

# Maple Ridge This Month

## DECEMBER 2013

### SPOTLIGHT ON: The Christmas Bells

#### Downtown Maple Ridge is a Winter Wonderland

Here's a little story that speaks to the traditions of our community.

In 1966 the Downtown Merchants Association, wanting to create an iconic Town Centre display for Christmas, got together and purchased the Christmas bell decorations that have been the centrepiece of the community's holiday experience. The Operations team have the responsibility of storing and maintaining them, and making sure they get hung every year. In 1966, the lights made their debut in the Town Centre and a tradition was born. The photo here was taken that first year as they were hung.

That was 47 years ago, and in that time, weather, sunlight and the passing of time have resulted in the beloved bells fading to look more pinkish than red, and the plastic had become quite brittle and fragile. Almost three years ago there was a discussion about getting new decorations to replace the bells based on some emails from newer residents who thought our bells were a bit shabby looking.

There was some discussion with the community, especially the new Downtown Maple Ridge Business Improvement Association, and it was discovered that any thought of replacing the bells was, frankly, nuts so that idea was shelved. What the Parks and Operations team came up with was a plan to try to consolidate the bells that were in the best shape to 224 Street. In addition, new LED lights were placed in the tree canopies and a new look emerged in the Town Centre. The combination of the beloved red bells and the canopy lights were a huge hit, and the plan to keep the bells alive as long as possible was implemented.

Here's where the story gets interesting. Earlier this year, after the decorations were taken down, the team at the Operations Centre, found the original molds for the bells in a dusty corner of the warehouse. The molds, being almost half a century old, needed some repair, so we managed to track down the original manufacturer in Port Coquitlam and asked if they could refurbish the molds so we could recast the bells.

The manufacturer was thrilled to learn about this discovery, and not only agreed to refurbish the molds, but asked if they could manufacture them again for use around the continent. It turns out these retro style decorations are becoming popular again. We agreed to allow them to distribute them with a couple of provisions.

First, they can't sell them within a 200 kilometer distance of Maple Ridge. After almost half a century, this is our community's tradition now. The second, and befitting the original spirit of the donation by the Downtown Merchants Association, Maple Ridge will get a fee for every bell sold using the new molds that will help offset the cost of keeping our bells shining bright each year.



This year, when you look up at the bells, you will notice that they are all bright red like the day they were first put up in 1966. All 55 big bells and 55 little bells have been recast, and our electricians at the operations yard, working like Santa's elves in the North Pole, have rewired all the fixtures and replaced the old bulbs with modern energy efficient bulbs.

As for the icicle lights, it turns out that the canopy lights were a bit hard on the trees, so the lights were moved onto the trunks of the trees a few months ago, but the canopies seemed a little bare. Members of our Parks Team had seen the icicle lights and hatched the plan to have them added along with the new bells. After the icicle lights were hung some folks wondered where the bells were and worried that they were gone for good. But the fact is that the bells have become part of the Christmas magic of Maple Ridge. They aren't gone - in fact they have been reborn to be part of the Christmas tradition for the next generations of Maple Ridge citizens to enjoy with family and friends.

So get your video camera out and experience the beauty of Maple Ridge Christmas. The Peace Tree will become the North Fraser's largest Christmas tree at the December 7, 2013 lighting ceremony to mark the start of the Santa Claus Parade! At that point the full streetscape will glow!

### ENGAGED: Business Planning Sessions

The 2014-2018 Financial Plan started to come together in February of 2013. Council received a steady stream of information and provided feedback to staff throughout the year. This formed the basis of the 2014-2018 Financial Plan which will be reviewed by Mayor and Council on Monday, December 9, 2013 from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm followed by a public question and answer session from 5:30 - 6:30 pm.

There's a new button on the District homepage at [mapleridge.ca](http://mapleridge.ca). Click through and you can get as much detail about the

2014-2018 Financial Plan as you would like. This button will also get you to a link to the Live Q&A session that will be streamed from 5:30 to 6:30 pm on Monday, December 9, 2013. Staff will be monitoring District social media channels ([yourmapleridge](http://yourmapleridge)) and the special email ([budget@mapleridge.ca](mailto:budget@mapleridge.ca)) for your questions. We hope you will be able to take time out of your busy schedule to attend the budget briefing or watch the Live Q&A session.

### FEEDBACK

#### Contact us at [enquiries@mapleridge.ca](mailto:enquiries@mapleridge.ca)

If you have a question about any of the content in this ad, or questions about any programs or services offered by the District of Maple Ridge, please send an email to [enquiries@mapleridge.ca](mailto:enquiries@mapleridge.ca) and one of our team members will respond to you.



11995 Haney Place, Maple Ridge BC V2X 6A9

[mapleridge.ca](http://mapleridge.ca)

### INFORMED

#### December 2013

##### Council Meeting Schedule

Mayor and Council encourage everyone to attend these important public meetings. It's your chance to see how public policy is debated and enacted.

##### Monday, December 9

9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Business Planning Session - Council Chambers

5:30 to 6:30 pm - Live Budget Q&A - Council Chambers

##### Tuesday, December 10

9:00 am Business Planning Session (if required) - Council Chambers

6:00 pm, Public Hearing - Council Chambers

7:00 pm, Council Meeting - Council Chambers

##### Agendas & Minutes

Agendas for these meetings are posted online the Friday before the meeting date. Go to [mapleridge.ca](http://mapleridge.ca), click the link under Mayor & Council on the home page.

##### Council This Week

Subscribe to the 'Council This Week' eNewsletter that provides a summary of issues discussed at Council Workshop meetings. Go to [mapleridge.ca](http://mapleridge.ca), click the link to 'Council This Week' and sign up today.

##### Council Meeting Videos

If you are unable to attend a Council Meeting, Public Hearing or Committee of the Whole meeting you can now watch these meetings on your computer 24/7. The entire unedited meetings are posted two to three days after the meeting. The video is indexed to the agenda package so that you can watch them in their entirety or click through by agenda item. Go to [mapleridge.ca](http://mapleridge.ca) and click on the video link at the bottom left of the home page.

### INFORMED:

#### Christmas Calendar

#### Great Holiday Events for the Whole Family!



##### December 7: 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm

##### Christmas in the Park & Santa Claus Parade

It's a magical Christmas in Memorial Peace Park starting at 4:00 pm. For details visit [www.mapleridgechristmasfestival.com](http://www.mapleridgechristmasfestival.com).

To volunteer: [volunteer@mapleridgechristmasfestival.com](mailto:volunteer@mapleridgechristmasfestival.com)

##### December 14: Firefighters For Families Food Drive

Firefighters and the Youth Academy visit the major grocery stores in Maple Ridge to collect food and cash in support of the Friends In Need Food Bank and the Christmas Hamper Society.

##### December 15: 8:45 pm - 9:30 pm CP Holiday Train

The 'train of lights' raises money, food and awareness during the holidays. The train will stop across from the *Billy Miner Pub and restaurant* just East of the Port Haney WCE Platform. For more info visit: [www.cpr.ca](http://www.cpr.ca).

##### December 24: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm The Christmas Haven

Held at The ACT in downtown Maple Ridge, this venue provides a festive atmosphere for our guests and is the centre point for a dinner of turkey and all the fixings; local entertainment; children's activities; and a visit from Santa. The Christmas Haven is 100% volunteer driven, operated by a dedicated Steering Committee and is only made possible through the outstanding generosity of our Community. For more information go to [www.christmashaven.ca](http://www.christmashaven.ca).

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