

MERRITTON MATTERS

SPRING 2014 • Volume 10, Issue 1 • www.merrittonmatters.ca



Photo by Susan Fluellon

The Museum officially opened at its new location at Lock 3 in 1991, and is now known as the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre. It has a significant collection of artifacts related to the history of Merrittton, St. Catharines and the Welland Canals.



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Merrittton Matters

Merrittton Matters is distributed through The St. Catharines Standard and is also available at many of our community's fine establishments. If you know someone who lives out of town who might like to receive the Merrittton Matters by mail, please call Sheila at 905-227-8988.

CHECK OUT THE MERRITTON MATTERS WEBSITE AT WWW.MERRITTONMATTERS.CA

MERRITTON COMMUNITY GROUP - A PROUD PARTNER OF THE MERRITTON LIONS

This newsletter is a volunteer effort by a small group of people who are determined to keep the spirit of the Merritton community alive through providing information to our readers about the past, present and future of our neighbourhood. The articles have been written by the contributors listed below and articles without a byline are by the editor Lorraine Giroux. We gratefully accept ideas and articles for our upcoming newsletters. Send these by e-mail to merrittonmatters@hotmail.com or through the mail to 19 Wanda Rd., St. Catharines L2T 1S5. Your ideas and opinion matters!

Merritton Matters is a self-sustaining publication thanks to our advertisers. We don't expect to make a profit but we do like to cover our costs. If you are interested in advertising with us on a one-time basis or with a regular ad, we'll gratefully welcome your contribution!

Merritton Matters Volunteers

Editor/Writer: Lorraine Giroux

Article Contributors: Tom Barwell, Penny Coles, Stu Colt, David C. Craig, George Hostick, Adrian Petry, Tom Richardson, Kathy Rutherford, and Phyllis Thomson

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Behind the Scenes Coordinators: Arnold Hartnett and Sheila Morra

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Constable John Zivcic - December 6, 2013

Killed in the line of duty with the Toronto Police Force, John was a former resident of Merritton where his family still resides.

Bill Marshall - January 20, 2014

Bill came to Canada following his discharge from the Royal Navy after World War II. He settled in Merritton where he spent the rest of his lifetime and the Merritton community has been all the richer for it. Besides having a distinguished working career, Bill found the time to serve Merritton and the region in so many capacities, always willing to commit more of his time to anything that would benefit our little town.

Frank Kaupp - February 18, 2014

Frank was an unassuming man who quietly volunteered his time and knowledge in many ways, helping to make Merritton the great community it is. He was one of the early volunteer firemen and was Fire Chief for many years. Frank, and his father before him, operated Kaupp Electric for the past sixty-eight years in Merritton, a business which is now being carried on by his sons. It is families like the Kaupps, with their dedication to our town that keeps Merritton, and will keep Frank, in our hearts.

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Class of 1964 Reunion

By Tom Richardson

The Merritton High School class of 1964 has held a reunion every five years for the past 25 years, following the high school reunion of 1984.

2014 will represent the 50th anniversary of our graduation. A planning committee of Janet Armstrong Gunn, Mike Johnson, Frank Memme, John Wilkinson, Marilyn Polson Hotta, Nancy Dorman Bufalino, and Tom Richardson have been working to plan reunion events over the weekend of June 13, 14 and 15, 2014. Present plans include a Friday night get-together at the Merritton Legion followed by an afternoon and evening at the home of Frank Memme in Wainfleet. We are also proposing a Sunday brunch at a location still to be determined.

While we have the contact information of many of our classmates, there are some people for whom we have lost contact. Consequently, if you know of the whereabouts of the members of the class of 1964, would you please be kind enough to contact one of the following people:

• **JANET ARMSTRONG GUNN**

janet.gunn@niagararegion.ca
905-227-1400

• **JOHN WILKINSON**

jwilkinson29@cogeco.ca
905-227-1344

• **TOM RICHARDSON**

tarichardson@sullivanmahoney.com
905-682-8820

We are hoping to make this a signal event in the annals of Merritton High School.

ROLLER RINK?

Do you remember the roller rink on Hartzel Road? We're looking for people to share memories and/or pictures of it. Please send these to merrittonmatters@hotmail.com.



HARTZEL ROAD'S HOME HARDWARE

By Phyllis Thomson

Fifty years ago, in 1964, Home Hardware began its journey into Canadian households with a single store located in St. Jacobs, Ontario. Today, it has one thousand member stores from coast to coast. It is Canada's only 100% Canadian, dealer owned and operated, major retailer and, in 2004, Home Hardware was honoured by Canada Post with the issuing of a commemorative stamp to celebrate their 40th anniversary.

The Allan family have operated their Home Hardware store on Hartzel Road for thirty-seven years. Moving here from Cochrane, Ontario, they opened their hardware store at 89 Hartzel Road in 1977 and, as the business grew, they purchased the old Cavers Furniture Store just up the road in 1999, and moved their business there, where you will still find them. Wayne Allan is the Manager of the store, with the assistance of other family members and sixteen full time and four part time employees, most of whom are either from Merritton or live in the Merritton community.

It is one of those stores where you could wander around for a considerable time and be surprised at what you find. And, from personal experience, I can attest to the fact that the staff are knowledgeable and friendly and will happily guide you to whatever you are looking for, without hesitation and, with more than 100,000 different items available in the store, there are times when you do need a little help!

Along with a handful of others, they are one of the longest standing businesses on Hartzel Rd. and one of the cornerstones of the Merritton community.



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Ye Old Garage

By Tom Barwell

There was an old garage located on Wedsworth Street just west of the Merritton rail bridge. The house that it belonged to was owned by the Dempsey family and their home was on the same property but situated on Walnut Street. John (Jock) Dempsey ran the bottle draw for the annual Labour Day Parade and its headquarters was once the old garage itself. Early on each parade morning there was a frenzy of activity around the old building. Over a dozen volunteers arrived to gather the materials they would need for their endeavour. These would be aprons, milk bottles and tickets. There might be a nip or two in order to help them on their way. Of course, that was only a rumour. It was a happy scene with much joking and ribbing. A great way to start the day!

After having gathered all their necessary items they would fan out along the parade route and begin their task. The tickets would be in two parts with a number on each section. There was no signing of names required. Any amount of change was dropped into the seller's bottle and they would receive one of the cherished tickets. Of course paper money would be appreciated as well. If a more generous amount of money was donated this would mean an extra ticket or two. Up and down the route they would go and after the parade they would invade the carnival grounds. Everyone knew everyone else and there was much joking and carrying on. This sometimes brought an extra donation or two.

It didn't take long for the bottles to fill up so the overflow would be dumped into the apron. After a good few hours of work the volunteers would return to their headquarters, in the old garage, where for sure there would be a few cold wobbly pops available and for sure they went down without touching the sides. The money was counted, with half going to the winning ticket. The draw would be made at the carnival grounds later in the evening. If the winner was not present, the number would be posted in the local paper the next day. All the proceeds went to the Merritton Athletic Association for kids sports and was an excellent way to raise funds.

Over the years it faded out but has since returned without the draw. Just a simple donation is asked for but it takes a little fun out of it. As for the garage? It has since been torn down. I guess it would not have been designated as a heritage building but in Merritton history, with its wealth of memories, I'm sure it would have. And I'm sure if you would slightly rake the ground where it once stood you would uncover the odd bottle cap.



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McLean-Malpas Mission Choir

Barbara Brooks sent us this picture of the McLean-Malpas Junior Choir after reading David Craig's article in the last issue of Merritton Matters. Her mother was the Mrs. Gladys Bradley whom David mentioned as the pianist in his article. A multi-talented woman, Gladys also made the choir gowns. Choir members were (left to right bottom row) Lindsay Shaule, Linda Barrett, Carolyn Shaule, Carol Barrett, Wendy Wilson, Sandra Hooton, and Gary Shaule. The top row of singers were Marie Bradley, Linda Sills, Linda Wilson, Lorna Steele, and Barbara Savage.



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New 'Playing Favourites' Exhibition at the St. Catharines Museum

Adrian Petry, Public Programmer, St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canals Centre

Everyone plays favourites and the staff here at the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre is no exception.

Playing Favourites, the newest exhibit at the museum, showcases our favourite artifacts, with pieces as unique as a glass pig ornament and the Niagara Wine Festival mascot, 'Mr. Grapé'. Also featured in the exhibit are a few Merritton related artifacts including a fire-insurance plan of the Independent Rubber Company complex, now known as 'The Keg' and a bicycle lamp made at Thomas Wilson's carbide factory.

For those who know me, it's not surprising that I selected a fire-insurance plan for this exhibit. I really enjoy pouring over them, examining and soaking up all the fine details. The plan was donated to the Museum in 1975 by the Kimberly-Clark Corporation. It displays the Independent Rubber Company complex as it stood in 1920 but also includes the entire surrounding canal infrastructure, making it easy to see how the building was constructed to take advantage of water power. My obsession with maps and plans led me to study canals; the Rideau and Welland, in particular. When I studied at Brock, I used Merritton as the basis for my undergraduate thesis study of the impact nineteenth century canals had on urban form in canal-side communities. When I was tasked with choosing an artifact for the exhibit, I knew exactly what I wanted.

The fire-insurance plan isn't the only Merritton connection found in the new exhibit. Phil Cristi, Manager of Programs and Culture, Recreation and Community Services, chose a Miller's Carbo Carbide Bicycle Lamp which was developed at Thomas Wilson's carbide factory in Merritton which opened in 1896. Phil chose this artifact because it reminded him of attaching the man-powered bicycle lamp to his first bicycle as a child. "I was mesmerized by how a spinning gear attached to my front tire powered my light which allowed me to stay out a little longer riding my bike," says Phil. Personal stories and memories are at the heart of this exhibit.

We are hoping for participation from the public including voting for your favourite artifacts and suggesting your favourite Museum-wide artifact. To help facilitate the public's participation we have launched a special blog to coincide with the new exhibit: www.stcmuseum.tumblr.com.

The Playing Favourites exhibition is on display until the end of 2014.

The St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre is located at 1932 Welland Canals Pkwy. For more information regarding Playing Favourites and other museum exhibits visit <http://www.stcatharines.ca/MuseumExhibits>, call 905-984-8880 or email museum@stcatharines.ca. Admission to the museum is by donation.



PROUD TO HAVE BEEN A MERRITTON KID?

You might want to show it then! Bev Downes Damiano is coordinating the sale of t-shirts that have that slogan.

The shirts are \$20.00, shipping will be extra and orders must be prepaid. For more information, contact Pat at patron1@bell.net or Bev at eventz_décor@yahoo.ca.



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Helping us Find Our Roots

If you want to find information on your family history, you might want to check out Mayholme. It's a charitable not-for-profit institution established in 2002 dedicated to saving and promoting local and family history in the Niagara Region. Their main resource is a library collection with thousands of books, files of material on local individual families and microfilm containing images of historical documents related to this area. It is run by some of the most experienced researchers in the region who voluntarily help visitors find their families or research materials. Don't know much about research? They also help people who are new to research with basic instruction on how to find information and how to organize and store it. There are microfilm/fiche reader-printers, a photocopier, scanner and computers in the library to aid in research. There are also archival collections of local photographs, documents, letters, diaries, and other written material.

Besides being a source for local research, it's a beautiful spot to explore. It's located at 525 Ontario Street on property granted by the Crown to Peter May UE in 1786. May was the son of William May of Butler's Rangers. The house, built about 1857 by the Cole Brothers on Ten Mile Creek, contains original furniture, pictures and artifacts. The library was built in 2003, replacing the original woodshed off the back of the house.

Mayholme is open from 10 am to 3 pm Thursdays and Fridays. They can be contacted by email at mayholme@mayholme.ca or by phone 905-934-1173.





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The History of Women in Our Community

On a trip to Edmonton in March, I saw a mural proudly commemorating the historic achievements of five ground-breaking women activists - Irene Parlby, Nellie McClung, Emily Murphy, Louise McKinney, and Henrietta Muir Edwards. These five women were influential in the 1929 decision that women were persons, leading to the ability to hold office and vote in elections. The mural by artist Kris Friesen is a tribute to women from an earlier era who accomplished something that bettered their community, their province and their country.

It prompted me to reflect on what I have learned over the past years as the editor of Merritton Matters about women in our community's past and their accomplishments in making Merritton what it is today. In each issue of our Merritton Matters newsletter, we have sought to provide glimpses of our history while continuing to document the present. We're always seeking to unravel the contributions of men and women to our community but we've only had a handful of articles that focus on the contributions of our female forbearers.

When we look back through the past issues, many more stories have been shared about the men who played a role in the history of our community than the contributions of women in the last centuries.

Truthfully, the lack of stories about women throughout history is common to more documents than Merritton Matters. Virginia Woolf is famously quoted as having said that, "For most of history, Anonymous was a woman." We know that women had really never been absent from history but there are fewer references in history books to the contribution of women. The social history of women comes mainly from evidence of registers of births, marriages, deaths which are never totally complete. Throughout the twentieth century women became more and more well-known in the public sphere through participation in public life and their membership in organizations such as Women's Christian Temperance Union, the suffrage movement, and the church.

Here are the stories of three of our more well-known women.

One of the few well-known women in the history of Merritton was **Lillian Marietta (Minnie) Phelps** who was born in June 1859 in Merritton. Typically, little is known of her early life. The Women's Christian Temperance Union started gaining momentum in their charge for prohibition and voting rights for women in 1874 and what we know of Minnie comes mainly from her association with the Ontario WCTU. She was the first recording secretary from 1877 to 1881, an organizer and lecturer throughout the 1880s and 1890s, and president of the WCTU in St Catharines at various times from the 1880s until after the turn of the century. Minnie was also a member of the Canadian

Women's Suffrage Association, joining in 1883, and published an article in 1890 to argue for equity of employment, pay, and vote for women. Written about in *The St Catharines Daily Standard*, she was described as a public lecturer whose "oratorical excellence" had "placed her in the first rank among women speakers." Phelps died in 1920 at her family's home in Merritton and was buried in Victoria Lawn Cemetery.

Mary Flynn grew up in Merritton, one of nine children. At the age of 23, she became a postulant at the Sisters of St. Joseph in Toronto, received her habit in 1875 and in 1877 became Sister Monica. She moved with other Sisters to Port Arthur's Landing, caring for the sick and injured in two rooms of a small convent while the other Sisters were busy running a school. Sister Monica was instrumental in planning for, organizing and then managing a new hospital built beside the convent, even collecting

money by visiting railway camps and devising an "insurance plan" where she would guarantee health care in return for a donation. She became Mother Monica in 1887, continuing her work at the hospital until she retired in 1923. Family members travelled from Merritton, Toronto, St. Catharines, and Niagara Falls, N.Y. to celebrate her Golden Jubilee in 1925. The hospital is considered a tribute to her fifty years of religious service.

Mother Monica was honoured in 2007 with a new monument in St. Andrew's cemetery by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie. A new headstone was erected with a consecration ceremony held by Bishop Frederick Colli.



ABOVE: First unit of St. Joseph's Hospital constructed during the building of the C.P. Railway through Prince Arthur's Landing (building on left).

Bertha Thompson grew up in our community where her father Ted owned a printing company located at the base of the Merritt Railway Bridge. Bertha became the first appointed Juvenile and Family Court judge in Niagara. She was a Canadian lawyer who met and married Bernard Harrison in Hong Kong. Bernard had been an electrical engineer who served in the Second World War maintaining the air raid warning system. After the war he was sent to Germany to help restore their telephone system. Subsequently, the British Government posted Bernard to Hong

Kong. When they returned to Canada, they came to Niagara because of Bertha's family. Bertha died in October 1989. Their house was donated to Brock University so that the proceeds could be used to finance the Student Health Services and Athletic Therapy Clinic and Brock University received a gift of \$1.6 million as the Harrison-Thompson Bursary Trust. Bernard died in January, 2003 at the age of 95.

Information on Mother Monica retrieved from <http://kindredfootprints.blogspot.ca/2010/03/mother-monica-part-i.html>

MERRITTON'S BOWLING ALLEY By Penny Coles



People are often surprised to hear there is a five-pin, eight-lane bowling alley in the Merritton Community Centre. It's been there for decades, and is used for weekly league play. It's also rented out for birthday parties. To inquire about the bowling alley, call the Community Centre at 905-682-0098.

Please share your bowling alley memories with us at merrittonmatters@hotmail.com.



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2014 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Have you ever thought that what you do matters little when it comes to our community? As far as we are concerned, you are the centre of what happens here and your opinion counts. It's important that we all take the opportunity to express those opinions in the upcoming Municipal Election.

We need to elect a mayor, six Regional councillors, 2 Merritton ward councillors and school board trustees in the election to be held on Monday, Oct. 27, 2014. Nominations will be accepted until Friday, September 12th and forms are available from the City Clerk at 50 Church Street, St. Catharines. The fee to file a nomination is \$200 to run for mayor, and \$100 for all other positions (city and regional councillors and school board trustees). This fee must be paid to the clerk at the time you hand in your nomination form and these must be filed in person.



ATTENTION CANDIDATES

Merritton Matters will be assembling a newsletter in August. We will attempt to contact each candidate who has declared by press time in order to profile them in the issue. Candidates who are interested in advertising should contact us through Sheila Morra at 905-227-8988.

Merritton Memories

Merritton is alive and well on Facebook, the online social networking service. Merritton Memories is a common-interest user group that makes us wonder 'How on earth did we keep in touch with our Merritton buddies before this?' (Besides running into each other at local establishments, of course!) Ask to become a 'friend' in order to exchange messages and photos or just simply read the reminiscing of people throughout the world who are connecting through their Merritton roots.

We asked founder Francie McGlynn about the start of this Facebook page. Here's her answer:

"My paternal great-grandparents and grandparents arrived in Merritton in the early 1900s to work on the canal and my Dad grew up on Maple Street. When he and Mom married they settled in Merritton and that's where I grew up. But my Mom grew up in St. Catharines and her family had been there for a long time. Last year a distant cousin sent me an 1866 newspaper report about my great-great grandfather Samuel Weaver. The St. Catharines newspaper noted that he had been jailed for playing euchre on the Sabbath and 'denuding' his neighbour of his money and clothing. The paper went on to say that he lived in Smokey Hollow. I managed to learn that Smokey Hollow was out Martindale way but other than a few newspaper and map references nothing more seems to have been recorded about what must have been a very interesting part of St. Catharines. That disappointment made me realize that my generation is the last generation that grew up in the old Town of Merritton. I didn't want our stories to be lost the way stories of the Smokey Hollow community have been lost. I started Merritton Memories with that thought in mind - but even in my wildest imagination I never guessed how many people would be interested in sharing their stories and photos of the old days in the best place in the whole world! The spirit of Merritton is certainly alive and well!"

Go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Merritton.memories/> to access this site. You'll have to be a member of Facebook to access it.

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SHERI'S CREATIVE EDGE

Congratulations to Sheri's Creative Edge as they celebrate their 40th year in the Merritton community.

Three generations of Sheri's family have been involved in the salon and have been crucial to making it successful. In 1974, Sheri's grandmother and her mother opened the salon together and in 1986 Sheri began her career there and she took over the operation of the salon in 1991, following her mother's retirement.



During International Women's Week 2014, Canadians were encouraged to reflect on the contributions of women entrepreneurs. Sheri's Creative Edge is one of our successful women entrepreneurs and we celebrate her success. As we know, some businesses come and go on Hartzel Road, but this salon has remained in the same location for four decades and is still very much alive and thriving.

PETE'S PIZZA

Pete's Pizza is celebrating 30 years of creating delicious pizza and wings. Started at a location off Pleasant Avenue, they have additional locations throughout St. Catharines and Niagara Falls. The first Merritton location opened in 1991. In November 2010 Jerry Dipietro re-opened the former Hallett's Coach House as Pizza Jerry's Union House. Jerry is a proud sponsor of Merritton and the entire Niagara Region, supporting local schools, sports and charities.

Bill Sheets sent us this picture taken by Edmund Butryn of a group of people in Hallett's Union House (now Pizza Jerry's Union House) in the 1960s. Bill is on the right hand side at the back. We've identified some and their names are listed below – can you name any others?



Back Row: Fourth from left - Jimmy Galvin, Sixth from left - Spike Spencer, Seventh from left - Steve (Bartender)
Front Row: Fifth from left - Len McGarry, Sixth from left - Frank Murphy

CONGRATULATIONS TO TRACY SACCO

The 2013 Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship was awarded to Tracy Sacco by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honourable David C. Onley, in Toronto on October 17th. This award recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions to the well-being of their communities and whose assistance is given without remuneration or reward. Nominated by the Niagara Regional Police, Tracy was praised for her determined advocacy of our youth, especially those who are marginalized or disadvantaged.

Tracy Sacco first became a principal at the DSBN in 1996. Since then, she has worked at Welland Centennial, Port Colborne Secondary, St. Catharines Collegiate and, most recently at A.N. Myer Secondary in Niagara Falls. Tracy currently serves as the DSBN's Student Achievement Leader for Alternative Education. Tracy (Barnfield) Sacco is a graduate of Merritton High School.



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MHS Gathering

By Stu Colt

The annual MHS gathering was held Friday, December 20 at El Cafetal Restaurant, located at 338 Merritt St. (We used to meet at Players which is no longer in operation.) Attendance, which peaked between the hours of 6 and 7 was quite good and some hardy souls were still present well after 8. Many expressed sorrow that Bruce Hemphill, a prime organizer of this soiree was absent. Sorrow quickly turned to envy when it was explained that after spending Christmas in British Columbia with kids and families, it was on to Australia to visit more relatives. As you know it's now spring in Oz. When that welcome wears thin, it's off to Thailand and other exotic Far East destinations. Lucky Bruce will not return to Canada until April! It's not easy being retired.

Back to the gathering. There are still Tigers who don't know about this annual event, so perhaps a New Year's resolution to "pass the word" would help to increase attendance next year. The event will probably take place on Friday, December 12 or 19 at the same location.

Apologies to all for the "glitch" in serving the finger food which in past years had been so good. After dialogue with the owner, many goodies finally appeared but not until 7:45. Unfortunately by then many guests had departed and much good food was wasted. This will not happen next year.

To those who attended, hope you had a good time, and expect to see you next year. All best wishes for a great 2014.

THINKING ABOUT SOCCER THIS SUMMER?

Maybe Dreaming about Hockey this Winter?

The MAA has opened registration for local kids to join the Little Bulldogs Soccer School program starting after Victoria Day. Age groups for the soccer school are 3-5 and 6-8. Focus of the program is to teach the rules of the game, develop passing and shooting skills and encourage sportsmanship through weekly mini games. An end of season mini tournament is planned to showcase the skills the kids will learn.

Why not sign your little ones up for MAA's Little Bulldogs Hockey School program for the Winter 2014-15 season? They offer new and experienced children aged 3 and up the chance to develop the key skills needed for playing hockey focusing on skating drills, passing, and shooting. With a high ratio of instructors to each child, they help players develop understanding about the rules of the game and the importance of fair play!

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MAPLE CREST

By David Haywood

In the fall 2012 Newsletter former resident Sabrina Davis lamented the fact her childhood school, Maple Crest Elementary, no longer existed in Merritton. Sabrina stated that she loved the school very much and that she had numerous friends and accompanying memories as a result of attending Maple Crest while living across the street on St.Peter. Sabrina said she left Merritton in 1985 after a fire at her house, and had not returned to the area in years. Fortunately for Sabrina, one year before her family left 26 St.Peter, my family – the Haywoods – were establishing roots at 14 St.Peter down the street (also across from where Maple Crest once stood).

My family still lives on St.Peter - occupying two houses across from one another (covering three generations of the Haywood family - my parents, two siblings, one wife, two daughters, and a nephew). When I read Sabrina's letter I jumped at the chance to answer her question while also feeling honoured to fill in the blanks as to what happened to Maple Crest after her family left in 1985.

My experience at Maple Crest started in 1985 when my parents enrolled me for senior kindergarten. Also enrolled were my older brother,

MAPLE CREST ALUMNI

Thomas Froese is a Canadian newspaper columnist and storyteller who writes widely about his experiences in the Middle East and Africa, offering comments on news, travel and life. In one of his online posts he wrote about Africans playing hockey on what must be Uganda's only Canadian-built hockey pad. He watched a dozen Africans help christen the pad: sticks from Canada in hand, shooting on nets that he bought from a Canadian in Yemen. All of this brought back memories of his visit home to Canada when he took his son Jon to Maple Crest Park where his public school once stood. A generation ago he was among the kids who played on a rink on the Maple Crest School's wintry field: information that prompted his son to say excitedly and repeatedly, "So it was right here?!"



Robert, and my older sister, Brandy. We all loved attending the school and we cannot forget the times and memories we created in the school's hallways and playground before, during, and after class. Baseball (not on the gravel baseball diamond but on the dirt one we created next to it), hockey (in the parking lot of course!), and soccer (who can forget the one-goal soccer field) were played by all the kids on the block. Back then the school was thriving. When I was in grade 3 (in 1988) the school added a portable to accommodate the increased population of the school. Renovations and additions added another utility room off the gym, a storage shed in the back portion of the property behind the school, and another portable next to the one mentioned above.

Unfortunately, the good times were not to last. Declining enrolment coupled with, a new funding formula used by the school board had a negative impact on Maple Crest and its chance for survival. The final blow was delivered and it was announced that Maple Crest would close in June 2001. Merritton faced the grim reality of seeing the school shut down and their tiny community's little Merrittonians being shuttled to nearby Westmount and Burleigh Hill schools. A year or two later, the school was torn down and a park was inserted in its ghostly shadow –the epoch in time for Maple Crest Elementary School had sadly come to a close.



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HOPE DRAGON

Kudos to Merritton resident Emily Laffin. She's a grade 10 student at Denis Morris High School who sold hand-made dragon sculptures in order to raise funds for Wells of Hope in Guatemala. Her teacher, Ted van der Zalm, had shared stories of his work there with students and Emily took his message to heart. With an interest in dragons, she modelled four types



of dragons from clay, called them Hope Dragons and sold these for \$15.00. Buyers received a one of a kind sculpture as each one was made individually with custom enhancements. By the end of her efforts, Emily had made 107 dragons, and a total of \$5085 was raised. This was enough to build two homes for families struggling to survive in Guatemala. Three of the dragons were auctioned off at the Taste and See event in February which was the kick-off event of the year for The Wells of Hope. Emily's aunt, Rosella Born, helped her manage the fundraising efforts and her uncle John Born helped with the creative efforts.

Emily, John and Aunt Wanda Laffin spent March Break in Guatemala, along with other Denis Morris students, working on building houses and improving school buildings. To learn more about Wells of Hope, visit www.wellssofhope.com.



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THE OLYMPICS OF CARHA HOCKEY WORLD CUP

Two years before the exciting men's Olympics hockey game of 2014, there was another exciting Olympics – the one unofficially referred to as the Olympics Men's Rec/Beer League Hockey. Officially called Budweiser CARHA (Canadian Adult Recreational Hockey Association) Hockey World Cup, it also is held every four years with different countries competing. It is the largest amateur hockey tournament in the world. And unlike the Socchi Olympics, the CARHA games featured a Merrittonian racing down the ice, hockey stick in hand.



This was a global competition where Russia wasn't the host but did field a team. After viewing the opening ceremonies in Sault Ste. Marie, more than 45,000 spectators watched the various age groups compete. Honourary Chairperson Phil Esposito dropped the puck at the Essar Centre which saw 120 teams compete.

David 'Cricket' Robertson was one of our hometown players. He grew up in the Burleigh Hill area, played in Merritton, then went to play Junior 'B' hockey in Dunnville where he later played with the intermediate and senior leagues. Dave and a teammate from Dunnville, Doug Siddall, were drafted to play with a Toronto Warriors Senior team in the World Senior Cup. The Toronto Warriors team won the World Cup in the gold medal game. Well done!

With information from www.sachem.ca/opinion/dunnvilles-hockey-heroes-to-play-in-world-senior-cup/



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Victoria Village is proud to be part of the Merritton community and we welcome them and the new families to our community. This charming group of homes is an architecturally controlled master planned community. The Victoria Village office, located on the corner of Fred Fisher Crescent and Rockwood Avenue, actively sought a sports team to support and now have sponsored a minor soccer team, Victoria Village Bulldogs. We hope for a great season for the team!

Merritton Notecards

We still have several packages of notecards featuring Merritton historic sites available for purchase.

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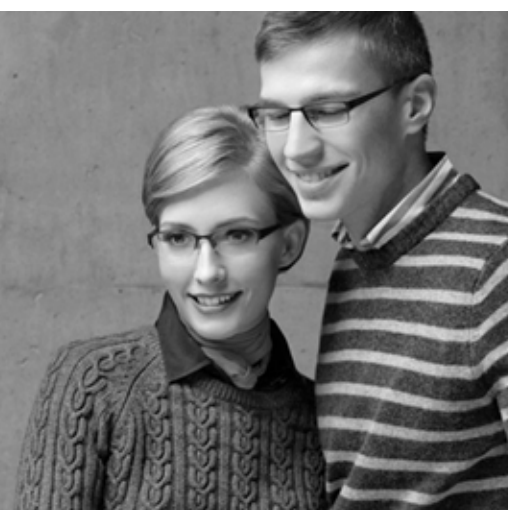
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The Merritton Lioness Club Celebrates 65 Years of Service

By George Hostick and Kathy Rutherford

It was on February 21, 1949 when a number of wives of members of the Merritton Lions Club met in St. James Parish Hall to discuss the advisability of forming a ladies section of the Merritton Club. With the support of the Lions Club, 17 ladies met on March 25, 1949 and took the step of organizing the Merritton Lionettes.

The first dinner meeting took place on April 11, 1949 at a cost of \$1.75 per member. The membership fee was established at \$1.00 per year.

The Lionettes main objectives were to support their Lions Club in their projects and to provide fellowship for Lions wives. Throughout the years the Lionettes helped out at a Well Baby Clinic at the Town Hall, donated equipment for the children's splash pool, helped at the annual Labour Day Weekend, held numerous card parties, fashion shows, swim parties, skating parties, raffles, and cooking schools. They have donated food and other items to the Social Service Welfare Dept. and worked at the Blood Donor Clinic.

In 1978 the Lionettes voted to join the International Lioness program. The Merritton Lioness have continued to support the Lions projects and have continued the fundraising projects already established. The Lioness have held successful raffles at the Labour Day Weekend as well as the annual Lions Turkey Roll. For many years the Lioness hosted numerous other non-profit organizations at their annual flea market, there, helping other groups in their own fund raising. The Lioness have also donated toward the purchase of guide dogs and special needs dogs. Other donations have gone to special needs children's camps, children's breakfast programs, Community Care, hospice, Lions Eye Care Niagara and Out of the Cold Program. Also since the 1950's, the Lioness have given bursaries to local high school students going on to post-secondary school studies.

The Lions Club of Merritton extends our congratulations and best wishes to our Lioness Club on the celebration of their 65th Anniversary. We also extend our thanks and appreciation for their tremendous support to the Club and our Community.

Pinehurst



Pinehurst School was established originally in Paris, Ontario and moved to our community in 2001 with the purchase of the closed Merritton High School. It was a school designed for special needs children and troubled teens in grades 7 to 12. Class sizes were small and students boarded in the facility. Students flourished at the school, learning techniques to cope with anxiety and anger and becoming more engaged in their education. Unfortunately the school closed its doors in November 2013, stopping their residential and recreational programs. Two other private schools which lease part of the building are still in operation. The building is listed for sale for \$2.5 million.

There remain a number of private school options in St. Catharines for students besides Pinehurst including Beyond Montessori (JK-3), Ridley College (JK-12), Beacon Christian (JK-8), Wheatley (JK-8), and Seraphim Academy (Catholic, K-12). Only a few of these schools cater to students from across United States and Canada and offer boarding facilities. Distinguishing themselves from other private schools, Pinehurst's niche market was students from across North America who had limited success at other schools. Their principal, Dave Bird, is a well-respected educator who serves in a volunteer capacity on the board of various professional organizations. Unfortunately, Pinehurst's enrollment went from approximately 40 students a few years ago to only 13 in September, prompting the program's end.

In 2013, Merritton Matters noted Pinehurst's 10 years of

contributions to our community. Those who had the opportunity to interact with the staff and students at the school were

always impressed with their enthusiastic willingness to contribute. One of the most positive features of Pinehurst was its community outreach program. Merritton benefitted greatly from the staff and student contributions. The staff accompanied the students on all volunteer activities and participated far beyond the doors of the school itself. Dave Bird received a City of St. Catharines Volunteer Recognition in 2011 for his rich contributions to the community. Dave was there to present to city council when the Merritton community wanted its own sign. Pinehurst contributed to the cost of the Merritton Neighbourhood Sign, located at the entrance of Mountain Locks Parks. The school, along with the Merritton Community Group, hosted an all-candidates meeting prior to a municipal election. The students were an essential part for many years in the Adopt-A-Street Program on Hartzel Rd. and Merritt Street, assisting Jean Westlake every year until finally taking over the clean-up themselves. Jean often commented that she could not have run the program without Pinehurst's students. In 2010, the school welcomed Tiger Alumni through their doors as part of the Merritton High School Reunion. Students served as ambassadors at the Merritton Community Group's Open Houses each year. Merritton residents and former Merritton High staff were employed at the school.

Pinehurst School became a part of our community and their presence will be missed.

SEARCH FOR WW2 HERO LEADS FROM AUSTRALIA TO MERRITTON CAN YOU HELP?

Alan Price of Brisbane, Australia wrote recently to let us know about his search to find Don Thomas, the only survivor of a top secret bombing mission over Berlin on December 29th, 1943. Here's his fascinating account of the mission and their search.

Descendants of two Lancaster Bomber Crewmen lost in December 1943 recently reestablished contact in Australia and have joined forces to recreate the history of the crew. The sole survivor of the crew was P/O Don Thomas RCAF, from Merritton. The families of George Harvey RAAF, the crew's Captain, and Dick Stuart RAF, the rear gunner, would be grateful for any information about Don Thomas and his life and family.

On the 29th of December 1943 at 1622hrs, Lancaster "R for Roger" took off from RAF Skellingthorpe near Lincoln in Eastern England. With over twenty successful operations behind them, "R for Roger's" experienced crew had been specially selected to undertake a secret operation whose purpose still remains unknown. Commanded by their Australian Captain, F/Lt George Harvey, the crew included P/O Don Thomas, the Canadian mid-upper gunner, with five other crewmen from various parts of the UK. They flew alone, ahead of the main bomber force, into the heavily defended skies over the Third Reich.

The following day, the crew members' families received the telegrams they had been dreading. "R for Roger" had failed to return and their sons were listed as missing. Six of the crew were later confirmed to be killed in action. The sole survivor was Canadian Don Thomas, who spent the rest of the war as a POW in Stalag Luft 3. (Coincidentally this is the camp from where the single greatest freedom attempt by POWs was made in 1944; an event made famous by the film "The Great Escape".)

In September 1945, families of the dead crewmen received letters from Don Thomas's mother, with the address given simply as "Merritton, Ontario". The letters, painstakingly hand-written by Mrs. Thomas, told the story of the aircraft's loss and her son's ordeal to survive against all the odds. They had been coned by searchlights South of Magdeburg and subjected to an intense flak barrage. A direct hit had set the aircraft on fire and thrown Don around in his turret. His oxygen mask had twisted round his neck and partially strangled him, while the flames burnt his face severely and badly damaged his parachute. He was on the point of collapse when his fellow air gunner, Sgt Dick Stuart from Cheshire in England, pointed him to the escape hatch. He bailed out to find that his parachute was partly burnt away and one of the damaged harness straps snapped.

By a miracle he landed in a ploughed field which partly cushioned his high speed fall. Even so, he was temporarily paralyzed from the waist down by the impact of landing. He dragged himself away and was found by some locals. The civilians kicked him and wanted to kill him there and then, but a soldier insisted that he was a prisoner of war and must be kept alive. For the next few weeks he was rigorously interrogated by his captors, who wanted to know why the aircraft had been flying alone. Despite this treatment and his injuries, he managed to stay alive and was sent to a POW camp until his liberation at the end of the war.

Following the war, there was some correspondence between the bereaved families of the crew members. However, as time went by, the parents' generation passed away and the story of "R for Roger" faded from memory. In recent years, a later generation of the rear gunner's family came across some old photos and letters from Sgt Dick Stuart. One photo had inscribed on the back "Dick and Don Thomas". With the internet age providing instant access to data from around the world, they started tracking down the history of the crew. A chance trail of information led them back into contact with the family of George Harvey, the Australian Captain, who also held treasured records of the crew. The two families joined forces and decided to try and contact other descendants of the crew, united by their common strand of history.

As the only survivor, Don Thomas is a key part of this history, yet nothing is known about his subsequent life. An undated photograph showing Don and his bride on their wedding day was sent to the Australian family.

Recently, after rereading Mrs. Thomas' letter from 1945, it was noticed that she had mentioned Donald's date of birth. Using the power of the internet, it was possible to search for Donald using his date and place of birth. This revealed that Don had died in 1993. The family is listed on a headstone at Victoria Lawn cemetery, St Catharines. From this information it is assumed that the Thomas family remained in the Merritton area. **If you have any further knowledge of Donald Frank Thomas or his family, the best way to make contact is via email. Please contact ww2projectlancaster@gmail.com.**

The Australian families gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Glenn Connell of the Merritton Lions Club in their search.



ABOVE: Don Thomas and Bride



FACTS from RAF/RCAF records

Name: P/O Donald Thomas

Date of birth: 27th Jan 1923

Home: Merritton, Ontario

Service No: J/19117

RAF Squadron: 61 of Bomber Command

LAST FLIGHT DETAILS

Date: 29th Dec 1943 from RAF Skellingthorpe, Lincs, UK

Aircraft: Lancaster, serial no DV-399

Target: Berlin

Crash site: 16 miles from Halle, near Berlin

Burial place for the 6 crewmen:

Commonwealth War Cemetery, Berlin

The McLean-Malpas Mission of Merritton

by David C. Craig

(Conclusion of article which appeared in last edition of Merritton Matters)

Attendance at the Mission peaked during the 1930s and 1940s. In 1937, the Sunday school enrollment was 140, with an average weekly attendance of 104. Sunday school was at 10:30, with a Sunday evening service. The mothers met as part of the WMS every Thursday afternoon at 2:30. After the war, as many more women worked and families became more mobile, attendance gradually fell off.

The biggest social outing on the Mission calendar was the annual church picnic to Queenston Heights, where young children swam in the wading pool, and older ones played baseball or climbed the circular staircase to the top of Brock's monument. Races were held by age group. In the July 1928 Standard report, these included a wheelbarrow race, a three-legged race, a balloon race, a potato race (?), and an egg-and-spoon race. They even had a "fat women's race", in which two of my relatives placed first and second! The Standard reported the winners and runners-up, and there are many familiar Merritton surnames among them: Bell, Rogerson, Henderson, Hough, Craig, Cowan, McGlynn, Galsworthy, Merrithew, Schooley, Wilkinson, Turner, Grimshaw, Rider, Primo, Martin, Loughlin, and Tiffany.

In 1947, 20 years later, the Standard again reported on the McLean-Malpas Mission picnic at Queenston Heights, where 100 attended. Again the race winners were announced and again familiar Merritton surnames appear: Hough, Grimshaw, Ryder, Bradley, Friend, Craig, York, Delaney, Bowes, Kitchingman, Adams, Lawson, Wilson, Campbell, Clendenning, Jackson, Makinson, Fluellon, and Krayewski.

The most memorable things that I remember from my years there are two-fold. Firstly, the songs we sang were old Methodist hymns, made for children, with a simple tune and lyrics, which all kids could sing and comprehend. I can still sing or hum many of them today: "Jesus bids us shine", or "God sees the little sparrow fall", or "Praise Him, praise Him, all ye little children, He is love", or "Jesus loves me, This I know", and so on. And with Bill Orser, in full windmill mode, leading the singing, we were all inspired to belt out the songs too.

The second most valuable lesson I absorbed from my years at the Mission was the mentoring and examples set for all of the children by those in authority which, in my time there, were mainly Mr. Orser and Mrs. Makinson. Mr. Orser taught the senior boys' class. His real job was as a milkman for Shelvock Dairy, going door to door with his horse drawn wagon. On Sundays, he became an outstanding Christian—helpful, patient, and selfless, and totally devoted to bringing a strong moral message to his young flock, both by teaching and by example. Mrs. Makinson was a housewife, mother, and grandmother who, to me, was next to a saint for all she gave to the Mission and to the children in her charge. I'm sure I'm not alone in saying that a large part of who I am was forged at the Mission in my formative years.

In closing my reverie about the McLean-Malpas Mission of Merritton, I have this vision of a sunny Sunday morning in "heaven"--- think of it as a real place or as a metaphor or as a 5th dimension, whatever you choose. Anyway, the Mission is there, and I'm inside the auditorium, a fly on the wall. It is packed to overflowing with people of all ages, from all those families I mentioned, spanning the years 1892 to 1997. I recognize a lot of faces from the past. There's Miss Irwin, Mr. Orser, Mrs. Orser, Mrs. Makinson, Mrs. Bradley, Mrs. Delaney. Everyone is happy and all are singing "Jesus bids us shine". But ...who are those four smiling adults in the back, the two men with long sideburns and the women with long dresses, buttoned to the neck? OMG—it's John and Eliza McLean, and Isabell Malpas and her husband! They look so proud!

“...So let us shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.”

*With thanks to Michael Johnson, my Merritton HS classmate, for his vital assistance in researching the history of the McLean-Malpas Mission.
Thanks, Mike!*





Jeff Burch
Executive Director

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Lions and Lioness Anniversary

In 1939, 24 active citizens in our town formed the Lions Club of Merrittton. Their first project was the construction of a community swimming pool. Later they would go on to spearhead the completion of the Lions Community Centre and Merrittton Centennial Arena. Local initiatives benefit from the work of the Merrittton Lions as do Lions International programs such as Lake Joseph Camp for the Blind and Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides.

About a decade after the Lions Club, 17 members' wives voted to form the Merrittton Lionettes with the objective of supporting the Lions while providing fellowship for women.

On March 8th, 2014 the community and special guests paid tribute to the Lions Club of Merrittton which proudly celebrated 75th years of serving its community and to the Merrittton Lioness for 65 years of commendable service to the community.



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Mini Implants: One of the most rewarding and exciting new procedures in the dental field today is the system for making loose dentures tight again.



Mini implants are providing the hopeless denture patient as well as the non-hopeless denture patient with stability and the ability to enjoy food and life without annoying slipping dentures. In as little as 1 hour, 4 dental implants can be placed and your transitional denture can be fitted over the implants. You leave the office with a stable denture which can be used IMMEDIATELY!

In addition, the placement of these implants results in little or no post-operative discomfort. Many patients who were not candidates for conventional implants because they didn't have enough bone or because of finances, are mini implant candidates.

"Call us now for a FREE no obligation appointment. See how you can enjoy eating the foods you love without worry. . ."

 Niagara
Mini Dental
Implant
Centre



"Loose dentures? We have a solution!"

DR. THOMAS PEKAR, BSC, DDS, FIACA

info@mini-dental-implants.ca

185 MERRITT STREET ST. CATHARINES ON 905-227-5995

Patient friendly  healthcare financing



A timeless smile says it all!

"Dr. Pekar fixed my loose denture problem in only a day, and I'm very pleased with the results!" *Jean F, Thorold, ON*

Niagara Mini Dental Implant Centre can deliver teeth in a DAY, and our in-house financing partner makes it easy for you to get the smile and self-confidence you've always wanted. Mini Implants mean less surgery, with less time to heal and less discomfort... Less time to get the beautiful smile you've always wanted.

AFRAID? Don't be!
We can provide sedation – mild, moderate or "knock me right out!"