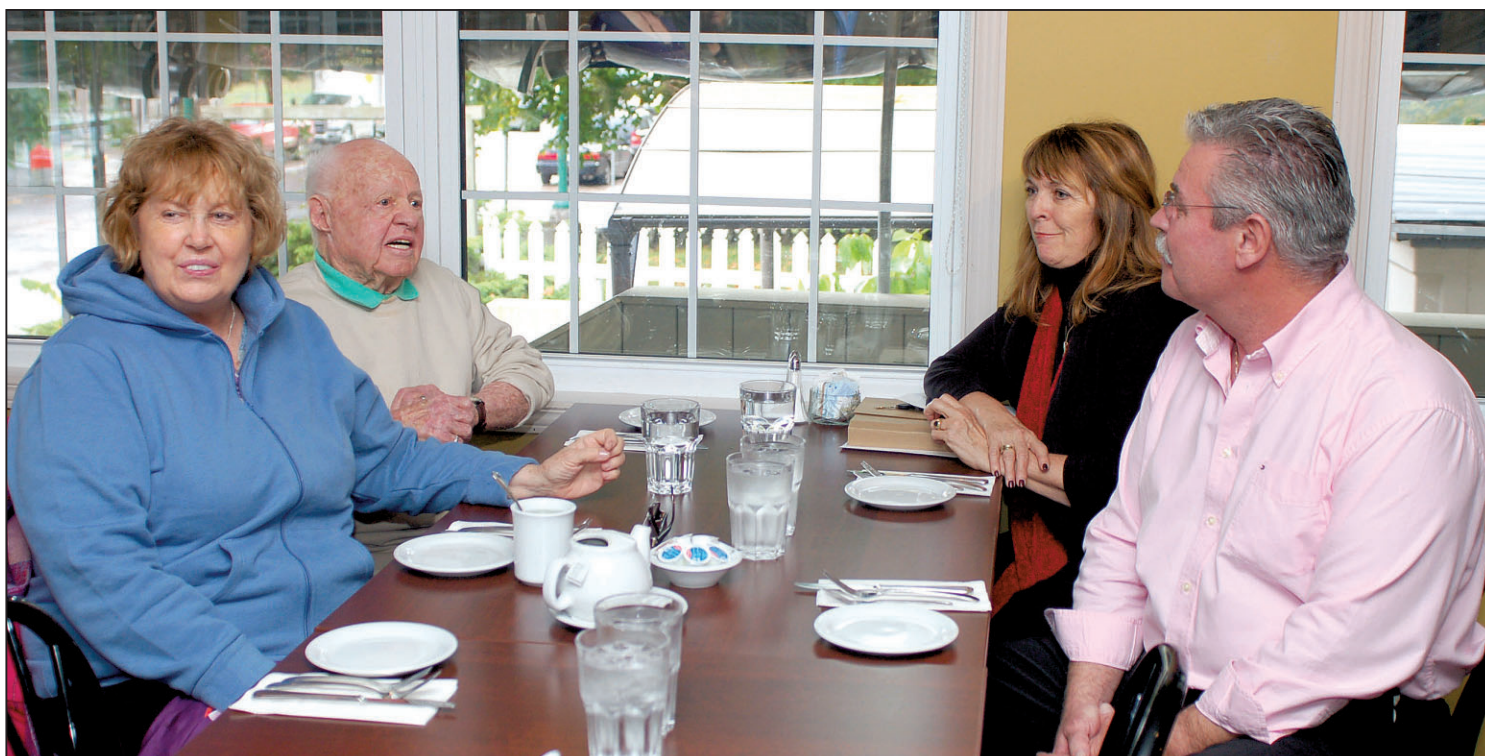


Tuesday, October 6, 2009

■ **STAR IN TOWN:** Mickey Rooney and wife grace Brockville with a visit



RONALD ZAJAC The Recorder and Times

Mickey Rooney, second from left, and his wife Jan, left, prepare for lunch with local contest winners Louise Severson and Don Spracklin at the Brockberry Café on Monday.

# Lunch with a legend

RONALD ZAJAC  
Staff Writer

He has more than 300 films to his name – not to mention 89 years – and all of his well-known wit intact.

When asked by a reporter Monday what he considers his greatest achievement, Mickey Rooney replied: “Staying alive.”

“You go through a lot,” the screen and stage legend added as the small crowd at the Brockberry Café erupted with laughter.

Rooney, who was in Brockville with his wife, Jan Chamberlin, ahead of their Monday night show at the Brockville Arts Centre, then added the achievement is staying alive and enjoying oneself.

The couple was in town for “Let’s Put On a Show,” Rooney’s autobiographical musical highlighted with film clips, humorous anecdotes and memories of his career.

The illustrious octogenarian’s

showbiz career has spanned almost his entire life, as he first performed at 17 months old.

This latest tour has taken the couple across southern and eastern Ontario and was to wrap up in Ottawa tonight.

“We’ve enjoyed it, Jan and I,” said Rooney. “We’ve had a wonderful time. We’ve played wonderful theatres.”

But Rooney had yet to see the inside of the newly redesigned Brockville Arts Centre, which reopened officially Saturday with a grand gala of local talent.

Rooney’s show is the first professional act to grace the new and improved stage.

Rooney and his wife, passionate animal lovers, had lunch at the Brockberry on Monday with city Councillor Louise Severson and her friend Don Spracklin, who won the privilege because Severson took part in a fundraising draw for the Leeds and Grenville branch of the Ontario Society for the Pre-

vention of Cruelty to Animals and the Gananoque Humane Society.

For Severson, it was a lucky mistake.

“I thought I bought tickets to the show. I bought tickets to the draw,” she said.

She was busy with customers over at Severson Cleaners when local OSPCA manager Tonya Martin phoned to tell her she had won, so she was unclear at first what exactly she had won.

“I was like: ‘Are you kidding me?’” said Severson, who thought she was supporting the animal shelters just by buying show tickets.

Luckily for her, the contest prize also included two tickets to Rooney’s show.

Severson, who lists *National Velvet* as her favourite Rooney film, said she was not nervous about dining with a showbiz legend.

She came to the mid-afternoon date armed with a birthday card for Rooney and an auto-

graphed copy of photographer Ian Coristine’s book of Thousand Islands photography, *Water, Wind and Sky*.

When asked if he was nervous about sitting down with Rooney, Spracklin replied: “Of course.”

Martin and Nisha Milkovich, director and major grants and gifts co-ordinator of the Gananoque Humane Society, said the fundraiser brought in under \$1,000, to be split between the two organizations.

The contest did not sell out its 200 tickets because it was put together on short notice, said Martin.

The Brockberry Café donated the food and service for the event, the pair said.

As for Rooney, he was equally laconic when asked what his plans were after the tour.

“We’re going home,” he quipped.

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■ **PRESCOTT**

## Contract halted, but why?

NICK GARDINER  
Staff Writer

PRESCOTT – A sole-source contract for a national engineering company with a local presence remains up in the air after Monday’s municipal council meeting.

Council voted to defer a recommendation from last week’s committee-of-the-whole meeting to extend a contract to Genivar Inc. for engineering requirements at two infrastructure projects valued at \$2 million.

Chuck Street was one of three councillors who questioned the deferral suggested by Mayor Suzanne Dodge. But he was alone in voting against Monday’s proposal which Dodge said came from public works director Craig Cullen.

“Something smells. I can’t support this,” said Street.

Street said Cullen provided a “thorough presentation” to last week’s committee meeting in support of his request to sole-source the job.

He said the presentation was well received by the committee, which includes all members of council.

There was one stipulation they gave to Cullen. He must first ensure Prescott won’t be penalized by the federal and provincial funding partners for not putting the job out to bid.

With that point clarified, other councillors were also perplexed by the proposal.

Councillors Mike Dimopoulos and Jo-Anne Beckstead both argued the recommendation doesn’t force Cullen into signing a bad deal for the town.

“He’s not beholden to do this,” said Beckstead.

“It’s giving him the authority (to enter into an agreement) but he doesn’t have to.”

see **PRESCOTT** | Page A2

■ **UNIONIZATION VOTE:** SLC part-time staff casting ballots

## College workers may join OPSEU

DEANNA CLARK  
Staff Writer

St. Lawrence College part-time support staff were voting yesterday and again today on whether or not to join the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU).

The local tri-campus college is one of 24 across the province with staff voting on the issue. Once completed later this month, it will be the largest union certification vote in Ontario’s history with up to 10,000 eligible part-time college workers.

“This is significant,” Betty Cree, OPSEU’s provincial executive chairman for college support staff, said in a telephone interview with The Recorder and Times on Monday.

“After this vote, and we’re hoping it’s positive, they will then negotiate their first collective agreement,” Cree said.

“It is righting a wrong for part-

time college workers,” she said. The workers haven’t been unionized at all in the 47 years of community colleges in Ontario.

“Part-timers sit side-by-side with full time staff and do the same work for less pay, no benefits and no guarantee of work from one semester to the next,” Cree said.

“It’s very unfair because they bring the same level of skills, experience and qualifications to the job,” she said.

Brockville, Kingston and Cornwall campus workers voted Monday and Kemptville workers are slated to vote today.

It was against the law in Ontario for part-time support staff to unionize until it changed last year. According to union officials, colleges hired more part-timers as a cost-saving measure because they didn’t have to provide benefits or wage increases.

see **UNIONIZATION** | Page A2

■ **NIGHT TO REMEMBER:** Arts Centre bash a sell-out



DEANNA CLARK The Recorder and Times

Brockville’s Danny Lawn shares a laugh with master of ceremonies Chris Puddicombe during the Brockville Arts Centre Grand Reopening Gala Saturday night. See story on page A4.

### ONLINE



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### INSIDE



#### NEW DOCTOR AT BGH

A new internal medicine specialist will add depth to Brockville General Hospital’s staff. Dr. Tom Psarras started working at BGH on Sept. 8 after working at Sudbury Regional Hospital. **Page A3**



#### MEALS ON WHEELS

Community and Primary Health Care is marking Meals on Wheels Week by inviting dignitaries to help deliver meals. The agency delivers some 30,000 meals in a year. **Page A3**



#### BRAVES NIP 73’S

Brockville Braves netminder Clarke Saunders came within 22 seconds of his first shutout this season, but his teammates still had something to celebrate on Sunday. They earned a 2-1 decision over the Kemptville 73’s for a modest two-game win streak. **Page B1**

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### WEATHER

Mainly sunny  
High 14° Low 10°  
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