

Natalie Melanson
W.L. Seaton Secondary
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The Importance of Vernon Winter Carnival

When I was two years old, my grandparents brought me to see the hot air balloons at Polson Park for the Vernon Winter Carnival. I was bundled up in my pink snowsuit with a fluffy white collar so that all you could see were my rosy red cheeks and nose. My family loves to tell the story of how I gazed up at the balloons, wide-eyed and filled with wonder, and exclaimed, “Big balloons!”. The Carnival is immensely significant to Vernon’s community because it brings people together and showcases creativity.

I have no memory of that first Carnival experience, but I have since returned to see the “big balloons”, which are equally as majestic each year. It is through events such as these that you can feel a sense of community. Spectators warming their hands on hot chocolate, children chasing each other through the snow, or begging their parents for mini doughnuts; these moments bring us all together. People gather to feel the warmth of the balloon flame and to have it light up their faces, experiencing a reprieve from a cold winter night. This event fosters community spirit, as families and individuals gather in the cold to participate in a beautiful start to the Winter Carnival.

Furthermore, the Vernon Winter Carnival inspires creativity in people of all ages. There are countless opportunities to display individuality and creation, from floats to decorating contests. Businesses decorate windows for the Best Decorated Contest, adding to the winter magic. As a part of a small music group at the Vernon Community Music School, I got to participate in the Carnival parade for “Remember the 60s” in 2020. The younger kids rode on our Yellow Submarine float, while I ran around handing out candy to spectators, feeling very important in my flower crown. The parade is a wonderful way to represent different societies in Vernon and allow them to demonstrate their creativity and enthusiasm for the Carnival and their city.

The beautiful thing about the Vernon Winter Carnival is that it caters to a broad range of people. You don’t need to be a certain age or a part of any organization to participate, you can simply show up. There are activities that appeal to all age ranges, including an abundance of family-friendly events. Every year, I love visiting the snow sculptures at Silver Star with my

family. The diligence with which they are created is evident and they are always a delight to see. Many activities can be entered as a group, such as school poster contests or trivia nights. The Carnival provides an incentive for people to get out and engage in an enjoyable event that varies from their normal routine.

Ultimately, the Vernon Winter Carnival brings joy to everyone involved. Whether people attend one time or are dedicated annual participants, everyone feels as though they belong, because there is something that appeals to each person. The Carnival is a celebration of the season, but it is also a celebration of connections and talent in our community.