

## The Yarrow Athletic Association by Elmer G. Wiens

As the population of Yarrow grew and its residents prospered, athletic activities among its youth and adults gained importance. In the mid 1940's, the town boasted two Senior League softball teams, the Yarrow Growers and the Yarrow Lumbermen. Large crowds of spectators attended the softball games played on the ball diamond at the downtown Public School. The adjacent streets in the heart of the commercial district, recently paved Central Road and School Avenue, were lined with parked cars on game evenings.

With their recent prosperity, residents had more time for leisure and recreational activities. Facilities were required for indoor and outdoor sports to meet this demand. As late as 1946 Yarrow's Christian High School, the Sharon Mennonite Collegiate Institute, played their basketball games in the barn of Henry Ratzlaff (Senior). Religious programs and events were provided by the two Mennonite churches. But for secular entertainment, such as movies, residents had to travel to Chilliwack.

A group of young Yarrow men with an abundance of entrepreneurial talent chose a cooperative approach to provide Yarrow with entertainment and sports. Of this group, a number had returned home after serving in the Canadian Armed Forces during WW2. These men included John Hepting, Henry Froese, Peter Bargaen, Hank Giesbrecht, Abe Wittenberg, John Wittenberg, Henry Ratzlaff (Junior), and Henry Fast.<sup>1</sup> Some of these men were experienced businessmen, and others became successful businessmen in later years.

Accordingly, on December 16, 1946, a group of young men met at Bargaen's Carpentry Shop for the founding meeting of the "Yarrow Athletic-Entertainment Association" (YAEA). Its inaugural executive members were: John Henry (J.H.) Hepting, President; W.H. (Bill) Siddall, Vice-President; Henry Froese, Secretary; and, Fred Hendricks, Treasure.

The following account of the YAEA and its successor, the Yarrow Athletic Association, are based on these organizations' minutes as provided by Mary Froese.<sup>2</sup>

\*\*\*\*\* 1947 \*\*\*\*\*

The next meeting of the YAEA was held at Bargaen's Carpentry Shop on January 3, 1947. Since the association planned to raise funds by showing movies in the basement of the Yarrow Public School, Jack Wittenberg of the Chilliwack School Board advised that an official application be made to the municipal school board for this purpose. He also advised that the association would be exempt from property taxes if it built its hall for recreational purposes.

Other house-keeping motions were made and carried: membership payments would be five dollars per month; members would forfeit their membership if delinquent more than three months; membership payments to be made on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month; and movie ticket prices would be fifty cents for adults and twenty-five cents for children.

Yarrow resident Bill Wolfe of CHWK radio volunteered to provide publicity for the YAEA to unanimous applause. Bill Siddall stressed the importance of presenting the objectives of the association to the Yarrow community, diplomatically, in order to build support.

The School Board gave approval for the use of the Public School basement for showing movies. At their January 17, 1947 meeting in Bargaen's Carpentry Shop, the YAEA decided to reduce adult movie fees to thirty-five cents. Members agreed to acquire 1000 board feet of 2 x 12's for the purpose of building benches for movie patrons. John Esau volunteered to look after setting up benches and cleaning after shows. J.W. Neufeldt and Johnny (Mex) Giesbrecht volunteered to usher the audience.

At an extraordinary meeting held on February 1, 1947 in the Public School's basement after the movie, the association's members voted to change its name to the Yarrow Cooperative Athletic Association (YCAA), intending to organize under the Cooperative Act. J. Teichgrab moved and John Esau seconded a motion that the Objects and Rules of the YCAA be accepted subject to alterations, deletions or additions by the Association. The motion was carried.

At the subsequent meeting of March 3, 1947 at the Public School, A. M. Guinet, Barrister & Solicitor, advised that the organization incorporate under the Societies Act. C. Peters moved and C. Sukkau seconded a motion to this effect. Motion carried. Peter Nightingale moved and Bill Siddall seconded a motion that the name of the organization be the Yarrow Athletic Association (YAA). Motion carried.

At this meeting members decided to show movies once a week at 7:30 PM on Wednesday, beginning on March 12, 1947. A motion by B. Unger, seconded by J.W. Neufeldt, to purchase a Bell & Howie projector, large movie screen, and a microphone for \$750.00 was carried. J.H. Hepting was placed in charge of the film program, including the selection of projectionists.

In the Declaration<sup>3</sup> of the "Yarrow Athletic Association" as filed on March 17, 1947 with the Registrar of Companies in Victoria, the objects for which the Society formed were:

- (a) To provide recreational athletic entertainment facilities for the youth of Yarrow, B.C.
- (b) To promote conduct, and give assistance to athletic activities in the community of Yarrow, B.C.
- (c) To promote and operate athletic games and competitions and entertainment for the benefit of the Association and for the welfare of the Community.
- (d) To join with other organizations for the carrying out of the same or similar objects.

The signatures on the filed declaration and the association's by-laws were John Hepting, David Harder, Fred Hendricks, Peter Nightingale, and Abram J. Wittenberg, as witnessed by Henry Froese.

The organization's first venture was to purchase four acres of land whereon to build a hall as a venue for indoor sports events and public roller skating. At the April 23, 1947 meeting, members voted in favour of purchasing land owned by the Post 24 Civil Defense Guild. Subsequently, this property was purchased for \$1079.66, including registration fees.

At the meeting held on May 14, 1947, J.H. Hepting, Dick Epp, Bill Unger, Henry Froese, and John Kliever were elected as directors of the YAA with their positions on the executive to be determined by themselves. Mr. J.H. Hepting was elected President.

Presenting movies in the Public School basement to raise funds for their yet to be realized projects occupied the attention of the YAA for the remainder of 1947. At the December 1, 1947 meeting, members opted to show movies twice weekly, provided they could share the rental cost of films with the Sumas Recreation Association. Movie nights in Yarrow were to be Mondays and Thursdays. Mr. D. Harder was elected to replace Mr. Bill Unger on the executive.

\*\*\*\*\* 1948 \*\*\*\*\*

The movie nights at the Yarrow Public School were paying off. At the first meeting of the YAA in 1948 on January 5<sup>th</sup>, President Hepting read a list of films available from RKO Pictures and 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Fox. With their funds accumulated during 1947, members considered building a 100 foot by 90 foot hall for indoor sports. Members approved buying J. H. Hepting's Bell & Howell 16mm sound projector and movie screen for \$650, to permit continuous screening of movies along with their existing projector and screen.

The January 14, 1948 edition of the Chilliwack Progress contained an update of the YAA's activities:

It is expected that this year will see the actual construction of a building. The association has acquired assets to the amount of approximately \$4000. The effort is particularly substantial because of the fact that these assets represent the donations of a small, but energetic group of progressive young people. Activities have been carried on in the basement of the Yarrow public school with the permission of the school board. This is the only accommodation available at present. Particular care is being taken to look after the premises and no extra burden is put on the janitor staff of the school.

Before 1948, Yarrow's Senior, Intermediate, and Junior softball teams played their home games on the ball diamond in the North-West corner of the Public Schools playgrounds. This facility, with neither fences nor enclosed bleachers, prevented teams from charging spectators to watch games. Accordingly, at the February 5, 1948 meeting, Mr. Pete Nightingale moved that the YAA lease a field from George Knox for the purpose of constructing a ball diamond with bleachers and fences. After approving this motion, members decided to approach Yarrow's merchants and ball clubs for sponsorship opportunities.

As a result, the focus of the activities of the YAA shifted from the construction of a hall for indoor sports to providing facilities for outdoor sports. Significantly, the hall was never constructed, although on several occasions it appeared that the YAA would actually begin building it. Eventually in 1952, construction began on a 24 foot by 60 foot club house, but the YAA was disbanded before much work had been done on this structure.

That spring of 1948, the Yarrow Athletic Association constructed a softball diamond for Yarrow's softball teams on the field it leased from George Knox on Wilson Road South, north of the B.C. Railway tracks near Vedder Mountain. The YAA and Mr. Knox<sup>4</sup> agreed that the rent would be \$50.00 per year for three years. Bulldozer work began in March to level the ground; bleachers and an announcer's booth were constructed shortly afterwards.

With the sponsorship of the Yarrow Grower's Cooperative, Yarrow fielded Senior B and Intermediate softball teams wearing YAA crests on their jackets, and "Y G" logos on their ball caps. Managed by Johnny Giesbrecht, the Intermediate ball team won the 1948 Provincial Intermediate Softball Championship.



The members of the 1948 Intermediate team as shown in the photograph above were:  
Back row: George Derksen, Bernie Dyck, Pete "Happy" Wall, Henry "Tiny" Harder, Ernie "Nestor" Reimer, Jake "Brownie" Brown, Alex Fast;  
Front row: Irwin "Wiener" Froese, Len "Leggy" Froese, John "Mex" Giesbrecht, George "Fuzzy" Enns, John "Vagy" Martens

The Froese family, appearing in the announcer's booth in the photograph, actively maintained the ball diamond, mowing, raking, and liming the base lines and batter's box. Mary kept score; Ed announced the games; and Harold (Cactus) was everywhere.<sup>5</sup>

The minutes of the meeting held on November 23, 1948 reflect the successes of the YAA during its first year of operations. A preliminary financial report indicated the net profit of approximately \$1000.00 from the year's activities. It was moved by Bill Siddall that a manager be appointed in charge of the ball park, to look after conditions and general maintenance of the grounds; the manager was to consult the YAA executive on any financial expenditure. J.H. Hepting nominated Dick Epp for the position of ball park manager. Bill Siddall seconded this motion. Motion carried. Len Froese replaced H. Froese as Secretary of the YAA. "Dick Epp was to report at the next meeting regarding (the) estimated cost of a club house at (the) given dimensions (of) 60' x 26' x 12'."

An unofficial banquet and meeting was held on the evening of Wednesday, December 22, 1948.

\*\*\*\*\* 1949 \*\*\*\*\*

President Hepting reported at the year's first meeting on January 12, 1949 that after all the bills were paid, the YAA's bank account's balance was "very small," and that a \$50.00 rental fee was due to Mr. Knox for the ball park. Pete Nightingale and Fred Hendricks were appointed to collect overdue membership fees from delinquent members. J.H. Hepting reported that the Provincial Government intended to collect a 25% amusement tax from YAA revenues. He planned to meet with Mr. Turnbull, the head of the Amusement Tax Commission, to resolve this issue.

With the failure of the Yarrow Grower's Co-operative Association in 1948/49, the YAA assumed responsibility for Yarrow's Senior B softball team.

At its meeting on February 2, 1949, the YAA elected Johnny Giesbrecht to manage the team. Under his direction, sixteen local business sponsors paid twenty-five dollars per year to have their names on the backs of the team's uniforms. The \$400 collected covered the cost of operating teams, buying uniforms and jackets, plus entry fees and insurance. The gates collected at games in Yarrow were used to pay for the umpires and the cost maintaining the ball park.

A special meeting was held on March 1, 1949 to elect the YAA executive. The executive and directors of the YAA for 1949 were: John Hepting, President; Bill Siddall, Vice-President; Len Froese, Secretary-Treasurer; Dick Epp, manager — works committee; Jack Dick, assistant manager; and, Eddy Froese, advertising and promotions.

President Hepting detailed a letter received from Mr. Turnbull exempting the YAA from the provincial amusement tax. Johnny Giesbrecht reported that uniforms, jackets, and ball caps were ordered from Sparlings Sporting Goods in Vancouver for twenty-four dollars per set.

Because the Knox ball diamond was not ready for games by late March, Yarrow's Senior and Junior teams played an exhibition softball game on the Public School grounds.

The Chilliwack Progress (March 23, 1949) reported that "the Y.A.A. team will have players from the former Yarrow Growers and Yarrow Lumbermen teams." Talented players from the previous year's championship Intermediate team augmented this experienced roster of players.

At the YAA's meeting on April 7, 1949, Johnny Giesbrecht reported that the team's uniforms and jackets had arrived, and that Yarrow's team will compete in the Chilliwack Senior B league, with games starting in May. (The eight team Senior League's executive members were: Frank Kickbush, President; K. French, Vice-President; and Peter Andrews of Yarrow, Secretary-Treasurer.) The YAA's members decided to build more bleachers and a wooden fence on either side of the South Wilson Road ball diamond, with more seats to be built behind the backstop if necessary. The possibility of entering a Junior softball team later in the year into the B.C. final playoffs was also discussed.

The year's fund-raising dinner held at the Bright Spot Café was well attended by YAA members and friends, including "Prince", Cornie Sukau, Eddie Froese, Johnny Giesbrecht, Henry Froese, Johnny Hepting, Henry Hepting, Len Froese, Steve Szabo, Doug Corbough, Fred Hendrichs, Pete Nightingale, and Henry Fast.



At the meeting held on May 2, 1949, Johnny Wittenberg moved and Pete Nightingale seconded a motion that season's tickets would be sold for all ball games played at the YAA Wilson Road ball park. Motion carried.

The executive meeting held on May 17, 1949 approved the request by the 1948 Yarrow Co-op team to play an exhibition game at the YAA ball park for the purpose of raising funds for a banquet at which their BC Championship Trophy would be presented.

As of June 6, 1949, the YAA was still looking for bidders to take the first crop of hay on both the YAA Ball Park and its Boundary Road property. It was decided at the meeting held on this date that seasonal passes would not be sold in 1949 because of a “lack of time.”

At a joint meeting on June 17, 1949, the YAA and the Yarrow Junior Chamber of Commerce (YJCC) executives reached an agreement whereby the YJCC would continue to sponsor the Junior softball team, with games to be held at the YAA Ball Park.

The Senior B softball team, managed by Johnny Giesbrecht and coached by Irvin Froese, provided the highlight of 1949 for the YAA, and perhaps for the village of Yarrow, by winning the BC Senior League softball championship.<sup>6</sup>



The 1949 Y.A.A. Senior B softball team’s members as shown in the picture above were:  
Back row: Len Froese, Jake Neufeldt, Pete Ratzlaff, Hank Harder, George Berg, Henry Funk, Alex Rempel, John Adrian, and Henry Neufeldt.  
Front row: George Derksen, Alex Fast, Johnny Giesbrecht, George Thiessen, Peter Wall, George Enns, and Irvin Froese

After the summer break, the YAA continued to raise funds by showing movies at the Yarrow Public School. At the meeting on September 26, 1949, members voted to resume regular shows on Tuesday and Saturday night commencing at 7:30 pm with an admission fee of 35 cents. Bill Siddall collected admission; Johnny Wittenberg ushered; and Eddy Froese promoted the shows. Members agreed that the softball club’s caps and uniforms be turned in to the YAA for cleaning in preparation for next year’s ball season. The payment of a bill from Jake Derksen of the Vedder Lumber Yard for lumber delivered to the YAA ball park was also discussed.

The members at the November 21, 1949 meeting discussed levelling their YAA Boundary Road property for building a hall. Elected to the entertainment committee were Johnny Giesbrecht, Bill Siddall, and J.D. Esau.

The YAA closed the successful year of 1949 with its meeting on December 14. Elected to the executive were: John Hepting, President; Bill Siddall, Vice-President; Len Froese, Secretary-Treasurer; Ike Paetkau, and Ben Braun, Directors. J.D. Esau was asked to build a frame to be erected at the Bright Spot Café for advertising shows. The bill for lumber from Jake Derksen was in order and accepted for payment by the YAA. The quorum for official YAA meetings was reduced to ten members from fifteen members.

\*\*\*\*\* 1950 \*\*\*\*\*

Members' hopes were high for another successful year at the year's first meeting of the YAA on March 7, 1950. The YAA intended to level their Boundary Road property to build a hall, but it was waiting for bulldozing equipment from the Vedder Army Camp to become available. Members decided to award a trophy to Jake Neufeldt, the winner of the 1949 Pheasant Shooting contest, an event to be held each year thereafter. Members voted unanimously to sponsor a Senior B softball team, with Johnny Giesbrecht, Manager, Henry Neufeldt, Coach, and Len Froese, Ball Team representative. Ben Braun volunteered to be in charge of the Wilson Road ball park; Fred Hendricks volunteered to be in charge of gates at the ball park. New team jackets would be bought for the upcoming season.

The YAA executive determined on April 3, 1950 to engage a private projectionist to show their movies at the Public School. After an arrangement made by J. H. Hepting with Mr. Gordon West fell through, Hepting undertook to run the shows and book the films during the spring and summer.

Because many of the 1949 Senior team's players had moved from Yarrow to take jobs elsewhere, the members at the April 20, 1950 meeting decided to sponsor an Intermediate softball team instead of a Senior B team. President J.H. Hepting agreed to meet with George Knox to extend the lease of the ball park grounds for another three years.

At the June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting held in the basement of the Public School, Ike Petkau and Ben Braun reported that the new board fence and repairs to the ball park were completed. Special thanks were voiced to George Derksen for donating his truck and tractor, and to other volunteers, including children, for their time and labour. Abe Epp and Ben Braun volunteered to be umpires at the home ball games during the year. John Hepting reported that George Knox agreed to rent his property on a yearly basis, provided he retained use of the land beyond the outfield.

John Hepting resigned as President at the meeting of Directors held at the Post Office on June 12, 1950. Bill Siddal agreed to be the acting President until the next AGM in 1951.

The annual pheasant shooting contest was the main topic of the September 26, 1950 meeting held in the Public School basement. Len Froese was elected to be the official judge. The contest



was to begin on October 13, 1950. The whole pheasant, including all its feathers, were to be brought to the judge. The pheasant with the most rings on its longest tail feather would be the winner, ties broken by the length of this feather. Moreover, any individual winning the contest three years in a row would get to keep the trophy. The pheasant contest fee was set at one dollar. On a lighter note, Jake Neufeld stated he would donate one thousand dollars to the YAA should he win first horse in the Irish Sweep Stakes.

At the last meeting of the YAA in 1950 held on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, J.H. Hepting reported a contract with Andrew F. Kotowich of New Westminster to show movies.<sup>7</sup> Under the terms of the contract dated October 18, 1950, Kotowich committed to rent the school basement from the YAA and to use their equipment to present one movie per week, with possibly three shows later on. The members decided to decline Mr. Kotowich's offer to buy their small projector and movie screen for three hundred and fifty dollars.

\*\*\*\*\* 1951 \*\*\*\*\*

The year's first meeting of the YAA held on March 13, 1951 was adjourned for a lack of a quorum.

The YAA's Annual General Meeting for 1951 was held on Tuesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Public School's basement. The executive and directors of the YAA for 1951 were: John Hepting, President; Bill Siddall, Vice-President; Len Froese, Secretary-Treasurer; and Ike Paetkau, Ben Braun, and Jack Dick, Directors.

A large number of ball players from the previous year's teams attended. At issue was the choice of playing softball or baseball during the 1951 season. A majority of the players voted to play softball, even though baseball was increasing in popularity in the Chilliwack District.

Johnny Giesbrecht agreed to manage the softball team on the condition that he would be given a reliable helper as coach. The majority of people present voted in favour of Henry Neufeldt for coach, although he was not present. President Hepting agreed to contact Marshall Knox about renting his field for the ball grounds for another year. New sponsors would pay \$15.00 for advertising on the back of a uniform, while old sponsors would pay \$7.50. The number of shows was increased three per week.

At the special meeting held on April 30, 1951, it was revealed that unexpected work commitments had prevented Johnny Giesbrecht from organizing a YAA Senior B softball team as intended. In the meantime, players impatient with the delay had organized an Intermediate softball team coached by Eddy Froese and Pete Ratzlaff. While these developments were known to Len Froese, Secretary-Treasurer, the uncertainty about the formation of a senior team kept Len Froese from informing the YAA president and directors sooner. Several YAA members expressed disappointment about this turn in events. After these matters were discussed, Vice President Bill Siddall moved that the YAA sponsor the Intermediate team with the understanding that the team's coach and players maintain themselves within the YAA's jurisdiction. The motion was seconded by Jack Dick and carried by the members.

At a subsequent Directors Meeting held on June 1, 1951 at the home of J.H. Hepting, Eddy Froese and Pete Ratzlaff agreed to the terms whereby the YAA would sponsor the Intermediate team. Jack Dick was nominated to purchase the softball team's equipment on behalf of the YAA.

Spurred on by the successes of Yarrow's softball teams in the past, Yarrow's Intermediate softball team continued Yarrow's winning tradition, winning the 1951 B.C. Softball Championship.



The 1951 YAA softball team's members as shown in the picture above were:  
Back row: Eddy Froese - Coach, John Dahl, Pete "6" Ratzlaff, Jake Wiebe, Hank Ratzlaff, Pete "7" Ratzlaff, Ernie Bergmann, and Spike Klassen;  
Front row: Rusty Bergmann, Hank "Crow" Martens, Irwin "Sally" Harder, Elmer "Slim" Neufeldt, Fred Adrian, and Allan Wilkie.

On October 1, 1951, Yarrow's championship softball team was the main topic of the meeting of the YAA held after the movie in the basement of the Public School. Pete Nightingale moved and Johnny Giesbrecht seconded a motion that a banquet be held in honour of the team, with YAA members paying for their own meals. This motion was carried unanimously. Eddy Froese agreed to organize the banquet.

Other YAA sports teams were also discussed at this meeting. Members voted to donate a soccer ball to the Juvenile soccer team organized by Russ Dyer. Ben Braun, on behalf of Yarrow Lumber Yard, agreed to donate poles for the soccer field, while Fred Hendricks, Eddy Froese, Jack Dick, and Pete Nightingale volunteered to build the goal posts and to prepare the soccer pitch. Hank Giesbrecht was placed in charge of the YAA volleyball team.

The Annual Pheasant Hunting Contest would be held under the same rules as in previous years during the official pheasant hunting season. Johnny Giesbrecht was elected the official judge, with pheasant feathers entered in the contest displayed in the Jolly Roger Barber Shop.

By the end of 1951, Yarrow was recovering from the effects of the slump in the berry market. Virtually a self-contained community of Mennonites, it had a population of about 2000 people. With 800 members, the Yarrow MB Church was the largest Mennonite congregation in B.C. The First Mennonite Church on Eckert Road had a membership of 200.<sup>8</sup>

During its first five years of activities, the YAA successfully sponsored Yarrow's sports teams, built a ball diamond and soccer field, regularly showed movies at the Public School to raise funds for its activities, and held annual pheasant hunting contests. By the end of 1951, the Yarrow Athletic Association seemed an ongoing success, contributing significantly to Yarrow's secular culture.

\*\*\*\*\* 1952 \*\*\*\*\*

The official goings-on of the YAA began with the AGM held on February 5, 1952 in the Public School basement. Approval was expressed with the volleyball and soccer teams' activities. However, some dissatisfaction was expressed with last year's banquet for the championship Intermediate softball team. Apparently, the food, facilities, and service provided were not adequate for the price paid per plate. Also, it was advised that in the future each member should pay for the meal in advance of the actual banquet.

Bill Siddall voiced regret that he could not serve as Vice-President for another year since his family planned to relocate from Yarrow. Elected to the executive were: J.H. Hepting, President; Jack Dick, Vice President; Len Froese, Secretary-Treasurer; and Ike Paetkau, Ben Braun, and Bill Schellenberg, Directors.

Members voted in favour to begin construction of a YAA club house. Accordingly, Fred Hendricks was designated to select a Building Committee and to report its progress to the YAA members at a meeting to be held within one month. The minutes of the YAA do not indicate the purpose of this "club house." Originally, the association intended to build a 100 foot by 90 foot hall for indoor sports and recreational roller skating. And its articles of incorporation emphasized providing athletic games and entertainment for the "benefit of the Association and the welfare of the Community." Was the construction of a "club house" compatible of the Association's objectives?

A special YAA meeting was held on February 12, 1952 at the Bright Spot Café to hear the Building Committee's report. Fred Hendricks requested members respond to the Building Committees estimates for the construction of a club house. On the question of constructing a 20 foot by 60 foot building, or a 24 foot by 60 foot building, members voted in favour of the latter construction. All members were in favour of beginning immediate construction of the building provided for in the estimates, as moved by Bill Siddall and seconded by Henry Fast.

Further progress on the club house's construction was reported at the March 31, 1952 meeting held in the Public School after the movie. The shiplap for the building and gravel for the foundation were on the building site. Mr. H. Ratzlaff would lay a 24 foot by 60 foot cement slab. George Derksen and Isaac Epp would haul the gravel and rocks.

Furthermore, it was agreed that Hank Giesbrecht would remove and store the bleachers from the field that the YAA had been renting from Marshall Knox. Mr. Pete Nightingale would be in charge of removing building materials from the back yard of J.H. Hepting's office.

The next meeting would be held on April 9, 1952 with members of the softball teams in attendance

Eleven Junior and several Senior ball players attended the meeting held in the Public School on April 9, 1952. At issue were the location of the new Ball Park and identity of the teams' coaches. Len Froese was appointed to contact Mr. H. C. Penner about using the ball grounds at the Sharon Mennonite Collegiate Institute (SMCI) on North Wilson Road. Fred Hendricks suggested that Hank Martens would make an excellent coach. Hank Giesbrecht agreed to see to the dry cleaning of the ball uniforms. The works department of the YAA would move the bleachers and other ball park equipment to the SMCI ball park if it became available.

The general meeting on May 20, 1952 revealed some unsettling developments concerning the ball teams. During the time since the last meeting, Johnny Giesbrecht, Ben Braun, and Len Froese had collected money directly from Yarrow's merchants and members of the community on behalf of the ball teams without consulting the YAA. When Fred Hendricks demanded an explanation for these happenings, Johnny Giesbrecht explained that the YAA was not expending enough effort towards sports in Yarrow. Moreover, he stated that the community in general was more in favour of donating towards community teams than the YAA's ball teams.

An argument broke out among the members since many wanted to maintain the status quo. In an effort to reconcile the differences among YAA's members, Mr. Pete Nightingale stressed that as a member of the YAA he had always taken pride in the sports the YAA sponsored, especially the ball teams. However, he intended to continue supporting Yarrow's teams under the new arrangement.

Another argument ensued on the disposition of the ball teams' equipment. Some members were in favour of selling the equipment to the community team. But since the equipment was partially paid for from attendance at the ball games, this resolution was an attempt to make money off the ball teams for the YAA itself. In the end, the YAA's members decided to allow the community teams to use the park fixtures, such as bleachers, but retained the right to remove them if necessary. After Henry Harder remarked the YAA was formed to promote sports in Yarrow, Johnny Giesbrecht moved and Pete Nightingale seconded the motion that the YAA would donate fifty dollars towards the community ball teams. This motion was carried.

During the summer of 1952 and thereafter, ball games — softball and later baseball — were held on the North Wilson Road school grounds, even after the Chilliwack School Board purchased the private SMCI facilities to establish the Yarrow Elementary and Junior High School. The old Public School in downtown Yarrow would be condemned and eventually be demolished.

\*\*\*\*\* 1953 \*\*\*\*\*

Without its ball teams, the YAA's reasons for existing were greatly diminished. This sentiment was reflected at the YAA's Annual General Meeting held in the Public School basement on January 16, 1953. In his opening statements, President J.H. Hepting referred to a rumour regarding the disbandment of the YAA. Several members concurred that they too had heard this rumour. Mr. Henry Fast suggested that members "bury the hatchet." Mr. Pete Nightingale emphasized that "his membership money had originally been placed into the YAA for sports," and that these monies should continue to be used in that way.

In an attempt to gain clarity on the future of the YAA, Hank Giesbrecht moved that members vote by way of secret ballot on the issue of dissolving the YAA. This motion was seconded by Hal Hendricks and carried by the members. Afterwards, a majority of the members voted to dissolve the YAA.

John Esau suggested members elect a liquidation committee. Other members stated that information on dissolving a club registered under the Society Act was necessary before proceeding. The motion by Len Froese that President Hepting would contact a lawyer for this purpose was seconded and carried. After a motion by Henry Fast, seconded by Fred Hendricks, members agreed their building lot would be sold by sealed tender, with a minimum price of eight hundred dollars. It was also decided to sell the club's two projectors, movie screens and turn table, although no price was set at the meeting.

President Hepting reported to the members at the April 1, 1953 meeting the results of his meeting with A.M. Guinet, Barrister and Solicitor. The club's liquidation must be advertised in three Vancouver newspapers, and locally in the Chilliwack Progress. Thereafter, funds obtained from the sale of the assets of the YAA must be deposited and held in the club's bank account for thirty days. The lawyer's fees for legally winding up the affairs of the YAA could be in excess of one hundred dollars.

Towards the end of this meeting, Fred Hendricks, Ben Braun, and Johnny Giesbrecht were elected to form a liquidation committee. Furthermore, it was suggested that the two movie projectors be sold for three hundred and four hundred dollars each.

The last meeting of the Yarrow Athletic Association as recorded in its minutes was held on Friday, May 29, 1953 in the Yarrow Public School basement. Secretary-Treasurer Len Froese read the previous meeting's minutes. Johnny Giesbrecht moved the minutes be adopted as read; Bill Siddall seconded this motion. Motion carried.

The liquidation committee had been unsuccessful in obtaining suitable prices for any of the YAA's assets. YAA member Abe Epp offered to buy the YAA's land and four thousand board feet of shiplap for six hundred dollars. A motion to accept this offer by Henry Fast, seconded by Jack Dick, was accepted unanimously by members. Furthermore, members agreed to denote the deluxe projector and movie screen to Henry Fast; Jack Dick received the utility projector, small screen and turn table.

President J.H. Hepting adjourned the last meeting of the Yarrow Athletic Association.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Dyck, Harold J. and Marlene A. Sawatsky. "Yarrow's Soldiers." *Yarrow, British Columbia: Mennonite Promise: Village of Unsettled Yearnings*. Ed. Leonard Neufeldt. Victoria, BC: Touchwood, 2002. 104.
- <sup>2</sup> Yarrow Athletic Association. *Minutes: 1946-1953*. Mary Froese.
- <sup>3</sup> Yarrow Athletic Association. *Societies Act: Declaration*, March 17, 1947.
- <sup>4</sup> Yarrow Athletic Association and George Marshall Knox. *Statutory Lease*, February 6, 1947.
- <sup>5</sup> Froese, Mary. Written Communication. n.p.
- <sup>6</sup> Martens, Robert. "Play Ball: Yarrow's High Summer." *Yarrow, British Columbia: Mennonite Promise: Village of Unsettled Yearnings*. Ed. Leonard Neufeldt. Victoria, BC: Touchwood, 2002. 197-98.
- <sup>7</sup> Yarrow Athletic Association and Andrew F. Kotowich. *Letter*, October 18, 1950.
- <sup>8</sup> Barber, L.E. "Yarrow's Silver Anniversary," editorial, *Chilliwack Progress* 27 May 1953.