

CRANBROOK DAILY TOWNSMAN

Remembering Joyce Metcalfe, and the Cranbrook Girls Bugle Band

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Images from yesteryear: The Cranbrook Girls Bugle Band, with Joyce Metcalfe standing second from left.

Patty Doering

As a woman I am looking into my past and replaying in my mind the pages of my life some 55 years ago.

As a girl I cherished all things in nature that were beautiful and learned at an early age that I had a heart and soul and yes I kept the most cherished pages of my life there. The universe with the sun and moon and stars guided me each day and somehow kept me safe in my solitude that I loved.

Isn't it amazing when by chance in this huge world of ours, meet outstanding people that greatly influence our lives? One such person was Joyce Metcalfe.

I was 10 and even then I knew how special this lady was. What drew me to her was the fact that I wanted to become a majorette in the Cranbrook Girls Bugle Band, an all-girls precision band that she directed. I knew then the excitement and energy I felt when I heard the bugles, drums and cymbals.

When I first met her I immediately knew she wanted my respect and she got that.

I was to begin my career with the Cranbrook Girls Bugle Band. Mrs. Metcalfe took me under her wings and I began to learn the art of becoming a majorette. I admired how Joyce walked with her head held high and how her voice had a resonance of control and leadership.

Pictured: Joyce Metcalfe

Above all, throughout the years I spent with Joyce, she taught all of us to smile and really mean it as it came from our hearts. She also taught us determination, respect and stamina. That is exactly eventually made us a world class band – Best in the world under 30,000. Imagine that!

All the years I spent going to bugle band practice twice a week and I was part of the prestigious placement among all bugle bands in the world!

Thank you Mrs. Metcalfe. Thank you Joyce. Thank you, my most cherished friend in my life!

Our band grew to over 100 girls and we would parade ourselves in practice throughout the streets of Cranbrook. As majorettes, we were at the front of the band, proudly strutting and showing the energy that made our band famous. Joyce was always there, marching alongside the band, always alert if any girls needed anything as we marched.

Did anyone know that Joyce was a seamstress? She made many of the uniforms we so proudly wore.

Of all the hundreds of girls that Joyce directed, she instinctively knew the perfect advice to all the girls going through puberty. She had such patience, and yes, it was a strict patience that had the girls carrying on with the lessons of becoming an adult. She taught us pride. We were ambassadors for our city. We were the Cranbrook Girls Bugle Band.

Pictured: Patty Keen (now Patty Doering) with the Cranbrook Girls Bugle Band.

I remember many completely funny and hilarious situations that happened along the way as we performed. The time I got the flu and we were performing marching down the street. In my delirious state, the band turned the corner and I kept going straight all by myself down the wrong road. It was Joyce that came to the rescue and put her arms around me and escorted me to safety. That was who she was.

I was a member of the band for nine years. Much later in my life as an adult, my mother passed away. I was trying my best to be brave through my mourning. I was in a grocery store one afternoon. The sun was coming in through the windows. I was trying not to cry and be so sad thinking of my mother. Suddenly like an angel, Joyce appeared in front of me. My heart was full of ache and all I could do was smile at her. I saw her eyes had a twinkle and she said, "You're smiling ... you're going to be all right."

And I was alright. From that moment I began to heal and carry on with life.


If ever a tribute should be written it should be to Joyce Metcalfe and her amazing dedication she shared with her direction for the Cranbrook Girls Bugle Band.

Thank you Joyce for all you have given me in my life. and the lives of hundreds of other women. Thank you for my smile that I use everyday. Thank you for instilling the stamina within me to face the tribulations of my life. Thank you for all the memories on our road to becoming a world class band.


Thank you, Cranbrook, for giving our band the opportunity to represent you all through the years.

Patty Doering (née Keen) works for the Victoria News

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