

Club for women offers social time and travel

By Michele Weisz

Women do not have to become members of the Quinte Chicks Social and Travel Club, or even have an interest in travel to attend monthly club meetings, but for those looking for female travel partners and fellow adventure-seekers, membership will bring together women who share a passion for travel and for new life experiences.

The new club held its inaugural meeting Wednesday at 6 p.m. with drinks and hors d'oeuvres at Sans-Souci at 240 Front St. in downtown Belleville. Originally formed more than a decade ago by travel agency owner Sherri McCarten, travel agent Jennifer Hunter has reinstated the women's only social gathering.

"There is nothing like it that I know of in the Belleville area," Hunter said. "There are a lot of business networking groups for women in the area, but no social ones."

The social club is an opportunity for the women of Belleville and the surrounding area to mingle and socialize each month. Within an hour of being introduced to one another, the women were chatting like they had known each other for years. The club's motto is "Live your best life." At one point, the original club had more than 100 members. Hunter said she hopes to see numbers like that again. Over 20 women attended Wednesday and a trip to Pennsylvania has already been booked for April 7. Jen McKay recently moved to the area from Kitchener and thought that the club would be a great opportunity to make friends.

Hunter said the club fills a need in the community for women "who often travel solo but don't necessarily want to travel alone."

Market research firm Pepperdine, Yesawich, Brown and Russell (since renamed Y Partnership) reported in 2006 that women have different travel preferences than that of men. Women tend to choose hotels with ambiance and value extra security measures. Hunter agreed. She believes that aside from the safety factor of travelling in female groups, women have different interests than men do, such as touring historical or quaint locations. She said that these trips will be customized to suit the tastes of the members while providing them with unique travel adventures.



Photo by Michele Weisz

(From left) Sandi Wight, Katherine Kimball, Sherri McCarten and Vicky Jukosky share photographs and compare phones Wednesday. The ladies were at Sans-Souci to socialize and meet new friends. The event was the first meeting of the new Quinte Chicks Social and Travel Club, a monthly women-only meeting for travel enthusiasts in the Quinte area.

"It's nice to find people who are like-minded... Who share the same travel philosophy," said Rachel Hughes. "It opens you up to new destinations that you wouldn't have thought of before."

There is a growing trend in women-only vacations. Destination travel for women has become an extended version of the girls' weekend getaway. There are more than 500, 000 results on Google

for a "women-only travel" search. More women are looking for opportunities to travel together and more travel agencies are booking these types of trips. According to Hunter, women choosing to travel together has become a niche industry. In 2013 an American Express survey reported a huge spike in the amount of girlfriend getaways with 56 per cent of women travellers taking women-only

trips, and a 15 per cent increase in trips booked between 2012 and 2013.

Travel writer Marybeth Bond, a National Geographic author and contributor to numerous news publications, has said on The Gutsy Traveler website that "Women— young, old, single, married, widowed and gutsy are fuelling an explosive growth in travel industry."

Women of all ages, both married and single came to the inaugural event.

Each month the group will meet for drinks allowing the women of Belleville the opportunity to form new friendships and meet fellow travellers.

"We're really focusing on the friendship and the social aspect...The travel is secondary," said Hunter.

Construction to begin in downtown revitalization

By Jeremy McKay

Downtown Belleville will see construction beginning in May as part of the first phase for the Downtown Revitalization Project.

The Bay Bridge Road CP Rail overpass and Dundas Street West reconstruction projects haven't moved since they were cancelled by city council on Nov 10, of last year.

The revitalization project was delayed in September when construction tenures for Front Street & Side Street were \$8.2

million over the approved \$16 million budget.

To resolve this, the project managers of Build Belleville have split the downtown project into three pieces.

"Smaller contracts mean we can get more bids on the contract. We can get more competition," said Denis Pianarosa, project manager of Build Belleville.

Pianarosa went on to explain that the contracts are now five million a piece, rather than a large 16 million contract. Downtown Revitalization Projects to be completed in 2015 are on Front Street

from Victoria to Pinnacle, and Station Street from Pinnacle to Church.

The Bay Bridge Road CP rail overpass and Dundas Street West projects are currently under review.

"We haven't defined a timeline for retendering it. The intent is to get this project back out this year," said Stan Czychyzyro, project manager of engineering & development services. The city recently submitted a Small Communities Fund grant application to help fund the Dundas West Street project. Czychyzyro went onto explain the project design is

under review and a report is to be provided soon.

The mayor's downtown taskforce was dismantled after the Mayor Taso Christopher was elected and replaced with the mayor's implementation team.

This was a follow-through of one of Christopher's campaign promises.

"It's not just about the downtown revitalization project, it's the entire scope of the Build Belleville project," said Christopher, he went on to explain that the new implementation team will focus on all the projects under the Build Belleville um-

brella. The new team consists of Couns. Jack Miller, Couns. Garnet Thompson and Mayor Christopher.

This new team will be handling all 22 Build Belleville projects at once and meeting on a weekly basis.

The public will be updated on all 22 projects on a weekly basis through the Build Belleville website: buildbelleville.ca. A public meeting will be held on Feb. 4 at the Build Belleville Project Building on 116 Pinnacle St. to update city residents on the status of where the Build Belleville Project is at.

Group offers no judgment, harassment

By Sarah Robertson

The Rainbow Alliance group at Loyalist is a place free of judgment and harassment based on gender and sexual identity.

Sarah Ogden is the mind and wellness practitioner at Loyalist College. She also facilitates the Rainbow Alliance meetings that are held weekly at the school.

The Rainbow Alliance is a safe place for LGBTQ, (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning) students and their allies.

"I think it's really important because although our society at large, and our school, have come a long way in being

welcoming and inclusive, there is still some homophobia that exists," said Ogden.

"Again, both on campus and in larger society, so I think having a group like this in time will help eliminate that. And it offers a safe space for those who don't have a safe space to be themselves."

Kendall Veen, who has been a member for two months, agrees that it's a safe place for students to be themselves.

"I think the Rainbow Alliance is important because it gives LGBTQ students somewhere to talk about situations and/or difficulties they go through as they discover and become established in their gender and sexual identity.

"You walk in the room for meet-

ings and you always feel welcome and like you can talk about anything. Everyone is really supportive and even though I've only been going for a few months, I've made great friends and learned more about the LGBTQ community."

The club is planning its next event Feb. 25. Pink shirt day is in support of anti-bullying. Last year, the club was successful in hosting a bake sale and movie night as well as selling t-shirts. All proceeds went to Three Oaks Shelter and The Boys and Girls Club.

If students wish to join the Rainbow Alliance, you can contact Ogden by phone at 613-969-1913, ext. 2675, or by e-mail at sogden@loyalistic.on.ca.

Sleeveless shirts not welcome in Loyalist College gym

By Daniel Luk

Over the past three weeks Loyalist College, a new no sleeveless shirt policy has been in effect, but there is confusion around the policy.

"I think it's really stupid, and an over-reaction, probably just to one person that didn't approve of it," says Adam Strickland, the captain of the varsity volleyball team.

"I do not go to the gym to show off my body in these athletic tops. I wear them for its purpose. And it is unfair that I can no longer wear my tops to the gym. Its extremely hot and I am a runner and now I am forced to wear something I am not used to running in," says active gym member Alyssa Loiselle

Asked about the new policy, Cory Mestre, the head of the fitness centre, said the reason for the new policy wasn't necessarily about the appearance of the members, but was aimed at minimizing the possibility of spreading infection.

Although sleeveless shirts used to be allowed at the gym, staff found that people were putting strains on the rules by exposing their midriff region, and even extending the armholes on their sleeveless shirts revealing their ribs and hips, he added.

Mestre said he isn't a doctor, however, his understanding of infection transmission is that if a carrier of a skin virus has a break in their skin, they cannot only

transmit the virus through skin-to-skin contact, but also through contact with shared equipment.

He also stated that although this occurrence is seen more in hospitals, it's not completely uncommon in fitness centres.

As of Dec. 5, the gym advertised the new policy's arrival on Jan. 5. Through the Loyalist College Athletics social media and signage, the gym has attempted to notify members that the dress code will no longer include sleeveless shirts.

Mestre explains the viruses aren't subjected to seasonal occurrences like common winter illnesses. It's the gym's responsibility to minimize the risk of spread by putting together the best practice system possible as a necessary precaution.

"We try to be as welcoming and accommodating as we can be. We're not telling someone you can't work out here anymore. It's just that we have this policy in place for the well being of all our members.

"We appreciate that it can be an inconvenience if they forgot to pack a T-shirt, if they grabbed a sleeveless or things like that, but all we say is to go get a T-shirt and come back.

"We want to have you here. We want to have you working out and we want to see you pursuing your health goals. You just have to do it wearing a sleeved shirt," said Mestre.

Skating...

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"I definitely have to focus on what's happening in the moment rather than focus on everything I have to do. I have to compartmentalize the things I have to do for skating and competing,

"When I'm competing, I just focus on the competing, and then I'll worry about everything else. And now that I'm done competing, it's like: exams, okay I need to focus on them now."

Kerri Jianopoulos, Emma's mother, had nothing but compliments to say about her

daughter.

"She's a great girl and she's very dedicated. She works very hard at everything she does, she's very disciplined and she likes to set goals for herself"

Emma puts much work into not only her skating, but also everything else she does, her mother said.

"Emma always has such a positive outlook. She's very enthusiastic about everything and she always has a great attitude"

Emma, who's reached her first-ever national appearance, said she is very pleased with her performance this year, and plans to continue competing in the future.



Photo by Giovanni Capriotti

Hats off

Marina Boretski poses in front of a mirror in her shop in Belleville. Passion for hats has always been part of her life. She received her first hat as a gift from her grandmother. Ever since, she has grown into a fine hat maker and a vintage apparel aficionado. To see more on Boretski, go to: <http://www.qnetnews.ca/?p=47834>