

Picnic-in-the-Park



Soapbox Derby

New Event for 2011

September 19, 2011

Dear Mrs Sandra Hodges, Mr Glen Brooks and Soapbox Derby Committee,

I am so pleased and honoured to have personally met the driving force behind your 1st Annual Soapbox Derby. Mrs and Mr Larry Renton are so precious and generous. After the ceremony Mrs Audrey Renton came up to me and shared with my family her story of racing soapbox cars so many years ago. In that era most of them were made of orange crates and pram wheels. They also built the hill for doing their races. Then to the carting at the Lansdowne Park, one anecdote she so amusingly told; she entered the Ministers wife in a race and it was announced at mass the next day that the minister's wife won the competition! The congregation was awed.... Mrs Renton was all smiles and giddy as she relived those wonderful moments up until the 1970's. This was a very special moment for me.

I was a Soapbox Derby participant myself from 1969 to 1972. My father, François (Frank) Desormeaux and I build my soapbox in 1968. My father and I took all summer to build my car. I still have the original blueprints and a copy of the detailed instruction for building the Class 'A'. Every piece of wood was measured 3 or 4 times and cut once. The axels were covered and the wood was planed and chiselled by hand. The attention to detail and the hand crafting to build this car

was well worthwhile. I started racing in 1969 at the age of 12 and loved every moment. My sibling wanted to race also; my father and I build a second car for the Class 'B'.

After René and I purchased our home, my father brought my car to me and it has been the attic of my garage since 1978. There was not much in Soapbox derbies in the area when our girls were growing up. So we skipped a generation. In 2010, I asked two of my grandsons; Anthony Carriere and Stéphane Rondeau if they would like to race in my car. So we took it out and the boys instantly got the racing bug. Everything is original to the 1968 version except for a paint job and handle bar grip on the steering wheel. The boys also requested that I put my racing crests on the car. And the younger siblings Joshua and Sébastien also wanted to race, so now, we have two cars. We could not do this without the support of the boys' parents.

This has now become my family tradition and legacy.

See you next year.

Carole A. Piché