

Russ Anber and the Rival boxing team make a surprise visit at the SADD/FYI youth retreat



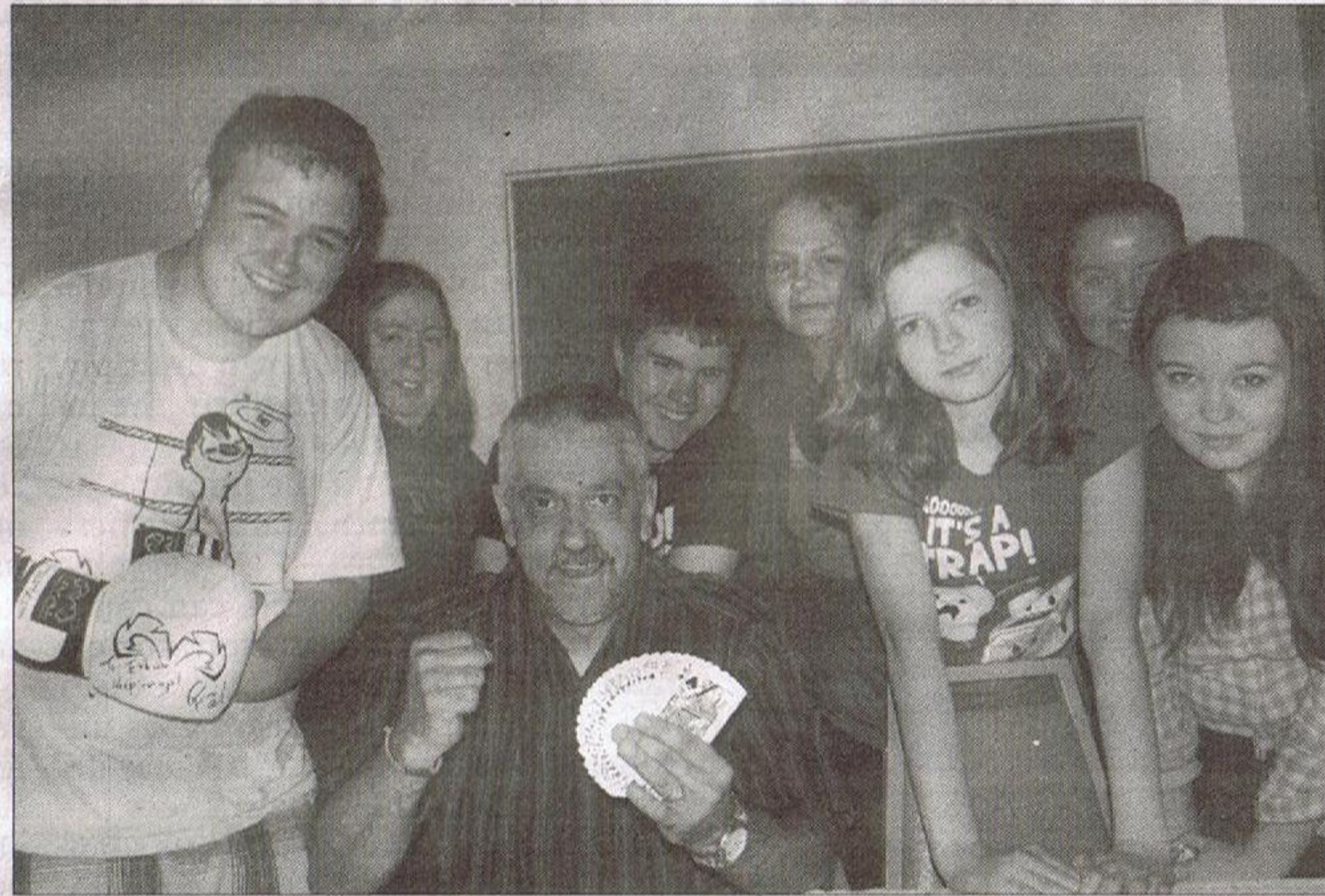
THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

On Sunday morning, Russ Anber, a world-class boxing trainer who trained four Olympians and a world champion, along with Julia Smith, Rival's customer service manager and their spouses, made a surprise visit to the Missisquoi North Youth Centre Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and Former Youth Involvement (FYI) leadership retreat weekend held on May 18 and 19 at the Horizon Hotel in Sutton.

Many of the SADD youth have been actively participating in a weekly "fitness through boxing" program animated by 15-year-old Ethan Ball, a senior SADD member. The group meets for an hour every Friday following its SADD meeting from 7 to 8 p.m. in the basement of the youth centre. Using boxing movements and focus techniques plus agility equipment, the group has been enjoying the road to fitness by sharing a common love and interest in the sport of boxing.

"It's really brought our group together on another level," explained Ball. "In our SADD meetings, we organize



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Boxing coach Russ Anber (seated, centre) with some of the members of the SADD Mansonville on their weekend retreat visit.

events and promotional stuff for other youth and our community but when we meet afterwards for our fitness class, we are doing it for us," he explained.

Anber has become somewhat of a legend at the youth centre, since he and his staff have been giving tips and encouragement by telephone and e-mail to the group through their contact with Ball, who in turn has been sharing the tips, suggestions and information with the group. It has long been Ball's dream to meet Anber in person and the look on his face when Anber and his Rival team

walked through the door as the group sat down for breakfast on Sunday morning was priceless.

"This is not something I normally have the time to do," explained Anber. "As a coach, I am often away training but I wanted to come here today to let these kids know that Rival recognizes the efforts they are making in getting fit and bettering their lives."

The visit was made possible through the efforts of Julia Smith, Rival's customer service manager. The Rival team instantly found its way into the hearts of

the youth. Anber shared some motivational words with the group inspiring them to find a sport to incorporate into their lives explaining that having a physical activity to focus on is healthy for both body and mind. Also an amateur magician; Anber spent the last half-hour of his visit doing magic tricks with the SADD group leaving both the kids and adults in awe.

As part of the retreat the previous day the entire group had taken part in a one-hour "fitness through boxing" workshop animated by Ball, who was assisted by the other youth from SADD who partake in the weekly fitness group (Jordan, Kira, Kayla, Emma and Alexe). SADD and FYI participants soon "felt the burn" as they experienced what the group does each week. Following the session, many expressed interest in taking up some type of boxing fitness routine. The visit on Sunday with Anber and Rival gave the youth an opportunity to ask a few questions about the sport, make inquiries about equipment and to get some information about the Rival gym in Montreal.

In the not too distant future, the SADD fitness through boxing group members will travel to Montreal together for a visit to the Rival gym where Anber has offered to put them through a workout, "Anber style."

With eager anticipation the youth are looking forward to this experience.

If you would like more information about Rival, contact them at:

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