

EWAG NEWS

Last Call for Seniors' Trip to Canada Blooms

Would you like to go to Canada Blooms in Toronto this year, but can't stand the thought of driving in the city? Let EWAG take care of that for you. On Friday, March 9, the warm, safe EWAG wheelchair accessible van will be heading down the 401 to enjoy a day at this amazing garden show. Spaces on the bus are limited, so don't delay – call today to book your seat. The cost is \$35, which includes transportation, entry into the show and the show magazine. Pick-ups are available in Erin, Hillsburgh and Squire's Lodge in Rockwood.

For more information and to book your spot, please call Mary Ellen at 519-833-0087.

EWAG's Thrift Shop in Rockwood Needs Your Help

– Do you have 3-4 hours per week you can spare to volunteer at EWAG? We are currently looking for volunteers to fill some spots in the thrift shop in Rockwood. If you are a people person, enjoy the idea of working in the ever changing environment of a used clothing shop, if you don't mind working independently and would like to give back to your community, here is your chance! Please call Sue at 519-856-2113 to discuss the vacancies we currently have. You won't regret it!

Annual Income Tax Assistance Available – If you live in a household with no dependents with an annual income of \$15,000 or less or if you live with dependents and have an annual income of \$22,500 or less, you could qualify for free assistance with your income taxes this year. We will be holding a tax clinic the first week of March. For more information please call Gillian at 519-833-9696.



RINK RESPONSIBILITY: Eden Mills outdoor ice rink at Memorial Park is enjoyed by the surrounding community. Like the other five rinks in Guelph/Eramosa, it is built and maintained by volunteers. The Eden Mills group is disputing a volunteer policy proposed by the township. *Rebecca Ring Photo*

Who is responsible?

Volunteers reluctant to sign policy

By Rebecca Ring

Since January 2006, Guelph/Eramosa Township and volunteers who construct and maintain the outdoor ice rinks have been trying to reach an agreement on a policy. The purpose of the policy is to “establish guidelines for the staff and volunteers responsible for the management of outdoor ice rinks and to identify and eliminate the risk for accidents.”

After months of negotiations and consultation with township lawyers and insurance professionals, a final draft was proposed but volunteers who operate the Eden Mills rink have so far refused to accept the policy.

The sticking point is the request for volunteers to document ice inspections in a daily log and to declare the rink open or closed, indicated by a sign. Volunteers Reid Kennedy and Alex Weir appeared before council Monday to voice the concerns of the group of nine.

Used own equipment

Weir first constructed a rink in Eden Mills seven years ago using his own equipment. Now the township provides equipment and water for flooding and maintaining the ice on township property.

Kennedy thanked council for allowing his group to go forward with the rink despite having no official policy. He said, “We’ve had one month of good skating and we appreciate the effort of council to resolve issues for the volunteers in Eden Mills.”

The last draft of the policy was proposed at the February 5 meeting of council, which Kennedy attended. He took it back to the volunteers and got an opinion on personal liability from a home insurance agent. Kennedy said the agent agreed that the volunteers are protected under the township’s insurance policy but completing a daily inspection log and declaring the rink open/closed incurs a far greater risk of liability in a lawsuit. He added that the volunteers feel the township

is putting them in a vulnerable position and they cannot agree to the new policy and will have to cease operations. Weir said he was told that the policy would be based on that of the City of Guelph but they do not require a daily maintenance log or the responsibility to open and close.

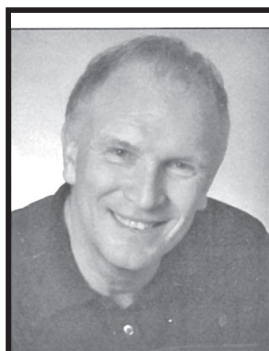
Covered by Twp.

Councillor Breen explained that the volunteers are covered by the township insurance policy and will be less liable if they complete the daily log. Steve Smith, a representative from the township’s insurance company, Frank Cowan Ltd., was on hand to clarify issues. He said, “If an injured party takes action against everybody – the township, volunteer committee, and the individual – our program provides coverage.” He went on to explain that the onus is on the complainant to prove negligence and the best way to prove due diligence is to document and keep records, “You need to prove what you did or did not do.” He added that it is good risk management and no different than road maintenance logs.

Councillor Knapp said, “The intent is to limit the liability of the volunteers and show due diligence. You’re not meant to sign your life away.” Mayor White asked Smith if the volunteers are more liable if they fill out the log. Smith confirmed that the log would provide a defence if a judge did not accept verbal confirmation.

The volunteers want township staff to sign inspection logs and declare the rink open/close. Councillor Scott said, “To make this work, we will have to sign the log.” White retorted, “How will we do that on Sunday?” He added, “We are all trying to get to the same place. We

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