



Champlain Township Mourns Passing of Community Builder

For Immediate Release

VANKLEEK HILL (Ontario) – The Township of Champlain is deeply saddened by the passing of Mr. Phil Arber, Excellent Events Principal and community builder for approximately 40 years. He died on December 14, 2016 after a short illness.

“Most of our residents within the Municipality at least knew of Mr. Arber as he worked on many community projects in addition to running his company, a hobby farm and an antiques business,” stated Mayor Gary J. Barton. “A fixture in our community since the 1970s, I am convinced that people will remember him as a mover and a shaker, one who would get things done as per his vision of events, for having a direct personality, but above all else, his sense of community. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and associates. He will be remembered for a long time.”

Phil Arber, a civil engineer by profession, bought his farm in 1973. According to an interview which he granted *Ottawa Magazine* in November 2008, he had farmed in his earlier years in rural Manitoba. While he raised sheep, kept horses with his life partner and grew organic crops, he also branched off into antiques and events coordination, which led to his creation of his own company, Excellent Events.

Mr. Arber will be remembered for his role as a building owner – the Arbor Gallery – Cultural Centre, which is located in the former Higginson clan homestead; a member of the Higginson Tower renovation Committee (this landmark re-opened for public visits in late 2006); his contribution to the creation of the Vankleek Hill murals; his Christmas Craft Fairs; the Commercial Fairs; his coordination of the fall Festival of Flavours (on behalf of the Vankleek Hill Farmers’ Market); his contribution as a Vankleek Hill Agricultural Fair board member; and a host of other business ventures and community events.

Finally, Phil Arber never feared work and seldom slowed down. In the *Ottawa Magazine* interview, he answered reporter Melanie Scott who asked him why he devoted so much energy to Vankleek Hill: *“Because you gotta contribute something, and I have to do more than just take up space. Sure, it’s a lot of work. So what?”*

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Information:

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