

Plenty to cheer about at K-Rock Centre

By Solana Cain

Gravity was defied Saturday at the K-Rock Centre in downtown Kingston as bodies flipped and flew through the air.

More than 100 teams from across Ontario, Québec and New York piled into the arena to compete in Cheer Evolution's first event of the season, Big East Blast.

Sloan Difabio started cheerleading when she was 11 years old. What attracted her to the sport was how "glamorous" the girls looked to her.

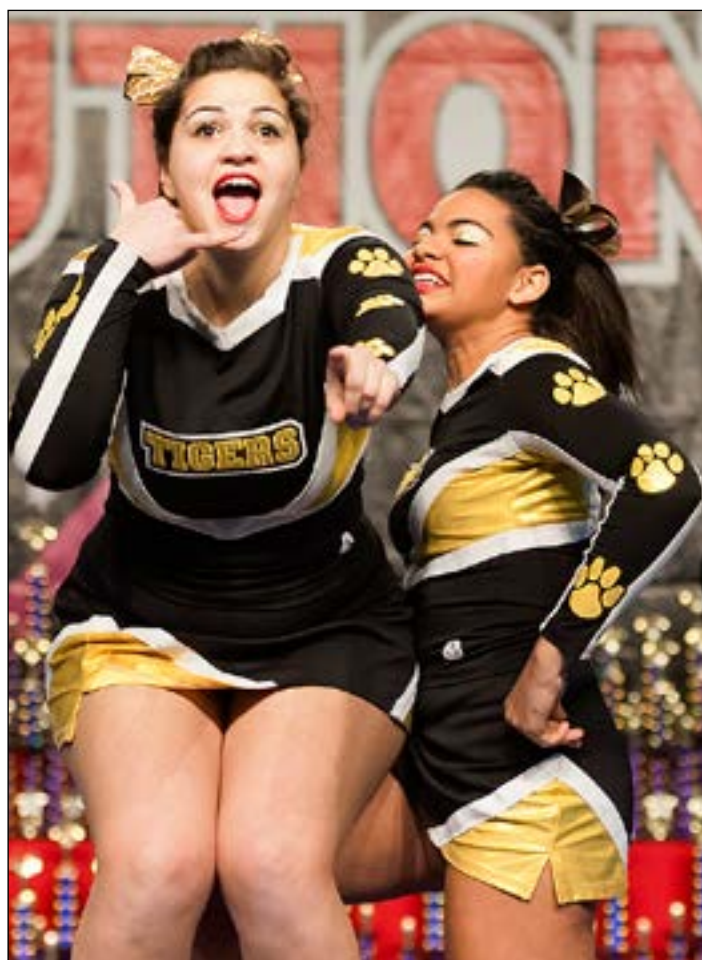
"I wanted to be a cheerleader so bad," said Québec native Difabio, "so I begged and begged my parents." Difabio, 16, and spends all her free time practising with her team, the Revolution Athletics Lady Gems.

Her team ranked fourth in their division.

"My favourite part about cheerleading is the team effort," she said. "When we're all together doing our routine, I forget about everything else."

Still sporting smiles, Difabio and the rest of her teammates climbed onto a Greyhound bus headed east for home.

Cheer Evolution's next competition will be held on Feb. 16 at York University in Toronto, after that will be the Ontario Championships in Kitchener on March 1-3, then Spring Classic in April and finally nationals in Niagara Falls on May 10-12.



Photos by Justin Chin

(Left) Cheerleaders from Uxbridge Secondary School cheerleading team, Tigers, cheer along with Call Me Maybe at the Canadian Cheer Evolution Saturday at K-Rock Centre. (Above) Lee Detlor, 22, of the Queen's University cheerleading team performs a toe-touch jump at the Canadian Cheer Evolution in Kingston. More than 100 teams competed at the weekend event.

Distracted drivers targeted in campaign

By Tom Hicken

The Belleville police's new Selective Traffic Enforcement Program for 2013 continues this month with the department targeting distracted driving violators.

The STEP program was put in place this year to raise awareness for traffic safety within the community. Starting with red light violations in January, each month introduces a new initiative with the goal to reduce damage, injury and even death from motor vehicle collisions.

Sgt. Tom Sweet of the Belleville police said they're looking at where collisions are prone and trying to lower them.

"What we're finding is more and more low speed rear-end

collisions near the Belle Boulevard area at North Front Street and Tracy and North Front streets - all of the high volume roadways where there's a lot of traffic movement," Sweet said.

One of the main causes for this, according to Sweet, is distracted drivers.

"A lot of people think it's just driving with cell phones," Sweet said, adding that even when on speakerphone, a cell phone user must be hands-free while driving.

However, distracted driving isn't limited to talking or texting on a cell phone. Watching an entertainment device, playing with an mp3 player, using a laptop, eating, and even holding a pet in your lap, are all considered forms of distracted driving.

"Occasionally we see people

driving down the road, turning around and dealing with their kids in the back while their vehicle is still in motion. We'll be looking at all of those things and try to end up with a better compliance rate than what we have at this point," Sweet said.

Sweet says the message is the same to everybody, but urges college students to pay particular attention.

"They all have cell phones and they're all really good at using them, but they need to do that when they're stopped - when they're not moving," Sweet said, adding it's best to pull over to the side of the road if necessary.

The department hopes to promote road safety through improving citizen's knowledge of traffic laws and the result of disobeying them, and from the

involvement of both the traffic management unit and front line officers.

"It's going to be high profile and high visibility. You'll see a lot of officers and if we're out there stopping people, hopefully the message will become clear," Sweet said.

Those choosing to ignore the ban on handheld devices or engage in other forms of distracted driving risk fines starting at \$155, while those charged with careless or dangerous driving could face fines up to \$2,000 with possible jail time.

"No text message is worth getting involved in a crash, possibly getting hurt or even worse. It literally takes two-seconds, but in those two-seconds, a lot of things can happen," Sweet said.

Van takes frosty plunge

By Marta Iwanek

Emergency crews were treated to a strange sight when they responded to a call on Friday afternoon on the Moira River.

Belleville resident James Browne was working on his gold Pontiac Trans Sport when its transmission failed and the vehicle rolled into the river behind his home.

No one was in the vehicle at the time. The van was Browne's only car. The fire department was called to help remove the vehicle, however, after an attempt to hook it to a tow truck, the van came loose and floated downstream. The van remains in the river north of the intersection of Moira Street East and Elm Street.

Belleville police Sgt. Sheri Meeks said the car is no longer a police matter. "It's been handed over to other agencies and I believe the Ministry of Environment is one of them."

In an email, Kate Jordan from the Ministry of Environment Communications Branch said the ministry's jurisdiction is in regards to any spills from the vehicle, however, its owner said the fuel level was low at the time. She said the Ministry has been in discussions with Belleville's fire department and the owner since Friday. She added the owner of the van has been advised the vehicle needs to be removed and, "Concern is being given to the strong river flow and ice in the Moira River."

Belleville Fire Department Acting Captain Rick Matthews said they are looking into the "safest, best options of removing the van," and want to look at all options before making their decision.

Sports facility a community success

By Nam Phi Dang

Belleville's recently completed Quinte Sports & Wellness Centre has brought people of all ages to one convenient location for broad recreational use.

Completed last August, this project, funded by the Ontario government, Government of Canada and the City of Belleville, brings members of the community under one roof for physical activities or casual leisure time.

Tracy Newton, the marketing and customer relations coordinator with the recreation, culture and community services department of Belleville, assisted with the development of the community centre.

Prior to being re-named the Quinte Sports & Wellness Centre, the Quinte Sports Centre was mainly used for its Olympic-sized Yardmen Arena, where all

of the Belleville Bulls home games were hosted, and the Wally Dever Arena, used by clubs and minor and junior hockey leagues.

"A business assessment and a leadership meeting called for a centralization of all of our facilities into one centre," said Newton.

The City of Belleville expanded the old sports centre with an additional 1700 square feet to create a new facility. Community funding from events like the Make-A-Splash campaign helped raise over \$100,000 towards the purchasing of aquatic equipment.

"We've added onto it which includes the aquatic centre which consists of three pools, two other NHL-sized arenas, which are rink A and B, a double and multi-purpose gymnasium, a youth room, a seniors' room that will be going online very soon, a dry land training studio, an

aerobics and yoga studio, a preschool room and an indoor running and walking track that is right above an ice rink and many public lounge spaces," said Newton.

Typically, memberships are required for individuals to use sports and health facilities. The Sports & Wellness Centre instead gives out free "wellness passports" for those who want to use the no-cost walk or run track and have a pay-as-you-go method instead.

"We are actually not membership based at all. Instead, we have something called a wellness passport, which is free for people to get into the walking and running track. From there, if they wish to participate in other activities, they can do pay as you go passes or register for programs which all goes onto their wellness passport. Right now, we have processed about over 11,000 passes and see a rise in rentals and programs," said Newton.

Marilyn and Ralph Jacklyn are Belleville residents who are taking advantage of the great offer. Both seniors, Marilyn insisted on using the free track after having hip surgery.

"After having my hip surgery, I took balance and strength classes where I heard this location had a track for free," said Marilyn.

Both the Jacklyns have used the track only four times but said they already enjoy the vast amount of activities offered at the centre.

Ralph said the city should be "quite proud of the centre."

"The most successful part about the centre is that it is accessible to all ages whether it is for preschool children to seniors. It also serves as a community centre, not just for Belleville but to cater to the whole Quinte region," said Newton.

Festival...

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Pancake breakfast and chili cook-off provide sustenance to participants

The only trouble that Gray and his fellow AOTS club members had this year was finding enough real maple syrup for all of the pancakes.

"We had a little trouble getting maple syrup this year because of the bad year last year and I think this year is going to be a bad year too," said Monte Moorcroft, former president of the AOTS club.

Standing outside watching pond hockey got a little chilly on Saturday, but the Community Pentecostal Church had a hot lunch and competition waiting for visitors.

The first annual chili cook-off was held in the warm, welcoming basement of the Pentecostal church. Each person who walked through the doors was offered four samples of the chili entered in the competition, a bottle of water, a ballot and a pencil.

This being the first year for the competition, Darren Snarr, the pastor at the church, said they were not sure how many people were going to show up, but they were being optimistic. About 50 people showed up to the cook-off.

"We're a ways away from the other events," Snarr said when asked why he thought not many people had shown up.

The winner was the chili made by Don Dowsell, second was the entry from Ken Deck, and third was made by the Community Pentecostal Youth. The church raised \$144.40 for the Stirling Community Food Cupboard. Each winner received a plaque.

Those who did show up to the event enjoyed trying all the different types of chili and the warm atmosphere.

Timmy Boyle, host of the UCB 102.3 morning show, Rise & Shine with Timmy & Anita, was there with his family.

"We're new to Stirling, so this is our first year, but we're enjoying it a lot."

Groundhog Fest did not end there. There was the Legion's meat draw and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church held a fish fry. If that wasn't enough excitement for one day, the Lions Club was hosting the Ken Kovach & Heartland Country band and having a dance above the arena.

Blood donations help in many ways

By David Zammit



Photo by Tom Hicken

Canadian Blood Services set up a clinic in Loyalist College's gymnasium for students and faculty to donate their blood on Friday. Loyalist holds a blood donor clinic every 56 days.

If you and the person beside you donated blood, one patient could receive brain surgery. That's all it takes to help someone in need of blood, whether it's for brain surgery, or if they have cut themselves and are in need of blood.

A single car accident victim can require as many as 100 pints of blood. Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. A total of 30 million blood components were transfused in the United States in 2006.

Loyalist College hosts a blood donor clinic every 56 days in the gymnasium.

"The target for this college is 72 people," said Ramona O'Shaughnessy, who works with Canadian Blood Services. "I would say we will reach about 65 to 66 here today, with a few dry spells," said O'Shaughnessy.

"I would say it was one of our better days at the college. Normally, we hit about 55 to 60 people at the most. The goal has always been a bit higher than it should be," said O'Shaughnessy.

The question everyone wants to know is how much blood do you give in total? "When you donate to Canadian Blood Services you give on average 10 per cent of the blood in your system," said O'Shaughnessy.

To book an appointment with Canadian Blood Services, go to www.blood.ca or 1-888-236-6283.