

The Westend Weekly

Bringing Communities Together



Box 66, Rainy River, ON P0W 1L0 Ph. 852-3815, FAX 852-1863, e-mail: westendweekly@tbaytel.net - Serving the District for 17 years VOL. 18, NO. 1 Wednesday, April 1, 2009
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Howard Hampton still active



by Marlene Deschamps
Howard Hampton is still the MPP from the Kenora/Rainy River District. He is no longer the leader of the Ontario NDP. Although he has had this new role for only a short time he said he feels 15 years younger and 20 pounds lighter. He is looking forward to being in the riding more often and being able to concentrate on Northwestern Ontario. He said there is always lots of issues throughout the province and as leader you get to spot critical issues and a better sense of this. He noted that Premier McGuinty is still not addressing any of NWO issues.

When asked about the situation at Abitibi and the dams, he stated they appear to be backing off for the moment in Ontario and they are more focused on Quebec. In Quebec they are selling them to Hydro Quebec, not a private company so it is not a political issue. Abitibi is huge in Quebec and the Quebec government is willing to pay valuable dollars into Abitibi. He went on to say that in Ontario this is a very political issue across the Northwest that McGuinty can't continue to ignore. Much of Abitibi's actions are contingent on them getting their debt problems under control.

While discussing the Tourism report recently out which would include Sunset Country being amalgamated into the Superior North region, Howie said this is a downtown Toronto idea and Minister Sorbara should realize tourism doesn't exist in newspapers with no one from Sunset Country and/or Northwestern Ontario having any input. He also agreed with the push to have the Tourist Information Bureau re-located for more access by tourists.

While discussing the new leader of the Ontario NDP, Andrea Horwath, Howie said she brings strength to the party. He added she is thoughtful and smart enough to listen to people which is a big bonus for a successful leadership.

So people will be seeing Howie more often and contact with him is, as always, available through his constituency office.

Air Cadet Squadron receives money from Fort Frances Lions



From left Captain Margaret Somerleigh, President of Lions, Jacques Fiset and Flight Sgt. Jackson Gillon.

by Marlene Deschamps
Air Cadet Squadron #908 meet Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at the Arena Auditorium. On Wednesday, March 25th they had a guest who was bringing monetary help for the Squad to assist in the programs and projects.

Fort Frances Lions President, Jacques Fiset was on hand to present a cheque for \$500 to the Squad. On hand to receive it was Captain Margaret

Somerleigh who traveled from Atikokan to review the cadets. In charge of the Squad was Flight Sgt. Jackson Gillon who put the 14 cadets present through their drills. He has recently been selected for the Power Pilot Project. This is the third cadet from this area to attend the Power Pilot Project.

Parents of the cadets have nothing but great things to say about this group of young people and all they gain by becoming

part of the Air Cadets. It is a merit based group that allows the cadets to attend a number of camps through out the year at no cost to the parents. This is a bonus for parents in all financial brackets. Many of those present would be attending 6 week camps during the summer. Music, leadership, orientation, physical education, avionics, gliding and power are all camps open to the cadets. They do not have to pay for the

very sharp uniforms they wear because they are also provided free of charge.

The Air Cadets take a break from their regular Wednesday parade and drills over the summer (from June 1st until September). They welcome new cadets and all you have to do to get involved is to come out on the first Wednesday in September and see how you can benefit from joining Air Cadet Squadron #908.

Waste water threatens Sturgeon environment

The Rainy River First Nations in northwestern Ontario and The White Earth Band of Ojibwe in northwestern Minnesota have staked a partnership in preserving our parallel lands and culture. Part of this partnership includes restoring the populations of Lake Sturgeon in our traditional waters.

Our efforts are groundbreaking – the first partnership of its kind in North America. We have been assisted and applauded by state and provincial agencies, and the federal governments have started to take notice. Yet we are still faced with obstacles that long ago should have been abolished.

Beginning March 23, 2009, several incidences of wastewater bypasses began on Rainy River. At press time, nearly 200,000 gallons of untreated raw sewage had been bypassed from outdated, antiquated wastewater treatment plants at both ends of the river. Sadly, this practice is common during large rain events and spring

run-off periods.

It has not been determined how such events can impact public health, not to mention the detrimental effects on fish and wildlife populations. Discharges of untreated sanitary sewage violate the federal Clean Water Act in the United States and the Federal Fisheries Act in Canada. These events should be seen as polluting the waters of the commonwealth.

Sturgeon co-existed with dinosaurs and have survived centuries of cataclysmic ecological effects. Yet despite their resiliency through evolutionary time, they are particularly sensitive to habitat degradation. Research has shown that the first year of life is most sensitive to environmental change, and emphasizes the importance of the first year in establishing year-class strength among the sturgeon species. Given that the lake sturgeon is considered a species of "special concern" in Canada and "endangered" in the United States, we all must make our best efforts to protect the species.

There is an immediate need for remedial measures and specific deadlines for upgrading wastewater treatment systems in municipalities and counties on both sides of our border. We are calling for the elimination of "wastewater treatment plant bypasses", and for the development of comprehensive plans to ensure that aging infrastructures are upgraded or replaced.

Our local municipalities and counties will require significant assistance from State, Provincial and Federal agencies to aid them in this matter. We are calling on these agencies, as well as the Stephen Harper government and Barack Obama administration to make this issue a top priority. Hard economic times are no excuse to let our Environment boil away on the backburner.

For more information on this issue, or to find out more about the environmental initiatives spearheaded by Rainy River First Nations and White Earth Band of Ojibwe, please contact Kiley Hanson, Rainy River First Nations Watershed Coordinator (807-482-2479) or Mike Swan, White Earth Natural Resources Director (218-573-3007).

"We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children".
- submitted by Rainy River First Nations

Reactions to waste water press release

by Marlene Deschamps
When contacted, Chief Leonard said that he received several calls, some in the middle of the night, regarding these bypasses. He added that International Falls dumped quite a bit and Rainy River on one occasion. He mentioned that the Fort Frances plant was at capacity and were contemplating bypasses but did not follow through. As Chief Leonard pointed out, if a private citizen drained his septic tank into the river he would be fined and possibly jailed so municipalities and companies should have to comply with the

same rules. He added that when storm systems flow to the lagoons and when they are full, the sewage goes into the river. He was frustrated with the level of compliance required by the average citizen and especially First Nations citizens that was not required by municipalities.

When the press release was shared with Mayor Roy Avis, he said that the Fort Frances waste water treatment plant was very seldom over maximum capacity. He added they adhere to all rules and regulations set by the Ministry of the Environment. He found the

reports for January and February that had been forwarded to Council from the treatment plant and noted there had been no incidents of bypass despite lots of snow and rain. He said the plant management sends the reports to Council on a monthly basis which is also required. He said that if they are forced to do a bypass, they are required, by law, to notify all communities that could be affected. Mayor Avis was also concerned about the dumping of raw sewage into the Rainy River and hoped the problem could be corrected.

Business Women's Fashion Show

by Marlene Deschamps
Don't forget to make plans to attend the Business Women's Network annual Spring Fashion Show. It is all ready to go this Sunday, April 5th at 2 p.m. at the Rendezvous. There will be some great prizes to be won as most, if not all, members contributed some great items for the draws. The tickets are only \$8 and are available at Rainy River Future Development offices or any member. See you there.

Justice served

On January 29, 2009, the Honourable Justice E.W. Stach of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice dismissed Mr. Richards's court action against Ken McKinnon, Amos Brielmann, Shawn Hyatt, Jeff Pollard, Jason Teeple, Herb Govier and Aarne Hahkala. After hearing submissions, on February 19, 2009 the

Honourable Justice G.P. Smith ordered Mr. Richards to pay the Personal Defendants costs of \$3,500.00. In his reasons, Justice Smith stated explicitly that Mr. Richards "should not have sued the Defendants in the first place" and should have responded to an earlier proposal of the Personal Defendants to dismiss the action."

Mark your calendar for Spring Fever in Emo April 16, 17, 18

Now that proves Spring is just around the corner!!



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