

Delivering posters papering town. Bobby Gimby
march in 100 kids 67
U of Cal bus navigator thru trees - rocking bus
lost coat post card
rimmer, 40th dad's biggest crowd ever -one of
biggest next to mendez likely
people in trees to road
who remembers benches nailed between trees?
lions beef picnics
blankets on hill
Walker's french fries
boat
canoes passing collection plate - I'd do that
kids swimming and jumping off rafts during show
- odd one mooning
cottagers came
german POWs built retaining wall and 2 sets of stairs
shuffle board at south end still there
race boats hydro planes
now its volleyball courts, new path ways
I spent 65 to late 70s
even gave up job at Oliver McLeod because it meant
working Sunday nights - tell Bent Ply owner Ken
Smith
hundreds of performers running up to dressing
change rooms to dress or on bus
Keith Bradley and son in aluminum boat setting up
speakers, running wire to bunker on hill
Bob Decker jokes lites
I'd balance raising flag for O'Canada - then as first
number started I'd flip the 6 banks of lights behind left
to right for a little dramatic effect
8:45 starts, earlier if bugs came out.
seldom got rain
Sunday afternoons were always a weather watch,
phoning the airport by the hour to see the air flow
movement of clouds.
this is what goes on behind the scenes and in the lit-
tle bunkers
left one held all the chairs for 100 and some strung
lights with 50-foot strings of cord with plug ins.
Wanda Millar - town's first and only female mayor
in poop deck with Col or band president.
She'd open show and halfway through announce col-
lection then thank the band before final number.
come early to put out your chair to reserve the best
spot with the benches.
lightning rods
rooster weather vain
Hugette White couldn't make it Stan White Jr. archi-
tect designed it.
shouldn't change it - like archway.
there are some things in Gravenhurst that are icons
like ships, archway and Barge, post office
great big bands concert, marching, marching onto
stage u of Cal band

added wings lined with drummers, colour guard fit
them all on stage.
2 steps behind
one dressing room right for hundreds to squeeze into
when it rained
walkway around back improvements wings
some plays
potted plants out each week, water them during week
bring down piano in spring
shorty kelly would paint it gray each spring
Norm Bonnis did a lot of work, as did H. Pierre and
John Middlebrooks.
Dad booked bands early 50s to 1980 when Fred took
over sound and eventually booking shows.
sponsor big shows
jazz, rock (Stacattos become 5 man electrical band
from Ottawa)
Orillia Silver and Barrie Collegiate Bands were sta-
ples, then came Muskoka District bands
I played here in high school and started out as Bay
Street Beatles lip-synching before it was popular in
early 1960s in Wanda Millar's Talent shows at Op.
a lot of fun
bring trumpet to play saints
give me a C mr Piano man
tried theatre with mikes
had tables set up in cabaret to bring 2 dozen down to
serve pop and chips to like club atmosphere.
Like the Op every musician in Muskoka wanted to
play the Barge or the Op - then you knew you "MADE
IT"
This is our summer Carnegie Hall
Stranger on street asks How do you get to the Barge
- practice
In the winter it's how do you get to the Op - (point
mike to crowd - PRACTICE'
You don't need a casino to enjoy big name acts.
Some huge Elvis shows.
Funny though I don't remember any radio broadcasts
I can still remember smell of french fries in cone
from Walker's and pinball machine first place I remem-
ber having pinball machines.
Wild Bill Davis passing out or falling off stage
people walk up to front of stage into hip high water
gulls flying over
sunsets - trains interrupting
Barge was place to be Sunday nights in Muskoka - as
many cars going north, as south east and west.
The tradition lives on.
Queen visit I was only 4 - and while my sister Cindy
presented 'wild flowers' as my proud parents watched,
my mom wanted to be here but she passed away a few
weeks ago.
The Queen came by CP train to Washago got in a car
to Gravenhurst then travelled to Torrance to get back
on.

The
detour. I
waved a
Union Jack
as she went
by my
home on
Bay Street
past the Segwun where Trudeau, Chretien and Martin
did too.

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The reason the Barge was built was because the
queen was coming. It was run by the Gravenhurst Civic
Music Association and the floating dock, which was
after the Town Band Shell in where the Rotary Gazebo
is now gave way to floating Barge

So it was decided that a new Barge should be built to
welcome the newly crowned queen on her first official
visit as queen to Canada.

It was finished being painted within hours.

A platform was build on the hill at the top of the
steps where the welcome was and my sister gave wild-
flowers.

The Barrie Collegiate Band welcomed her in their
scarlet red blazers and snappy white slacks.

It was a perfect day weather-wise.

My family's long association with Gull Lake Park
and the Barge comes full circle 50 years later as a
Rotarian I helped give away hotdogs.

It's been a long wonderful relationship growing up
here - being a Bay Street Terror from the other side of
town and the other side of the tracks down at the
Wharf.

We're blessed with two great parks now just nine
blocks apart.

Tell me your stories or write a letter to the editor
Lois Cooper at MuskokaTODAY.

And now it's thanks, Fred for your work, and on with
the second half of the show.

Kids playing in sand on the beach on late Sunday
night.

Cottagers would load their cars and stop at the park
before going home - and that was in the days when
Bethune Road was the Highway and it was hard to
drive by without stopping or at least rolling down your
window.

Many nearby neighbours would sit in their backyards
hearing the music loft by.

And what about these magnificent majestic pine trees
- the same one here in front by the steps as seen in
photos 60 years ago. It's a landmark that ought to be
designated a heritage sight.

Editor's Note: These memories came to light in the
queue so I published them for you to reminisce along. I
hope you enjoy.