



Photo by Tom Hicken

Sonya Dronsfield (left) and Jamie Hitchcock enjoy some quality gym time without the boys at Loyalist College's Ladies Only Night at the fitness centre, Sept. 9. Ladies Night provides an opportunity for female students and staff to use the facility who may not otherwise come there.

Ladies only nights at Loyalist's fitness centre:

Gym opens doors to women only

Females feel more comfortable in girls-only setting

By Tom Hicken

Walk by Loyalist College's fitness centre Wednesday nights and you might find the testosterone levels lower than usual, while sounds of laughter, rather than grunting, fill the air.

Starting Sept. 9, the college introduced ladies only nights at the fitness centre. It provides an opportunity for female students and staff to use the facility, which they may not have done.

"I think girls feel more comfortable for sure – we're a lot more self-conscious when guys are around," said Lauren O'Malley, a first-year nursing student.

"It's good because a lot of girls feel intimidated by guys that come here. Since we all get to come here alone, we don't feel intimidated at all," said Jaclyn Rice, a first-

year pre-health student.

Fitness facilities and campus recreation co-ordinator, Cory Mestre, explained that the program got its start after receiving feedback from surveys conducted by the student government. After a trial run last March, the initial turnout was lower than expected.

"Response last year was not good, though the time of year – March, when people may be more geared towards placements and final exams than working out – may have factored into that," Mestre said.

Mestre is giving ladies only night another run now through the fall reading week.

Ladies night isn't the only new development at the fitness centre. Last semester, a handful of renovations took place to redesign the entrance along with other improvements.

"We expanded the facility into an adjoining room, making space for the installation of lifting equipment," Mestre said.

Additionally, more cardio equipment was purchased and several esthetic up-

grades, like new mirrors and TVs, were made.

Mestre said he has noticed an increase in gym-goers since the renovations.

"The response has been overwhelmingly positive from all of our members," Mestre said.

Back in the gym, a steady stream of girls began to fill up the machines and mats. Colourful spandex blended together in metronome motions across the rows of treadmills, stationary bikes and elliptical machines.

Working behind the front desk at the fitness centre last Wednesday, Jess Chartrand said she can attest to the popularity of the first ladies night.

"The turnout has been really good. There's probably about 30 girls and we're expecting about 50 or 60 to pass through," Chartrand said.

Likewise, O'Malley has also seen a noticeable change.

"This is just my second night here, but yesterday there weren't nearly as much girls as there are tonight," O'Malley said.

While it's obvious the cardio machines

are the most popular among the ladies, a smaller group of girls can be seen crowded around a weight machine toward the back of the gym.

Chartrand pointed out that with no boys around, it's a lot easier for girls to work out because they're not afraid to try new things.

"Having the gym to themselves and experimenting with different weights is one of the benefits," Chartrand said.

Rice agreed as she hopped off a machine, wiped it down and encouraged a friend to try it out.

"I usually bike when the gym is co-ed, but I wouldn't usually use the hip abduction like I am now because it looks strange while you're doing it," Rice said.

Emilie Scheele, a first-year pre-health student, said she was excited to try the rowing machine, which she said she wouldn't do if guys were around.

"When boys come they always make fun of you for using the machines wrong and then they have to teach you, but tonight we can learn ourselves," Scheele said.

All aboard at VIA Rail with new digs

Belleville described as train town by dignitaries attending opening

By Catherine Jackman

VIA Rail officially opened the new passenger station Sept. 12, a project which has been in the works for almost two years.

If Belleville can be described as one thing, it can be called a train town.

After over 150 years of having a train station, it was time for Belleville's VIA Rail station to get an upgrade. The \$18 million investment, of which \$2.5 million came directly from the government's Economic Action Plan, built a new building fully equipped with an overhead bridge, better accessibility for passengers with disabilities and a more modern layout.

The opening fittingly took place at the VIA station on Station Street. In attendance at the opening were Mayor Neil Ellis, Marc Beaulieu, the Regional General Manager East and Chief of Transportation for VIA Rail Canada, as well as Minister of Parliament for Prince Edward Hastings, Daryl Kramp, who was there on behalf of Minister of State (Transport) Steven Fletcher.

"Belleville station is one of the top ten in Canada in terms of passenger volume today. It serves more travellers than the builders of the original station, back in 1856, ever imagined possible," said Beaulieu.

Mayor Ellis took a moment during his speech to remind the crowd of how influential trains have been to Belleville. He made mention of there being a locomotive not only on the town flag, but also incorporated into his mayoral emblem.

It was a reminder to the audience that it is impossible to be in Belleville and not feel the atmosphere, and its relation to the trains. With most of downtown intersecting with train tracks and even streets being named to coincide with locomotives, this town essentially revolves around trains.

Kramp said, "this new and modern station is just one of the many upgrades to VIA's stations, tracks, passenger cars, and locomotives infrastructure in the busy Windsor-Toronto-Montreal corridor, resulting in faster, and more reliable service for all VIA Rail passengers."

The new building, that took almost two years to build, was proposed by VIA Rail on November 10, 2010. At the time the project was estimated to cost \$14 million and was promised to be fully wheelchair accessible but would also be able to accommodate expanded track lines.

The old building, built in 1856 by Thomas Brassey, couldn't support the upgrades, but is still standing, after receiving a Heritage designation in 1973. Beaulieu discussed the old building's relationship with VIA Rail, and by working with the city of Belleville and outside companies to find a use for the building.

The train station has been fully operational since March.

Rain didn't stop sound of drum at festival

Drummer shares African culture's rhythmic beat for last four years

By Gail Paquette

A mother's heartbeat is one of the first sounds human beings hear.

That is why we all have rhythm, says Saikou Saho.

Saho is one of the many drummers who has been coming to the area's Drum Nation Festival for the past four years to share his African culture's rhythmic beats.

Drum Nation Festival has grown over the years from a backyard event to the 85-acre park at O'Hara Mill, 30 kilometres north of Belleville.

This year, the expectations of crowd size were in the thousands. Even though it rained most of the festival day on Sept. 8, organizer Deborah Richardson said the rain didn't stop the sound of the drum.

"All cultures share a background that includes drumming. Most often it is the sound of celebration or ceremony," she said.

"In native culture, the drum is believed to be the heartbeat of Mother

Earth. In Middle Eastern culture, it most often signifies celebration and African cultures deem it as a form of communication."

The festival offers drumming workshops and stage shows featuring Japanese, Spanish and native performances. There are wellness and instrument-making workshops, workshops for children, belly dancing, juggling and exhibitors with crafts from around the world.

The festival's participants are as diverse as the cultural array of performers. Babies to grandparents dance to the beat of the drum.

"Drumming brings so many people out of their shell," said Richardson. "There are no rules. You just take a stick and start."

Not only are there opportunities to join in a workshop and learn 'that inner rhythm,' the festival is an invitation to experience something new.

"I believe we should experience as many things as we can in life. New life experiences make us grow," said Richardson.

When Richardson started drumming, it was after many personal troubles with anxiety and stress, she said. Those have disappeared. The healing powers of the drum are echoed among many drummers, she added.

"I even had problems talking to people but the drum is a universal language. It is speaking without words."



Photo by Gail Paquette

African Drummer Saikou Saho says everyone has rhythm because the first thing we hear is our mother's heartbeat. He attended Drum Nation Festival at O'Hara Mill just north of Madoc to give workshops on playing the African drum.

Prince Edward County Gravity Festival in Picton

Spine-tingling adventure on wheels

By Justin Tang

Andi Leslie is propped up on a curb at the finish line gasping, her head hanging nearly between her knees. Her face is contorted with pain, her shin is burning from a high-speed spill but the seven-year downhill skateboarding veteran from Cambridge, Ont. can't imagine being anywhere else.

Leslie is one of four women competing at the Prince Edward County Gravity Festival in Picton.

Riders tear down a course just over a kilometre in length, with grades that reach a spine-tingling 14 per cent and a 90-degree bend nicknamed Crash Corner. They hit speeds of up to 75 km/h and when riders crash, they go down at those speeds too.

Gravity sports like downhill skateboarding, classic luge and street luge -- the three spectacles taking over Picton's Church, Pill and York streets for the two-day festival -- have typically been the realm of male athletes. But this typecasting hasn't stopped a handful of women from carving their own spot in the sport.

With a field of 108 athletes, event co-ordinator Krisha Parks considers the female turnout a success.

"The women's categories, they're definitely growing," Parks says. "We've doubled our numbers this year. Last year, we had two (athletes). The year before, we had three.

"There are a significant amount of women around the world. It's not as big in Ontario for women, but it's growing."

The gender gap isn't a big deal for Leslie, who is used to riding and racing with men. But the new numbers sure can help.

The other women gather to see if she's okay -- Cindy Zhou, who has edged out Leslie to take the win, Dianne Shaher and Michelle Poirier, each peeling off full-faced helmets and layers of leather and plastic armour as they check on their friend.

Four riders in progress, says Leslie, now sitting tidily in a lawn chair, looking at ease behind blue-tinted lenses.

"It's a male-dominated sport, so it's just natural that it's going to be that way," she says. "I ride with mostly guys all the time. If anything, it's more different to ride with women because they're more comparable to my level of skating. But the women are close -- it's nice."

Newly minted women's downhill Canadian champion Zhou agrees. The festival is also the national

championships as part of the International Gravity Sports Association World Cup Circuit.

"Riding with women who are good at the sport is really encouraging," the Toronto-based skater of three years says.

"You get to push each other. Riding with guys is cool too, but there's something different, having that mutual understanding of being a minority in the sport."

Despite this solidarity, Zhou insists that camaraderie isn't felt just between female skaters but among the longboarding community in general.

"Longboarding is so inviting and it's for everyone," she says placidly, pausing to accept a running high-five from 14-year-old Ben Keymer who has come to congratulate her.

"We're generally pretty stoked on one another," she finishes.

"There should be more girls riding, but they should take it at their own pace and they shouldn't be forced into anything they're truly uncomfortable with," Zhou explains. "Not everyone has to be super crazy gnarly."

Tynika Williams might just be among the next wave of female riders to hit the streets. The 10-year-old from Cherry Valley and her mother, Tammy, staked out a spot in Crash Corner at the intersection of Pitt and York streets. They spent the weekend soaking in the slides and spills.

"It's cool how they come down and if they take the corner too wide, they end up crashing," Tynika says, swiveling her gaze from her perch on a row of hay bales as riders carved past the chicanes and danced through the 90-degree bend.

It's something Tynika thinks she'd try, despite the sound of wheels, wood and leather on pavement still reverberating through the corner. And mom is especially on board.

"I'm all for it," Tammy says. "We're all about sports and girls."

"I'm actually shocked there's not more girls. I figured there would have been more."

Resting at the bottom of the hill, Leslie is content to skate just for the ride.

"Runs like that is what makes it worth it," she reflects. "A title is only temporary. I'll remember that run for the rest of my life."

With the women's event complete, Leslie readies herself for her next race. Along with Zhou, she has qualified for the open downhill skateboard event.

She'll be back among the men.

"There are a significant amount of women around the world. It's not as big in Ontario for women, but it's growing."

Event co-ordinator Krisha Parks



Photo by Tom Hicken

Andi Leslie from Cambridge, Ont., tears down the straightaway at Prince Edward County's Gravity Festival Sept. 16. Leslie is one of four female skateboarders who participated at this year's festival, doubling last year's female riders. The day included downhill skateboarding, classic luge and street luge with a total of 108 athletes.



Photo by Gail Paquette

This is the first year Albert Cormier has brought his 1952 Desoto Fire Dome to the Belleville Cruise Night. The cruise night is held every Tuesday night from May until October in the Zeller's parking lot, Bell Boulevard. Cormier has spent \$20,000 restoring the Desoto and it took him nine years.

Cruising through time

By Gail Paquette

Time shifts gears in Belleville on Tuesday nights for car enthusiasts in the Quinte area.

More than 100 gleaming vintage cars roll into the Zellers parking lot on Bell Boulevard from May until October for Belleville Cruise Night. The cars are parked in neat rows and the owners exit their vehicles with lawn chairs in hand ready to show and shine.

Spectators peruse the rows of meticulous chromed classics and the car owners share a common bond. "Everyone knows each other," said organizer Gladys Labelle.

"It's an old-fashioned get-together. We play music and have 50/50's."

For two hours, owners talk about their cars and share their stories with fellow car lovers.

Albert Cormier found a car neglected in a field while driving home one day. He

spent nine years restoring the 1952 Desoto Fire Dome to its former glory. With Hemi motor intact, 70 year-old Cormier did all the work himself, costing \$20,000.

"I betcha there is \$7,000 alone on chrome," he said.

With price tags as high as \$50,000 for a 1939 Ford Coup, this hobby can be expensive according to Cruise Night organizer Red Thompson.

"If you work on it yourself, it definitely costs less," said Thompson. "You have to love it to do it."

Cruise Night is not just a local car meet hosted by some old-timers who share the same passion as others do for their ride. They raise money for charities, hold dances and once during their five-month season hold a "junk in the trunk" sale.

Over the years, they have given hundreds of dollars to organizations such as The Quinte Humane Society and Big Brothers/Sisters.

Amusement park owner has dreams come true

By Gail Paquette

All Dirk Deinum wanted as a young boy was a Meccano model construction set.

"Do you remember them?" he asked. "They were like six bucks but my family was so poor and I never got one."

His wish came true less than twenty years later when he bought Crown Amusements.

"I have the biggest Meccano set in the world now," said 68 year-old Deinum.

Crown Amusements carnival has been serving the Madoc Agricultural Fair for 16 years, bringing in 10 tractor trailers, seven straight trucks, five pick-ups and various house trailers. They have been with most fairs on their circuit for at least that many years

"I guess they all like us," said Deinum.

For seven months, with a crew of up to 40, the convoy travels from Deinum's hometown of Fort Erie, Ont. to North Bay and Ottawa to Windsor.

At age 14, Deinum built a hotdog cart. He set up at local fairs at first and eventually went on the road with the carnival.

"I wasn't a very smart kid," he said. "No one would hire me and I wanted a job."

At age 25, he bought a carnival.

"I was working my hotdog stand with Crown Amusements. I had a really, really good weekend. There were lots and lots of hungry people," he said.

The carnival owner on the other hand had a lousy weekend. No one was riding the midway. He sold Deinum the business on the spot.

He admits that carnies live with the

reputation that they are gypsies coming to town to rape and pillage and leave with all the money and a few girls, but he says quite frankly, "It's a job. We have lots of fun but it is hard, hard work. Besides, we are getting too old for all that."

He and his wife, Maggie of 40 years run Crown Amusements. They never had any children of their own but he said the crew is their kids.

"Some of them are 50 years old but they are still our kids," he said. "We are truly a family, they are even in the will."

Donny Kerr has been with Deinum for 26 years.

"I have a love/hate relationship with the carnival," he said. "I get itchy feet in April and I know it is time to hit the road."

Mechanic Matthew Randall left another carnival job to work for Deinum and has stayed 15 years.

"If Dirk wasn't the best, the workers would not continue to return," he said. "Other carnivals see a 50 per cent change in staff every year."

Deinum is unsure of the future for his trade. He fears carnivals will eventually fade away.

"Labour is hard to come by and government regulations continue to increase," he said.

"It will be a sad day when that happens. People haven't changed and kids never change," he said.

"Except for the price of the ticket. They used to be a quarter, now they are a buck seventy-five. Business is still the same and always will be."



Photo by Gail Paquette

Sixty-eight-year-old Dirk Deinum says he has been living his dream as owner of Crown Amusement Carnival. With his wife Maggie of 40 years, he and his crew travel from their hometown of Fort Erie, Ont. to North Bay and Ottawa to Windsor. They are on the road for seven months of the year.

Family fun at the fair



Photo by Jason Prupas

In a daring act of courage, friends Bridget, 11, Meagan, 11, and Hayley, 11, brave the Banzai, one of the many ride and attractions offered at this years Kingston Fall Fair. Hundreds of people made their way to the Kingston Memorial Centre to enjoy the amusement attractions that the fair has to offer.



Photo by Gail Paquette

Three-year-old Amber Lessard's first time at a carnival was during the Madoc Agricultural Fair Sept. 15. Her mom said she had no fear and had to hang on to her as she rode the carousel. She waved to her grandma every time she rode by.



Photo by Jessica Nyznik

Greg Cassibo, manager of Candy Floss, spins cotton candy for customers at the 182nd Kingston Fall Fair Sept.13. The candy floss cart is one of many food vendors on site. There was also a variety of games, rides and entertainment.

By Gail Paquette

What could possibly be a better way to enjoy the cool crisp days of the fall season than with an old-fashioned country fair? Fall fairs are where ribbons are handed out to growers of the largest pumpkins and owners of the best calves. Live entertainment can be found in the grandstand, with horse and pony pulls, sheep herd-

ing displays and saddle horse shows as well. Food vendors entice with their sticky treats and the midway turns into a magical light show at night. Laughter is a common sound at the midway as children enjoy the familiar rides such as the ferris wheel, the merry-go-round, bumper cars as well as a few others.

There are always prizes being won at the classic carnival games like the ring toss,

shooting range and darts. Fall fairs welcome residents of communities year after year with the open arms of a family member and the similarities and expectations that run province wide make visitors feel at home. According to the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies, Ontario hosts 230 fairs and exhibitions yearly and more than half of them occur in the early fall.



Photo by Tom Hicken

Fair-goers speed along the Musik Express ride at the 182nd Kingston Fall Fair. The fair, located at the Kingston Memorial Centre, included a variety of games, rides and entertainment for all to enjoy.



Photo by Myriam Lublink

Krystal Seward, five, spent last Saturday afternoon at the Kingston Fall Fair with her mother Nikki Seward. The Sewards are visiting the area for a few days from Aylmer, Quebec to see Krystal's grandmother who used to work at the Kingston Fall Fair.