

Carnival time - party on

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FROM
THE EDITOR'S
DESK



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Winter carnivals bring out the child in all of us. Muskoka has many grand winter festivals including Port Carling, Port Sydney and now the Gravenhurst Winter Carnival is set to rise again.

Gravenhurst's carnival will run while Muskoka plays host to the Ontario Youth Winter Games – March 4-6.

There's also a winter carnival on ice at the Bracebridge arena.

It will be tough to live up to the original carnivals of the '70s, but you can make it happen.

In the '70s we danced to the Ike Kelneck band in the auditorium above the town hall in Huntsville, cruised the temporary pubs, ran the bed races, tugged the war and had an all out grand time. Carnivals were mainly for adults.

In Bracebridge there was a ragtime bar in the Patterson (Queen's) Hotel, another pub in the auditorium over the town hall and in the old curling rink. These were ran by the Lions, Rotary, Kinsmen, etc. They raised a lot of money and we raised the roof.

Rombos was the pizza place in town. They delivered pizza to the many pubs.

There were chainsaw carving contests. I am sure Peter Cooper still has one of those trophies. Nail driving, fire lighting, swede sawing, two man cross cut sawing, on and on.

The teenagers were busy earning money babysitting pretty much for the whole weekend. The adults did not go south, no they had their vacation right here at home.

Bracebridge initiated the first bed races. We formed teams with themes. The last one I was involved was based on the comic Baby Hughie. Grown men and women dressed in diapers. Eddie Armstrong had the part of Baby Hughie, needless to say his baby bottle – a large glass pop bottle with a sheep's nipple, had more than milk in it. The other runners were Chris Armstrong, Donna Ruttan, Eric Ruttan, Susan Armstrong. I made the costumes. CFTO came to Bracebridge and filmed the race. That tape has a real story to tell.

The famed tug-of-wars saw real competition grow in the community. Alcan Wire and Cable had the greatest teams for years. Although we never won, we still got medals. Mine is still in my jewellery box. Lots of good memories.

The Gravenhurst Opera House was the site of the Kinsmen pub. All these venues had live entertainment. Stompin' Tom Connors played an afternoon concert at the Gravenhurst Movie Theatre. He was fantastic. See Maisie's memoirs in her column.

Winter Carnivals put Muskoka on the map with Torontonians in the '70s. Winter has never been the same.

Just this week, I heard Leeds Grenville, moaning over and over "If only we could be like Muskoka."

Get out there and make your own memories this year at the re-newed Gravenhurst Winter Carnival. No need to chase the hot weather. Great fun is here to stay.

Now where is my medal...yes I do have one!



Janice Collins of Bala, holds her winning tickets to tonight's opening ceremonies of the Ontario Youth Winter Games at Muskoka Wharf and a pizza party at Boston Pizza, sponsored by MuskokaTODAY.