

Believing in Bancroft

By Sarah Sobanski

People like to identify with a place. Calling somewhere home gives you a lot of things, more than just somewhere you belong. Your home impacts your values, your drive, your attitude towards the world and sometimes even your mannerisms.

I've heard a lot of bad attitudes towards small towns, mostly from people who aren't from them. I've run into an atmosphere of animosity towards people who grow up in a small town ? especially as a girl who moved to the big city. I've met people who can't believe I'm from a small town because I'm not quote unquote fat or stupid. I'm not kidding, it was at a party in 2013 ? it's a funny story for another time. I had a boyfriend who always assumed I would move to the city because it was just better. I've had my opinion shut down because it's assumed that I'm biased because of where I'm from and don't even get me started on the redneck jokes.

A small town can easily become a micro world. Core beliefs and values that you pick up from the community you are surrounded by can be hard to shake, especially when the rest of the world is far away. Without getting too much into nature versus nurture, I think bad ideas are passed down and memorized. They're instilled, and people don't like change. A place that is never forced to change, never will.

Of course larger centres have their stereotypes and problems too. I've made my fair share of quips towards cities and their ever-busy populations. It's easy to call someone else different, to say they don't understand or my way or the highway. All this said, moving between small towns has made me nervous in the past ? mostly because I can be a tad outspoken.

Bancroft however, has impressed me.

It's not in the big things, but in the little things. The things people don't usually mention. It's an attitude that starting to rub off on me.

There is an incredible sense of wanting to move forward here. It seems to me that most of the people I meet want to create and grow and start something, anything.

I saw a packed house stand up at the Climate Change Town Hall and speak to their concerns about the environment and their impact on it in their everyday lives. They wanted to know how they could help and how they could see that other people helped. I spoke to the Bancroft Community Airport about their wish to grow to support local business. Pat Murdock wants to see the airport become a more efficient centre to support the emergency hospital and the surrounding area. Though I have decided where I stand, I ran into three different community organizations that were started to raise awareness about a quarry that could impact the township. Not one, not two, but three different organizations.

I've met artists and gallery owners just trying to help their friends and local artists get their work out. I've walked by gardens that are free to be picked by the public. I've seen supporters pack almost every venue no matter what the cause.

It's inspiring, it really is. It's heartening to know I've been right about small towns and how great they are my whole life ? I joke.

Bancroft is special.

There seems to be these wonderful attitudes of pay it forward. While I haven't run into a train of drivers paying for the drivers' orders behind them in the Tim Hortons lines yet, I wouldn't be surprised if that happened.

Maybe it comes from sitting on a dock half the time, maybe it's something in the water. I'm not exactly sure, but keep it up, Bancroft. Keep fighting for what you believe in. Keep showing up. Shoot for the moon, land among stars. Every cliché became cliché somehow.