

Rural Ramble needs county money

COLBORNE CHRONICLE DEC. 13/02

when we look at our budgets we look at this for support. I certainly will be supporting it."

Keep the children's admission free, Brighton Mayor Lou Rinaldi urged; children are often the instigators for family activities.

"With the jazz festival (in Port Hope), it was my understanding that the money we provided last year was seed money for the first year.

"We did not make any long term commitment to that committee. We need a policy so we treat everybody (seeking funding) the same. I think our support is there (for Rural Ramble), but we need to be very fair. I'm prepared to support something to keep Rural Ramble alive."

Trent Hills Mayor George McCleary urged the Rural Ramble organizers to solicit corporate funding. Port Hope Mayor Rick Austin suggested the selling of hats - as opposed to T-shirts.

County council referred the Northumberland Rural Ramble funding request to its Tourism and Economic Development departments for a recommendation for 2003 budget considerations.

\$350,000 in the county during their visit, Ms. McCann says.

"It is a unique event," Ms. McCann notes. The committee and host farm families and the phalanx of helpers are all volunteers. To date, adults buy "passports" to gain admission, no charge for children.

"People are very appreciative" the assessment surveys indicate, Ms. McCann says. "We have strong municipal and media support. It isn't often so many people from so many walks of life and working to the same goals."

For 2004, the Rural Ramble organizers are facing a financial challenge. Former grant sources have dried up.

"We are looking at a number of options to increase revenue in future," Ms. McCann says. "One was to increase the cost of ticket sales for adults to \$10 in advance (was \$8) or \$15 at the gate (was \$10). Another would be to charge \$5 for children aged 6-12 years. We might also increase our commercial host fees (\$150 now)."

"We supported the jazz festival in Port Hope," Alnwick/Haldimand Mayor Bill Finley noted. "This is a rural setup. I hope

"The organization is already in place and has proven its competency. Our financial obligations and budgets have been adhered to, Rural Ramble has broad support from private, public and volunteer agencies, and Northumberland County gets tremendous complimentary exposure."

"Rural Ramble is a great example of a successful grassroots organization," Ms. McCann maintains. "The interaction between the urban and rural leads to better appreciation for each other's lifestyles."

Rural Ramble is a weekend event. In its first year, 1999, an estimated 2,000 people visited the farms of five couples across Northumberland County.

Cancelled the next year because of the hoof and mouth disease scare, the event went ahead again in 2001 attracting an estimated 4,000 people. This past August, the third annual Rural Ramble attracted between 3,000 and 4,000 visitors.

Those visitors spent estimated

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Property assessment system failing

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CAO sees a dangerous ripple effect

The property assessment system is "failing and is failing badly", Hamilton Township CAO Peggy Cramp told council recently.

"And, as usual, it's all falling back on us (the municipality)," the CAO said. "We're ending up doing double the work, as usual. We're constantly sending information of people who have not been assessed and we receive no answer."

Property assessment is the lifeblood of municipal government. Taxation is based directly on the value of the properties within a municipality.

MPAC has recently implemented a restructuring program called "Futures". The new system "is dramatically changing property assessment in this province", a resolution from the Township of Armour read at Hamilton Township council's meeting states. "Municipalities are already noticing a loss of local expertise and a decrease in the service quality as a result of this centralized plan."

The Hamilton Township CAO agrees.

"We don't have access to anybody there now," Ms. Cramp said. "A lot of people based in Trenton (where the offices were) are moving out."

"This really is a problem," Ms. Cramp told council Tuesday. "It's starting to be an increasing bad problem for our municipality as has been for other municipalities."

"Some houses built two or three years ago have still not been assessed. There's no follow up whatsoever. Just recently, with mobile home parks, they were reassessed at triple their value, for example, from \$30,000 to \$80,000 or \$90,000. The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) has now agreed to do a reconsideration after we intervened."

Mobile home parks are posing a new a particular problem for Hamilton Township.

Up to this point, each mobile home appeared on the municipal tax roll as an individual entry. Each mobile home was issued an assessment notice by MPAC.

"Now, they are not going to allow us to have then as individual assessments," Ms. Cramp said.

"They (MPAC) will be issuing just one assessment for the entire mobile property. There will be just one tax bill and the owner will assess each mobile home owner. And when they do a reconsideration of the the property, they are not going to notify individual tenants of the new review."

Margaret Catherine Lounsbury
 In Warkworth on Friday December 13, 2002. Margaret Catherine Lounsbury (nee Taylor), formerly of Beamsville, was the beloved wife of the late Hugh Lounsbury. Dear mother of Catherine Galt (Dr. Doug Galt) of Colborne, John Lounsbury (Anne) of St. Thomas, Elizabeth Jackson (Dr. Jim Jackson) of Port Stanley and Bruce Lounsbury (Sue) of Brockville. Grandmother of Darcy Galt (John Cooke), Laurel Galt (Rand Simon), Micheal Jackson (Amy), Sarah Lounsbury, Ann Jackson, David Lounsbury, Alana Galt (Todd Free), Patrick Lounsbury, Iain Lounsbury and Colin Lounsbury. Great grandmother of Maeve Simon. Sister of Jack Taylor (Ruth), Joe Taylor (Pat), Helen Smith (Jack) and Peter Taylor (Ann), also Max Taylor, Betty Cuthbertson, Glenis Paterson, Bill Taylor and Tom Taylor, all predeceased. Sister-in-law of Jack Paterson. A family service was held at the MacCoubrey Funeral Home, 11 King St. W., Colborne on Sunday, December 15, 2002 at 2:30 p.m. Cremation followed. If desired, memorial donations to the charity of ones choice would be appreciated.

DEATHS

Laurine Frances Rouse
 At the Maplewood Nursing Home, Brighton, on Tuesday, December 10, 2002, age 97 years. Beloved wife of the late Richard "Milton" Rouse. Loving mother of Eileen and her husband Robert Lewis of Sebring, Florida. Predeceased by her son Glenn Rouse. Sadly missed by grandchildren, Stephen Fox and his wife Barb, Louise and her husband Jeff Lang, Lynn, Pauline and several great grandchildren. No visitation at the request of the family. A graveside service was held at Wood's Cemetery, Brighton on Tuesday, December 17, 2002 at 11 o'clock. The Reverend Brad Ford officiating. As an expression of sympathy, donations to the charity of your choice, care of the Walas Funeral Home, 130 Main street, Box 96, Brighton, Ontario, K0K 1H0 would be appreciated by the family.