

Guest article:

Growing up in Baie-D'Urfé

By Martin Sills

Growing up in Baie-D'Urfé in the 1960's was truly a magical experience, a heavenly place for children, no worries, we were all safe and secure with the only rule being to head home when the street lights came on. Our police force consisted of Chief Tom Gray who was seemingly always on duty but for no other reason than to stop and chat with us kids.

We first lived at 9 Willowdale where my backyard was Allan's Hill, having moved from Windsor Ont. I was now living the country life!! The Hill was truly a source of joy, discovered the love of skiing not to mention a bent aluminum toboggan and a few loose teeth.... We then moved to Normandy, while missing The Hill I now had much easier access to the lake so anything that would float and hold me became my goal. After experimenting with rafts and rickety skiffs I graduated to my pride and joy, a green - and very heavy - 14' Verchere rowboat powered by a 5 hp Johnson, true freedom and the lake was mine. To spend the summers venturing on it as far as Ste. Anne's or over to Dowker's Island to explore the old house ruins was every young boy's dream!

The love of Lac St. Louis continued into my teens spending many a summers' day sailing with my longtime good friend Sue Yovic, who lived on Gay Cedars, in her new Tanzer 16. The lake was also great in the winter, on a few rare days when there was little to no snow and the wind had it polished like a mirror you could skate seemingly forever occasionally venturing as far as the ice fishing village close to the bridge, they knew when the season was coming to a close when the first vehicle would plunge through the ice!! Also many Lakeshore Road homes would clear the ice to make hockey rinks which would double for curling with "stones" made from cement filled paint tins.

In the latter part of the '60's our lives were changing rapidly and for the better. We all had season's passes to Expo 67 and would see how many of the 90 or so pavilions that we could get our passports stamped from. With our beloved Expos baseball team we're now off to Jarry Park as well- so many things to do and see! At the same time the Steinberg mall was built so no more bike rides to Ste. Anne's for chips and pop although biking around Baie-D'Urfé North was still great fun, miles of freshly paved roads with no traffic as it was only fields then with no development.

Editor's note: Susan Yovik Hoeller and Martin Sills grew up in Baie-D'Urfé in the 1960s. Susan lives in Tampa, Florida, and Martin lives in Williams Lake, B.C. They have great memories of Baie-D'Urfé and offered to share their stories in News & Views. Susan's article was published in the March issue and this month we feature Martin's article.

Sadly all good things must come to an end and time for university and the future. I worked for our Towns' Public Works crew for 2 summers with one fun perk was to get to ride in the back of the dump truck in the Baie-D'Urfé Days parade waving our shovels and rakes! But two bucks an hour wasn't paying the university bills so off to BC to get a summer job in the forest industry where the real money was to be had. Upon graduation BC was still beckoning and I was offered a position as a Land Use Specialist with the provincial government retiring after a wonderful 37 year career. While I have been in Williams Lake for 44 years Baie-D'Urfé is, and always will be, my forever home and I still proudly fly its flag on my front lawn.....



*"Boss's" by the locks in Ste. Anne's 1969.
Myself, sister Susan and nephew Chris.
You could have a wonderful "Steamie",
Patates Frites served in a greasy paper bag,
only use vinegar never ketchup,
and a large pop for 45 cents!!*