

Summer venues to keep teens occupied

By Sarah Sobanski

Alice Cooper was right: school's out for summer and "all the girls and boys [are] makin' all that noise." A girl can't help but notice the number of teenagers that are now wandering the streets of Bancroft. But what else is there to do?

Growing up in a small town can be hard - there isn't a whole lot to do.

In fact, walking to tend gardens in Riverside Park last week, I noticed two pairs of feet hanging from the rafters of the roof of the sun shelter there. I nudged my friend and said, "Hey, look, we used to do that."

He asked if I had had anything better to do with my time. He came from the city, which I'm sure every small town teenager imagines is all concerts, flashing lights and fun 24-7. It would seem there just aren't as many places to go, as many things to do, that haven't already been done a thousand times before.

Bancroft, however, might be different. Here's a small list of things that might keep your teenager occupied and off the streets - figuratively and literally.

Dimples Mini Putt, run by the North Hastings Community Integration Association. They're open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and from noon to 4 p.m. on Sundays. Except don't go on a Monday, they're closed. For \$5 per person and under family and friends can practise their putting skills without breaking the bank. Plus, all proceeds go to a good cause.

If your teen keeps begging you for a car, take him or her to Robbie's Hobbies slot car and radio controlled racing. It might not stop him or her from inevitably bringing your worst nightmare to life and getting a licence one day, but hey, here's a sneak peek to see what they're like behind the wheel without actually being in said car. Maybe they'll take it slow, or more likely, they'll push that button as hard as they can and go zero to 100 real quickly. Who ever had to parallel park in a slot car? No fair.

If your teenagers are stuck listening to the same electronic music over and over again, send them to check out a live show during Bancroft's Mineral Capital Concert series. The lineup can be found at www.mineralcapitalconcerts.com or keep an eye on Bancroft This Week's community calendar. We list them every week. Free live music? Sign me up.

Best of all, take time to be out and about with your children. Why send them off to do these things on their own, when you can do it together? Build family holiday traditions. Make summer memories. You might jeopardize how cool they look, but in years to come they'll be telling stories about how funny it was that one time you asked them why they hadn't introduced you to their boyfriend or girlfriend yet, to their new boyfriend or girlfriend.

These are just a couple of suggestions to reply with next time your kid tells you he is bored - instead of reminding him the dishwasher hasn't been emptied yet. That's not even mentioning the outdoor sports available - lakes, ATV trails, the skate park, fishing and kayak rentals available all over town. Just remind them of sunscreen and to get off their screens.

We're so lucky to live in such a large playground. So get out there, get them playing, and embarrass them by being in the same vicinity in public. The summer will be over before you know it.