

Brooklin has a history of honouring fallen heroes

History



SARAH FERENCZ
Whitby Public
Library Archivist

Shortly after the Second World War, the community in Brooklin resolved to build a structure to memorialize the contributions and sacrifices of locals during the First and Second World Wars.

What materialized was the Brooklin Memorial Arena. It was built with assistance from local residents in 1948 and officially opened in 1949.

In an effort to keep costs down, the building committee, led by Dr. John McKinney, sourced the lumber from two wartime shell storehouses associated with Defence Industries Limited in Ajax, a munitions factory which produced shells during the Second World War.

Mr. McKinney told the Daily Times-Gazette that he expected to obtain close to 23,000 metres of wood from the two warehouses which measured 100 metres by 17 metres.

Starting on Aug. 12, 1948, Brooklin residents went to Ajax to dismantle the warehouses and transport the lumber to the construction site at the Brooklin Community Park and fairgrounds. It took about a month for the volunteers to strip both warehouses, remove nails, and transport the lumber, all of it during the stifling heat of August.

The Daily Times-Gazette referred to the process as a bee because the whole community got involved: groups of 40-50 people showed up on any given day to provide the physical labour, not to mention the number of women who



PHOTO COURTESY WHITBY ARCHIVES

BROOKLIN -- Brooklin Memorial Arena was built by the community in 1949 to honour the contributions and sacrifices of local residents in the First and Second World Wars. This photo was taken in 1954.

prepared the food for the picnic suppers.

On Oct. 12, construction of the Brooklin Memorial Arena began and by late November the frame was raised. Construction was swift in the hopes that the arena would be ready for public skating come the winter. But monetary shortcomings proved to be a small obstacle for the Whitby Township War Memorial Committee. The labourers received a salary but many of them returned a portion of their wages in the form of donations, citing community spirit as the reason for their generosity and dedication.

In the end, the arena was completed with a rink surface measuring 23 x 53 metres.

The basement housed dressing rooms, toilets, a cistern, and a furnace. It was, by all accounts, a marvelous arena built with hard work and a lot of heart in honour of Brooklin's veterans.

The arena was eventually demolished in 1972 and replaced with the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena, built the same year.

At the official opening on Nov. 7, 1949, Reverend H.P. Davidson of Oshawa provided the following thoughts on the arena: "Never permit anything that is

ignoble or dishonourable to flourish in the community. Never allow anything mean or unsportsmanlike to go on in here, or you will be sullying the names of those to whom it is a memorial."

Mr. Davidson's words carried a heavy weight, but the construction of the Brooklin Memorial Arena was accomplished through co-operation, resourcefulness, togetherness, and community spirit and I can't think of a better way to honour our veterans.

Sarah Ferencz is the archivist at the Whitby Public Library. Contact her at archives@whitbylibrary.on.ca.

Lots of ways to network in Brooklin and beyond

Business



TRACY HANSON

Social or otherwise businesses and professional organizations thrive on networking.

For what seems to be an overused word, networking is a frequent and constant activity whether you are building a business, new to a community or just making friends.

We consistently build our networks and expand our connections without even really thinking about it.

I suppose we could ask the age-old question, why?

I'm even more certain someone with a significant pedigree and several initials behind their name could provide a deeper and more profound answer. For me it seems simple: we like to connect with people. On a human level we need to feel connected what ever our endeavour is -- we all crave human interaction.

Networking has proven to be a sound business practice and is likely written in the annals of business books since the beginning of time.

The wheel, like many other things, was invented to make life simpler. And while I can not speak with any authority on that particular era, I do feel strongly that once that wheel was rolling someone, was showing off their new "toy" to the guy next door.

We hear often from Whitby Chamber of Commerce members how important connecting and broadening their own

networks are and the reason is largely similar.

Members repeatedly tell us they want to be a part of the community. By osmosis this connection allows business owners and operators to expand their opportunities and, quite frankly, grow.

The Whitby chamber is the largest network of business and professional organizations in town -- as such, members are given the opportunity to expand their connections, build lasting relationships which help to grow their respective businesses. There is an entire calendar dedicated to providing meaningful and relevant events and activities that connect people. Connections are the lifeblood of business success.

Building relationships founded on mutual respect and a shared experience, regardless of the type of business, sets the foundation for referrals and rec-

ommendations. Think about it, we are always quick to recommend a shop, restaurant, advisor, agent when the source is known, understood, and trusted.

Networking can be accomplished in a variety of ways across Durham Region.

There are several groups and organizations with mandates to do just that: provide an outlet to engage, build relationships and connect.

Business owners and those just starting out should consider how to extend their reach and create a network that will help to "show off" their new wheel.

For more information on chamber networking and connection opportunities visit www.whitbychamber.org. Membership is not a requirement to attend.

Tracy Hanson is CEO of the Whitby Chamber of Commerce, a Brooklin resident and former North Ward Councillor.