

Washago Rotary marks fifth year

The Rotary Club is celebrating its fifth anniversary in Washago this year.

The idea for the club was hatched on a golf course by local real estate broker Rod Harth and Dan Herbert, who owns and operates a collection agency in Barrie.

"Dan was new to Washago and we began playing golf together in 2004," Harth says. "During our golf games, Dan asked me if I thought a Rotary Club could be established in Washago. That was the seed that eventually grew into the Washago club."

The two began recruiting members with a target of 20, the minimum required by Rotary International to establish any new Rotary Club.

Within a few months, Herbert and Harth had recruited enough members to charter their club. By coincidence, the 100th anniversary of Rotary was coming up, and they decided to charter the club on Feb. 23, 2005, exactly a century after the first Rotary Club held its inaugural meeting. Hence the club's distinction of being called The Rotary Club of Washago and Area – Centennial. There are only a handful of clubs in the world chartered on Rotary's 100th birthday.

"We've come a long way in five years," Herbert says. "Our members conceived and developed the idea of covering Washago's deteriorating water tower with a decorative mural. We achieved our goal and have not stopped there."

The club grants youth scholarships every year to graduating elementary school students. It has also financed young people who have travelled to Africa to build homes for Habitat for Humanity, purchased ball team jerseys for youth teams and contributed thousands of dollars for Project Umbrella Burma, a refugee community on the Thai-Burmese border.

Soon after the club was formed, the number of



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Members of The Rotary Club of Washago and Area – Centennial.

members dropped from 21 to 12. Herbert says,

"We had many couples who were charter members who did not realize what is involved in running a Rotary Club. So when we lost one member, we in fact lost two."

The club has continued to recruit, and membership now stands at 21.

Meetings are held every Wednesday at 7:15 a.m. at the Washago Community Centre.

Visit the club's website, www.washagorotary.ca for more information.

– Chronicle staff

Our Ramara, SALT plan health expo

A Spring Health Expo will be held April 29 at the Ramara Centre on Highway 12 in Atherley.

The expo is the second in a series of presentations by Seniors and Law Enforcement Together (SALT) and the Our Ramara coalition. It will run from 1 to 3 p.m.

The event is open to all interested residents. It offers the opportunity for people to learn about services provided by organizations in Orillia for those in Ramara and the surrounding area.

Presenters from Information Orillia and 211 Ontario will co-present a session on information services available in our area. Another presentation will be made by a contact from Community Care Access Centre (CCAC). Following these short talks, exhibitors will be on hand to give out information and answer questions.

Other participating organizations include the Adult Diabetes Education Centre, Alzheimer Society, Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Hearing Society, Helping Hands, Hospice Orillia, Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Geriatric Health Unit, SALT, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and the Victorian Order of Nurses.

A third presentation is being planned by SALT and the Our Ramara coalition later in the spring at a time and place to be announced.

– Chronicle staff

Ramona Winterfest sets records

The 14th annual Ramona Winterfest in February set records for proceeds, attendance and participation in the festival's poker run.

The fundraising event for the Ramona Agricultural Society netted \$1,800 and drew about 250 people, an increase of about 25 per cent in each case. Participation in the poker run rose to 148 from 120 last year.

"The best indicator that we had a lot of new faces at this year's event is the fact that I did not know any of the winners," said Glenn Spriggs, president of the agricultural society and Ramona Hall. People came from all over Ramara, including new people from the southern end."

Spriggs said advance coverage in The Ramara Chronicle was a factor in the record turnout.

Visitors were greeted by two life-size ice carvings of Inukshuks, in keeping with the festival's theme, The Olympics in Canada. The carving was done by Ramona volunteers.

Sticking to the Olympics theme, the poker run winners were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals along with their cash prizes. The gold medal and \$50 went to Donna Sweetner, while the silver (\$30) was awarded to Chris Sherwood



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One of the Olympics-inspired inukshuks at the Ramona Winterfest in February.

and the bronze (\$20) to Lee Cole.

The annual Ramona Hall Pancake Supper will be held on Thursday, April 15 at Ramona Hall from 5 to 7 p.m. (See the Community Calendar listing on Page 31.) All proceeds go to the Ramara Fire and Rescue Service. Last year's event raised \$900 for the service.

To date, Ramona Hall has donated more than \$25,000 to the local fire department.

– Chronicle staff