

Melrose's half-century milestone



Photo by Bernice Pontanilla

Melrose Park's Connie Thiessen, left, and Susan Carson look for family members in old hockey team photos. Melrose is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a party on Sept. 16.

Club celebrating anniversary with big party on Sept. 16

By Bernice Pontanilla
Staff Reporter

A fresh coat of white paint, from floor to ceiling, on the walls of the main hall is just one way Melrose Park Community Club is celebrating its 50th birthday.

The second way is with a big party.

"Everyone's welcome to come," said Melrose president Susan Carson. "It's all free, except for the social, and we have a live band performing in the afternoon."

Melrose Park's 50th anniversary party takes place from 2 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 16, and features pony rides, face painting, hot dogs and an inflatable bouncer for the kids.

For the adults, there is a silent auction, pig roast and beer gardens planned and, for the evening, a \$5-per-ticket social at 8 p.m.

Carson, who has been a member of the club for more than 25 years, said Melrose's history is full of examples of community members coming together to expand the club several times over.

"The amount of volunteer labour that went into starting this club in 1956 was astronomical," said Carson, adding they still have the original minutes from those meetings.

"It was all volunteers that came and built this by

sections."

Today Melrose is a hub of activities, with soccer and hockey playing prominent roles.

But the club is also the home of Manitoba Volleyball's outdoor summer league, the dressing centre for Miles Macdonell Collegiate's Buckeyes football team and the home of an affordable children's summer camp and seniors arts and crafts space.

Melrose's treasurer and full-time caretaker Connie Thiessen said the club is her second home, as she spends the same amount of time in both her home and the club.

"My kids are here every night of the week," said Thiessen, who painted the entire main hall and added she has a few little projects still to go. "It's why I got involved, for my kids."

Thiessen started off volunteering for bingo, one of Melrose's main fundraising activities, then worked her way up to the executive and, since 2002, has been the club's full-time caretaker.

The husbands of both Carson and Thiessen grew up going to Melrose Park and their children have grown up there too.

Thiessen's two youngest children play their hockey out of Melrose, while Carson's did up until the 1990s.

Both said they hope many people, especially new residents with kids, come out and enjoy the festivities.

"I think both of us will be here until the day we die," said Thiessen, as Carson nodded.

Melrose Park is looking for donations for the silent auction. If you can donate, call 669-0518.