



City of Maple Ridge News Release

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A Christmas Secret We Can Finally Reveal

Maple Ridge, BC: Earlier this year a City staff carpenter, Mark Christiansen, was completing renovation work on a City owned property.

Let's let Mark continue the story;

"I was replacing some old paneling on the basement ceiling when I noticed a rattling sound. I pulled the paneling off carefully and lifted out an old gold cookie tin that was sealed with duct tape from above the ceiling. The tin was quite heavy and when I removed the tape and opened the lid I discovered a large collection of coins," said Mark. "There were small labels on some of the coins and I realized that someone had stashed these away for safe keeping. I gathered the tin, plus some other items that were stashed beside it and took them to my boss, David Boag at City Hall. David and I figured that Darrell Denton, who manages the City's properties, might be able to help track down the owners of the coins."

Darrell picks up the story;

"By using the names from labels on the coins, looking at the years that the coin collection ended, and matching up names on a title search we were able to pinpoint the most likely owners of the coins. I left a message on the voicemail of Sharon and Alf Mintha asking if they had left anything stored away in the basement of their old home. I got a call back from Sharon very quickly and she had all the details of the tin and other collectables. I knew that we had found our owners," said Darrell. "We arranged to meet them at City Hall to return the collection."

On Friday, December 15, Sharon and Alf met with Darrell and Mark for the return of their family treasures. Staff members had assumed that the small labels might be the name of Sharon and Alf's grandchildren, who the coins were meant for. The reality was more heartwarming.

"We were so excited when we got the call from Darrell. Alf put the coins up in the ceiling in the 1990s for safe keeping," said Sharon.

When Darrell and Mark brought the tin out Sharon and Alf were so excited. When asked about the names on some of the coin cases Sharon explained, “Those are the names of our son and daughter. Those coins were gifts from my father, their grandfather. The kids were young so we put the coins away for them.”

When Sharon met Mark, the carpenter who had discovered the coins, she asked him for a hug. “What integrity you have,” she said. Mark explained that his first thoughts were to get these coins back to the owner.

Sharon explained that she and Alf had resisted the urge to tell their family about this discovery because her daughter, who now lives in France, is returning on Boxing Day. “We are having a family gathering that evening and Alf and I will be presenting the children with these coins, gifts from my father, at that time,” said Sharon. “My dad has passed away, so these gifts have even more meaning.”

Alf and Sharon asked us to keep the secret until December 27 so they can surprise their children.

A week after the meeting Sharon contacted the City and noted, “We came home from meeting you all, and sat at the kitchen table for the longest time just looking at everything. We found something that is very dear to me. It is a pin given to my grandfather by the Canadian Government. It says ‘For Service at the Front.’ He was at Vimy Ridge during all the action.”

“I was told this story last week and I want to express my pride in the actions of City staff members in reconnecting the Mintha family with their family treasures. Part of the values statement for the City of Maple Ridge relates to ‘reputation’ and asks City employees to stress excellence, integrity, accountability and honesty in their work. This story embodies the values we strive for across our organization,” said Paul Gill, Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Maple Ridge.

We are very proud to be able to share this story with the community and we thank the Mintha family for allowing us to share this part of their family Christmas.