

Volunteers suffering from 'post-Olympic syndrome'

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

Some local-area residents who recently returned from working or volunteering at the Winter Olympics in B.C. are still basking in the glow of the experience.

Despite unseasonably warm weather, some organizational problems and the tragic death of a Latvian luger on the eve of the 2010 Games, those working behind-the-scenes, such as Georgetown chef Lori Gysel, say they'll never forget the the atmosphere on display through the 16 days of competition.

"The streets were thronged with people dressed in red and white and everyone was in such good spirits, high-fiving complete strangers and spontaneously breaking into singing *O Canada*" said Gysel, one of five head chefs working at the massive Molson Canadian Hockey House venue.

"It's delightful to be back home with my family but someone mentioned to me that I must be going through post-Olympic syndrome. It's kind of like Christmas in that you plan so long ahead of time for it and then it's over just like that. There's a bit of a letdown feeling."

Gysel estimates she worked about 70 hours each week and that the kitchen at the Hockey House served about 5,000 meals a day from a large menu, including private parties for members of the Canadian men's and women's hockey teams, as well as the Great One, Wayne Gretzky.

Georgetown's Jacqueline Sargent was a volunteer race steward at Whistler Mountain for the five alpine ski events, ensuring that spectators, athletes, support staff and media were where they were supposed to be on the slopes.

"I'm now just coming out of my depression of realizing that it's over," said Sargent, one of about 550 volunteers on the men's alpine course.

"I learned a lot and worked with athletes and people from all over the world. The weather was unpredictable the first week but the sun broke

through for week two and Whistler was incredible, just a sea of red wherever you went."

One of the biggest challenges for the hill crew was to ward off would-be daredevils who had access to public areas of the mountain and wanted to try out the harrowing Olympic course after the day's races were complete.

"We had people hiding in trees, trying to get on the race course and we needed to bring in some police to help stop them," she said.

"And wildlife. Because of the warm weather, we had bears waking up early from hibernation and wandering onto the hill. There was also a lynx that broke through one of the fences and onto the course. For the most part though, the spectators were great and I was lucky to have a lot of public interaction."

Sargent worked 14-hour days on her skis and met a Georgetown native in her 53-person crew, Ursula Schultz, who now resides in Squamish, B.C.

Annette Graydon was indoors most of the time during her stay, attending to the needs and wants of those staying at the athletes' village at Whistler.

Her resourcefulness was tested when German cross-country skier Claudia Nystad came looking for a sewing machine to make alterations to her one-piece suit.

Because the outfit was made out of spandex and lycra material, a special machine was required for the job and Graydon's billet for the Olympics, her aunt Elly Johnston, had one at her home in Whistler.

An hour later, the suit was fixed to Nystad's satisfaction and she went on to win a gold medal in an individual sprint event.

"My aunt said later she should have sewn a Canadian flag into the back of her suit, but the Canadian connection was lucky anyway," Graydon joked.

"It was a terrific experience, I'd recommend it to anyone and am so very glad that I got the opportunity to participate in such a wonderful Canadian event! I am so proud of our achievement, both athletically and socially."



JACQUELINE SARGENT



Halton Hills resident Annette Graydon (right) poses with double Olympic medalist Claudia Nystad of Germany at the recent Winter Games in Whistler. Graydon, a volunteer at the athletes' village, arranged to have some adjustments made to Nystad's racing suit that the cross-country skier would later wear while winning a gold medal.

Submitted photo

Halton Police nab 245 drivers for using hand-held devices

It appears some drivers in Halton didn't get the call telling them about the provincial ban on using handheld cellphones.

Halton Police issued 245 tickets last month under the distracted driver law which came into effect on February 1. They included 13 tickets issued in Halton Hills.

For context, the Ontario Provincial Police, which patrols major highways, issued 470 tickets over the same time period. Hamilton police issued 118 tickets, according to thespec.com.

Halton Police aren't out hunting drivers using hand-held electronic devices or staring at a laptop while driving, clarified Halton Police Sgt. Brian Carr. The service's officers have

been catching offenders simply by keeping their eyes open, he said.

The fine for the offence is \$125, with a surcharge of \$25 and \$5 in court costs, making the total fine \$155, according to Halton Police. Drivers can also be given three demerit points for a charge under the new legislation.

Ontario's distracted driver law came into effect October 26. Police began issuing tickets February 1 following a three-month grace period of issuing drivers with warnings. The law makes it illegal for drivers to talk, text, type, dial or email using hand-held cell phones and other hand-held communications and entertainment devices.

Diabetes isn't just about sugar.

We can help you avoid simple things that put your family at high risk.
Call a Registered Dietitian for free.

EatRight Ontario 1-877-510-510-2



ontario.ca/eatright



Paid for by the Government of Ontario