

Anglers brave cold at derby



Photo by Christopher King

Darren Phillips visited Merland Park in Picton, Ont. for the ice-fishing derby on Jan. 25, 2014. Phillips came from Montreal, Que. for the event and has been ice fishing since he was eight years old.

By Suzy Willig

Merland Park hosted its fifth-annual ice-fishing derby on the weekend, raising \$2,000 to give to the Kiwanis Club. The event began on Friday morning and ended Sunday.

One game that has drawn a particularly large amount of attention to the event is the topless ice-fishing game, called "Shirt Off-Fish On." This requires participants to remove their shirts for five minutes, while fishing. After the five minutes they're allowed to put their shirts back on and continue fishing.

The first person, a man from Vermont, to catch a perch won a \$2,500 set of golf clubs and the first 20 to catch perch also received smaller prizes.

"We had a bunch of guys doing Minnow to Win It... seeing how many minnows they could take from their mouth from one tray and put it in the other tray. It was a riot!" said Kim Lavers-Mulrooney, an organizer of the derby.

The last game of the day was pitch and release in which participants had to throw bean bags into corn hole boards, and there were prizes for winners of that game as well. The event had around \$10,000 worth of prizes and sponsors this year.

Tickets for the derby cost \$250 and included two nights of accommodation, two dinners, the first being a fish fry, and the second a roast beef or steak dinner, and three games. There were prizes for all three games, and also prizes for biggest fish of the day and biggest fish overall.

The derby also had a pretty good turnout this year, with families and anglers coming from all over Ontario and Quebec. A couple of people even drove out from Vermont. Lavers-Mulrooney said that around 60 derby participants came out and around 20 people came to just play the games.

"We're happy with the turnout, but yeah, the thing was, we opened it to the public this year, but just no one showed up because of the weather. We're hoping for decent weather next year," said Kevin Lavers, owner of Merland Park.

Jennifer and Kevin Lavers are the owners of the facility and run the event, and they live on the property. Events go on throughout the year, not just the ice-fishing derby in the winter. The resort and cottages are open year-round, and there are fishing charters that also happen at the park. Kevin is a charter captain, so he runs fishing charters in the warmer months.

"I'm from Montreal. I've been ice fishing since I was about eight years old," said one participant in the derby, Darren Phillips. Phillips also participated in the topless fishing contest.

The derby gets participants of all ages, generally starting at around 19 and going all the way to some people in their 60s and even 70s. Few women participate, but the Lavers encourage that they join, with prizes directed specifically to them.

Winterfest...

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The children's musical entertainer, Jake Diffy, drove to Brighton from Ajax to help make this event a successful and memorable one.

Hot dogs and hot chocolate were being served during the afternoon at the Brighton Community Centre, where many people gathered to play bingo. A marshmallow roast took place at Presqu'ile Outfitters.

However, some events have been rescheduled for next weekend, such as the oval ice racing and the snowshoe racing. Some other events did not happen at all, such as the hot air balloon ride.

Madder seemed disappointed when talking about how he may not be sporting his traditional snowman costume.

"It means a lot, especially to the children. It's great to be out there with the children but, hey, there's no children out today," Madder said.

Overall, the events that did take place were successful. People seemed to be in great spirits, despite the cancellations because of the weather conditions. It's all about getting the community together during the winter to share a laugh and spread a smile.

Debt...

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Although the province has invested roughly \$1 billion in its post-secondary students, what are the plans for those who aren't eligible for OSAP and therefore do not qualify for the tuition rebate?

Plans to help students who can't receive OSAP are on hold, said Duguid.

"We are looking at ways in the future of expanding the program further but any of the other initiatives that we've looked at are just too costly to undertake for the deficit where it's at today," Duguid said.

Although student debt is still an issue, youth in Ontario have an opportunity to gain work experience through the province's newest initiative.

The provincial fund was launched in September, and is a part of the Liberal government's Youth Jobs Strategy, a two-year, \$295-million project that aims to help 30,000 young people gain work experience or start their own businesses.

Duguid commended Loyalist College and Belleville on their success with the program.

"In a short four-and-a-half months, this employment centre has already landed 50 placements for our young people across this community," Duguid said.

Alzheimer Society benefits from Sunday walk

By Matthew Desouza

The Bay View Mall was taken over by the Alzheimer Society of Belleville-Hastings-Quinte for Sunday's 19th annual Walk for Memories.

About 150 participants came out for the event, which raised a total of \$32,293 from the Belleville region. All the money raised goes to fund the Alzheimer Society.

A total of \$64,300 was raised from Belleville, Bancroft and Trenton regions, \$5,700 shy of their \$70,000 goal.

Participants from across the region braved the massive amounts of snow to walk, strut and dance their way around the mall.

"All the money raised for Walk for Memories, which are brought in from the walkers who collect pledges, stays in the community and we use it to provide vital programs and services to people living with Alzheimer's and their families," said Walk for Memories event co-ordinator Hannah Brown.

"We find that most people that come down have a connection to Alzheimer's in some way. Someone in their life has been touched by it, so they want to

come and support in order to keep us in business here at the Alzheimer's Society," said Brown.

The event got underway at 10:30 a.m. and participants didn't stop moving and grooving until about noon.

Mayor Neil Ellis was also on hand to participate for his eighth year in a row, leading the walk with local MP Daryl Kramp.

"If you don't know someone that has it, it's a tragic disease and the amount of people affected every day, you've probably run into somebody that has this disease. With this event today, it brings awareness,

and public awareness will help not only the understanding of the disease but also the acceptance of caring for people," said Ellis.

The mayor said he was full of pride for his city during the event, thanking everyone for participating.

"These participants put the 'unity' in our 'community' and that's what makes our community. I've travelled throughout Ontario and seen events and talked to other politicians and I can tell you that Belleville has one of the greatest sets of volunteers and community support for organizations like this."

'Imagine' inspires Gleaners Food Bank gala

John and Yoko's bed-in basis for play shown at annual banquet

By Brianne Ste Marie Lacroix

"Imagine" a community free from hunger. That was the goal set out by Gleaners Food Bank with this year's annual banquet.

Approximately 150 guests filled the Banquet Centre on Saturday night for Gleaners second-annual gala dinner. Last year, the theme was "It's a Beautiful Life," based on the movie.

"This year, we kind of wanted to get away from that and do something a bit lighter and kind of fun and so Susanne

came up with the idea to do the great bed-in," said Kirsten Geisler, the director's assistant at Gleaners.

Susanne Quinlan, the director of operations, was inspired by Les Johnson's donations of original prints from the great bed-in of John Lennon and Yoko Ono in 1969. Quinlan wrote a script based on the original bed-in and Lise Lindenberg, from the Belleville Theatre Guild, put together a great cast of volunteers to act.

"When I wrote the script for the great bed-in play, instead of it being for war and peace, we made it for hunger, caring and sharing ... I wanted to do something different. I thought that having a play would make it different and something that people would want to come see," said Quinlan.

The celebration isn't necessarily about how much money is made at the fundraiser, but more about thanking the community for their support and donations throughout the years that have helped make the Gleaners Food Bank what it is today, Geisler added.

To thank companies that have been donating to the food bank since 1986, the 2014 Community Wing Awards were presented. There were plaques and pins representing a set of wings that were given to The Intelligencer, Avaya, Quinte Broadcasting, Redpath Sugar, ERB Transport, the Dinsmores, and Veridian.

According to Quinlan, this awards ceremony will be occurring for five years to thank companies for their support and generosity.

Quinlan estimated they would raise \$25,000 at the event.

Instead of having a traditional silent auction, organizers decided to sell \$25 boxes with the chance to win one of five prizes. Staying with the theme of the night, the grand prize was a two-night stay at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal where John and Yoko held their bed-in. Williams Hotels donated that prize.

"Gleaners' mission is to help the people of Belleville as well as those of the region. We had to do something to make sure that the warehouse was operational at all times and there are always expenses where floors need to be repaired and the shipping and receiving doors, there's always something... so we had to do something unique," said Quinlan.

Photo exhibit at Core Centre

By Paulina Uy

"Every town has a story, and every inhabitant of the village has a story, a personal story."

That's the message of Daniel Casares Roman, 37, of Spain, who is exhibiting his work at the Core Arts and Culture Centre, 223 Pinnacle St.

His exhibit is open from Jan. 17 to 31, Monday to Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Roman is a travelling photographer and his exhibit is comprised of 25 photographs taken from various countries around the world for the past 20 years.

He focuses on covering anthropological stories - different cultures, tribes, beliefs, religions, lifestyles, etc. For a multimedia version of the story, go to:

<http://www.qnetnews.ca/?p=33771>

Question: A recent study out of Princeton predicts that Facebook will lose 80 per cent of its users by 2017. Would you consider ditching Facebook? Why or why not?



Bryan Squires, 17, "No, it's just the way I get a hold of people. A lot of people I know don't have cell phones, so I use Facebook to get a hold of them."



Brandon Bisson, 22, "I would ditch it. Facebook is not something I utilize for social means. I use it to stay in contact with certain information, like gaming and other hobbies."



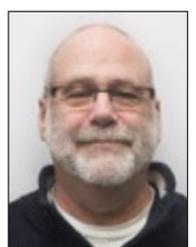
Megan Wallace-Burnett, 22, "I never really use Facebook for anything. It was like MSN. They will come out with something new eventually."



Andy Clarke, 50, "Sure, I'd consider ditching it. I have two Facebook accounts, one for social stuff and one that's professional."



Gail Genereaux, 50, "Right now, no. If I need to get in touch with students using Facebook, I can. Seeing as students tend to look at their Facebook more than I do, I can get in touch



Claude Garipey, 50, "I would ditch it if nobody was using it. Every so often a new social media type pops up, even though you end up doing the same things on the different sites."