Merritton. While it is uncertain when Richard came here, Robert arrived sometime prior to October 1912. Robert lived here several years before going to Australia. Richard was here only for a short time before he enlisted on February 7, 1916 at age 24 and 7 months in the Canadian Field Artillery. He states that he was in the Territorial Army for 3 years (in Yorkshire). His records show him as 5 feet 8 inches tall, fair complexion, brown eyes and light brown hair. He trained at Camp Petawawa, was sent overseas and arrived in England on August 22, 1916 on board the S.S. Cameronia. One month later he caught diphtheria and spent 77 days in isolation in the hospital in Aldershot. While on leave he returned home to see his parents and then, not long after, he was sent into battle, only to die on the battlefield on November 4, 1917 (possibly Vimy Ridge or Passchendaele in Belgium). The following is inscribed on his parent’s monument in the churchyard at Sand Hutton, a village on the outskirts of York: “Richard Spaven, Gnr C.F.A., son of the above Killed in Action in the Great War. Nov 4th 1917 and buried in Brandhoek No.3 Military Cemetery, Belgium, Age 25”.

Brandhoek is near Ieper (Ypres). He is also named on the war memorial in his village. A short occasional article headed “Additional Casualties Among Local Soldiers” appeared in the St. Catharines Standard, November 21, 1917, p. 1 reads as follows: “GUNNER RICHARD SPAVEN – the official casualty list contains the name of Gunner R. Spaven of this city, as having been killed in action. No official word has been received by local friends. Before enlisting he was employed at the Independent Rubber Works. His parents reside at Tulford, Kent (this is incorrect location), England. He enlisted with the 49th Battery and was a bricklayer by trade.”



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# Fundraisers for Cdn Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping “IN THE SPIRIT OF PEACE”



Terry Brauweiler contacted Merritton Matters recently. He is the Public Relations Officer for the Cpl Albert Storm CD Chapter of the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping. The Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping (CAVUNP) is an association for Canadians who served with the United Nations Peacekeeping forces to perpetuate the memories and deeds of our fallen comrades who lost their lives in defence of freedom.

This chapter was chartered as the 28th Chapter on the 29th day of August, 2007 and adopted its current name as a result of the first Niagara Region casualty in Afghanistan. The Cpl Albert Storm Chapter is holding two fundraisers this year. The first is an annual BBQ on July 14, 2012 at the Welland Legion Branch #4 12:00 PM to 11:00 PM. They are also holding their very first Annual Golf Tournament to be played at Water Park Golf & Country Club in Wainfleet, just outside of Welland on August 11th, 2012. Their goal is to hold events on a rotation basis throughout the area because they are a Niagara Region Chapter.

Cpl. Albert Storm, 36, of Niagara Falls died Nov. 27, 2006, after a suicide bomber attack. He was a member of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment out of Petawawa. Albert had family in Merritton and was a frequent visitor to our community.

The Niagara Region has approximately 300 United Nations Peacekeeping Veterans who have served on United Nations sanctioned missions and special duty assignments. Many veterans live on fixed incomes which is a reason why the chapter organizes fund raising events. This group meets on the second Saturday of every other month between 10:00 hrs. – 16:30 hrs. (Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec) at the Canadian Corps at 7 Clairmont St, Thorold.

## NEW ADOPT-A-STREET SPONSOR



In the past the Merritton Community Group sponsored the Hartzel/Merritt clean-up. You may have seen the volunteers out regularly, collecting bags of garbage. We still remember the time we loaded up our garbage bags at the very corner of the Food Basics parking lot and we were reported to the Niagara Regional Police. Someone had reported that we were dumping garbage

and within 10 minutes the police cars arrived. We must send out thanks again to Jean Westlake and Arnold Hartnett of the MCG as well as the students and staff from Pinehurst for their work over the past few years.

We thank Pinehurst School for becoming the new Hartzel/Merritt Adopt-a-Street patron!



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## We Want More Habitat Homes!

There is an exciting rumour in the wind that we may be in line for Habitat for Humanity homes on Tasker Street. We say let's bring on another successful project! The first Habitat home constructed in Merritton on Birch Lane became a wonderful home for the Schott family. Officially dedicated on February 25, 2010, it was the culmination of much work by the Merritton Community Group, the Rotary Club of St. Catharines, Habitat for Humanity, Merritton Lioness and Merritton Lions Club as major donors. It was also because of the six months of hard work by the District School Board of Niagara students that a very deserving family called it home. That home is a strong symbol of a very successful community project!

Established in 1993, Habitat for Humanity Niagara is a non-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of poverty by building homes in partnership with our community and families in need. They welcome all people without discrimination to join in the building of safe, decent, and affordable houses. A no-down-payment, interest-free mortgage is provided to qualifying families who would otherwise not be able to purchase their own home. It's "a hand up, not a hand out".

We're very proud of the way our community was positively affected as well as the organizations that volunteered their time, effort, skills, caring and money to make that first home in Merritton a reality. We followed Habitat's formula for success: Land + Community Partners + Funding = A new HOME for a deserving and qualified family to purchase. Habitat Niagara's mission is to transform the lives of the parents and children that become Habitat home owners. In so doing, their lives are radically improved. The three criteria to qualify for a Habitat home are (1) the need for affordable and adequate housing, (2) the ability to repay a zero-interest Habitat mortgage and (3) the willingness to partner with Habitat by contributing 500 hours of *Sweat Equity* volunteering back in the community.

When Habitat for Humanity builds a house, a ripple effect occurs. Families are less reliant on social services and food banks, student and apprentice builders become skilled trades workers within their community, the economy prospers with each building project, volunteers are engaged, and the entire community feels fulfilled in contributing.

Now it's time to establish more community partnerships and sponsorships to bring the funding required to kick-off construction on a new series of homes, right here in our Merritton Community. On average, it costs \$125,000 to build a Habitat home including the purchase of land. Habitat Niagara has already acquired the land upon which to build 5 more homes for 5 more deserving families in our community. Once the first home on Tasker becomes fully funded then a shovel can go in the ground to commence construction. With a few partnerships already on board, the fundraising has already begun. Habitat wants to hear from you. Get involved. Donate, Participate, Advocate. Show your commitment, one house at a time, or over the next three years to sponsor the entire project.

### Myth Busting Facts from Habitat for Humanity

- NO...we don't give away the houses for FREE.
- YES...families actually purchase the home, at fair market value, and repay a no-interest, no-down-payment mortgage. Payments are geared to their income and change annually as their financial situation changes.
- NO...they can NOT flip the house for a profit. Habitat always has the first right to repurchase the home to then help another family.
- YES...there is a very thorough family selection process based on three key criteria: need for safe shelter, ability to pay, willingness to partner.
- YES...the homes are built in partnership with community volunteers/students using donated construction materials when received.
- NO...we don't build our houses with USED construction materials.
- YES...we build our houses to EnergyStar standards, ensuring our families can afford to maintain their home for years to come.
- YES...we train our families for homeownership success through a series of workshops: topics such as, seasonal home maintenance, effective budgeting, being a good neighbour.
- YES...100% of donated dollars go into the home building program, guaranteed. The ReStore operation pays for the overhead and fundraising expenses.
- NO...Jimmy Carter did not found Habitat for Humanity. He is our most popular volunteer. In 1984, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, along with his wife, Rosalyn, participated in their first Habitat build project. Their personal involvement in Habitat's ministry, particularly through the Jimmy Carter Work Project, has brought the organization international visibility and sparked interest in Habitat's work around the world.

### Did you know....

- Habitat for Humanity International, the largest not-for-profit home builder in the world, was founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller.
- Habitat Niagara is part of a worldwide network. There are more than 2,300 active Habitat affiliates in over 100 countries around the world.
- Somewhere in the world a new Habitat home is built every 10 minutes!
- Habitat has built over 500,000 houses around the world, providing more than 2 million people in more than 3,000 communities with safe, decent, affordable shelter.
- Habitat for Humanity Canada was founded in 1985. There are 71 Habitat affiliates in all 10 provinces and 2 territories working coast to coast to eradicate poverty housing.
- Habitat Niagara was established in 1993. Niagara ReStore opened in June 2000.
- Habitat Niagara has built 35 homes to date across Niagara Region. We are in the process of building two more homes: Grimsby and Welland.
- The ReStore sells new and gently used renovation materials and supplies. All merchandise is donated by local companies and individuals, thus avoiding dumping/landfill. Pricing is often 60%-70% less than retail. Store revenues fund Habitat Niagara's operation, ensuring that donated dollars are used for the home building program.
- 6,199 families in the Niagara Region live in housing that is not affordable, over-crowded, substandard, or a combination of the three,
- 14% Niagara residents living in poverty. 15.6% children living in poverty.





# Cross-Border Hockey Happened Again!

Continuing a tradition started in 1964, the Wissahickon Skating Club in the Chestnut Hill section of Philadelphia had their international hockey exchange with the Merritton Bulldogs recently. This is the longest known running tournament of its kind with teams competing in Pee wee A and Bantam A levels. This year the Merritton group travelled to Philadelphia.

*We asked one of the players to tell us about the exchange.*

## Wissahickon, Philadelphia

*By Madison Kitchen*

Beautiful green trees, long trails, and lots of hockey! This is Wissahickon. The Merritton Bulldogs went to Wissahickon for the annual Silver Stick Hockey tournament. It was amazing! The billets were extremely nice to all of our team and we all had a blast! On the first day we arrived, the two coach buses went directly to the Chestnut Hill arena. We met up with our billets there and went back to their house with them. The next day the tournament began! We had a skills competition to start it off. In this competition there were 3 different activities - a shoot out, a rapid fire, and a fastest skater competition. The next day we had a parent game that took 45 minutes to complete. On our final day, we had a hockey game between WSC and MAA. Both teams were incredible, but Merritton showed their true skill and won the game 12-7 as well as being able to take home the Silver Stick Cup. It was an amazing experience and I hope to have the chance to do something like it again.

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# The Merritton Train Station

By Tom Barwell

The Merritton railroad station was a great place to spend an afternoon. There was always something interesting going on. We would wander down and park ourselves on a bench and watch all the action. Besides the great steam engines that would roll through there were the small switcher engines bouncing around making up the rows of boxcars that would transport cargo all over North America. Sleek passenger trains would stop to pick up and drop off travellers. Mail cars were loaded. The NS&T would come up from the city with even more goods.

From time to time we would peer through the window and watch the telegrapher pound away at his key. We were amazed at the speed of his finger. He would get annoyed with getting stared at and would scowl and wave his hand at us to get lost. One day we made a face at him. Wrong thing to do. He came charging outside and threatened to get the railroad police after us. Now those guys could be a little menacing so we muttered an apology and just peeked the odd time.

One day I was down by myself and lo and behold he made a gesture through the window and invited me in. Patting a chair I was told to sit down and keep quiet. He was a picture of concentration tapping his key and sending messages to far off places. Sometimes he would stop, listen through his earphones, and write on a paper pad. Then he would take the note and tie it to a strange looking contraption that I learned later was called a "train order hoop". It was made from a long slender pole of wood and ended in a circular hoop at the end. String was passed through the center section and the train order paper was tied in the middle. This note told the train engineer where he needed to stop and pick up or drop off boxcars along his route. The telegrapher would hold up the pole as the train went speeding by and the engineer would grab it by slinging his arm through the hoop. He then dropped the apparatus along the tracks after untying the order paper. Sometimes one was handed to the caboose as well. The telegrapher, whose name was "Ed" asked me if I would walk down the tracks and retrieve the discarded hoops and bring them back to the station. I jumped at the chance, excited to be part of the big picture. I then did a couple of other odd jobs such as sweeping the platform and the waiting room.

One day Ed asked if I would like to hand off a message to a scheduled train. Wow! That would be a great piece of the action and I keenly accepted the chore. So one fine morning I found myself standing on a raised platform with a hoop in hand.

Off in the distance I could see the train approaching from the east. Closer and closer it came and bigger and bigger it got until it seemed to blot out the sky. A huge smoke and steam belching monster. My legs were shaking and I almost ran away in fear. It came roaring into the station with the engineer staring at me like some avenging angel. I held up my arm as far as I could and suddenly the hoop was snatched out of my hands. With one more blasting of the whistle it was gone, followed by a great whoosh of wind in its wake that almost swept me from the platform. The one to the caboose was a lot easier and made me feel like a real railroad veteran.

Over the summer I performed the chore a few more times but sadly Ed was transferred to St Catharines and I lost contact with him. With the advent of radio this operation became a part of history. And then, years later, the old Merritton station burned down. At that time it was no longer in much use. But what a horrible loss to our beautiful little town. It is a memory I will never forget.

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# Inflatables – Yes, a Merritton Connection

Niagara Inflatables and Games has been in business for 10 years, serving Southern Ontario as one of the largest entertainment companies in the area. Nancy Schappert is the owner, and she and her husband Scott started the business in 2002. They just recently won the 2012 Entertainment Supplier of the Year award for Festival and Events Ontario. This is a huge honor and achievement for them, as they started as a backyard party business in 2002, and have grown the business to top entertainment supplier in Ontario! Festival and Events Ontario was established in 1987 as an association devoted to the growth and stability of the festival and event industry in Ontario. All of the major festivals and events in Ontario are associated with FEO. Did you know that Niagara Inflatables and Games supplies over 10% of the top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario? They service many of the major festivals in Ontario, including the Niagara Wine Festival, St. Catharines Rotary Rib Fest, Ancaster Heritage Days, Dunnville Mudcat Festival, Locke Street Festival, Poultryfest, Hamilton Conservation Authority, Port Colborne Heritage Canal Days Festival, Burlington Sound of Music, Dundas Cactus Festival, Toronto Caribbean Jerkfest, Sudbury Ribfest, St. Catharines Busker Festival, St. Catharines Folk Arts Festival and more. They have provided entertainment for the City of Burlington, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland, Port Colborne and many small municipalities in the area. They also supply corporate picnics, churches, grand openings, birthday parties, street fairs, block parties and more.



Niagara Inflatables employs local Merritton residents. Jennifer Argentino is their office manager and she lives on Elm Street. Married with two children, she loves the fun nature of the business. Their other Merritton employees are: Julie Geier, Richard Moreau, and Tyler Lutz. They hire college and university students every April as their delivery crew, and they welcome the application of local Merritton students. Because of their strong connection to Merritton, they are happy to offer FREE DELIVERY to any birthday party or block party bouncer rental located in Merritton.

They offer a wide range of inflatables, starting at \$189 plus delivery and set up. They have many interactives that can accommodate teens and adults: Obstacle Courses, Paddle Boats, Jousting, High Striker, Mountain Climb Challenge, Bungee Run, Rock Climbing Wall and inflatable Maze. They can also provide Popcorn, Cotton Candy and Snokone Machines, Carnival Games, Sports Games, Thomas the Tank Engine Trackless Train, Cotton Candy Concession Trailer and more. You can view their products at [www.niagarainflatables.com](http://www.niagarainflatables.com). For more information, call their Sales Manager: Jennifer Argentino, 905-646-JUMP (5867) or email: [jennifer@niagarainflatables.com](mailto:jennifer@niagarainflatables.com).

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# COMMUNITY PARK, DIAMOND #1 TO BE RENAMED GEORGE TAYLOR FIELD

By Geoff Crane

A committee of 3 people was formed in January, 2012 with the proposal to rename Community Park, Diamond #1 George Taylor Field. We made this proposal to City Council on Monday January 23rd, 2012.

George Taylor passed away on September 20, 2011. He was a retired employee of the City of St. Catharines as a foreman for Parks and Recreation and he was Head Grounds Keeper of Community Park during the tenure of the St. Catharines Blue Jays. During this time, George was recognized by the New York Penn League as Community Park met the Professional Baseball Standard for field conditions. To many in the Merritton community, George was Community Park.



In 2009, George was inducted into the St. Catharines Sports Wall of Fame as a builder for his coaching accomplishments with the Merritton Athletic Association.

George coached baseball for 35 years, beginning in 1952 at the age of 19. He coached 6 teams to Ontario Baseball Championships, in 1957 with Juvenile, 1961 and 1962 Midget, 1964 Peewee, 1965 Junior A, and 1981 Tyke. He also had 2 teams reach the finals, in 1966 with his junior team and in 1982 with his bantam team.

For four decades, George coached young athletes about baseball and about life.

The Lions Club of Merritton, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 138, Merritton, Merritton Athletic Association, St. Catharines Metros Baseball Club, and Merritton Alliance Senior Baseball Club all wrote letters supporting our proposal.

Following our presentation to City Council on January 23rd, City staff was directed to schedule a public meeting. This meeting was held in February to discuss our proposal and at City Council meeting of March 5th, our proposal was accepted.

We have scheduled the renaming of the park for **Saturday May 5th at 2 pm.**

At this time, the new sign and a commemorative plaque will be unveiled for George Taylor Field.

Everyone is invited to this event. The Lions Club of Merritton will be hosting a BBQ following the unveiling ceremony.



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS  
FOR MAY 5TH!**

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Hugh Cosgrove, Ted Collins, Geoff Crane

## GREAT TIMES...GREAT SPORTS

By Ernie Jukes

Wow, what a day it was. October 14, 1948 and Merritton High just won the Niagara District High School Track and Field Meet in Beamsville. We beat every school by a fair margin and I won my school letter. The rest of our track team included Jules Kovach, Bob Clout, Graham Ireland and Gord Hamilton. It must have been a great year because the same guys, along with George Hough and Ernie Wignall, also won the Niagara District Church League Basketball Championship. I recall Jack Kaupp, Scotty Girotti, and Mel Bird played with me on our High School Basketball squad. Would you believe we all played football together? We had good times together off the field as well.

The Town of Merritton was probably more noted for baseball and I was fortunate to play Bantam, Midget, Juvenile and Junior ball with a lot of fine athletes. A super short stop that comes to mind was Jack "Tony" McGlynn. Another top short stop and cleanup hitter was the girl that I married 57 years ago... Audrey Hough. She played for a winning team, the Merritton Legionettes, with Carole Wedsworth, Joy Copeland, and Barb Raby to name only a few. We also played Championship



Badminton together throughout the Peninsula with good players like Bob "Soupy" O'Neill and Fred Cartmell, coached by Jack Dempsey Sr. upstairs in the old town hall. What a Town. We were lucky to be there. Audrey Hough was also town athlete of the year during our wonder years 1945-1950. She was captain of the Jr. Squad and also played for the seniors when they won the tough COSSA crown for Ontario at Hart House in Toronto. Both teams were finally inducted into the Sports Walkway of Fame in 2011. I also ran for the Harriers into college days. Scotty Fenton was my coach and Al Page, a British Empire Champion, my mentor. They helped me attain the Dr. J.A. Wilson trophy which was also won earlier by local Murray Gayman, Canada's top high school pole-vaulter at the time.

Some readers will remember Duff's hamburgers, Makin's grocery, dancing at Crystal Beach, skating on Granny's pond, swimming at the wash walls and if there was enough snow we would ski on Burleigh Hill. Great times with great pals in Merritton. Business took us away from the peninsula to Oshawa, but we continued to be active with canoeing, curling, golfing, hunting, writing, painting and bridge. If anyone would like to contact us please email to [ernoddjukes@hotmail.com](mailto:ernoddjukes@hotmail.com).

# NOT MY MERRITON

Laura Moncor, an American writer from Salt Lake City who primarily publishes on the Internet, writes a fiction weblog about a town named Merriton. But, it's not our Merriton. Laura's fictional town of Merriton (spelled with only 1 t) is twelve hours away from San Francisco. It's a place where people come to ski or just get away. Actually the only thing we have in common with her fictional community besides the name is that the people are always friendly there too!

She states in her weblog that any resemblance to any towns is purely coincidental. When asked why she chose the name Merriton, she let us know that it was because it was the closest town to Lizzie Bennet in Pride and Prejudice although it was spelled Meryton in Jane Austen's book. Before she wrote this book, she played a game called Animal Crossing in which you can name your own town and Merriton sounded like a happy place to be. Many of the characters in her book are named after the video game animals, which is why Vesta appears to be a fluffy sheep and Dora is as meek as a mouse.

The first book, Merriton: Twelve Hours from San Francisco is going to be available on Kindle and iBooks soon. The ebook will have twenty additional chapters that were never published online. She's currently working on Merriton: 35 Minutes from Home right now, which is the story of the next resident of the cursed Bowen House. A new chapter is posted every Wednesday and each story develops over two years, since no one has been able to stay in the Bowen House for more than two years.

A weblog is a web site that has entries written by the website owner. Originally it comes from WeBlog and has been likened to a log or journal, usually devoted to a subject or theme. It often takes the format of a developing commentary by one person or with anyone able to contribute to the discussion thread. You can use a free blog site to get started. Laura uses WordPress which is web software you can use to create a website or blog.

Other people who reference Merriton in their blogs are Rick Dykstra, Member of Parliament for St. Catharines, who used it to post a picture of Remembrance Day in Merriton 2010, and St. Andrews Presbyterian Church.



Picture from Rick Dykstra's Blog

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# WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Niagara Health Services has inked a deal for the St. Catharines General Hospital site once it is no longer needed as a hospital. The new owner, anticipated to take over in the spring of 2013, is Panoramic Properties Inc. – Butera. Panoramic Properties was started in 1995 in Niagara Falls by President Angelo Butera with a goal of creating beautiful, affordable and comfortable places for people to call home. The goal is that the Queenston Street property will be turned into multi-unit residences, with the funds from the property sale helping to fund the new local hospital in west St. Catharines. Many community members were worried about the neighbourhood and local businesses once the new hospital site opens. The conversion to residential developments will be the beginning steps in creating successful urban growth. Some of the historic features will be preserved, although some will be moved to the new hospital site.

Street News, volunteering. SMUN has a large communal garden in Vineland and co hosts the annual Harvest Festival in Centennial Park every October.

In 2011 SMUN hosted 26,146 visits and served 10,884 lunches, 162 individuals retained or found housing, 27 individuals with disabilities found employment, 63 individuals who use services volunteered regularly, 65 participated in employment development activities. The stories behind the numbers tell us that people feel welcome, hopeful and more part of their community. We are making a difference in people's lives and are proud to be part of this neighbourhood.

Check us out at [www.startmeupniagara.ca](http://www.startmeupniagara.ca).

# Start Me Up Niagara

Susan Venditti used to sell real estate in 1999. But she's had a much different career focus since then. We asked Susan to tell us about Start Me Up Niagara, located at 17 Gale Crescent. Read her story below.

I thought I understood everything about being homeless; I was filled with opinions and solutions. The only problem was that I did not know one person who was homeless. I started volunteering at Out of the Cold. I met people without housing. I started calling them by name. Soon my opinions and solutions were worthless. This was deeply troubling. An opportunity to change my life presented itself and I grabbed it when I was hired by the National Network for Mental Health to direct a research project to assist unemployed people with mental health issues, start and grow their own businesses. This was the beginning of a long journey toward what is now Start Me Up Niagara.

In 2000 Start Me Up Niagara was incorporated as a not for profit charitable organization. While it continued to offer self employment programs, it moved in new directions. Today it offers a range of services from its building at 17 Gale Crescent. Open 365 days a year, it is a welcoming safe place for those who are having a difficult time at this point in their lives. It's a popular spot for accessing community resources and on weekends serves a community lunch. Other services include housing preservation, employment supports, skills development, onsite healthcare, recreational activities,



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# ???

Jim McMahon became one of the premier box lacrosse goal scorers in the 1940's and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2001. He played on the Ontario Lacrosse Association championship teams in 1945 and 1958 and the St. Catharines Mann Cup champions in 1946. In an interview, Jim made mention of playing in a lacrosse box off of Tasker Street and at the end of Townline Road in Merritton in the 1930s. Does anyone remember? Contact the editor at merrittonmatters@hotmail.com.

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## NEW MENU ITEMS

My daughters and I were eating dinner at one of Merritton's fine food establishments when I jokingly said that the menus should feature more Merritton-like names. They, of course, being true Merrittonians, came up with dozens of ideas based on site names. How about some Applewood Pie, Wembly Wontons, Merrittoni Rigatoni and Welland Canal Cannoli? Then with some prompting from Mom about historical names, they ventured that we definitely needed a Trapper Leo Catch of the Day, Ricci's Rumballs and Skipper's Scallops. Other ideas?

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# School Crossing Guards in Merritton

Driving around the Merritton community before school, at lunch time and during home school dismissal times, you'll notice that there are crossing guards using their authority to stop traffic so that children may cross safely. This program is administered by the City Clerk's office. Although they are not police officers, they do have the authority, under the Highway Traffic Act, to require approaching vehicles to stop for their crossing. Some of our local schools (i.e., St. Christophers, St. Theresa) do not have city crossing guards, presumably because if a traffic survey was conducted to examine volume, this did not indicate the need for their services. Provincial guidelines also do not recommend the installation of crossing guards at signalized intersections or all-way stops. Ontario Traffic Conference regulations require a crossing guard where at least 100 students are crossing the road.

Municipalities are responsible for the cost of crossing guards and the average annual cost per location is \$10,000. In St. Catharines there are approximately 76 crossing guards at 72 different crossings throughout the area.

Requests for installations of crossing guards must be in writing and sent to the Clerk's Department at the City of St. Catharines, 50 Church Street, PO Box 3012, St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 7C2.



## HERE ARE OUR COMMUNITY'S SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD LOCATIONS:

**BURLEIGH HILL** - Burleigh Hill at the school; Burleigh Hill at Dalecrest Avenue; and Glendale Avenue

**CONNAUGHT** - Queenston Street at Eastchester Avenue; Vine Street below General Hospital at the rear of the school

**FERNDAL** - At the school and Dunvegan Road; Hartzel Road at Dunvegan Road

**ST. MARGUERITE** - Burleigh Hill at Burleigh Hill School, Dalecrest Avenue; and Glendale Avenue

Some of our readers may not be familiar with Dalecrest Avenue. This is a very small street that links Hillgarden Road with Burleigh Hill Drive.

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# **LOBSTERFEST**

~ ALL YOU CAN EAT ~

**Saturday, May 26th, 2012**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Merritton Community Centre**  
7 Park Avenue  
St. Catharines, ON L2P 1P9

**TICKETS:**  
**\$70.00**

*TICKETS MUST BE  
PURCHASED BY  
MAY 20, 2012*

**FOR TICKETS CALL:**

**GEOFF CRANE - 905.684.7655**

**PIRIE APPLIANCES - 324 MERRIT STREET - 905.227.3953**

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