

Cottam baseball president says farewell after 30 years

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

For the past 30 years, one name that's been synonymous with Cottam Minor Baseball is Ken Roadhouse.

Since 1977, Roadhouse has been involved in nearly all aspects of the association. He's been a player, coach, umpire, tournament convener, president and board treasurer at one time or another.

Now, after three decades of loyal service, he's hanging up his glove and retiring.

"My kids have been out of it for so long and I just felt it was time that some-

body else took it over," Roadhouse said, adding that he still plans to attend some games – but from now on he'll be watching from the grandstands.

For Roadhouse, baseball has been "a way of life" since he first picked up a bat and started playing at age 10.

He moved to Cottam in 1970 with his wife Rosemary and a few years later joined the CMB as the coach of his son Steven's team.

Roadhouse spent some of his most memorable time as a coach, teaching kids about the game.

"It was kind of rewarding that I could help the kids have fun and keep them occupied in the summer and just watch them develop," he said.

He coached Steven for several years and later became the coach of his other son Matthew's team.

"It was just gratifying that they had a place to play and that they played with their friends. They developed into a pretty competitive bunch of kids. They could play anybody. They loved playing too. That's what we did in the summer," he said with a chuckle.

As CMB president in the mid-1980s, Roadhouse recalls a time when more than 300 local youngsters would come out every week to play in a league that was thriving.

"Every little community had a team," Roadhouse recalled.

It was also a time when bingo fundraisers would generate a significant amount of profits for the league.

But over the years the CMB began to struggle as bingo revenues dwindled and kids found other sports like soccer to play during the summer.

"Back when I started, baseball was all we did," Roadhouse said. "That's all that was available. Over the years there have been more choices."

As the CMB lost more of its bingo dates due to failing sponsorship, it also became tougher to generate funds.

Roadhouse and the league were forced to hold other fundraisers, such as carwashes, pop bottle drives and selling pull tickets.

The CMB was also losing some players with the addition of select teams in larger leagues.

"With all of those factors, community ball hangs on if it can," Roadhouse said.

With about 135 players, the CMB is still a popular pastime for Cottam area kids.

Registration began last weekend at the Cottam United Church. The CMB's recreation centre at Ridgeview Park was previously used for registration, but it was severely damaged two weeks ago when a vehicle smashed into it, said current CMB president Rick Mayea.

The season runs from May 1 until the end of July.

Healing through art exhibit

The Arts Centre in Leamington will host an exhibition from March 21 to April 21 titled "Healing Through Art: Everything Isn't Black or White".

Produced by the Canadian Mental Health Association, this exhibition includes work from a variety of local artists. Each piece of art comes with an artist's statement explaining how the piece came to be and how, in many cases, the art helped them through a difficult time in their life.

"We are so proud of the exhibit," explained Patti Lauzon, CMHA-WECB Director of Advancement. "The pieces are really extraordinary and many of them offer an incredible insight into those in our community living with mental illness."

CMHA-WECB's mission is "to enhance and promote the mental health of all persons and support the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness in our community

through education, prevention, advocacy and services."

Over 100 pieces were submitted to the exhibit, which was adjudicated by local art experts. An opening reception will be held at the Arts Centre on March 24 starting at 4:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Neka Allen, Fund Development Officer by March 23, 519-255-9940, ext. 225 or nallen@cmha-wecb.on.ca



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