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ParkArt a huge success

Charlotte Neitzel of Eganville was one of many local artists displaying their works at the inaugural ParkArt festival in Centennial Park on Saturday. A councillor with Bonnechere Valley Township, Mrs. Neitzel was displaying her water colour pictures. The event attracted an estimated 1,500 visitors and was deemed a big success by organizers and participants alike.

MP Gallant brings more unwanted attention with her "bizarre" words on prison farming

By Neil Etienne
Staff Writer

Pembroke -- Famously gagged by her prime minister years ago following a rant and near bigoted comments toward a fellow, but homosexual MP while in cabinet, rarely attending open public all-candidates' meetings and the subject of frequent scorn in many of the county's council chambers in recent months over any number of

issues including AECL, supporting the HST and failing to support the Ottawa River's heritage designation, local MP Cheryl Gallant has drawn the attention of major media to the region once again with what some are calling "bizarre" suggestions regarding the prison farm system.

The CBC and most other major media outlets had glaring headlines this past week about her ideas on prison

farming, leaving local agricultural producers and members of the National Farmers Union to scratch their heads, believing she simply doesn't understand the issue, let alone her local constituents' desires.

"Very bizarre," is how NFU President Dave Mackay put it, adding he had talked to MP Gallant recently on the issue and her suggestions local farms take on former prisoners as em-

ployees missed the point and caught him off guard. "I don't know where she got that idea.

"She came up to me (at a recent meeting in Whitewater Township) out of the blue and started talking about this idea of us taking prisoners on our farms," he added. "We want to save the white whale, we don't want it in our backyards; I just don't know what her thinking is." **See Page 18**

August event will be final big sale at Black Water

By Terry Fleurie
Staff Writer

Foymount -- For 27 years, the Black Water Factory Outlet Store has been the destination of choice for a wide range of consumers looking for a quality line of outerwear and recreation products

Sadly, that will all end this summer when the popular retail store at Foymount closes for the final time when inventory is depleted.

Linda Dixon, inventory co-ordinator at Black Water, said the upcoming August long weekend sale will be the final big sale at the location and will be one that consumers should not miss.

"This is our final one and it's a liquidation sale," she explained. "The prices will be the lowest that we've ever had basically across the board."

Ms. Dixon said the owners, BMG Sports, a division of Barrett Marketing of Woodstock, New Brunswick, announced in April the store would be closing this year. She said she believed the closure was precipitated by the sale of the company to a "sister" company which in turn decided it would not continue the operation of the factory outlet store.

"I guess they have decided to get rid of their end-of-lines in a different manner but how that is, I do not know," she said.

No firm date is set for the closure. It will be based primarily on how long the inventory last.

"We're saying the end of August because we think the stock will be so low it would not be worthwhile enough to have a September long weekend sale," Ms. Dixon explained.

She said at present inventory levels

are slightly lower than what they would normally be going into the August sale but there is generally a very large selection available for what is traditionally their biggest sale each year.

"Things right now are starting to get picked over a bit as the prices have been dropping every sale since we started the May long weekend," she admitted. "And they've just gotten lower and lower."

"This will be without a doubt the lowest prices that anybody has ever seen here," she added.

She said since news of the closure started to circulate business has been quite brisk.

"There's been a lot of people who have been coming in and buying merchandise now while the selection is really good rather than waiting for lower prices," she remarked. "There's a lot of people coming in and they are basically walking out with armfuls of stuff because they know it's their last chance to get these kinds of prices."

Ms. Dixon said many consumers are very sad to learn of the store's impending closure and they are coming in and telling the staff it will be their last trip there.

"They're saying good-bye to the staff because they've been here a number of times and now they're just basically stocking up," she noted.

Customers are asking questions about warranty on the products. They have been assured Sierra Designs, the actual product line, is remaining in operation.

"Information can be picked up off the website," she said.

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Lt. Col. Dave Dixon, a native of Eganville, recently took over as the new commanding officer of 21 Aerospace Control and Warning Squadron at CFB North Bay. Story on page 2



BV drops arena user fees for neighbours to \$200

By Gerald Tracey
News Editor

Eganville -- In an act of friendship towards its neighbours, and to reduce the financial burden on parents from neighbouring townships, Bonnechere Valley Township council has lowered the non-resident user fee at the Eganville Arena to \$200 for the 2010-11 season.

The decision was made by council last Tuesday night after an earlier motion that had pegged the user rate fee for the 2010-11 season at \$323 was rescinded.

The decision to reduce the user fee was based mainly on the hardship it would bring to families from neighbouring municipalities participating in programs at the arena and also in hopes the move will help future negotiations, particularly with neighbouring North Altona Wilberforce Township, the second largest user of the arena next to Bonnechere Valley.

The non-resident user fee has been simmering for several years, but the issue began to boil in the last 16 months after BV council dug in its heels and said it was no longer fair for BV ratepayers to be subsidizing users from neighbouring municipalities that do not contribute to the arena operating costs.

After several failed attempts to convince NAW council to contribute towards the operating and capital costs of the arena, BV decided earlier this year to impose a \$382 user fee per child per year. That resulted in NAW council, which has few dollars budgeted for recreation, pulling \$20,000 out of its reserves and eventually agreeing at a meeting between the two councils three weeks ago to contribute \$150 towards the user fee charged each child enrolled in minor hockey and figure skating. At that same meeting, BV council announced it would reduce the user fee to \$323. The

Council rescinds earlier motion to ease financial burden on families from neighbouring townships; talks will continue with townships for more funding

higher user fee would have included sharing costs of capital expenditures while the lower fee only assisted in sharing the annual shortfall incurred for operations.

BV council agreed to lower the user rate, increase ice rental rates and continue to subsidize the shortfall in the hopes their decision is viewed in a positive way by neighbouring municipalities and that they will increase their financial support in the future.

"What we have done is raise the ice rental rates which kind of spreads the pain over a wider group of people," Councillor Bob Peltzer said of BV's decision. "We have also agreed at

least in this one year to absorb some of the costs ourselves with the idea that we want to create an environment where anybody that was able to afford to participate last year would be able to continue to afford it this year.

"The economic argument is that we can shoot ourselves in the foot by maintaining a rigid line and lose 10 per cent or 20 per cent of your participants in the sport because you decided to hold the line and add a higher user fee."

Hourly ice rental rates for the coming season have been set at \$90 for minor sports and \$140 for adult sports. The only exception in the

rate issue is the CanSkate program. The fee for children enrolled in a first-time skating program has been set \$10 per child.

Coun. Peltzer said BV has "kind of met" NAW almost half way on the user fee issue with the hope that a new arena committee being formed will further bring the municipalities together and allow everybody to share in arena decisions and costs.

The new committee is one that BV council has agreed to create for the purpose of overseeing arena operations. (See separate story on page 6).

BV sees the new committee as a positive step in the arena funding issue and it hopes neighbouring municipalities will buy into the idea that it is indeed a community arena and not just the Eganville Arena.

"We're willing to offset some of the user fees this year as a friendship offering to show that we have good will too and that we are not trying to

be a dictator when it comes to arena fees," Coun. Peltzer said. "We are also saying in this motion, 'hey guys, it can't be just us alone. We need your help!'"

He said the lower fee is for one year.

"We need to look towards the future. Instead of it being the Eganville Arena, it needs to be a community arena in Eganville," stated.

Mayor Zig Mintha said the lower user fee was discussed at an afternoon committee meeting last Tuesday attended by parents from both BV and NAW townships who have children enrolled in minor hockey and figure skating.

"If they (parents) get \$150 from their township, and then pay \$50 and we get \$200, we have come a long way and it looks like we might be able to put some peace into this thing and move ahead," he said.

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