

MERRITTON MATTERS

SPRING 2018 • Volume 14, Issue 1 • www.merrittonmatters.ca

PHOTO BY T. LEE KINDY



Merritton Matters is available at local businesses and the public library.
If you would like to have home delivery, please call Sheila at 905-227-8988.

MERRITTON MATTERS VOLUNTEERS

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. Formerly run as an independent group named the Merritton Community Group, we are now part of the Merritton Lions Club.

Editor/Writer:
Lorraine Giroux

Photographer:
Susan Fluellon
Steven Hartwell
T. Lee Kindy

Article Contributors:
Tom Barwell
Steve Liddiard
Rob Mellor

Graphic Designer:
Lana Pesant

**Advertising
Representatives:**
Morag Enright
Tony Morra

**Behind the Scene
Coordinators:**
Sheila Morra
Phyllis Thomson

We are very appreciative of writers who add to our community content. A special thank you must go to Tom Barwell for his wonderful contributions over the past years and for providing us with the centre page article in this issue. Articles in this issue without a byline are by the editor.

If you have suggestions for articles please email these to merrittonmatters1@gmail.com or mail them to 3 Capri Circle, St. Catharines L2T 3X4.

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Team 2852 DM High Voltage

Denis Morris reports that after their six week build season, they have two completed robots. One robot is for practice and the other is a competition robot. The team of students and mentors dissected this year's anticipated game and came up with a robot design that will be able to play all aspects of the game. The robot is well rounded in that it can shoot the cubes in the high and low goals and has the ability to climb!



Their first district competition was the Georgian College Event in early March where the team made it to the quarter finals even with a few issues that caused some headaches through qualifying. They came home with the Imagery Award. The second competition was at Waterloo University from March 22 to 24. They have qualified for the Ontario District Championships starting April 12 at the Hershey Centre in Mississauga.

2018 TRIVIA

Everyone had a great time at the Fourth Annual Trivia Night held at the Merrittton Community Centre on February 24, 2018. All proceeds are to be directed to **Community Improvement Projects**.

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- Football Jersey - E. McIsaac
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Changes to Our Old Hiking Trail

Hiking the old Niagara, St. Catharines and Toronto track from Ball across Merritt to Thorold from Bessey Street, Steven Hartwell noticed a huge change from a previous trip. He had a picture of the trail from before and then snapped another and we've included these to show the work that was in progress. The railroad ties had been ripped out from Bessey all the way up to Greenhill-Townline E in Thorold.

On the Merritton Memories Facebook page, there was lots of speculation and then a shout out to our ward councilors to solve the mystery. Steve contacted the planning department who let him know that the CNR owns the 20-metre-wide strip from Bessey to St. Peter and all the much wider area beyond to Townline East which is the area marked by the black line on the map. They have cleared out all the old tracks, with assistance from Trillium Railway, in preparation to sell it all. The narrow strip is currently zoned Greenspace, but, whoever buys it can apply for rezoning. The wider area between St. Peter Street and Townline had already been rezoned for medium density housing.



Photos by Steven Hartwell

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JOHN DUNDAS

Inside the cover of this book (below), a man from Merritton signed his name and dated it October 13th, 1885. Does anyone have any information on John Dundas?






FOOD4KIDS

There are 1,500 children in Niagara struggling through each weekend without food. Food4Kids is a new program recently introduced in three St. Catharines and three Fort Erie schools to provide for children with limited food for weekends and during the summer. Those enrolled in the program receive a bag of healthy food every Friday with each child in the home receiving their own food package. In the summer, bins of food are delivered directly to the homes of children in need. Typically funded by individuals, corporation or one-time grants, there are many ways to help including monetary donations, food drives, joining the committee, becoming part of their Monthly Giving Club and/or scheduling a packing day with a team of friends or co-workers. The Merritton Lions donated \$400 for Food4Kids which will sponsor one child for a year.

The pilot program began in January 2018 with one school in our area, Connaught Public School, participating. We asked Principal Kelly Diiorio how it was going and she let us know that it has been a success so far. "It just fills in that gap of the weekend when kids don't necessarily have access to healthy food at home due to very tight budgets. The program folks are excellent to deal with, and they really put the kids first. We have about 30 kids and their families who are participating currently. They even provide food for babies in the home. We are so very lucky that they chose Connaught!"

CLASS OF '99

Shannon Facette and Becky McMahon are planning a celebration for the 20th anniversary of their graduation from Merritton High, a date that was also marked by the closure of the school. The celebration will take place on June 21, 2019. Check out their Facebook page at 'Class of 99 Reunion' for upcoming details.



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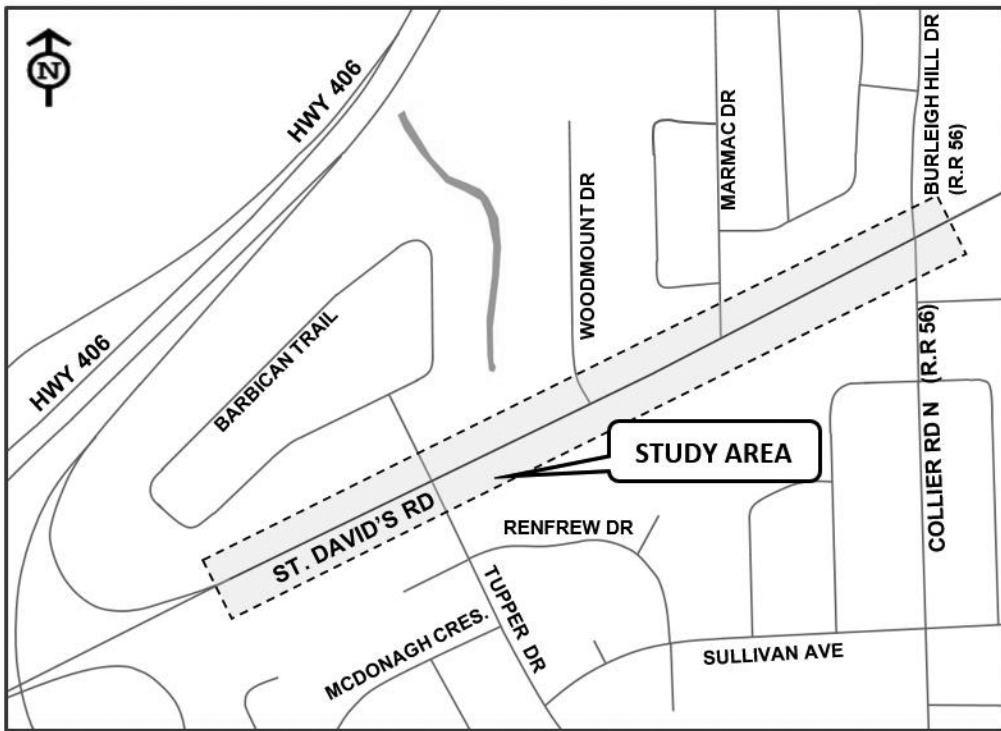


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Assessment of St. David's Road, Collier Road and Burleigh Hill Drive

We noticed that the Niagara Region has initiated an Environmental Assessment study for St. David's Road (Regional Road 71) between the Highway 406 ramp, near Barbican Heights, and Collier Road/Burleigh Hill Drive. The first Public Information Centre (PIC) for the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment of the area was held on March 22 and the second was held on April 5. The study is examining the existing road conditions and intersection safety as well as to implement 'active transportation facilities'. What are 'active transportation facilities'? Municipalities are looking at ways to incorporate active transportation, particularly cycling and walking, to reduce automobile dependency and encourage healthier communities.

We asked Cam Milne, Project Manager, Transportation Engineering at Niagara Region to provide us with more information on what will happen next with the assessment. He let us know that April's PIC will lead to recommendations being submitted to the Region in the next few months. Then a consulting firm will be hired to make a detailed design for construction that is anticipated in 2019, if approved by Council as part of the 2019 Roads Capital Budget later this year. Another PIC will be held, likely in late 2018 or early 2019, to present the construction details to residents.

Photo By Susan Fluellon



The front cover photo was taken by T. Lee Kindy of a drained canal looking south towards Glendale Bridge. This photo was taken of a drained Welland Canal Lock 3 with a view looking north. All vessels had to be clear of the canal at 7:00 p.m. on December 31, 2017 so that repairs and reconstruction could take place and then it reopened on March 29, its 189th opening. The first up-bound ship of the 2018 season was the Algoma Niagara and the captain was given a top hat at the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre as part of the traditional Top Hat Ceremony. The first down-bound ship, heading toward Montreal, was the Algoma Captain Henry Jackman although it was supposed to be Algoma Enterprise which was held up in Ohio as it waited for a shipment.

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Misspelling

The St. Catharines Heritage website (as accessed on March 30) misspelled Merritton when it stated, “This project includes street names from: St. Catharines, Grantham, Merriton (!) and Port Dalhousie.”

Misspelled as Meritton? Here’s what may come up.

 <p>MERITTON BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL</p>	<p>486 CAP. 69. INCORPORATION OF VILLAGE OF MERITTON. 37 Vic.</p> <p>CAP. LXIX.</p> <p>An Act to incorporate the Village of Meritton.</p> <p>[Assented to 24th March, 1874.]</p> <p>Preamble. WHEREAS the inhabitants of the unincorporated Village of Meritton, in the Township of Grantham, in the County of Lincoln, have, by their petition, represented that by reason of its close proximity to the works being carried on upon the Welland Canal, and from the continual rapid increase in the population of the said Village, it is desirable that the said Village be incorporated; and it is expedient to grant the prayer of the said petition:</p> <p>Therefore Her Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:</p> <p>I. On and after the passing of this Act, the inhabitants of the said Village of Meritton, comprised within the boundaries hereafter mentioned, shall be, and they are hereby constituted a corporation or body politic, under the name of “The Corporation of the Village of Meritton,” apart from the Township of Grantham, in which the said Village is situated, and shall enjoy all</p>	 <p>meritton</p>
<p>This school coat of arms is for the MERITTON British International School in Thailand.</p>	<p>Statutes of the Province of Ontario, Page 486</p>	<p>The MERITTON trademark graphic above is the branding for wool-cotton mixed fabrics.</p>

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CAPTAIN GLENN SAVIGNY RCN

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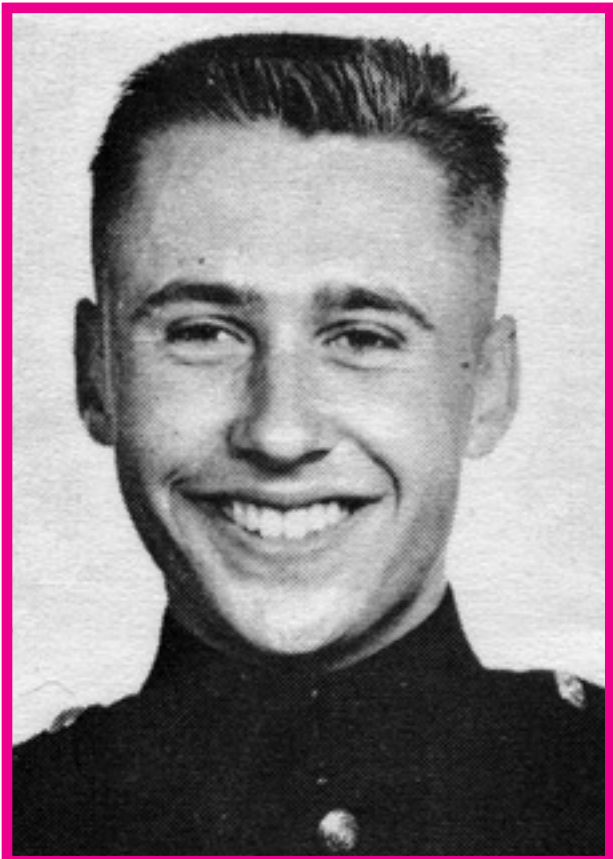
By Tom Barwell

Last year Tom Barwell was standing in front of the Cenotaph reading the names when it occurred to him that one man's name was missing – Glenn Savigny. While Glenn didn't die in battle, he still served his country in a remarkable way as an accomplished Canadian naval pilot. Tom felt the people of our community should know Glenn Savigny's story and wrote this wonderful tribute for Merriton Matters.

Glenn was born in Merriton on July 7, 1943. His father Hugh was a World War 2 veteran, president of the St. Catharines Flying Club and once president of the Merriton Lions. I remember Hugh driving around in a large Snap-on-Tools truck, delivering his product to the many industries Merriton had in those days. He was a very industrious and well-liked man. Ray, Hugh's brother and Glenn's uncle, was also a very ambitious person. He was the original owner and developer of the Vineland Quarries. However, the main item on his bucket list was to open his own golf course, so he simply purchased a dairy farm and it remains today as Beechwood Golf Course. Recently, it celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Glenn made his way through the public school system in Merriton and entered good old MHS, where I first met him. There were four of us who chummed around – Glenn, David Craig, Ray Martin and myself. Jill, Glenn's sister, now lives just outside Kingston, Ont.

Glenn had a great sense of humour and 'was ready for anything' (within reason). Under that demeanor, however, was a very clever individual. He was an excellent chess player, a very good debater, and played the trumpet in the Air Force Cadet Band in Thorold. He remarked to me one day that his aim was to fly a plane from the deck of the HMCS Bonaventure, Canada's aircraft carrier. I didn't laugh or joke about his statement but, instead thought if anyone could do it, it would be Glenn. He was one of the most positive people I have ever met. Glenn breezed through MHS, while I ran into a stiff breeze!



OFFICER CADETS BRIEFED AT BASE BORDEN

Captain Glen Savigny, an instructor at the Canadian Forces Officer Cadet School,

briefs officer cadets prior to the start of a field exercise in

Borden. Over 500 cadets are taking training at the school

during the summer months. (National Defence Photo)

After his final year at MHS, Glenn attended Thorold High. Shortly after graduation, he entered the Royal Military College in Kingston. RMC is a very difficult institution to gain enrolment. Its standards are extremely high and, as a result, only the best gain entry and graduate. His first choice, "Honours Sciences" was eventually changed to "Mechanical Engineering". His pick of the Forces was, of course, Naval Air and he graduated in 1965 as one of the highest members of his class. He was one step closer to the "Bonnie".

Glenn was assigned to Centralia, Ont. for pilot training where he first trained on a small Chipmunk aircraft. Next up was Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, flying Beechcraft type planes. From there he traveled back to Shearwater, Nova Scotia and learned the art of flying Canadian built, two engine tracker aircraft used in submarine patrol. Glenn then joined the VS880 anti-submarine squadron for further training and deployment as a co-pilot. He advanced to the rank of Captain.

The Bonaventure was purchased from Britain in the early 50's. In 1959 it was caught in a vicious storm off the coast as it was heading to Halifax. The ocean treated it like a toy. Armoured thick windows were blown out, and guns torn from their mounts. Planes tied down on the decks were practically destroyed. Some crewmen and pilots were thrown multiple times from their bunks. The storm seemed to follow them with 60 foot plus waves tossing the ship like cork. It must have been very frightening.

As carriers go, it was very small with a mixture of aircraft flying from its deck – Sea King helicopters, Banshee jets and the two engine Tracker aircraft leading the way. The Bonnie, as it was nicknamed, was decommissioned in July 1970 and sold for scrap to Taiwan.



It was not easy to land and take off from an aircraft carrier, especially one the size of the Bonaventure. Confidence, hard work and just plain old guts come into play. Just imagine trying to take off from a heaving, twisting platform with wind that is constantly changing directions. There were U.S. pilots who balked at the effort. I'm not sure of the date that Glenn accomplished his dream of landing and takeoff, but he did it!

Glenn married Nancy Laurie of Scotsburn, N.S. in 1974 with former Merritton resident Ray Martin as his best man. He was to return the honour when Ray married, but unfortunately he was on maneuvers off the coast of Portugal at the time.

In 1972 he received a commendation for his part in the rescue of the ocean freighter "Rumba" off the east coast of Canada. It was outbound from Montreal on its way to Africa with a load of eight locomotives, each weighing 140 tons. They had come loose in the hold and were thundering back and forth, pounding the ship to bits. The entire crew of 18 were rescued with the help of the Canadian Coast Guard in conjunction with the Trackers. Shortly after, he was awarded "The Canadian Forces Decoration" for his efforts.

Glenn took a short posting to Chilliwack, B.C. This was a base for officer training (CFOCS) and for

a while he was an instructor. But tragedy struck. He was diagnosed with cancer. Sadly, this pretty well ended his flying career. The government transferred him to Downsview and CFB Toronto as a staff officer. This allowed him to be close to his family. He was then referred by the National Defense Centre in Ottawa to Roswell Park Hospital in Buffalo where they specialized in cancer treatment. From there he went to M.D. Anderson Cancer Hospital in Houston, Texas. All to no avail. He fought hard as only he could do but, sadly, passed away on July 8, 1979 with his family by his side.

Glenn was one of a kind. Through hard work and perseverance, he accomplished what he had set out to do. Fly from the "Bonnie". He had so much more life ahead of him. I often think of him and felt that his story must be told. I received a lot of research help from Ray Martin and a former pilot who flew with Glenn, by the name of Jack Flannagan who lives in Belleville. There is much more that could be written of Glenn but hopefully this will help preserve his memory.

In closing, Glenn lived his life to the fullest and probably accomplished more in his short life than some people do in a lifetime. He was always positive, always happy, always whistling and loved adventures. I miss him and his family misses him and, as he said, "I don't need a headstone, I will endure in your memories". That he has.

With special thanks to: Jill Savigny Ferguson, Trisa McConkey (Jill's daughter), Jack Flannagan (Veteran Navy Pilot), Nancy O'Reilly, Ray Martin (Glenn's best friend) and Michael Johnson (Merritton Historian).




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WEEKEND WARRIORS

by Steve Liddiard

Congratulations to the Merritton Weekend Warriors Junior Masters Lacrosse Team for success in their first season! They became 2017 Ontario Champions defeating the defending champions from Kincardine and the powerful Bramalea team in sudden death overtime to clinch their first provincial title. The Ontario Masters Lacrosse Association is intended for players over the age of 21 to compete in a non-contact game that promotes physical fitness, sportsmanship and fair play. We wish them continued success as they begin their title defense.

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Above: New administration building designed by Raimondo & Associates Architects



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A new administration building will be constructed at the north-west corner of the Victoria Lawn Cemetery, across from Spring Street. The former fire hall will be demolished and then a new 4,300-square-foot building will be erected by the fall of 2018 by Aldor Builders. The building currently being used by the cemetery staff was the original one built in 1856. The cemetery, with its 130 acres of grave sites, will be open during construction.

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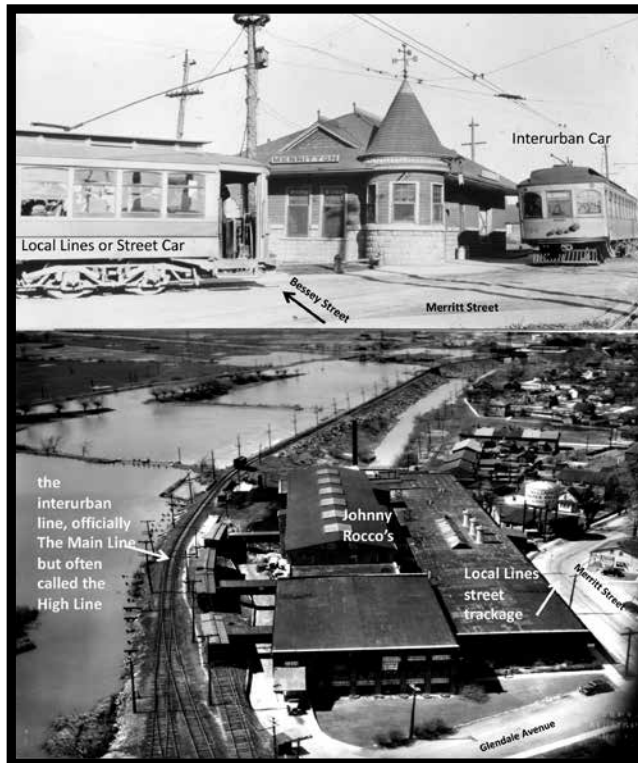


The Interurban Railroad

At a recent Canadian Railroad Historical Association talk, Dr. Andrew Panko spoke about the various trains that ran in the area. On display at the talk was CRHA Niagara Division's 2015 brochure, the year this organization sponsored the plaque at the corner of Merritt St. and Bessey St commemorating the Niagara, St. Catharines and Toronto railway. The electric freight and passenger railway linked the separated communities together and started service in 1889.

The photos shown here are from that brochure. The top photo shows a ground view of Merritt Station at Bessey and Merritt and an interurban car. This photo was taken sometime before May 31, 1931. The NS&T was Canada's last interurban.

The other is an aerial photo of Glendale and Merritt, looking north, that shows what the area looked like when the NS&T used to go through.



ST. CATHARINES STREET NAMES PROJECT


Have you checked out the St. Catharines Street Name Project Book? It's fascinating! Spearheaded by Maurice Gomme, it contains the history of the naming of our city's streets, including the changes brought about by amalgamation.

Go to <https://stcatharinesheritage.org/2018/03/13/st-catharines-street-names-project> and then you can download the St. Catharines Street Name Project Book (14MB).

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ACROSS FROM THE FLEA MARKET



Welcome Barburrito

Looking for some excellent Mexican food like tacos, burritos and quesadillas? Well look no further than the newest business addition to Merrittton. Sean Morra has opened a new restaurant in the Mountain Locks Plaza, by Sobeyes on Glendale Avenue. We asked him some questions while we were munching away on the delicious nacho chips.

What's the most popular food in the restaurant? There are lots of great options with many people coming in to order the chicken burrito. Burritos in general are really popular.

What appealed to you about Barburrito? The food is made fresh. Everything is cooked and prepared in the store and not pre-processed. All the rice and beans are cooked fresh along with all the vegetables which are purchased raw and prepared in store. Even the salsa and guacamole are made fresh daily with no added items or preservatives. This food is a more healthy option.

Why did you choose this spot? I live here so I wanted to support the community. This plaza is located in a high traffic area that is close to Brock University.

We've heard about your school lunches. Tell us about what's involved in the school catering. The taco lunches are made fresh and customized for each child. The food is made just before lunch with the chips cooked just before the lunch is sent out. We're proud of the fact that this is not pre-prepared food so we know the students are eating a healthier lunch.

Any other interesting info to share? The menu is being changed with many new options in the month of April. There will be new burrito options of Nacho and California and new options of butter chicken, jerk chicken, Buffalo chicken and mole chicken.

We can't wait!

Municipal Election is Monday, Oct. 22, 2018

Do you have strong opinions on how our city should be run? Do you think public service is for you? Maybe you should become a candidate in the upcoming municipal elections! Nominations are accepted for the office of Mayor, City Council, Regional Council, Regional Chair, or School Board Trustee from Tuesday, May 1, 2018 to Friday, July 27, 2018. If you are sure you'd be a great choice for mayor or councilor, round up at least 25 endorsements from eligible electors and file your nomination papers.

Or, if you just want to make sure you're eligible to vote in the 2018 Municipal Election, go to www.voterlookup.ca to make sure you're registered.



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THE MERRITTON SPIRIT

COMMUNITY INTEREST, INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT

By Rob Mellor

Growing up in the Town of Merritton was unique, yet similar, to that experienced in other small and up and coming communities. There is an old saying that “It takes a community to raise a child”. I couldn’t agree more.

What was happening in Merritton and other similar communities that was successful and more effective than in larger communities? Your memories will help you identify the answers. They are all related to community spirit. The willingness to share and give your time and skills to the community! Not just a monetary donation. It’s all about meaningful relationships.

My father was a self-employed carpenter contractor. He took me to work and introduced me to the people he worked with and did business with. Many of these people were neighbours and friends. Most of these people supported each other, watched out for all children and volunteered their own time to improve their community. Many of these neighbours were members of service clubs and volunteer organizations in the community. All of these people, from large company owners to the labourers, lived in the community and worked together by helping and supporting each other. Most of them went to church together on Sundays.

Local business owners often allowed tabs (credit) for families to help them out during tough times and the patrons were loyal to them. Most of the kids knew the owners and had a good relationship with them. Many of the children ended up with jobs working in those establishments. The cycle continued.

The churches, service clubs, volunteers, businesses, companies, auxiliaries and families were fundraisers, parents, neighbours and much more! My father ran one of a number of Cub and Scout Troups in Merritton. All volunteer leaders dedicating their time for the kids each week. We had about 8 adult leaders with vast outdoor and life-skills to offer. I can personally remember over 30 names of kids involved and I’m sure you could double the number that I have forgotten. Winter camping outdoors was one of the best experiences but there was so much more. We had sponsorship from local business, accommodations from the church and many volunteers as well.

Take a moment to imagine how many volunteer organizations were providing opportunities for hundreds of kids in Merritton. M.A.A., Lions Club, Masons, Legions, schools, Optimists, Kiwanis, business owners, labour unions and the list goes on. Now recognize the fact that most of these neighbours got to know the families and kids while volunteering their own personal time. This is how a “Community Raises A Child”.

Christmas was the highlight of the year. Every one of these groups held special events and most companies held Christmas parties for the children and employees. The groups made sure they knew which families and children were in need. They found ways to deliver help without damaging pride but upholding respect!

There is no question as to the reasons behind Merritton’s success. It was dedication and community spirit. Remember those selfless gestures and personal commitments made by everyone in the community. You grew up in a very special place!



An Alliance Paper Mill Christmas Party, late 1950's.

Picture courtesy of Donna Wright Broadley

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