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WESTMEATH & DISTRICT  
RECREATION ASSOCIATION



## JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER

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The Westmeath & District Recreation Association (WDRA) and the Whitewater Region lost a valuable employee recently to an illness. Melle De Hann's mechanical skills and tenacity will be sorely missed at the Westmeath Arena & Community Hall. Melle was what one we would call a 'Gem' of an employee – multi-skilled and reliable. Melle came on board some years ago as our Operations Manager responsible for all mechanical operations and maintenance activities in the ice-arena, the upstairs hall and the ball diamond. He maintained a good relationship with community members and users of the facilities. He was also on-call for emergencies after-hours and to work unusual hours where necessary. Being on the WDRA committee, I know for a fact his numerous extra trips to and from Lapasse were not charged for. The greatest percentage of work effort occurs during the ice-making and ice-maintenance time of the year. Melle adjusted quickly to this new role. He had natural talents that were fully developed over time by studying 'Refrigeration and Ice Making' courses until he was certified understood every in and out.

President Brenda Grady thought of Melle as a smart, hard working man, with a kind heart and an incredible attention to detail. She will miss him both as an employee at the Westmeath Rink & Hall and as a friend. She has wonderful memories of how good he was to her son. He was always there when catering an event at the Hall or any WDRA function - to make sure everything was in order. Melle attended the WDRA monthly meetings bringing up issues that needed resolution. When necessary, he would get quotes from contractors to complete the job.

Neil Nicholson was most familiar with Melle's work schedule and described the following. There was not a single thing that was done at the Westmeath Recreation Centre that Melle did not have a finger in. In fact, it's hard to think of the Recreation Centre without thinking of Melle. He was there caring for that building and the ice every day through the winter and in between fishing trips in the summer. He knew the compressors in the mechanical room by the sounds they made, the Zamboni had been stripped down and rebuilt enough times that he had memorized each nut and bolt, and the quality of ice he made was second to none. But he didn't stop there, he supported every WDRA event or hall rental. He was there to unplug a toilet, rig up the two wells to ensure the kitchen didn't run out of water, adjust the AC, catch a mouse, change a bulb, meet the piano tuner or make sure all the doors were locked up. In fact, it was rare that I ever went to the rink or the hall and didn't see or meet Melle there. He took absolute pride in taking care of the facility for no other reason than he wanted to see it used for the community, specifically for the kids in the community. Even with his sometimes-gruff approach, it was really only a show. His heart was so big I often saw it overflow. Melle and I worked on many projects together, spending hours getting things exactly right and chatting about the next project. His fingerprints are everywhere in that building, his voice will echo on the ice or from behind the stage, but most importantly he will remain in my memory and in the hearts of many of the members of our community; where all the things he did for us really made the most impact.

Melle and his wife Eileen supported nearly all the events that took place in the Hall. Eileen was involved as volunteer in many of the functions. Noticeably Melle showed a softer side when chatting the women. One of his favourites was Hazel Bromley. Hazel said about Melle, "He was always so kind and polite to talk too. He was generous to others in the community if he could help out. The Westmeath rink was lucky to have him." Melle looked forward for time to fish. As Phil Cottrell remarked, "Melle loved his fishing and loved looking after his boat. He fished a lot with his brother Corny as well as with Keith Bromley. He particularly liked to catch Walleye and Pike". With Melle's passing the Recreation Centre lost both his talents and his support.



*Welcome!* to the Community – the Pelkey Family

Laura and Cody Pelkey will have lived in Westmeath 10-years this December and love it here. They spend lots of time in their boat, fishing the Ottawa River and also taking in outdoor adventures around Renfrew County. They were previously at Garrison Petawawa. Four children 20, 9- and 7-year-old twins.

A special greeting to Laura who has joined the WDRA committee as our newest Director at Large. She has been an office administrator for 7-years at a framing construction business in Beachburg.

The home is also a place for unwanted dogs to decompress while they find their forever homes.

Cody is a full-time plumber apprentice as well with the Westmeath Firefighters earlier. He grew up in Winchester.

Laura was born in Perth where her father was in the OPP and involved with OPP dogs. Her parents are now retired and living in Kemptville.

The Pelkey's have been involved in softball before Covid and eager to see it resume. They love living in Westmeath and one day hope to purchase land for a farm.

#### FOR HALL BOOKINGS

Please call  
Marg Gervais  
613-587-4838



Thank  
You

To the  
Township of  
Whitewater Region  
for the new benches in the  
area  
Looks great!



#### TOUR DE WHITEWATER NEW UPDATE:

The Tour de Whitewater, scheduled for July 2021 has been **CANCELLED** due to COVID. However, the **Bike Routes** will be posted on the FACEBOOK T de W blogspot for informal rides beginning at the Rec. Centre. (Google Tour de Whitewater blogspot)

At the **end of LOCKDOWN** – September 15, **toilet facilities** will be available for community use. An **Accessible Portable Toilet** will be installed along the Ball Park fence, along with a picnic table for very small groups, to encourage outdoor activity in these Covid times. These are available for anyone in the community.

We hope to install cameras to discourage vandalism; **PARENTS PLEASE ASSIST US** with this one.

#### MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR:

**TOUR DE WHITEWATER 2022**

**Saturday, July 9, 2022**

**TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE THIS HAPPEN!**

Please note: change of date from May to end of Lockdown for access to toilet facilities through to September



#### 4-H Barn Quilts

It was a Renfrew County 4-H project in which about 30 kids from all over the county participated.

Each member made three 2 ft. x 2 ft. squares. They kept one but the other two went into bigger quilts, the quilts actually made from plywood. These quilts became part of the barn quilt trail being developed in Renfrew county by the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association.

The paint was largely donated by the women who had gotten together in long weekend in May in 2019, to create barn quilts for display all over the county to help create a country-wide barn quilt trail. It is still ongoing.

There are two barn quilts that can be seen from the road on the Bromley line. The other 4-H ones are located at the Renfrew and Cobden fair grounds.



Anne Bromley Receiving her  
2019 WDRA LIFETIME VOLUNTEER AWARD

Happy  
Father's  
Day! 🎉👔👔👔

JUNE 20TH  
AND ALSO  
FIRST DAY  
OF  
SUMMER  
Enjoy !



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