



Photo by Elaine Bombay

Saikou Saho answers a question from the audience while Fiona Fountain, 9, waits for the drumming to begin again during a workshop at the Drum Nation Festival in Madoc last Saturday. Saho has demonstrated African drumming at the annual festival since its beginning six years ago. For more photos, see page 3.

Taking a look behind the scenes of Argonauts training camp

By Andrew Lahodyskyj

Many people have watched Toronto Argonauts games, but few know what it's like to be behind the scenes of the team.

The players have so much dedication to this sport that they love and for the team they play for, it makes getting up at the crack of dawn worth it for all of them.

It's a brisk early morning at the start of June. Players make their way to the dining hall through the dew-covered grass to start breakfast. It's 5:45 a.m. The Argos are hosting their training camp at York University for the first time.

The thought of being up at this hour might make most people cringe, but for these professional athletes, it's just another morning of practice. Everyone stands in line in the cafeteria chatting about the plays they are learning to run, sports games that were on, or even the Kardashians.

It feels like a tight-knit family waiting for their meals. Most players come out with plates stacked on each other full of steak, eggs, hash browns, yogurt with nuts, fruit, and two glass of milk or juice.

Once the players finish scarfing down their food and the cafeteria is spotless, the players and coaches make their way to the field to start one of the two practices of the day. Once the players are dressed, everyone piles onto the field and gets together with teammates who play the same position: QBs with other QBs, running backs with other running backs.

They start running some basic drills as head coach Scott Milanovich makes his rounds chatting with players to see how they are feeling that day. After finishing his rounds and talking to the other coaches, the whistle is blown and everyone is lined up, defence on one half and offence on the other, for stretches. The new strength and conditioning coach, Chad Kackert, a former Argos star running back, leads everyone in some key stretches to make sure everyone is limber and won't hurt themselves during practice.

Throughout the rest of the morning, players run drills with their teammates who share the same position, putting 110 per cent effort into every little detail. Closer to the end of practice, the offence and defence come together and run plays that they have been learning during the off season. This brings some high intensity into the camp and really shows what this team is made of.

Despite all the blood, sweat and tears that has been invested by the players and coaches, there is no guarantee that the Argos will bring home the Grey Cup this season. Fans can only hope and pray their team will be in the top spot again.

For a photographic look at the Argos training camp, turn to page 2.

Festival celebrates culture

By Elaine Bombay

Despite the cold temperatures and pouring rain, about 200 people attended the sixth annual Drum Nation Festival in Madoc last Saturday.

"The Drum Nation Festival is a celebration of creativity and culture," said Deborah Richardson, one of the event's organizers. "The drum is the tool to celebrate culture. It's also a great way to bring the community together and have fun."

The theme of the festival was "uniting humanity through culture and creativity."

The festival grew out of Terry and Deborah Richardson's love of drums. They held a drumming circle in their home for family and friends who shared their passion for the instruments. As they

'Sound is our medicine. Sound can get us to a peaceful place.'

Dawn James

saw what drumming did for people, the couple began buying drums as gifts for their family, said Richardson. The family's Christmas celebration became a drumming circle.

Eventually, the drumming circle became a festival in the Richardsons' backyard. When it became too big for their home, the festival moved to O'Hara Mills. Two years ago, the festival moved again, to Whytock Park, to accommodate the crowds.

Richardson said that they anticipated up to 3,000 people to attend this year, but the poor weather was the likely reason for the much lower numbers. Richardson said she was still impressed by the number of people who attended and the vendors who braved the cold and the rain.

The day was divided into a series of performances by musicians, belly dancers and sound healers.

Dawn James demonstrated the singing bowl and sound healing. She used the singing bowls to bring healing by affecting the vibration frequency in the body.

Prayer, affirmations, and simple acts of kindness can raise the frequency, she told the audience, before leading them in a healing mantra for themselves and others. "Sound is our medicine. Sound can get

us to a peaceful place," James said.

Saikou Saho, a Toronto-based drummer originally from Gambia, led over 60 attendees in an African drumming workshop. Armed with djembe drums, both adults and children beat out African rhythms for two hours.

Saikou has been part of the festival for all six years.

"The drum is a sound we are all familiar with — from inside the mother's womb. Everyone can relate to the sound. The sound is not foreign. Rhythm is not foreign to anyone," he said.

"The power of this festival is healing. One lady told me that she has never had so much fun. People don't even feel the pain of hitting their hand on a drum for two hours."

Residents worry about impact of quarry

Citizens Against Melrose Quarry seek appeal from ministry

By Micah Bond

Area residents say dry wells may become a reality if Long's Quarry continues to pump groundwater away to facilitate deeper extraction.

The quarry, located on Shannonville Road, has been pumping water towards the bay since the mid-90s and members of the community are concerned that if it continues, the water table could sink and cut off the water supply, said Susan Munro.

The proponent, CH Demill Holdings Inc, has conducted geological studies of the area and concluded that this is not a significant risk, however, peer review done by Malroz Engineering has indicated otherwise. Malroz Engineering was hired by the organization Citizens Against Melrose Quarry.

Munro is the chair of Citizens Against Melrose Quarry which is currently waiting for permission to appeal the Ministry of the Environment's June decision to renew the quarry's Permit To Take Water or PTTW.

Munro said she is afraid that there could be a 'pop-up' which is when the quarry floor buckles and water rushes up into the quarry. If this happens, she said it is possible that the surrounding water table would sink below the level of wells in the area.

This happened at a quarry near Kingston, she said. "The water drained away and the city of Kingston had to pipe water out to residents." She said it's a similar type of terrain in and around Long's Quarry.

In a statement to the Environmental Review Tribunal, John Pyke, an environmental geoscientist with Malroz

Engineering, said:

"Despite the terms and conditions contained within the new PTTW, the large-scale dewatering activities at the existing Long's Quarry and/or proposed Melrose Quarry have the clear potential to cause unacceptable or significant impacts to local domestic wells and Blessington Creek.

"The proponent's claims that quarry dewatering will not cause adverse groundwater or surface water impacts have not been adequately substantiated by scientifically sound investigations, and appear contrary to the proponent's own modelling which predicts impacts upon nearby domestic wells."

However, Tony Fleming, a lawyer hired by the company, said that in consideration of the technical data he's seen, the possibility of a pop-up is not an issue at Long's Quarry.

"The water that we're talking about is a very deep aquifer and it's also what they call a highly mineralized aquifer which means the water is not of good quality," he said. He added he was not aware of any, or very few wells, that actually tap that aquifer. "Most of the wells that are in the area are what are called shallow wells," he said.

Fleming said that if the aquifer was adversely affected, it would only impact on a very small number of wells, if any.

An aquifer is a layer of permeable rock, gravel or sand that can absorb or contain water.

Munro said that in 1994 there actually was a small pop-up. Because of this, their permit was not renewed in 2005. The permit was not reissued until 2012, she said.

"If the MOE was doing their job and there was a pop-up and they denied him a permit to take water, what changed? Did he come to them a number of years later and say 'Look I've got all these studies?' No, they gave



Photo by Micah Bond

Sue Munro is the president of the organization Citizens Against Melrose Quarry which is fighting against the proposed quarry near Shannonville Road and the water-taking permit for the nearby Long's Quarry. Residents are concerned that quarrying below the water table could dry up the well water that is essential to their farms and homes.

him a permit to work while he got the studies. Is that right?" she said.

Asked if the water table would recover in the case of a pop-up she said: "I think you need to get on your knees and ask the good Lord above because in Westbrook it didn't come back. The pop-up that happened over here in 1994, it did come back. Nobody knows."

Munro said she would be more comfortable if the proponent was carrying insurance to cover the cost of

drilling new wells and installing filtration systems should the water table drop. "We wouldn't have so much to harp on, would we? But that isn't the case," she said.

CH Demill Holdings is also going through the process to be approved to build a second adjacent quarry, which is being called the Melrose Quarry.

The proposed quarry would be about 60 acres, essentially doubling the size and output of the current

quarry and potentially causing even more danger of dewatering, said Munro. Both quarries would be producing about 500,000 tons of aggregate a year.

She said she was also concerned about the increased number of loaded dump trucks that would be needed. There are already about 96 trucks leaving the quarry and driving past Tyendinaga Public School each day, she said.

"That is an accident waiting for a place to happen."