

The ROCKWOOD Miller




GROUNDHOG DINNER: Auctioneer Kevin Gibson gets the bidding going at the 'Groundhog Day Dinner and Auction' in Eden Mills last weekend, to raise funds for the community hall retrofit. Over 36 items worth up to \$1,500 were donated. - Vivien Fleisher photo



SPICY SAMOSAS: Krishna Indian Cooking School instructor Chitra Saravanan (right) displays the spices used to make spicy samosas with participant Barbara Lukachko at Guelph-Eramosa's latest Older Adult workshop at Rockmosa. - Vivien Fleisher photo

Rockwood's 'Order of the Bear' moves into deluxe den

By: Vivien Fleisher

Bear sightings around Rockwood have spawned lots of chatter, but for a few residents, it sparked the imagination, leading Waylen Woods to adopt the persona of the bear as a mascot on behalf of the town through endless memes on Facebook. This in turn inspired Frank Marsh to name his weekend gaming sessions with neighbors in his basement "The Order of the Bear". When Marsh started letting locals know about his gaming nights, it took off. "We had fifty people join the group after I posted it, and I thought I can't do this in my basement anymore." That was last spring. He and Ryan Goodfellow came up with the idea to create a gaming space like the cafes in bigger towns, and after the skate park opened last August, Goodfellow had a chat with GET Mayor Chris White about the fact that—while it was great

the town offered so much for physical activity—it would be nice for those who lean more toward the cerebral world of gaming to have somewhere in town to play. White, with council's approval, generously agreed to let them use the recently-vacated nursery space in the basement of the Rockmosa Community centre.

Last Saturday was opening night for "The Order of the Bear" gaming. With a colorful fantasy mural created by a Guelph artist lighting up the space, and several games on offer, like Star Wars X-Wing, Magic the Gathering, and Kids Munchkin, the space is organized via a monthly calendar and games are run by all ages. They even offer food, but keep it open for those with food restrictions. According to Goodfellow, "Everything you see here has been put together by volunteers and donations. It's been a bit of a trek. We got the lease in September, and it's

been a slow build. But it doesn't matter how long it takes, as long as we get to a point where it's open for people." Adding that a lot of those who came out Saturday night were in Frank's basement six months ago. "They're all community members. But you see kids that don't necessarily engage in certain ways at school with each other, who then see each other here. So, it's building stronger relationships in a town of 5,000 people."

Next steps are to expand into the adjacent room, bring in more games like chess, connect online with gamers around the world, live stream and even create "terrain" with a 3D printer at some point. It's not for profit, run by volunteers, and open to the community. The goal was to create a place where people can come and hang out; instead of sending them out of the community, "we can keep them here."



WORD IN THE VILLAGE

with Vivien Fleisher

Do you participate in Lent, and if so, what will you be giving up this year?



Steve Buck "Yes, I will be participating in Lent. I've given up alcohol in other years. It's a candidate for sure, my wife would like that. But it's Superbowl Sunday, so it's not going to happen today."



Bruce McPhail "No, but I do think of it. But no, I don't do it anymore."



Christine Wenger "Yes. Ah, well I haven't quite decided yet... probably some form of baked good because that will be hard for me."



Emmy Banks "Yes. I'm going to give up chocolate. It's pretty hard for me because I love chocolate."



"The Order of the Bear" founders and gamers. Dean and Griffen Purdham (left), Angela Healey, Frank Marsh, Ryan Goodfellow, Roger Carroll, Adam Creamer, Andrew Stewart, and Kai Carroll.