

Jim Earle

It was lots of fun growing up out here in Montgoemry Place. There was always somebody to play with.

When we moved here, there were only a few houses west of the 3300 block Caen Street so I could roam the prairie. I enjoyed the fact that we grew up on the edge of the city, and we could take off on our bikes.

I hung out with Keith Ecklund quite a bit. Keith lived a few houses away on Caen. I don't know how old we were, maybe 9 or 10, but somehow Keith knew Dr. Stuart Houston who was a prof at the University and an ornithologist. Dr. Houston, Keith and I would drive around the grid roads looking for owl and hawk nests. Keith and I would climb the tree and bring the baby birds down for Dr. Houston to band.

The next year, Keith and I got a baby Great Horned Owl from a nest and kept it for that summer. We called him Hooty. We spent the summer catching mice and gophers for him. We had a snare line where Parkridge is now. We also had a fox pup that we dug out of the dump. I had a black and white Cocker named Candy when I was 12. She would go everywhere with us. I also had rabbits for a while.

Near Leisureland past the entrance to the dump off Spadina Crescent lived a man we thought of as a hermit. We would often stop in for a drink of cold well water and a visit.

My parents, Alan and Betty Earle, built our house at 3330 Caen Street. We moved in (Mom, Dad, me and my younger sister Trudy) on August 1, 1958. We planted trees that we dug from the north and a few that we got from the Indian Head Nursery. We had Nanking cherries, pears and apples and a Manchurian elm hedge. In the garden we dug crab grass for years.

I started Grade 3 in Montgomery School, two years after the school opened. I played hockey and ball in earlier years, but a compound fracture of my left leg in July, 1962 at Scout Camp curtailed most sports afterwards. This bone break came in the midst of Saskatchewan's Doctors' Strike.

Boys and girls entered Montgomery School through the mudroom at the north end of the school. Girls went through the red door; boys through the blue. We filed to our classrooms in single file, boys on one side, girls on the other.

That winter, when I was 12, I started working for the Co-op milkman, helping deliver milk on weekends and holidays to homes in Montgomery Place. I did that until I was 14. The last delivery before Christmas was always the best. We collected chocolates and money all day around the route.

I remember going to the Roxy Theatre on 20th Street on Saturday afternoons. Admission was 10 cents a kid. It was also 10 cents a kid to get into the Riversdale Pool. I always seemed to spend my bus fare and end up walking home. In those days, almost every car passing on 11th Street

north of Avenue P was going to Montgomery Place. They'd see that they knew you, stop, and you'd have a ride home.

In Montgomery Park there was a full-sized ball diamond with bleachers and two full-sized rinks. One rink was for hockey, the other for public skating. There was a huge speaker on the top of the rink shack to play classical music for the skaters. A list for rink supervision was drawn up each year, and parents all contributed some volunteer time.

I worked at Intercontinental Packers in the summer while I was going to Mount Royal and University. In the summer of 1966, I worked tearing down Intercon's feed lot where the Auto Mall is now. I made \$ 1.25 per hour.

My parents sold their home on Caen Street in 1970. Dad died in 2014. Mom still lives independently in Saskatoon as I write this in 2021.

In 1972 I bought the home at 3358 Mountbatten Street. After marrying Lynn McDonald in 1980, we bought the McDonald home at 3436 Ortona Street in 1984.

In the 1980s and 90s, when my two sons Jimmie and Kent were young, I coached community soccer. In 1994, I was the co-chair of a committee established to erect a new rink in Montgomery Park. After that, I managed the rink, and served on the Montgomery Place Community Association board as Vice-president or President for 15 years.

My biggest challenge during that time was the completion of Circle Drive. Dave Price and I started attending meetings in 1998, hoping to minimize the impact on Montgomery Place. After many years of meetings, letters to City Council, and presentations to City Council, the MPCA managed to move the roadway from Dundonald Avenue to the other side of the tracks through the Holiday Park Industrial Area. The flaw in that design was a level train crossing at 11th Street, despite years of the MPCA offering officials other options.

Growing up and living most of my adult life in Montgomery Place, I'm proud of my contributions to the community through work with the rink and the MPCA. I had a role in increasing the lot size for subdivisions and the creation of the street signs that explain our street names. I'm especially proud of my contribution every Remembrance Day, organizing the annual Remembrance Day ceremony with former classmate Leslee Newman since 2009. The task was handed down by Don Leier, the Korean War vet who began the ceremony in 1996. I now lead the ceremony that remembers veterans and honours the roots of Montgomery Place.