

## **ROAR Conference – September 24, 2014**

Debbi Grills

### **Session 4 – Organizing Active Community Events**

I especially chose this session because I think that our community is becoming more and more adept at organizing large community events but that maybe we are missing the “active” component. The first part of the session was presented by a couple who are members of the RUNfrew Running Community. RUNfrew is a small running club based in Renfrew. They are as much about social interaction as running. The presentation of their website [www.runfrew.ca](http://www.runfrew.ca) gave us feel for the running community and the events they offer and participate in.

The second part of the session was a short presentation about a cycling group in the Township of Horton. This is another small group of avid cyclists who enjoying cycling in and around their rural community. Of particular interest to me was the development of cycling trails on the abandoned railway bed. With many volunteers, donations of materials, heavy machinery and support from the township council, a multi-use trail has been created. This trail was a boon to those cyclists who wanted to enjoy their sport without vehicle traffic.

### **Session 5 – Pickleball**

I attended this active session with Gayle. It was presented by a recreation instructor and Pickleball senior players from Shawville, PQ. These players play in a senior league in a local church basement.

Pickleball is a racquet sport that combines the elements of badminton, tennis and table tennis. It is a sport in which 2 or 4 players use solid paddles made of wood or composite material to hit a perforated polymer ball over a net. The sport shares some of the features of other racquet sports, the dimensions and layout of a badminton court, and a net and rules similar to tennis with a few modifications.

After a brief overview of the game, the experienced seniors gave a demonstration of how the game should be played and we all had a chance to give it a try. Gayle and I will continue to need some practice! It is suggested in the information folder distributed that when playing with equally skilled players as yourself, you will have good competition and lots of fun All ages and skill levels play this sport. A game can last anywhere from 10-25 minutes.

I have done some online research about the required equipment costs and although we were quoted \$350 for the kit, it is closer to \$500 at this time. The net, paddles and balls come in a duffle bag that could be easily stored on a shelf. Something we should definitely consider for next year’s budget.

### **Trade Show**

There were eighteen exhibitors at the trade show. I returned with some catalogues for items of possible interest to our municipality; Schoolhouse products inc., SDR SEATING; Playground Planners. These are filed in the office if our committee is interested. There is also a booklet of exhibitors and contact information available.

A local business (Pembroke) of possible interest to our Canada Day events is [RY-J's Climbing Adventures](#). Sean Dennison specializes in delivering high quality interactive event experiences such as: portable rock climbing walls, bouncy castles, interactive hockey net and a dunk tank to name just a few. If we are interested in booking any services for events or fun fairs, it must be done well ahead because of the popularity. How’s this for a fundraising idea...[Dunk the Council!](#)

### **Session 6 – Seniors & an Aging Community**

I attended this workshop with Gayle and she has covered the content quite well in her report above.

An excellent conference! Many thanks for the opportunity to attend.

## ROAR Conference – September 23, 2014

David Balla-Boudreau

Here are my thoughts and observations after attending the ROAR conference on September 23rd (in no particular order)

1. The welcome from County Warden Peter Emon was very good and well delivered, considering that he was in the process of installing a furnace and had not scheduled that he was to speak at this event. His message was to work together and to show the 'bean counters', such as himself the value\lifestyle of recreation in your community so that you can access funds. In his perspective 'recreation' was to bring revenue into your area, but also to benefit the citizens in your area.
2. The workshop on 'Connecting Recreation and Tourism' presented by 2 women from Pembroke and Petawawa was very good, however way out of our financial capability when they defined the amount of budget involved around the 'Fiddling week at the Park in Pembroke'. Their focus was how to bring in outside dollars to a community and how to estimate the amount of dollars that could be obtained i.e. restaurants, hotels, gas stations etc. The only events that we have in the townships that would come close are the events of the Missing Link, and the money we make is pennies compared to their dollars.
3. General discussion on 'Sports Tourism'. Talk on budget as 1 problem, volunteer burnout as another issue, and how to get folks off the couch and outside. Suggestion to consider 'dry' events i.e. the focus is not so much to make \$ off the bar, but to get people exercising e.g. trails for walking, mountain bike riding, cross country skiing etc.
4. Based on a discussion it appears that most communities have a recreation master plan, or a tourism strategy. Does HCM have either of these?
5. At different times in the day, a number of discussions took place on 'how to reward volunteers'? This is an important concept, but a tricky one to implement without missing someone and creating a negative impact, or doing something which is too big and too expensive. Bottom line, I did not learn any real answers on how to best do this.
6. Second workshop was on 'Using your Community Resources'. Unfortunately, also not as applicable to HCM as we have no schools and no service groups, other than the ladies of the CWL who we max out for their charitable efforts. In this workshop there was also a focus on the roles of libraries in the community (and Kelly at Petawawa library would be a good resource) to what could be available. Carmen stated that under this type of program it is possible to get equipment to get people moving e.g. snowshoes, mountain bikes etc. through the library that could be taken out just like a book. Our challenge would be where to store the bikes and snowshoes? On the ceiling of the library ??
7. The third workshop was on 'Nature' with Fred Blackstein with a strong focus to realize what 'nature' may provide you in your area. Trails was a big item, and although there is \$ to build them, there is rarely \$ to maintain them, so you have to be creative (and lobby to put away some of the grant money received for future maintenance). We need to ensure that our library has the suite of inexpensive Algonquin Park guide books (on birds, animals, Brent Crater etc. of the park) as well as the generic guide book on birds as bird watching is one of the fastest growing nature activities. Clearly Fred would be a good resource for the group who wants to create some walking trails.

In summary, lots of good folks attended from a large section of Ontario, all wanting to improve opportunities for recreation in their community which made it an encouraging day, so for that I say thanks to HCM for providing the funds for me to attend this conference (which by the way had twice the number of participants as hoped for).