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MONDAY APRIL 1, 2012

Sleepy Hollow Golf and Country Club

Participants

ANNIE'S KITCHEN
BAKED AT FRANKIE'S
BOSTON PIZZA
CANDLELIGHT AND MEMORIES
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WATER DEPOT



Gartner fan of today's NHL

From page 1.

hide his beliefs.

"It's a personal faith but not a private faith," the Richmond Hill resident said. "I felt like this is who I was and who I am."

On the ice, Mr. Gartner was one of the fastest skaters and most consistent scorers.

Mr. Gartner, 51, started his hockey career in Mississauga. He played midget in Barrie, then moved up through Toronto and Niagara Falls.

At 18, Mr. Gartner wanted to turn pro in the NHL, but he was too young. So he played for the Cincinnati Stingers of the fledgling World Hockey Association. The right-winger ended his first season with 52 points and was runner-up to Wayne Gretzky for rookie of the year honours.

At the end of the 1978-79 season, the WHA and NHL merged. Mr. Gartner was drafted fourth overall by the Washington Capitals in 1979.

In 1989, he was traded to the Minnesota North Stars, which was followed by a move to the New York Rangers (1990), Toronto (1994) and the Phoenix Coyotes (1996) where he finished his NHL career two seasons later.

While in New York, Mr. Gartner became the 16th player to reach the 500-goal mark, sixth to reach 600 goals and 33rd player to score 1,000 points.

Could Mr. Gartner amass all the points he did way back when if the game were played as it is today?

"I would think so. I think in some ways goals are harder to come by then when I played," he said. "(They) could also whack and hack you before ... so they might cancel each other out."

Unlike other former players who lament the way hockey has changed, Mr. Gartner likes today's game.

While playing for the Rangers, he received a "glancing blow on the side of the head", a good hit, he recalled, that didn't even cause Mr. Gartner to drop to the ice.

It did, however, enough damage that he was not able to finish the game. But it did not stop Mr. Gartner from playing the next game a few days later.

"Hockey is an inherently dangerous sport," he said. "Getting hit and getting hit hard is one of those things."

APPLAUDS CHECKING BAN

When it comes to the Ontario Hockey Federation removing bodychecking from its house league and select minor hockey programs as of next season, Mr. Gartner is all for it, noting it's an opportunity for more kids to just play for fun.

"Younger players need to have the ability to grow and get stronger," he said.

Since retiring in 1998, Mr. Gartner became part owner of National Training Rink, which provides programs from learn-to-skate to elite hockey training. There are three complexes in Ontario: Barrie, Newmarket and Richmond Hill.

For the past four years, Mr. Gartner and his family have been parishioners at Springvale Church in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

"We thoroughly enjoy it. It's a terrific church. Very welcoming," he said.

The prayer breakfast takes place at Station Creek Golf Club, 12657 Woodbine Ave. The breakfast buffet starts at 7 a.m. Tickets are \$20 each and available at Candlelight and Memories, 6198 Main St. For more information, go to www.wsprayerbreakfast.com

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