

## A Forever Tradition

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I come from a family with deep roots in Vernon. I am the 5th generation in my family to be born, and grow up in Vernon. My living relatives and I all have warm and happy memories of the Vernon Winter Carnival. I remember when I was a little girl I thought that princess and queen Silverstar were real royalty, and when I heard that they were going to be at an event I would be so excited. One year my cousin was one of the finalists for queen Silverstar, and I was literally speechless when I saw her. I always loved going to the hot air balloon light up. There was something about watching those giant balloons light up in the night, especially when I was a little kid. My family and I would always go together, get hot chocolates from Tim Hortons, and walk across to Polson Park. We would each pick our favourite balloon and cheer when its fire would light up. One year I remember talking to one of the people who was working at one of the balloons, (my favourite one,) and they explained to my brother and me how it was just the hot air that was what lifted the basket up into the air. Then the next week at school I told all of my friends about it because I felt so smart.

By far my favourite part of the carnival was going to watch the parade. Even as I started to get older I never missed a parade. My brother stopped going but I always went with my Grandma. We made it our one little tradition to go together, and it was something I looked forward to all year. There was a time when my great-grandpa was in the Heritage Park Square nursing home on 27th street, and my family and I would help bring the residents out to watch the parade with us. It would make the residents day to get to go outside, and since a lot of them didn't have family of their own that would come visit I would get to visit with a lot of them and hear about their memories from past carnivals.

The Carnival Cops, I was terrified of them when I was younger. I would take special care to make sure my pin, and my families were clearly visible so we wouldn't get arrested. I thought it was actually a crime to be caught without a pin on. My parents used to use that to their advantage during the carnival, and if I was misbehaving, they would threaten to call the carnival cops. I never got the chance but growing up my best friend and I always wanted to be Jopo and Jopette. We always loved the idea of getting to make people smile and laugh, especially when they are such a well-loved part of the Vernon Winter Carnival.

The carnival is something that an entire family can enjoy together. My grandpa has all of the winter carnival pins, and so did my great-grandpa. There are events and traditions to be enjoyed by all ages. The Vernon Winter Carnival is something I will always remember and cherish deeply. Well, it is far in the future one day I look forward to sharing these traditions with the next generations of my family.