

# Local Special Olympians clean up at Provincial Summer Games

By Barb McKay

Kincardine's Special Olympics athletes returned from this year's Provincial Summer Games with plenty of confidence and hardware.

The track and field team brought home a combined total of 24 medals from the games, which were held in Peel Region from July 13 to 16. Jackie McDonald placed first in the shot put, standing long jump and 4 x 100-metre relay events and third in the 100-metre run. Jessica Belyea placed first in the standing long jump, 4 x 400-metre relay and 4 x 100-metre relay events, third in shot put and fifth in the 100-metre run. Bethany Collins placed first in the standing long jump, second in the 1,500-metre

run and third in both the 800-metre run and the 4 x 100-metre relay.

Allan Moore placed first in the 100-metre and 200-metre runs, first in the 4 x 400-metre relay and second in the standing long jump and shot put events. Marianne Stewart placed first in the 200-metre run and standing long jump, second in the 4 x 400-metre relay, third in the 4 x 100-metre relay and fifth in shot put and the 400-metre run.

McDonald said these are the most medals she has picked up at the Special Olympics Provincial Summer Games. She was unaware that she had placed third in the 100-metre run and was at the back of a tent when her name was called. Receiving her medal was a memorable experience; by the time she pushed through the crowd to reach the podium the other awards had been presented and she was the centre of attention alone on the podium.

Coach Angela Taylor said this is the largest group of athletes that she

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Left: Robert McCourt of the Power Workers' Union presents a cheque for \$1,000 to the Kincardine Special Olympics team. Joy Laidler accepted the cheque on behalf of the team. The local team recently returned from the Special Olympics Provincial Summer Games. (Barb McKay photo)

# The sisterhood of the Red Hat Society in Kincardine

By Barb McKay

There is no age limit on fun.

That is a motto that the ladies of the Red Hat Society live up to. The society, a social club for women over the age of 55 years old, has branches worldwide, including right here in Kincardine. The local club currently has 18 members

who meet monthly for lunch, friendly conversation and to plan social events.

Joan Wood, 89, is the current queen, or head, of the chapter and has held the rank for the past two years, taking over after the passing of former queen Jean Karikas.

"Jean was a very good queen," Wood said.

"She was involved with the Lions Club and other things. She was on the ball all the time."

The Red Hat Society is appropriately named for the fabulous red hats that the members wear to the meetings and social gatherings. The red hats, adorned with purple accents, are all unique. The more flamboyant, the better.

"Some of the ladies really like 'bling'," Wood said. "Jean liked a bit of bling."

The society is open to younger members, known as juniors, who wear pink and violet hats before they graduate to become Red Hat ladies.

The Kincardine chapter, the Royals, has been around for more

than a decade. There were previously two chapters but one closed and members, including Wood, now belong to the current one.

"It's a social club," she said. "It's friendship more than anything. You meet a lot of different people and have a lot of laughs. As you get older it is something you can look forward to, and you can be a little silly if you want to."

The ladies are there for each other not only in the fun times, but in the difficult times as well.

"Unfortunately, we have had a few funerals and when we go we wear the red hats," Wood said. "It shows a bit of support for a Red Hat lady who has lost someone they love."

More often, though, the ladies gather for happier times. Each year, the Kincardine chapter hosts a special event and invites members from around the region to join in. For the past few years

Kincardine has held a luncheon and attended a Bluewater Summer Playhouse production. Last week, 95 Red Hat ladies from Kincardine, Wiarton, Goderich, Bayfield and other chapters attended a performance of *Wally's Café*. Wood said the annual gathering is a boost to the local economy because the ladies shop downtown before and after the play.

The Kincardine chapter plans events and activities for its own members when it meets the first Thursday of each month. The ladies have enjoyed a glass painting class at the Victoria Park Gallery, a porcelain doll making demonstration by one of its members, a flower arranging class and, next month, will hold a garden party at the home of member Betty Conlin.

Most of the Red Hat ladies are also involved in the community in other ways as volun-

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Members of the Royals, the Kincardine chapter of the Red Hat Society, hold their monthly meeting at Gilleys. (Kincardine Independent file photo)