

# A Diary of 80 Years in the Life of Maritime Auto?

By Andrew MacDonald

The year in which that car rolled off Mr. Ford's assembly line was the same year Ray Fillmore incorporated Maritime Auto Salvage Ltd. in Truro, NS. It's been 80 years since Mr. Fillmore started Maritime Auto Salvage Ltd. in Truro, and to sit and think through what changes and adaptations an auto recycler would have to undertake to last over the past 80 years is actually quite interesting. This



Ed MacDonald shows Councillor Tom Taggart the crusher pile with over 300 automobiles.



From the smallest bolt to a whole engine, every possible part is recycled at Maritime Auto Parts.



A variety of parts are catalogued and lined up ready for delivery to the customer.



Twenty to twenty-five vehicles are recycled per week, with every part given an ID number and placed into a catalogued inventory.

is a recount of Maritime's history over the past 80 years, and what's in store for the future.

I doubt when Mr. Fillmore started in 1932 he had any of the '32 Fords in the yard yet, but imagine what he did have! Most likely a whole bunch of Model Ts (60% market share at one point in the '20s), but also Model As, Studebakers, Packards, Buicks, Oldsmobiles, Cadillacs - image if you could just only walk through that recycling yard today what you would see. What would have been the hottest selling parts through the 30's? It was right in the middle of the Great Depression, so I'm guessing anything to keep your car moving.

After the 30s came WW II. No production vehicles were manufactured in the US from 1942-1946. Notwithstanding the obvious tragedy and loss brought upon by the war, I could not imagine what the Mr. Fillmore's inventory would be comprised of. The newest car in the lot would be at least 5 years old!

Fast forward to the early 60s. The Fillmore's (Ray's son Ronnie joined in 1955) just had a decade full of receiving salvage from some of the most unique and stylish vehicles ever built, full of chrome and designs inspired by the jet age (wings & turbine accents!). However, in the early 1960s the "Bi-Hi" (Bicentennial Highway) was routed right through Maritime Auto's Lower Truro location, forcing a move. Rumor has it that many of the vehicles were simply buried in place, cringe! The new home became Glenholme, NS.

After about 40 years, and two generations, the Fillmore's sold Maritime to Basil MacKay and Harry Marsh in 1974. Each had a background as insurance adjusters and they were able to understand and work the procurement of salvage for the supply of parts. They organized the vehicles into rows by make and model and eliminated the "junk yard" feel. Mr. MacKay was quoted explaining the energy savings auto recycling provides to the auto industry.

Mr. MacKay expanded the building on the front and the back. The property was completely fenced in and for those of you who remember driving the old Hwy #4 between Amherst and Truro would remember the large "MARITIME AUTO SALVAGE" painted along the Folly River embankment. That fence has long since fallen, but the odd section with a letter or two are still there.

In 1987, a young couple from Ottawa (originally from NS) with two young children (one and three years old) approached Mr. MacKay with intentions of buying Maritime. I was the three year old. My father, Ed MacDonald, had become hooked on the concept of Auto Recycling through friends at Arnprior-Ottawa Auto Parts. The Scot in him liked the fact you could pay less than half of full price for a part, and that you could be environmentally conscious at the same time. My Mother was a project manager with Parks Canada and has a Commerce degree from Acadia, my father an HR specialist with the Federal Government.

Upon seeing my Dad in his summer shorts and paisley shirt, Mr. MacKay politely told him he "was out of his goddamn mind", and to "get lost". Mom

and Dad returned determined the following year, Mr. MacKay took their money, shook hands and the transfer began.

From 1988 until today, there have been a lot of changes in how auto recyclers do business. My parents almost immediately implemented a computerized inventory management system which has steadily progressed over the past 25 years. To the point where now when a vehicle lands in the yard, parts are entered into a tablet PC with pictures and they are simply downloaded straight into our system. Vehicles and parts can also be researched online on our website.

The vehicle processing side has also progressed. Not only is it environmentally friendly to re-use and recycle vehicles and parts, but all vehicles must be depolluted prior to being shredded into scrap. Moreover, it is in our interest to recycle these materials wherever possible. Removed gas powers our fleet vehicles, oils heat our building in the winter and AC refrigerant is re-used by local repair shops. Auto Recyclers adapt to meet environmental legislation, but Maritime also voluntarily adheres to the Canadian Auto Recyclers Environmental Code (CAREC).

On July 20, we celebrated 80 years with an open house. It was a beautiful summer day, with just enough of a breeze to make sure that Ed froze after 3 hours in a dunk tank. We also had a BBQ, cake and plenty of merchandise to go around. On the way home, one family heard their names on the local radio as the winners of our grand prize draw for a 3000W generator. They turned around



Deanna Martell tries to send Ed MacDonald into the freezing cold dunk tank. At the end of the day a \$1000 donation was made to the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade for the use of their dunk tank.



Loader operators have a full time job simply moving vehicles around the compound.

and came right back! The staff all pulled together to make it a big success and we had a wonderful turnout of customers, suppliers, business partners and friends from the community. We were also able to donate \$1000 to the Onslow-Belmont Fire Brigade who had their truck on display. We love being able to have a reason to celebrate.

## What's next at Maritime Auto?

By Andrew MacDonald

What's next? Well some of that is going to rest on my shoulders. I had worked at Maritime since I was about 10 years old. However, after high school I moved to Ontario to get my Mechanical Engineering degree from Waterloo. I ended up staying and working a year in manufacturing engineering for GM, three years in quality engineering for Toyota, and then two years in new model management for Lexus. I couldn't stay away for long though. People ask me a lot why I would leave a 'high profile' job to work at a small business in rural NS. Well, besides the quality of life and being closer to family and friends, the answer is easy. Auto Recycling is addictive - I'm constantly wondering what else we can do with all these car parts?

As is the case with all succession planning, my parents had reservations in selling their business to their son. After convincing them I was actually serious, they employed Grant-Thornton to interview me and provide a risk analysis with an objective view. Long story short, I started working at Maritime in March and am working towards taking over in the next year. We

have a fantastic staff of 20 people and I am really enjoying working with them. I have a big learning curve in front of me, and big shoes to fill (two pairs!) but I can't wait to get on the front side of the wave and re-use, recycle and potentially even start repurposing the death out of these vehicles.

Imagine 80 years from now what they might say about what Maritime 'was' today? "It would have been full of gas and diesel cars!" "Cars in those days got into accidents!" "I bet they had

whole sections of 2007 Cobalts and were crushing 2002 Civics!" Maybe the collectible car given away at the 2092 Atlantic Nationals Car Show will have once been a rebuilder from Maritime Auto Salvage at one point. Who knows what the long term future might look like; all we can do is continue being open to change and growth. And of course, we must keep asking ourselves, what else can we do with all these car parts?!

**Andrew MacDonald is the son of Ed and Lana and will be taking over the business within the year.**


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From the Truro Commercial Banking Team - Congratulations to  
**Maritime Auto Salvage Limited**  
on your 80th Anniversary!  
We thank you for the continued opportunity  
to be your Financial Partner.

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