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**WDRA**

WESTMEATH & DISTRICT  
RECREATION ASSOCIATION

## JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

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### YOGA RETURNS

FOLLOWING PUBLIC HEALTH  
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Wednesday, January 6, 2021

Westmeath Rec. Centre upstairs hall

10 week session - \$80.00

(can be paid in two instalments)

No drop ins allowed

If interested please call Danielle

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### Tree Lighting at Westmeath

At 6:30 pm December 12<sup>th</sup>, outside the Westmeath community Hall, there was a steady drizzle of rain. In virtual darkness Mayor Mike Moore strode onto the soggy ball field and began a countdown. As if by magic, a Christmas tree lit up with its many strings of lights, multi-coloured balls and a prominent blinking star on the top. Horns honked and people cheered – the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual WDRA Christmas Tree Lighting event was underway.

Opening remarks were given by organizer Lorraine Lynch. She thanked everyone for coming, acknowledged her assistants, the WDRA and Ernie with his music machine. 20 cars were parked facing the fences and others standing nearby, made around 70 adults and children out to celebrate. After Lorraine, Mayor Moore gave a welcoming speech that included “a stern warning to stay safe during the pandemic.” Neil Nicholson welcomed everyone on behalf of the WDRA, followed by Pastor Anita Walling with readings and prayers.

Ernie Thomas (Abby Lane), our popular DJ from LaPasse, brought his music system in his van and belted out Christmas Carols.

Many of the children brought balls to hang on the tree. There was hot chocolate and delicious homemade cookies for everyone, prepared by Brenda and Marie-Paul, as well as candy canes for the kids, handed out by Santa's helper. Anne Bromley and the 4-H Club handled the Food Bank donations.

Despite the rain and an uncertainty of what the weather might be (and the missing microphone), the evening was more than successful.

**WISHING EVERYONE A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



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### An Overview of the Hall Entranceway Project

The new entranceway/ramp to the second floor Hall was triggered by an Ontario Trillium Grant of \$150,000 in February 2019. The project was determined to begin September 1<sup>st</sup>, so not to interfere with scheduled events at the Hall.

The project grew more complex with the addition of an extended roof - money provided by Whitewater Region for it. The design was engineered by Jp2g. Afterwards they sent out the design for bids. Wade Construction was selected as the contractor.

It was taking time for engineering drawings to be converted to shop drawings. The anticipated completion date of Nov 30<sup>th</sup> was looking doubtful. Knowing that a Christmas Dinner & Dance was important to be held, a compromise was made with the contractor to at least have entry into the Hall for that occasion – which was acceptable to the organizers.

That date too became elusive, despite every attempt to make it happen. Finally, the Christmas event was cancelled. Shortly after, the overflow of an unexpected artisan well put a hold on progress for more than a few weeks. Winter set in – now too cold for welding. A decision by the WDRA to halt production until warmer weather was based on saving costs.

Covid-19 arrived in March and everything was shut down for a few months. Up until then, 90% of activities were being held with the help of the back-emergency stairs. They unfortunately, were not compatible for everyone.

The shutdown was lifted . Construction began at what seemed a slower pace but no matter: no one used the Hall until Yoga did beginning in October. All the questions of ‘when and why’ had ceased and so did the interest of our community in returning to the Hall.

On behalf of myself and our WDRA committee, we apologize for this 4-month project extending into one taking well over a year. We understand community frustrations, we had them too. Soon, the consequences will be long forgotten. Then we can appreciate and make use of this attractive barrier-free entrance into the community Hall for many years to come.

**Note:** This project in part helped by Delta Bingo

### Westmeath will have a Rink!

Anne Bromley dropped the puck on this project and in January blades will be clicking. The idea of an ice rink on a baseball diamond introduced on Facebook got plenty of response and volunteers to make it happen. As Anne said in her presentation to the WDRA, “It wouldn’t be fair to go a whole year without any ice.” Untraditional, rather than a surface rink, Hughie Martin’s suggestion to dig instead and Benji McMullen did just that, piling the earth around the perimeter. A few places will be leveled to allow entry for skaters (maybe on a used carpet to keep the skates clean), clearance of snow and flooding. Shane Bromley will make the accesses as well as clearing snow off the ice after major snow falls. We could use some volunteers to clear (shovel or your own snow blower) after smaller snow falls. We are also still looking for someone near to the rink you might have a 4 wheeler to pull our “Zamboni”. Feel free to contact Anne Bromley [anneb@nrtco.net](mailto:anneb@nrtco.net)

The initial flood will done by the fire department, led by Darren Rabb. What is really needed is a dedicated flooding mechanism. Everything from a barrel being pushed around the with a controlled amount of water (like was done in the day at a previous rink) or a modified Zamboni -type flooding mechanism which could be a unit attached to a tractor or a 4-wheeler. Michael LaGrotta is looking into the engineering of a solution. He is also preparing a \$2,500 grant to cover the overall cost, to present to WWR. Last of all, a porta potty either loaned from WWR or rented from McCrea’s will be positioned nearby. In fact, an insulated covering is available for it to keep you know what a little warmer.

The silver lining in this is when spring comes, the dirt will be moved back over the infield of the ball diamond – which badly needed an overhaul.

## Westmeath Captures Dougherty Cup

By **Lorne Spotswood**

It was 1967 and 450,000 U.S. troops were in Viet Nam, Muhammad Ali was stripped of his title for refusing to enlist in the U. S. Army, the first heart transplant took place in South Africa, G. M. introduced the Chevy Camaro and Lulu hit the charts with “To Sir with Love”. A new car cost \$14,250, average income was \$7,500, gas was 33 cents a gallon and a movie ticket was \$1.25.

In March of that same year, the Westmeath senior team of the Laurentian Hockey League won the Dougherty Cup. Here is the story.

Westmeath and Micksburg had advanced to the finals, beating out the other teams; Foresters Falls, Beachburg, Cobden and Queen’s Line. The games were held in the Beachburg arena until the ice became too soft; there was no artificial ice in the arena. Bryson Buchanan would scrape the ice between periods with his tractor cutting down the slush ice. When the ice became too soft, the series was moved to the P.M.C. in Pembroke. Art Bogart was manager of the P.M.C. and he split the gate receipts 60/40, 60 for the P.M.C. and 40 for the teams. In those days he was often referred to as 60/40 Boggy. The series had quite a following, up to 900 to 1000 fans came to watch the games.

Micksburg had taken the first three games and the team was confident that they would win the 4th game and take home the Cup. So sure, of a victory that a party was already planned with plenty of food prepared. Westmeath coach, Archie Blackwell, had a plan to advance to the 7th game. His plan worked and Westmeath tied the series. It was now down to the wire. Who would win the seventh game?

Micksburg had some excellent players; Mickey Donnelly and Ray Steege to mention two. Mickey Donnelly was a great stick-handler and Ray Steege had an extremely powerful shot. Blackwell’s plan was to keep Donnelly and Steege covered so when they were on the ice, he sent out a cover to prevent them from having too many opportunities to score a goal against Bill Jeffrey. The slogan was “stay with Steege”

Bill Laronde was one of Westmeath’s players on the 3rd line; however, he had a weak shot. Emmet Ethier, Westmeath’s top defenseman, dubbed him “tap-tap Laronde”. The final game went scoreless until the third period. Low and behold, tap-tap Laronde popped the puck past the Micksburg goalie. The game ended shortly and Westmeath went home with the Dougherty Cup; Micksburg went home to cold beans. The winning team had a dinner and reception in the Westmeath arena to celebrate their victory. Bill Kutschke, of C.H.O.V. in Pembroke, was the guest speaker.

The Westmeath team consisted of mostly young players, age 17 to 40. Brian Tate was the youngest at age 17 and Emmett Ethier was the oldest at age 40. His brother Frank and Sylvester Dupuis were a couple of years younger than Emmett. Emmett Ethier would drive up from his Kingston job to play. He was a tremendous defenseman, very solid on his skates. It was unwise for a player to attempt to stickhandle around Ethier. Many tried and several went over the boards. They then began to shoot before encountering Ethier at the blue line. Emmett Ethier had an opportunity to try out for an N.H.L. team; however, circumstances regarding transportation prevented him from making the try-out. He was N.H.L. material.

One of the Westmeath players was Patrick McCann. His family had left Montreal and moved to Westmeath. He was an excellent player and played the first line with Lorne Spotswood and Brian Tate. Spotswood and Tate would feed McCann the puck and many scores were made.

The second line of Frazer Barr, Bill Couturier and Frank Ethier scored many goals, but those players kept Donnelly and Steege from scoring. The 3rd line, consisting of Sylvester Dupuis, Pat Kelly and Bill Laronde was quite a bit weaker but Blackwell used the line on occasion.

Westmeath had a strong defense; Lorrain (Fatty) Gervais, Emmett Ethier, Bernard Ethier and Bill Robinson. Frank Ethier, who was a great stick-handler, often filled in on defense.

The senior team continued for several years; however, the team never won the cup again.

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