

Local News

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Beauty contests in the Townships

By Taylor McClure
Special to The Record

We've all heard of a Miss Canada, Miss America, or Miss World, but what about Miss Eastern Townships?

Beauty contests, or pageants as they are more commonly known, have a history here in the Townships with several towns in the area holding contests of their own.

The winners from each of the towns, which included Sherbrooke, had the chance to battle it out in a regional contest to be crowned the Queen of the Eastern Townships. Using Record archives, we were able to piece together the role that beauty contests played in these communities and what they entailed for the woman who was crowned winner.

As we looked through the archives, we found various mentions of a Miss Sherbrooke, Miss Waterloo, Miss Saint-Hyacinthe, Miss Richmond, Miss Stanstead County, and Miss Drummondville.

In an issue of the Record dating back to August 23, 1941, there was a roundup of the Stanstead County Fair, which included a mention of a beauty contest. Irene Lavers from Ayer's Cliff was announced as the winner and was crowned Miss Stanstead County. She received a silver cup for her big win.

A Miss Sherbrooke Contest took place on May 8, 1949, at the Sherbrooke Commercial Exhibition according to an article that was published on May 3. Sherbrooke had not had such a contest in quite some time and over a dozen girls entered. The Queen was chosen

based on her beauty, personality, and popularity and received a \$500 prize.

On Dec. 7, 1955 an ad appeared in the paper advertising a beauty contest at the Premier Cinema to elect the next Miss Sherbrooke. A follow-up article was published in the paper the next day that informed the community that Gisele Lacasse was crowned as Sherbrooke's Queen; she was just 16 at the time. In honor of her win, she was presented with a trophy, a bouquet of roses, a jeweled tiara, and many gifts from local merchants.

That same year, on Nov. 23, Mercedes Chapman was named Miss Richmond for 1955. Jean Marcotte, reigning Miss Waterloo at the time was on hand to congratulate her.

An article published in the paper on Oct. 24, 1963 gave a better idea as to what some of the rules and regulations that were set in place for the contests.

A Miss Sherbrooke contest held at the Belvedere St. Armory on Feb. 8, 1964, organized by Don D'Amico, asked that all competitors be 21 years and older, a citizen of Sherbrooke, and single or married. They also had to send in photos, provide their height, weight, measurements, education, talent, and employment. Contestants were not only being judged on their beauty but also their talents, employment, etc. The winner was promised an all-expense paid trip to New York, gifts, cash prizes, and paid appearances. The woman who was crowned Miss Sherbrooke was also expected to participate in certain engagements that dealt directly with their talents.

From piecing these bits and pieces of information together, it seems that



RECORD ARCHIVES

Miss Richmond - Richmond beauty queen Mercedes Chapman received a hug of congratulations from "Miss Waterloo" after the former was voted winner of a beauty contest and named "Miss Richmond of 1955." Miss Waterloo, who is Mrs. Jean Marcotte in real life, presented the trophy to Miss Richmond. From the left are Miss Gertrude Beauchesne, Miss Waterloo, Miss Richmond, Miss Shirley Ward, Miss Barbara Hebert and Miss Jeannine Lupien.

the winners of these beauty contests also had the chance to compete to be crowned the Queen of the Eastern Townships region.

An article written in the paper dating back to July 12, 1932, mentions The Eastern Townships Beauty Contest at the Sherbrooke Fair. According to the article, the contest was not only focused on beauty but on personality and popularity. It was stated that the woman who was best able to impress the crowd would be crowned the winner.

On May 3, 1956 The Eastern Town-

ships Beauty Contest was held at the Granada Theatre, the first time the contest was held in Sherbrooke. Georgette Bourdeau, who was also crowned Miss Waterloo of 1956, was named Queen of the Townships over eight other competitors.

The Eastern Townships has a very interesting and colourful history and beauty contests are just one of the many surprises to be discovered.

MRC Memphremagog police visit the volunteer centre (CABMN) in Potton



On Wednesday, January 29 the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CABMN) in Mansonville received a visit from Sargent Steeve Cote and Sargent Jean Guy Caron who is the person in charge of the "Poste de MRC de Memphremagog" Police de-partment. While Sargent Cote is a familiar face at the CAB, Sargent Caron, his supervisor was making his first visit to the non-profit organisation.

The two discussed collaborative initiatives in Potton like the Police participation at events like the upcoming Winterfest on February 8, organised by the CABMN. The Police will also continue the non-emergency exchanges at the CABMN one Friday afternoon per month (by appointment) for citizens with questions, concerns or in need of advice. Those wanting an appointment need only call the cab to be added to the schedule: 450-292-3114. The Police will also continue their efforts in awareness and prevention with the two local elementary schools as well as with at the CABMN Youth Centre.

For the staff of the CAB, the exchange provided an opportunity to touch base on a variety of topics and services. The CAB has long valued the collaboration with the Police and the benefits are clear in the services provided and the support offered. Meeting Sargent Caron was a highlight as making him aware of the needs firsthand and his meeting the people providing services in the various communities is vital. (Submitted by Mable Hastings)

Richmond

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The statement concluded with a thank you to the citizens, teachers, partners and sponsors who have supported the board and the CAR.

"Finally, a huge thank you to the employees who have endured the turmoil. Without qualified staff, we forget the institutional partnerships necessary for the smooth operation and continuity of a cultural organization. They deserve all our respect."

Following the resignation of the board members, a new board was immediately elected.

Among the newly elected board members is Benoit Saint-Pierre.

For the moment Saint-Pierre said the new members plan to continue to operate the centre with no disruption in activities for the population. While the move to the Sainte-Famille Community Centre is now most definitely off the table, no other decisions have been made as of yet. The board will meet in the coming weeks to elect a president and vice-president from among the new members.

Also on the new CAR board is returning member Jeanette Charland, founder of les Amis de la musique du Centre d'art de Richmond and former executive director of the centre.

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