

Why you think Vernon Winter Carnival is important to our community?

The Vernon Winter Carnival is a long-standing tradition in our community. It is an important festival because it brings community members together to experience events that create memories that last a lifetime.

I have fond memories of Winter Carnival events. I remember years of lining the streets of downtown Vernon with hundreds of other people, anticipating the floats and fancy cars that would entertain willing spectators during the Winter Carnival Parade. My sister and I longed for the music and candy that was handed out by community members and volunteers.

I remember my parents laughing about monetary donations that they made to help break friends free from “jail” after the Carnival Cop had arrested them at their workplaces. As a young student, I excitedly anticipated the dances that were held at the rec center where us pre-teens could meet up from surrounding schools to celebrate our great city together.

I was always excited to hear about the new theme and poster contests that my friends and I participated in at school, anxious for the judges’ decisions, anxious to see if one of my friends would win! My class attended the Coca-Cola Classic Peewee hockey tournaments and we created posters to encourage and cheer on out-of-town guests. The hockey tournament brought out a spirit of sportsmanship and I remember my teacher talking about the quality players that had participated in the past.

My mom speaks of her time at Much Music video dances and viewing ice sculptures up at Silver Star Mountain and adult events such as Suds and Cider. She shared that her and my dad, when 18 years old, volunteered to be the mascots of the carnival. They dressed up as Jopo and Jopette and attended many events to help brighten the carnival spirit.

My grandmother speaks of Queen Silver Star training and competitions and how young girls became ambassadors of Vernon. (My grandma volunteered for years as a coordinator / chaperone for the Queen Silver Star Excellence Program). Her carnival highlights include the hot air balloon event that sees colorful balloons fill the sky and land on the ice of Swan Lake just outside of her backdoor.

These stories fill our house every February and reveal the importance of the events that collectively make up the Vernon Winter Carnival. The fact that my family, made up of three generations of “Vernonites”, can share our favorite memories and desire to attend new events, reveals that importance of the Carnival even today. The celebration brings people together and allows them to escape the long winter by offering fun and festivities that make the winter seem a little more bearable. Decorated store lobbies, carnival pins on lapels and the Carnival Cop wondering through the mall all bring joy and something festive to long February days. School children learn of the events by attending hockey games, jam cam curling events or simply using their artistic talents to design carnival posters. I know that our family will venture out to see the

ice sculptures and balloon glow once again. Each year, we run into families that we have not seen in months, and we share stories and catch up on holiday happenings.

The Vernon Winter Carnival is important because it brings the community together. All interests and all different ages are planned for. People can be participants, observers, or volunteers. Local businesses get to showcase what they have to offer, and the people of Vernon get an opportunity to get out and experience something new. There is truly something for everyone. The Vernon Winter Carnival is a 10-day festival that builds community spirit and gives families an opportunity to have shared experiences that build fond memories that last a lifetime.

A response from:

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