

Davis "snarly and cantankerous" but still respects council

By Wanda McConnell
Staff Writer

It was once suggested to Roy Davis that he really should consider running for city council.

His reply may be the most famous of the man's many biting one-liners: "My mother never raised no idiots."

Davis, a resident of Elmwood, has been a volunteer member of the East Kildonan-Transcona sub-committee on parks and recreation for about as long as the sub-committee has existed - about 15 years. His association with the local Residents' Advisor Group goes back further than that.

When it comes to political matters, he likes to make his point simply and bluntly, and it's often tinged with sarcasm.

He appears to have little time for the hot-air politicians and bureaucrats he deals with on the sub-committee.

But in fact, the man is a contradiction in terms.

He gained the reputation as a "bear" during his 26-year career in the army and it's an attitude that didn't go away when he retired from the forces as a sergeant 13 years ago. By his own admission, the "bear" - who does beautiful cross stitchery as a hobby - admits: "I'm snarly and cantankerous. Just ask my wife."

And yet, he has a lot of admiration for the same city councillors he complains about.

"I do take them to task every once in a while. And I get tired of them beating around the bush. But those people do a lot of work. It's



intelligent enough. In order to make a decision I have to read and re-read a report, and it takes me 20 minutes to formulate an opinion and state it. I'm not good at snap judgments.

"And I think of all the good things to say after I get home."

That's another irony, says Skowron, who adds he often encouraged Davis to run in the Elmwood ward.

"I thought he would be my heir apparent. He's belittling himself to say he wasn't smart enough. I never understood

why he said that position as an arb the union. He is on at applying simple sense."

Capable or not, he's content to sit volunteer role in which he loves.

"I like to argue point across. And I memory and a short

Now that he has the post office he warned the council around to yell at louder."

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tremendous job considering all the meetings they have to attend and all the reading they have to do. We've had a few duds, but on the whole they are dedicated conscientious people."

He wonders sometimes, why they didn't throw him off the sub-committee long ago. But then again, he says, "Every councillor down there knows I'm not serious. I'm not chastizing them. I like to bring their faults forward is all."

Ironically, it was the

Pothole Hotline ready for calls

"It's the time of year again when alternate cycles of freezing and thawing cause potholes to develop on city streets and we are asking the citizens of Winnipeg to help us combat this problem," Coun. Chris Lorenc has announced.

Lorenc, chairman of the city's works and operations committee, said crews will be repairing these potholes as they occur. However it is virtually impossible to effect a permanent repair until the ground has thawed. He noted that the unseasonably warm weather in January and early March is likely to result in a particularly severe spring pothole problem.

City crews will do their best to keep up with the occurrences, however, the public's assistance is helpful to advise of pothole locations to expedite their repair.

In order to accommodate

Davis often wonders why they didn't throw him off the sub-committee long ago.

Wanda McConnell photo

councillor he most admired whom he loved to bait the most - Alf Skowron, who was defeated last fall as Elmwood ward councillor after 17 years.

"He might have been sucking wind, but Alf called a spade a spade. He knew what was best for this city and was one of the most dedicated councillors I knew."

The admiration is mutual.

the public in reporting potholes, the operations department has again instituted a Pothole Hotline to take citizen's calls. The number is 986-HOLD (986-4653) and began operation March 30.

City crews will endeavor to repair reported potholes on the Regional Streets System within 24 hours of notification. Reported potholes on all other streets will be repaired as expeditiously as possible.

Skowron says Davis was like a mentor, urging him to pursue issues and projects, providing advice and reports on what the man on the street was saying and generally being a strong ally in city politics.

Their friendship goes back to the formation of the Residents' Advisor Group, just prior to Unicity and was strengthened later when Davis was president of Chalmers Community Club.

At the time, the club needed a new gymnasium and Skowron fought hard to get it. Davis' three children helped Skowron with his election campaigns. The two were also NDP members until Skowron had a falling out with the party. Davis quit in protest as well.

The two are not unlike. Like Davis, Skowron was noted for being somewhat crusty and bombastic at times. But Skowron thinks Davis has an excuse.

Until his "second" retirement a couple of months ago, Davis was a letter carrier, then union negotiator and

grievance chairman for 11 years for the Canadian Union of Postal Workers - hardly a laid-back job.

"I think between his military background and as a union man you become a cynic with bureaucracy and even your fellow employees."

Davis got into politics quite by accident. He and his wife Fran have always owned and loved dogs and he had gone to a resident advisory group meeting to protest some "stupid dog bylaw."

It also happened to be the night they were electing members to the group and before he knew it, he was a signed-up recruit.

He has never thought about graduating from his volunteer position to that of city councillor, he says. The reason?

"I never thought I was

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Community Committee briefs

East Kildonan-Transcona

By Wanda McConnell, Staff Writer

Dedication approved

The East Kildonan-Transcona Sub-Committee on Parks and Recreation approved a recommendation to name the resource library at River East Arena Preschool Recreation Centre in honor of Sharon McGinnis.

The recommendation came from the local parks and recreation department, which operates the preschool centre. It came in response to a request from the preschool leaders at River East Arena and Roland Michener Arena, where a similar program operates.

McGinnis, who died last December, was a child care worker at the River East centre

for 12 years.

She was one of the originators of the centre and without her initiative and determination "the preschool programs would not be as successful or as well known as they are today," says the department's report.

The resource library, which McGinnis helped to establish, includes a variety of parenting books and books for children.

Park to honor Davis

The sub-committee also approved a recommendation to rename Thames Park, located on Thames Avenue at Elmwood Road, to Roy Davis Park in memory of the former

Park name to honor Roy Davis

sub-committee member.

Davis had sat on the sub-committee for 15 years, until his death last summer. He had also been an active community member and strong supporter of the Chalmers Community Club and the Elmwood Giants baseball team.

"This park is an ideal choice. It is close to where he lived, he helped develop the park and it is in the shadow of the Elmwood Giants ball field and Chalmers club. Of all the areas he could be remembered by this is the most appropriate," said Dick Todd, general manager of the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Parks and Recreation Branch.

Final bill a problem

The final bill for the dedication ceremony for the renaming of the Incinarena to

Terry Sawchuk Memorial Arena came to \$2,845.33. While none of the sub-committee members are quibbling over the worthiness of the dedication, the final bill presented a problem.

The ceremony was accounted for in the 1990 parks and recreation budget, but the event was delayed until Feb. 23, 1991.

In the meantime, the 1990 balance went back into general revenue and the 1991 budget freeze prevented the local branch from including the cost of the event in this year's budget. As a result the branch requested a per capita grant to cover the cost.

Coun. Shirley Timm-Rudolph (Springfield Heights) quickly reminded branch parks and recreation manager Dick Todd that city departments do not qualify for per capita

grants. **March 1991**

Coun. Don Mitchelson (Henderson) and Coun. Terry Duguid (Miles MacDonell) said they did not wish to deprive other community groups by allocating some of the per capita grant funds to

parks and recreation.

Mitchelson moved to forward a recommendation to the Committee on Protection, Parks and Culture to include the amount as an entry in the 1991 operating budget for the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Parks and Recreation Branch.

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