



(L-R): MP Gord Brown, TLTI Mayor Joe Baptista, Recreation Hall Chair Meg Mallory, Rockport Canada 150 Chair Diane Phillips and MPP Steve Clark, at the unveiling of the Canada 150 antique brass bell, which will sit atop the pavilion at the Recreation Hall, in Rockport. Photo: Catherine Orth

Rockport's river heritage

BY CATHERINE ORTH

They wanted to celebrate Canada 150. They wanted to do it in style and they wanted to pay tribute not only to Canada but to their great heritage, of one of the world's most important rivers: The St Lawrence. They were the Rockport Recreation Hall Committee and The Rockport Development Group, who work together for the last six months to bring the event, "A Salute to Rockport's River Heritage" together.

Did they succeed? Indeed they did! Set at the Recreation Hall on the 1000 Islands Parkway, on Saturday, August 26, with the recently added spacious pavilion as its focal point, the day's events flowed. One could participate in the game to match over 100 old artifacts with modern ones. One could go into the Recreation Hall and vote for your favourite paddle from the 150 paddles that were painted locally and have been travelling from event to event garnering votes. One could ask questions and listen to local residents tell the stories of their long time Rockport resident families. One could take to the history trail on walking tours through the village and along the Heritage Walk. Local historian, Brian Phillips, was on hand with his interpretive signs (there are 25 in total in Rockport alone), with many facts at his finger tips, educating the unsuspecting that Cornwall's Pub was in fact named after one of the most important entrepreneurs of the area. The Cornwall family store was the heartbeat of the village at the turn of the century. Whether it was stories of rum running or boat building, or gazing nostalgically at photos of a beautiful past, the day charmed and pleased.

Rockport Canada 150 Event Chair, Diane Phillip's said, "Rockport's river heritage has a ton of history: boat building, old churches, marinas. There

are families who have been here since the village came into being in the mid 1800's."

History, laughter and entertainment came together as Leeds and the Thousand Islands councillor Gerry Last emceed the delightful, Styles of Decades Past Fashion Show, she was instrumental in creating.

From the turn of the century, each decade was represented. The fashion show wrapped up with an appearance by legendary Marilyn Monroe (Tracy Griffin) singing Happy Birthday, Canada 150.

Wendy Merkley said, "It's a moment to be proud when we've all pulled together and made this beautiful day happen."

Before the evening event of music and dancing started, MP Gord Brown, MPP Steve Clark and Leeds and the Thousand Islands Mayor, Joe Baptista, participated in the unveiling of a handsome, antique, brass bell.

Ms Phillips said, "The committee thought we should have something lasting for Canada's 150, so we bought an old bell from an antique shop in

Athens. Our school (referring to the Rockport School that is now the Recreation Hall, but also was once Ms Phillip's and Wendy Merkley's school) didn't have a big bell. It had a small hand one, that kids used to vie to ring. But since we're on the former school's property we decided to buy a large bell that would be appropriate for the pavilion. It was a steam train bell from northern Ontario and we're going to put it in a housing, atop the pavilion, like in the old days."

There was loud applause, also, as TLTI Mayor Joe Baptista said, "And soon, we're going to have public access to the St Lawrence River!" referring to the recent acquisition by the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, of the historic Custom House; the last remaining public point of access on the river.

With the bell dedicated and ceremonies set aside, Rockport, satisfied that it had, indeed, honoured it's past in style, rocked the night away. Something it also, historically, has done well.

CHARLESTON LAKE CORNER Summer at Charleston Lake



BY KATIE ROSS

As fall arrives the Charleston Lake Associations (CLA) is reflecting on another eventful summer at Charleston Lake. Locals, tourists, and cottagers supported the CLA by stopping by the information centre. Summer 2017 was record breaking as we endured wild storms and extreme rain-falls.

The CLA Information Centre opened weekends during May and June, and Thursday through Monday during the busy months of July and August. Summer student, Katie Ross, returned to the position of information centre manager again this year. New for sale were CLA hats which became popular along with CLA golf shirts. The CLA and Charleston Lake Environmental Association (CLEA) proudly offer Nature Clean household cleaning products which encourage cottagers to use an environmentally friendly option. The CLA is humbled to have re-

ceived many new and returning memberships this year and will continue to preserve and enhance the lake thanks to the support from our members.

CLA Youth Programs were a blast again this year. Offered in July at Sand Bay County Park were three weeks of camp for children four to twelve years old. This included nature, sports, and adventure themed camps; all of which sold out! Leadership Camp was also offered for older campers who wish to learn valuable leadership skills.

The annual CLA Family BBQ and Regatta celebrated fun times and Canada 150 with a day of beach activities, canoe races, minute - to - win it challenges, and a donation BBQ featuring a Canada 150 cake.

The 2017 CLEA annual "Doug Hale Memorial" Golf Tournament was very successful. Sold out with 72 golfers and over 100 people for lunch, an enjoyable day was spent at Cedar Valley

Golf Course. Participants golfed 9 holes and competed in longest drive, closest to the pin, and putting contests. Soon after, the golfers and those joining for lunch headed to the clubhouse for a silent auction, awards, and prizes. We were thankful to have the weather in our favour as the sunshine added to the liveliness of another wonderful CLEA Golf Tournament.

The foremost topic of the summer has been the extreme rainfall and high water levels which affected many people in the Charleston Lake area. Docks were submerged, boats floated away, and bogs roamed the lake. The CLA is optimistic that this "100 year rain" will be just that - a time we can reminisce in awe of the summer that a bog blocked the submerged Main Dock and the corner of Slack Road collapsed. Charleston Lake was enjoyed by many boaters, cottagers, and visitors just the same.

Truck owners are welcome

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Anyone with a truck is welcome to be part of the show. The event was also open to spectators and the site was quite family friendly.

"There was a great response from the community," commented organizer Charlie Tackaberry. "The grounds were very busy with lots of visitors to see

the show!"

There was no judging involved but there were draw prizes for all registered vehicles. A silent auction also took place to help raise funds for the local club. The grounds also offered camping facilities and a loading ramp was also available.

A BBQ took place on Saturday night as well and the Athens Lions Club helped provide

meals for the event. There were also quite a few donations made to the Athens Food Bank during the event. A real highlight of the weekend was when the trucks lit up on Saturday night at 9:00, a glowing tribute to the passion and dedication that the Club has for their trucks and their special friendship connections as well.

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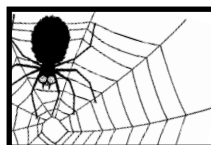
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