



OUT OF HIBERNATION: Spring sports slowly returning following extended hiatus. **PAGE 9**



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Gary Fulton works out during a recent session of Rock Steady Boxing. The program is designed to help people with Parkinson's Disease minimize some of their symptoms while staying physically fit.

Boxing program helps knock out effects of Parkinson's Disease

BY JENNIFER KOTILA
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When many people hear the words "Parkinson's Disease," their first thoughts most likely would be that of a person having noticeable uncontrollable movements, such as what was exhibited by celebrity Michael J. Fox. While this would be a more severe form of the disease, there are actually a large number of people who live with milder forms, whose symptoms can be somewhat manageable through an exercise program. One such program has been based here in Cambridge for around one year now.

When K.C. Bohn, former owner of Outdoor Edge, was in the bike business, he met a customer who had Parkinson's disease, which became his inspiration for helping those with the disease when he retired and closed the Cambridge bike shop.

"I put him on a bike, and you couldn't tell he had Parkinson's because the repetitive motion helped him out," Bohn said. "And then I saw on TV this program 'Rock Steady Boxing,' and that's when I thought, 'When I retire I want to be able to help these guys.'"

Once he retired, Bohn went through a two-day training program for Rock Steady Boxing in Florida. His program in Cambridge is an affiliate of

over 1,000 Rock Steady Boxing programs all over the world. However, his program is one of the few that is a nonprofit, he said. He does have to charge a fee in order to cover the overhead of providing a place in which to host his clients, but he volunteers his time to the program.

Bohn started the program about a year ago with about 10 participants. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic hit about a week after starting the program, which reduced the class size to four. He said he is looking forward to welcoming more people into the program again once the pandemic is under control now that vaccines are available.

"We need more people to make the program work," Bohn said.

Currently classes take place Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 p.m. in Cambridge, in the same building that housed Outdoor Edge. Soon, Bohn will be starting classes at 5 p.m. after introducing Tai Chi to the program, as well.

Workouts start with a warmup, and then mind and body works for how to stand and punch. Participants then complete a circuit workout followed by boxing, a five-minute core workout, and a cool-down. It is during the cool-down that Bohn will

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Residents voice opposition to Isanti County Auditor/Treasurer changes

BY JENNIFER KOTILA
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A room full of people appeared at the Isanti County Board meeting April 7 to voice their opposition during a public hearing to a resolution which would change the County Auditor/Treasurer official from an elected official to an appointed official.

The resolution states the county board recognizes the benefit of having appointed persons in the position of County Auditor/Treasurer because it promotes efficiency and consistency of county business with individuals qualified to oversee a broad spectrum of complex issues with the Auditor/Treasurer's office.

There were two written comments submitted from anonymous Isanti County residents who supported the resolution, stating it is important to have people with the proper experience and education in the position of Auditor/Treasurer.

However, most of those who came to the public hearing did not feel the change would be constitutional, and was taking away their rights.

"To get a really sharp CPA in, I think they can be manipulated to work with the county rather than for the people and finding new income streams and new ways of taxing us," said resident Scott Leroux. "This is how it works to government all over the place right now when they can take the voting right away from the people. They get somebody in there that they want and then there is more control. I just

'I just want to protect our right to vote.'

Scott Leroux
Isanti County Resident

think it's very wrong." He also stated if whoever is voted in does not do a good job, a new person could be voted in the next time, and an auditor-treasurer shouldn't have to be a certified CPS as long as they are smart enough to overlook the books and make sure everything is right.

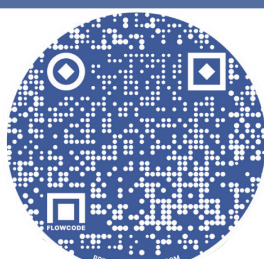
"I just want to protect our right to vote," he said. "The next thing it will be appointing the sheriff. It will be appointing you guys (commissioners), it will become a big buddy system. That's not what we want. We want to keep everything working for the people. I ask that you guys give it careful thought, I really urge you to think about it."

Another speaker lamented about not paying as much attention to local government and government in general until recently. "You all know how the board works, and we have been trusting you to take care of these things to our detriment, we should have been paying attention," Deanna Moos said. "So, as we have our head up and looking around, we think, we're looking, we're learning, we're researching, trying to understand how all of these appointments and all these board positions work."

Moos went on to say

SEE OPPOSITION, PAGE 2

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PARKINSON'S: Participants discover physical, mental benefits from the program

FROM PAGE 1

start introducing Tai Chi into the sessions.

"These guys really work up a sweat. I know many people who couldn't keep up with them," Bohn said, while at the same time emphasizing individuals can work out at whatever pace they are comfortable with. He said no boxing experience is necessary, and the workouts can be geared towards either men or women, with ages ranging anywhere from mid-30s to early 90s.

SUPPORTING MIND AND BODY

Rock Steady Boxing participant Don Block was diagnosed with Parkinson's about 20 years ago. His wife saw a pamphlet about Rock Steady Boxing, and encouraged him to try it out.

"I figured if it could help me get my coordination and some of my balance back, some of my strength – those are all things that Parkinson's kind of robs from you," Block said. "I was just hoping it would help."

Some of the symptoms Block

was experiencing a year ago when he started the program were twitching of his hands, making it difficult to tie shoelaces or run a computer mouse due to poor hand coordination, and losing his balance when walking, causing him to shuffle.

"Those are getting better. I have way more strength than I had," he said. "It's hard to tell from week to week, but if you look back on some of the exercises that you were really struggling to do when you started and are very easy now, it makes a difference."

Participant Leon Swanson was diagnosed with Parkinson's about five years ago. His daughter, Kelly Pearo told him about the program and got him involved. She said it has gotten him moving and is loosening up the muscles that get tight from Parkinson's.

Swanson said it especially helps loosen up his neck muscles to allow him to be able to turn his head to look behind him when farming and driving.

Another participant, Gary

'This gives me the discipline to come out and do this - I know it's the right thing - but, the guys are here too and I don't want to let them down, it's support.'

Gary Fulton

Rock Steady Boxing participant

Fulton was diagnosed about 11 years ago and a friend from church recommended the class to him. He decided to join "partly for the camaraderie," but also because he does try to stay fit as much as he can. "This thing sneaks up on you," he said about Parkinson's, adding that a lot of people know about the external symptoms of Parkinson's, but not the cognitive part that causes him to lose his train of thought.

"I didn't know it would be as hard as it is, I thought it would be fun," Fulton said about the class. "I said to K.C., 'This is really a total body workout.' I really look forward to it – I enjoy it."

When he was first diagnosed with Parkinson's, Fulton was told about support groups, but he didn't feel like that was the right fit for him. "I've always been kind of by myself, especially when things like this occur. It's like, 'I don't need people to lift me up,'" he said, adding that he is glad he tried it. He noted how the guys in the class share their stories. For instance, he and Block were talking one day and he forgot what he was saying "right smack dab in the middle" of what he was saying, and Block shared that the same thing happens to him, as well.



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Don Block takes a turn with the speed ball during a recent workout.

Some people with Parkinson's get bad tremors and some don't, Fulton explained. Some are more cognitively affected, hampering the executive functions of the brain. He noted that Parkinson's creates a lack of dopamine, so when the body releases adrenaline, parts of the body don't know what to do because the sensors don't know how to transmit the signal properly.

Before coming to each class, Fulton doubles up on his medication in order to relieve some of his symptoms, which include foot-dragging and hand tremors. Another symptom prevalent with Fulton is holding his hand behind his back without realizing it, which is known as dyskinesia. His doctor was the first one to notice, and encouraged him to get it checked out, which led to him seeing neurologist and being diagnosed. His niece has teased him about holding his arm and hand back at a family function, asking, "Why are you holding your hand behind your back, are you hiding the cookies?"

The classes have helped

Fulton relieve some of his symptoms and strengthened his core muscles, but he still has to be careful around stairs and the glass coffee table.

"I know that exercise is good, but I just wouldn't do it. This gives me the discipline to come out and do this – I know it's the right thing – but, the guys are here too and I don't want to let them down, it's support," Fulton said, reiterating the camaraderie he feels with those in the class. He said he would like to see more people get involved. "My neurologist tells me, 'You're doing great! Stay fit, keep active.' Because when you slow down and you start spending too much time on your couch, you start to waste away."

People interested in the program are welcome to come try it a couple times for free, and scholarships are available for those who may not be able to pay the fee. In fact, Cambridge Medical Center recently provided a grant for the program.

To learn more or to get started, contact Bohn at cambridge@rsbaffiliate.com or 763-221-6883.



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K.C. Bohn, owner and head trainer of Rock Steady Boxing, jokes around with Leon Swanson during a break in his workout.

Second Blue Ribbon Beard Bonanza scheduled

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Spring has sprung and it's time for the growing season to begin - growing a beard that is.

The Blue Ribbon Beard Bonanza is back in 2021. If you have a beard, support a beard wearer, or are crafty enough to create your own, make plans to be at the Isanti County Fair on July 24, 2021, at 3 p.m., at the bandshell stage for the Second Blue Ribbon Beard Bonanza.

Nine categories of facial hair; including the mustache, partial beard, full < 6", full beard > 6", freestyle beard, "Whiskerina," kids craft and Best Bearded Veteran, will be professionally judged. A new category addition for 2021 is the 5 O'clock Shadow. This category's wearer will sport the new stubble similar to that achieved after a long day in the office. Contestants will be required to provide a time stamped photo of a freshly shaven face prior to 8 a.m. on the day of the event.

Entry into the contest is \$10 and first, second, and third place will be awarded in each category. The Best in Show or crowd favorite will be chosen from a lineup of all of the first place winners from each category.



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The competition was hairy during the first Beard Bonanza back in 2019.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Maddy Nelson Memorial Foundation. More information and pre registration can be found at www.blueribbonbeardbonanza.com or on the Facebook event page, under Blue Ribbon Beard Bonanza.

Isanti County awarded federal funds

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FAMILY PATHWAYS

Isanti County has been awarded Federal Funds made available through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program through the State Set-Aside Committee.

Isanti County has been chosen to receive \$9,534 for Phase 38 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in the county.

The selection was made by a National Board that is chaired by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and consists of representatives from American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; The Jewish Federations of North America, The Salvation Army; and, United Way Worldwide. The Local Board was charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

A local board will determine how the funds awarded to Isanti County are to be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area. The local board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive

these funds and any additional funds made available under this phase of the program.

Under terms of the grant from the National Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must: 1) be private voluntary non-profits or units of government, 2) be eligible to receive Federal funds, 3) have an accounting system, 4) practice nondiscrimination, 5) have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs, and 6) if they are a private voluntary organization, have a voluntary board. Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

Isanti County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously to various local food shelves, New Pathways, Catholic Charities, and A Place For You participating. These agencies are responsible for providing meals and nights of lodging.

Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must contact Kathy Wills, Local Board Chair, Family Pathways, 6413 Oak St, North Branch, 651-674-8040 for an application. The deadline for applications to be received is Friday, April 30 at 4 p.m. The meeting to distribute funds will be a Zoom Meeting and those applying will be given the date. Attendance is mandatory for applying for funding.