

The Westend Weekly

Bringing Communities Together



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Barwick Gun & Hobby Show draws a crowd



Ted Biggs, former well known Natural Resources officer in this area, now living in Kenora, had lots of information to share with everyone.

by Marlene Deschamps

The Second Annual Barwick Gun & Hobby Show was held on Saturday, May 2nd. 573 people paid at the door which was about the same as last year. The show's promoters, Scott and Tasha Stafford were very pleased with the turnout and

Scott said the crowd was different this year because people came to buy. He added there was a lot of stuff that went out the door. The first show held last year was successful also but many of the people who came were there out of curiosi-

ty because it was new. This year people came to buy and the exhibitors were pleased that trade goods came in from the public.

The contest for deer mounts this year was decided by the public. The public got to vote for their favourites and this year there was also a category for shed antlers. Taking first place for a full rack mounted deer head was Shane Brown from Barwick. Coming in second was Bill Parsons from Bergland. The shed antler favourite was Rod Cupp from Barwick while taking second in that category was Jared Cupp.

The exhibitors came from as far away west as Manitou in Manitoba to Thunder Bay in the east and Kenora and Dryden from the north. There were a number of American buyers that came up for the show this year. Most exhibitors have expressed interest in returning and have booked tables for next year's event. Scott said they are going to try and hold the Barwick Gun & Hobby Show on the first Saturday in May on a yearly basis. He added that he and Tasha really appreciate the public support for the show.

3,000 people viewed the exhibits at the Fort Frances Home & Leisure Show



Benji Dobransky, left, and Darren Lowes accepted first place for top booth in the show.

by Marlene Deschamps

Although the 2009 Home & Leisure Show began at 4 p.m. on Friday, the official opening celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce started at 6:30 and featured the Rainy Lake Highlanders, free cupcakes, refreshment & balloons and opening remarks. Chamber President, Cathy Emes welcomed everyone and introduced Bill Peloze of TBay Tel, one of the major sponsors. Bill spoke briefly on how pleased he was to once again be a sponsor for the show and congratulated the Chamber on being 100 years old. Howard Hampton MPP was also on hand and when handed the mike remarked that he had never seen the arena look so good. He said he was happy to be on hand for the show and for the celebration of the Chamber's 100th year. Deputy Mayor Sharon Tibbs said that she, like many others, thought of spring when they talked about the trade and leisure show and the idea of seeing the boats displayed got people excited about spring really being here. She added that on behalf of the Mayor, who couldn't attend, they wanted to congratulate the Chamber on their 100th and hoped everyone

had an enjoyable weekend. Cathy Emes then spoke briefly about the history and foresight of the originators of the Chamber of the Commerce. She thanked the Fort France Museum for putting up a booth that highlighted the history of the Chamber and the business community of Fort Frances and encouraged everyone to visit that booth. She made note that they were sharing this special birthday with the OPP who also had a display set up. She invited everyone to enjoy the show after they had a piece of the beautiful birthday cake or one of the many cupcakes decorated for the occasion. They cut the cake with the help of some youngsters and everyone singing "Happy Birthday" to the Chamber and OPP. After picking up one of the treats, the large number of people that had gathered for the festivities, started making their way along the arena floor to visit the exhibitors booths.

On Saturday, Chamber President, Cathy Emes, said it was really exciting to acknowledge the foresight of business people to form the Chamber 100 years ago. She added she was thrilled with the response from people considering the present economic situation.

She noted that in these tough times it is even more important to support businesses in the Rainy River District. She said she was equally thrilled with the number of exhibits (which were over 70) and the turnout of the public. She mentioned they were equally pleased to share their anniversary with the OPP. Cathy said she had received wonderful comments from the general public about how well organized and how well run the show was and how much fun everyone was having.

There was much to see and do at this year's show and loads of prizes. The popular Plinko game returned and the grand prize of a patio set was won by Jim Bliss. 2nd prize of a BBQ was won by Mckenzie Booth.

There were hourly attendance prizes for \$100 Chamber gift certificates and centennial tapestries so there were many, many winners throughout the two day event.

Plaques were awarded to the best three booths. First place went to Lowes Furniture & Appliances. Second place went to the Farmers Market and RRFDC and third place went to the booth set up by the Fort Frances Canadian Bass Tournament.

Jeanette Cawston was very pleased with all those visiting the Farmer's Market Booth and said this really could be considered the first week of Farmer's Market as they had 10 district producers who had their products on display. She wanted to remind everyone that the official first Farmer's Market of the season takes place Saturday, May 9th.

Lowes Furniture & Appliances really deserved to win first place for their booth that had palm trees surrounding their hot tub focal point. If anything makes people want to have something fresh and new to hail the spring season, that hot tub did the trick.

Chamber Manager, Dawn Booth, said there were just about 3,000 people over the two day show and this was about the same as last year. Elsie Hampton won the \$1,000 Chamber gift certificate. Dawn was pleased there were some new exhibitors this year which she said they always like to see and the whole two days went very, very well. She said it could be deemed as very successful once again.

Heated debate on sidewalks

by Marlene Deschamps

A public meeting regarding the Portage Avenue, Nelson Street and Victoria Avenue truck route upgrade expected to begin starting Tuesday, May 5th was held on Wednesday, April 29th at the Civic Centre. Manager of Operations, Doug Brown, welcomed everyone, introduced the engineers on hand and did a power point presentation regarding upcoming work. He pointed out tender information, the 2009 schedule and the 2010 schedule, what streets were involved and the highlights of each phase. The highlights included the road work, general road works, water works, sanitary sewer and miscellaneous works. Each highlighted point included the square metres, asphalt to be used and what was being installed.

The floor was then opened to questions. And there were many, many questions. The first question were in regards to the businesses and home owners that would be directly affected by detours during construction. Brown stated they would be meeting with those

people on an individual basis. The mood then changed abruptly as the issue of a line existing in each of the Miscellaneous Works section for both 2009-2010. That line stated eliminating sidewalks on the south side of some streets on construction sites and the removal and elimination of side walks on the east side of the avenues in some areas. Brown said he would like to see all sidewalks removed on the east side of avenues and the south side of streets. This would make for cheaper and quicker snow removal in the winter season. There were quite a few home owners on the east side of Portage who were very angry with the statement and the plans to make this happen. One home owner very angrily told Brown that she had to pay \$1,600 to have a new sidewalk installed in front of her home on the east side of the avenue under 10 year ago. She wanted to know why they would want to remove perfectly good sidewalks that people used on a daily basis and require them to cross what will become a busy truck route in order to continue

north or south on their street. One person mentioned that Fort Frances was designated a safe community by the World Health Organizations. He did not think they would continue with the designation if restrictions were place on the handicapped because of lack of sidewalks. One home owner said that since the Town did not pay for the sidewalk in front of his house, because he had to, that he considered it his sidewalk and he did not intend to let the Town remove it. One home-owner cited the reduction in their property values if sidewalks were removed and another noted that when he bought his home on Portage Avenue he never felt he would be living on a truck route and wondered why the trucks to Abitibi could not travel down Eight Street through an industrial area and then up McIrvine to an already designated truck route. It was mentioned that this was really not a truck route and it wouldn't be used permanently by Abitibi and their use of it would end eventually. The ad put in

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Library discussions continue

by Marlene Deschamps

The Town of Fort Frances held a special Committee of the Whole Meeting on Monday, May 4th. The meeting was called in order for the Town to meet with the Library Board and Committee to try and work out a solution to the delay in the construction of the new Library and Technology Centre. Councillor John Albanese chaired the meeting.

Councillor Albanese opened the meeting and asked Councillor Andrew Hallikas to begin by stating the reasons he requested the meeting take place. Hallikas said he wanted frank and open discussions between the groups and an amiable and respectful exchange of views.

Committee Member, stated she felt they could get this done. She added she would like to know of any opposition and who is in favour, in principle, of building the library. Councillor Paul Ryan stated his concerns were strictly financial. He mentioned the \$500,000 tax base they had lost with possibly more and if they had to cut services and get down to basics dollars for the museum would be first to go with dollars for the library second. He further stated that he was in support of and stood by the original \$592,000 but not a penny more. He said he didn't know if the Town should be building anything new in these tough economic times. Deputy Mayor and Councillor Sharon

Tibbs said she was there to hear what everyone had to say and to listen. Councillor Perry stated he was in favour but the cost was too high and the building too big considering we were looking at a shrinking population. He noted another community had to shelve their plans for a new building and stay with the old library because of the economy. Councillor Rick Wiedenhoef said he was in favour but concerned about cost. He wanted to see if they could hopefully find a compromise to reduce the footprint of the library. He wanted to know if they could achieve functionality with a reduction to 11,800 square feet. Councillor Albanese said the Board and Committee had never come

forth with a complete package and total costs. He said that with the economy everyone is facing he is not prepared to build a new library. He added that he was not prepared at this time because we cannot afford to build this library today. Councillor Hallikas stated that if the Build Canada dollars came through and the cards fell into place they could go ahead. It was mentioned that the builders were prepared to give an extension on the tender package for a further six weeks. When the question arose as to reduction in size which would lead to a reduction in cost for construction, maintenance and operational costs, Councillor Hallikas said it was premature to compromise before Build

Canada was heard from. He also felt the town could at least match the fund raising amount of \$850,000. It was mentioned that MP John Rafferty had offered to deliver a letter from the library board directly to the minister. The town has not heard about the Fed Nor grant yet as mentioned by Mark McCaig. He also noted the Mayor has been working hard on the Fed Nor grant issue on behalf of the Town and the library. The fact is that a library is not just about books anymore and has become a social gathering spot. Councillor Ryan agreed but also stated that with the many technologies available today and on tap to be on the market soon, many of what the library offers will be avail-

able in everyone's living room. The Fort Frances Public Library was pegged as being an old relic by a committee member which some took exception to. Councillor Perry asked if it was necessary to have a fireside lounge. Councillor Albanese said that many people believe that the library could be revamped and Councillor Tibbs mentioned that an outside elevator had been constructed at the Museum in order to make it accessible and that had worked quite nicely.

After around two hours of discussion it was determined that everyone would wait until the submission to Build Canada comes forward, especially since the tender has been extended.



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