

## The Yarrow Athletic Association: A Cooperative Approach (Part 1 of 3)

By Elmer G. Wiens

The Yarrow Athletic Association operated in the Mennonite community of Yarrow, BC from 1947 to 1953. It was founded in late 1946 when a group of young men gathered in Bargaen's Carpentry Shop with the intention of providing Yarrow's residents with secular recreational activities and facilities.

As the population of Yarrow grew and residents prospered, the desire for athletic activities became more important among youth and adults. Facilities were needed for indoor and outdoor sports to meet this new demand. As late as 1946, Yarrow's Christian high school, the Sharon Mennonite Collegiate Institute, played its basketball games in the barn of Henry Ratzlaff, Sr. The town's two senior league softball teams, the Yarrow Growers and the Yarrow Lumbermen, held their softball games on the ball diamond at the downtown public school.

While the two Mennonite churches of Yarrow provided religious programs and events, residents still had to travel to Chilliwack for secular entertainment such as movies or bowling.

The success of the Yarrow Growers' Co-operative Association probably influenced the young men to choose a cooperative approach. Accordingly, at the Athletic Association's inaugural meeting on December 16, 1946, the attendees selected John Henry (J.H.) Hepting, president; W.H. (Bill) Siddall, vice-president; Henry Froese, secretary; and Fred Hendricks, treasurer. The Association's membership included men who had recently returned home from serving in the Canadian Armed Forces during World War II: John Hepting, Henry Froese, Peter Bargaen, Hank Giesbrecht, Abe Wittenberg, John Wittenberg, Henry Ratzlaff, Jr, and Henry Fast (Dyck 104). Some members were already experienced businessmen, while others became successful in later years.

Initially, the organization was called the Yarrow Athletic-Entertainment Association (YAEA). The following account of the YAEA and its successors, the Yarrow Cooperative Athletic Association (YCAA), and finally the Yarrow Athletic Association (YAA), are based on the minutes of these organization as provided by Mary Froese (YAA *Minutes*).

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

The next meeting of the Association was held at Bargaen's Carpentry Shop on January 3, 1947. 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 the group that an official application be made to the municipal school board for the purpose of showing movies.

Other motions were made and carried. Membership payments of \$5 were due on the tenth day of each month. Members would forfeit their membership if delinquent for more than three months. Movie ticket prices would be set at the cost of fifty cents for adults and twenty-five cents for children.

There was unanimous applause when Yarrow resident Bill Wolfe of CHWK radio (in Chilliwack) volunteered to provide free publicity for the YAEA. A few members expressed concern about the Yarrow MB Church's reaction to movies being shown at the public school. Other members wondered about the nature and content of the movies. Bill Siddall stressed the importance of presenting the objectives of secular recreational activity to the Yarrow community diplomatically, in order to build support from locals.

Once the Chilliwack School Board gave its approval for the use of the public school basement for showing movies, revenues began to roll in to the new Association. Revenues increased so much that at the January 17, 1947 meeting in Bargaen's Carpentry Shop, the YAEA decided to reduce adult movie fees to thirty-five cents. Members then agreed to acquire 1000 board feet of 2 x 12's to build benches for the movie patrons. John Esau volunteered his time to look after setting up benches and cleaning up after shows. J.W. Neufeldt and Johnny (Mex) Giesbrecht volunteered to usher when audiences lined up for movies.

At an extraordinary meeting held after a movie on February 1, 1947 in the public school's basement, the Association's members voted to change its name to the Yarrow Cooperative Athletic Association (YCAA), intending to organize under the Cooperative Act.

At the subsequent meeting of March 3, 1947 at the public school, A. M. Guinet, barrister and solicitor, advised that the organization incorporate under the BC Societies Act. C. Peters moved and C. Sukkau seconded a motion to this effect. Peter Nightingale moved and Bill Siddall seconded a motion to name the organization the Yarrow Athletic Association (YAA).

In the Declaration 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 promote conduct, and give assistance to athletic activities in the community of Yarrow, BC.
- (b) To promote and operate athletic games and competitions and entertainment for the benefit of the Association and for the welfare of the community.
- (c) To provide recreational athletic entertainment facilities for the youth of Yarrow, BC.
- (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 YAA's first venture was to purchase four acres of land on which 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 among themselves. Mr. J.H. Hepting was again elected president.

Providing movies in the public school basement to raise funds for its yet to be realized athletic 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. With the funds accumulated during 1947, members considered building a 100 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 [sports] 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."

As mentioned, Yarrow's softball teams played their home games on the ball diamond of the public school's playgrounds. This facility, with neither fences nor enclosed bleachers, prevented teams from charging admission to spectators. 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.

As a result, the focus of YAA shifted from the construction of a hall for indoor sports to providing facilities for outdoor sports. Interestingly, the hall was never constructed, although on several occasions it appeared that the YAA might actually begin to build it. Eventually, in 1952, construction began on a 24 by 60-foot clubhouse, but the YAA was disbanded before much work had been accomplished on this structure. The majority of members remained more committed to outdoor sports.

During the spring of 1948, the Yarrow Athletic Association constructed a softball diamond on the field it leased from Mr. Knox on Wilson Road South, north of the British Columbia Electric Railway tracks near Vedder Mountain. The YAA and Mr. Knox agreed that the rent would be \$50.00 per year for three years (YAA *Statutory Lease*). Work began in March to level the ground, and bleachers and an announcer's booth were constructed shortly afterwards.



The members of the 1948 Intermediate team:

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 (Froese).

With the sponsorship of the Yarrow Growers' Co-operative, Yarrow fielded Senior B and Intermediate softball teams wearing YAA crests on their jackets, and "Y G" logos on their ball caps (Martens 197-198). Managed by Johnny Giesbrecht, the Intermediate ball team won the 1948 Provincial Intermediate Softball Championship.

The minutes of the meeting held on November 23, 1948 reflected 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. Dick Epp was selected for the position of ball park manager. A banquet held on the evening of Wednesday, December 22 celebrated the YAA's achievements for the year of 1948.

The YAA continued as a successful cooperative venture for four more years, until it was disbanded in 1953.

#### Sources

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### **The Yarrow Athletic Association: Achieving the Aim (Part 2 of 3)**

By Elmer G. Wiens

The Yarrow Athletic Association(YAA) was actively involved in providing secular recreational activities and facilities in the Mennonite community of Yarrow, BC from 1947 to 1953. It operated in a community where the two Mennonite churches struggled to dissuade its adherents from assimilating to the surrounding and dominant Anglo society (Regehr). Many Yarrow residents perceived movies and sporting events, often regarded as taboo in the community, as inoffensive. Particularly, the young adults found ways to engage in these activities in nearby Chilliwack, where other and more serious worldly temptations waited.

Perhaps an unintended consequence of the YAA was to address the demand for entertainment: movies whose content could be monitored by community approbation; and athletic events where smoking and alcohol were prohibited, and interaction with non-Mennonites was limited. It could be suggested that the YAA had a role in delaying the community's assimilation into the mainstream Canadian society.

Almost all the YAA members and the young men who played on its teams had a Mennonite background and came from Yarrow. Large, boisterous crowds attended the ballgames, and residents were proud of their teams' winning ways. Along with competitive team sports, the YAA organized another popular competition: the annual pheasant shooting contest.

The following account of the YAA for 1949 and 1950 are based on its minutes as provided by Mary Froese (YAA *Minutes*).

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

President Hepting reported at the first YAA meeting of the year 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 ballpark. 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 total 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 \$25 per year to have their names placed on the backs of the team's uniforms. The \$400 collected covered the cost of team operations, buying uniforms and jackets, plus entry fees and insurance. The gate fees collected at games in Yarrow were used to pay for the umpires and the cost of maintaining the ballpark.

This public-private partnership between the public based YAA and Yarrow's private entrepreneurs provided a stable, successful arrangement until 1953.

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 of the 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 \$24 per set.

When 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 schoolgrounds.

*The Chilliwack Progress* (Mar 23, 1949) reported that "the Y.A.A. (Senior B) 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 roster of experienced 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 would compete in the Chilliwack Senior B league, with games starting in May. (The eight-team Chilliwack Senior League's executive members were Frank Kickbush, president; K. French, vice-president; and P. Andres, secretary-treasurer.)

The YAA decided to build more bleachers and a wooden fence on the sides 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 into the BC final playoffs was also discussed.

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 ballpark.

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

As of June 6, 1949, the YAA was still soliciting bids to take the first crop of hay on both the YAA ballpark and its Boundary Road property. It was decided at the meeting held on this date that season 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 Ballpark.

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 (Martens).





The members of the 1949 YAA Senior B softball team:

Back row: Len Froese, Jake Neufeldt, Pete Ratzlaff, Hank Harder, George Berg, Henry Funk, Alex Rempel, John Adrian, Henry Neufeldt.

Front row: George Derksen, Alex Fast, Johnny Giesbrecht, George Thiessen, Peter Wall, George Enns, Irvin Froese.

After the summer, 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 nights 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 should 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 ballpark was also discussed.

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

The YAA closed the very 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; and Ike Petkau 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 from fifteen to ten members.

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

Members' hopes were high for another successful year. At the 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 ballpark; Fred Hendricks volunteered to be in charge of gates at the ballpark. New team jackets would be purchased for the upcoming season.

The YAA executive decided 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 softball 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 ballpark grounds for another three years.

At the June 7 meeting held in the basement of the public school, Ike Petkau and Ben Braun reported that the new board fence and repairs to the ballpark 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 would retain use of the land beyond the outfield.

J. H. Hepting resigned as president at the meeting of the 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 \$1. On a lighter note, Jake Neufeldt stated he would donate \$1,000 to the YAA should he win first horse in the Irish Sweepstakes. The YAA's minutes did not indicate if this occurred.

At the last meeting of the YAA in 1950 held on October 23, J.H. Hepting reported a contract with Andrew F. Kotowich of New Westminster to show movies. 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, progressing to possibly three shows later on. The members decided to decline Mr. Kotowich's offer to buy their small projector and movie screen for \$350.

Although the YAA softball team did not win a trophy in 1950, expectations were high for the following year. The YAA was achieving its objectives.

#### Sources

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## The Yarrow Athletic Association: The Windup (Part 3 of 3)

By Elmer G. Wiens

During its first four years of activities from 1947 to 1950, the Yarrow Athletic Association (YAA) had successfully sponsored Yarrow's sports teams, built a proper ball diamond on South Wilson Road with fences, bleachers and an announcer's booth, held movies at the Public School to raise funds and the annual pheasant hunting contests. At the beginning of 1951, the YAA seemed an ongoing success, contributing significantly to Yarrow's secular culture.

Yarrow with a population of about 2000 people was recovering from the slump in the berry market and the demise of the Yarrow Growers' Cooperative Association. The Yarrow MB Church, with 800 members, was the largest Mennonite congregation in B.C, while the First Mennonite Church on Eckert Road had a membership of 200.

The members and executive of the Yarrow Athletic Association, organized under the B.C. Societies Act, were all volunteers. These dedicated, motivated individuals offered their time, energy and skills through a sense of community pride and civic duty. However, the flourishing post-war economy provided jobs and business opportunities to Yarrow's residents whose time commitments conflicted with volunteer work for the YAA. Yarrow's residents, particularly its younger men and women, took jobs, enrolled in higher education and started businesses elsewhere. The Mennonite exodus from Yarrow had begun.

The following account of the YAA for 1951 through 1953 is based on minutes as provided by Mary Froese (YAA *Minutes*).

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

The YAA's Annual General Meeting for 1951 was held on Tuesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> in the basement of the Public School. 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 attended from the previous year's teams. At issue was the choice of playing softball or baseball during the 1951 season. A majority of players voted to play softball, even though baseball was increasingly popular in the Chilliwack District.

Johnny Giesbrecht agreed to manage the senior softball team on the condition that he be given a reliable helper as coach. The majority of people present voted in favour of Henry Neufeldt for coach. President Hepting agreed to contact Marshall Knox about renting his field on South Wilson Road 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.

At a 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. In the meantime, players impatient with the delay had organized an intermediate softball team coached by Eddy Froese and Pete Ratzlaff. While this was known to Len Froese, uncertainty about the formation of a senior team kept him from informing the YAA president and directors. Several members expressed disappointment about these events. After these matters were discussed, members agreed to sponsor the intermediate team with the understanding that the team's coach and players maintain themselves within the YAA's jurisdiction.

At the Directors' meeting on June 1, 1951 at the home of J.H. Hepting, Eddy Froese and Pete Ratzlaff agreed to terms whereby the YAA would sponsor the intermediate softball team.

Spurred on by past successes of Yarrow's softball teams, the intermediate softball team continued their winning ways to capture the 1951 B.C. Intermediate Softball Championship.





The members of the 1951 YAA softball team:

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 at the meeting held after the movie in the Public School's basement. Pete Nightingale moved and Johnny Giesbrecht seconded a motion that a banquet be held to honour the team, with YAA members paying for their own meals. Eddy Froese agreed to organize the banquet.

Other YAA sports teams were also discussed. Members voted to donate a soccer ball to Russ Dyer's juvenile soccer team. 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 erect 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 once again during the pheasant hunting season. Johnny Giesbrecht was elected the judge, with pheasant feathers entered in the contest displayed in Hank Giesbrecht's Jolly Roger Barber Shop.

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

The official business of the YAA began the AGM held on February 5, 1952 in the basement of the Public School. Approval was expressed with the activities of the volleyball and soccer teams. Bill Siddall expressed regret that he could no longer serve as Vice-President since his family was moving away 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 once again voted to begin construction of a YAA "club house," and Fred Hendricks was designated to select a Building Committee. The minutes of the YAA do not indicate the purpose of this "club house." Originally, the YAA intended to build a 100 foot by 90-foot hall for sports and roller skating. The

articles of incorporation emphasized providing athletic games and entertainment for the “benefit of the Association and the welfare of the Community.” It is unclear if the construction of a “club house” was compatible with the original objectives.

At the special meeting on February 12, 1952 held at the Bright Spot Café members heard the report of the Building Committee. The construction of a much smaller building of 24 feet by 60-feet was approved with work to begin immediately.

At the March 31, 1952 meeting held in the Public School, it was reported that shiplap for the building and gravel for the foundation were on the building site; H. Ratzlaff would lay a 24 foot by 60-foot cement slab; George Derksen and Isaac Epp would haul the gravel and rocks.

Eleven junior and several senior ball players attended the meeting on April 9, 1952. The issues were the location of a new Ball Park and the identity of the teams’ coaches. Len Froese agreed 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 Hank Martens would make an excellent coach. Hank Giesbrecht agreed to arrange for dry cleaning the uniforms. The works department would move the bleachers and other ball park equipment from Knox’s field to SMCI’s ball park if and when it became available.

The meeting on May 20, 1952 revealed some unsettling developments. Since the last meeting, Johnny Giesbrecht, Ben Braun, and Len Froese had collected money from Yarrow’s merchants and community members for the ball teams without consulting the YAA. When Fred Hendricks demanded an explanation, Johnny Giesbrecht said that the YAA was not focusing enough on sports. He contended that the community favoured donating directly to community teams instead of the YAA.

To reconcile these differences, Pete Nightingale stated that he always had pride in YAA’s sports teams, particularly the ball teams, and would continue supporting Yarrow’s sports teams.

Another argument ensued on what to do with the ball teams’ equipment. Some members wanted to sell the equipment to the community team. But since it had been partly paid for from attendance at ball games, others felt that they would be making money off the ball teams for the YAA itself. In the end, the members decided to allow the new teams to use fixtures such as bleachers but retained the right to remove them. After Henry Harder remarked that the YAA’s purpose was to promote sports in Yarrow, Johnny Giesbrecht moved and Pete Nightingale seconded the motion that the YAA donate fifty dollars towards the community ball teams.

During the summer of 1952 and for some years thereafter, ball games — softball and later baseball — were played 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 demolished. Its playgrounds would be turned into a park.

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

Without its ball teams, the YAA’s reasons for existing were greatly diminished. This sentiment was reflected at the YAA’s last 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. Henry Fast suggested that members “bury the hatchet.” Pete Nightingale emphasized that “his membership money had originally been placed into the YAA for sports,” and that it should continue to be used for that purpose.

To obtain clarity on the future of the YAA, Hank Giesbrecht moved that members vote by way of secret ballot on its disbanding. This motion was seconded by Hal Hendricks and carried by the members. By secret ballot the members passed the motion to dissolve the YAA.

John Esau suggested forming a liquidation committee. Other members suggested that legal information be obtained on how to break up “a club” registered under the Society Act. President Hepting agreed to contact a lawyer for this purpose. After a motion by Henry Fast and seconded by Fred Hendricks, members agreed their building lot be sold by sealed tender with a minimum price of eight hundred dollars. They also agreed to sell “the club’s” two projectors, movie screens and turn table although no prices were set.

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

Towards the end of this meeting, Fred Hendricks, Ben Braun, and Johnny Giesbrecht were appointed to the liquidation committee. Furthermore, the price of the two movie projectors were fixed at \$300 and \$400 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. The liquidation committee was unable to obtain any acceptable bids on the YAA's assets. Abe Epp offered to buy the land and four thousand board feet of shiplap for six hundred dollars. A motion by Henry Fast and seconded by Jack Dick to accept this offer was carried unanimously. Additionally, members agreed to donate the deluxe projector and movie screen to Henry Fast; the utility projector, small screen and turn table went to Jack Dick.

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

#### Sources

Yarrow Athletic Association. *Minutes: 1946-1953*. Mary Froese.