

The Westend Weekly

Bringing Communities Together



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MPP Howard Hampton helps kick off Tourism Week



Pictured from left, Mayor Roy Avis, former Manager, Jane Johnston, Manager Bev Noga and Howie cutting cake. In background is Fort Frances Museum Director, President of the Field Naturalists and bureau staff

By Marlene Deschamps

June 6-10th is Tourism Week in Ontario. The Fort Frances Tourist Bureau is one of 18 across the province who were hosting open houses on Friday, June 3rd.

Ontario is encouraging families to create their own Ontario travel story this summer during this year's Tourism Week—a national awareness week that highlights the economic and social value of tourism.

When Ontarians visit their local travel centre from June to September 5th they can enter to win: more than \$12,000 in prizes, as well as free passes and attractions coupons; four Ontario getaway packages courtesy of Hilton Worldwide, Motor Home Travel Canada, Ontario's finest hotels, inns and spas and resorts in Ontario.

Quick facts: tourism is an important part of Ontario's economy supporting 300,000 jobs. In 2008, tourism spending in Ontario reached \$22 billion. Ontario welcomes almost 18 million out-of-province visitors annually. Travel Information Centres provide a range of services including customized travel counselling, foreign cur-

rency exchange, theatre reservations, passes to attractions, bus tours, camping permits, fishing licences, accommodation reservations, gifts and souvenirs.

Howie as our MPP is known, said that he was pleased to be here to kick off Tourism Week. He said as a university student he learned the value of tourism when he worked with the Canada Manpower student program. They placed around 1,500 students in summer employment from Sioux Narrows to Atikokan and places in between. He spoke of how today, farm families are supplementing their income by running deer hunting camps. They see people from Kentucky to Vermont to the Carolinas. He jokingly said many of them are hoping to shoot a bear but that is not to be. He said it is looking like a good year for tourism and he added he was pleased to see there was a greater appreciation locally for the bureau.

Mayor Roy Avis who was also on hand said that tourism is a major part of our economy and without it we would be in trouble. He made note that our

bureau was a very nice building and that the staff had really made it very welcoming.

Manager Bev Noga said they had success in working with the museum and tourists always want to know about local museums. It was mentioned that a couple who visited from Germany heard about the museum when they saw a folder in a bureau down east. She added museums and libraries are the first place many want to visit and we are lucky to have a great museum and brand new library to direct them to.

Howie then cut the cake and staff handed out cake and refreshments to those who were on hand. During the event, there were quite a few tourists who entered the building and they seemed pleased that so many people were there to welcome them. Some even had a piece of cake.

Don't forget to visit your local Travel information bureau to get in on the great prizes being available to Ontarians. The one in Fort Frances is located just before the border crossing. The one in Rainy River is located next to the old Railroad Station and right on the main highway.

Rainy Lake/Rainy River part of Mother Earth Water Walk 2011



Debbie Danard from Toronto, originally from Rainy River First Nations and granddaughter of Annie Wilson who started the water walk by taking water from Hudson's Bay.

By Marlene Deschamps

The Mother Earth Water Walk returns as the snows melt and further south spring rains fall and Mother Earth awakens and new life begins. The Water Walk began in 2003 in answer to the questions "What will you do?" In 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 Mother Earth Walk encircled Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Ontario and Lake Erie respectively. In 2008, the walk revisited Lake Michigan. The 2009 walk stretched from Kingston, Ontario to the Atlantic Ocean along the St. Lawrence River. The 11,525 miles or 18,549 kilometres were walked to call attention to the sacred gift of water, the source of all life. The past walks also raised awareness of the need to take care of the water and to help our Mother Earth who is struggling to survive and provide for all of her children. Each of the 24,113,700 steps were a prayer for the water, for Mother Earth, for the animals, the birds, the insects, the trees and for humans. This spring the Water

Lake Superior where they will converge at Bad River, Wisconsin on June 12th to be united with Lake Superior where the first Water Walk began.

The Western Water Walk began Sunday, April 10th in Aberdeen Washington and trav-

beginning point for the Northern Water Walk. Water from Hudson Bay travelled by train to Winnipeg and the route carried the sacred water south through Manitoba, Ontario and into Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The walkers will be journeying over 10,400,000 steps and carrying the healing and sacred salt water from the four directions which will converge at Bad River. This is so the healing water can assist the Great Lakes, the largest fresh water source in the world, to heal and continue to provide life to all.

Debbie Fairbanks from the Couchiching Treatment and Support Centre, along with Heidi Smith from the UNFC and Laura Horton from Seven Generations, and who intended to be part of the Walk met on May 4th to welcome the walkers as they entered our area. The met with Treaty #3 Police who agreed to escort the walkers and indeed met them at the Manitoba border and travelled along with them all the way to Pithers Point. Kudos to them. The person who started out from Hudson's Bay, Debbie Danard, and her husband and 3 year old daughter Talyn Bay flew to Churchill from Toronto. Debbie is originally from Rainy River First Nations and is the granddaughter of well known Elder, Annie Wilson. She said she wanted her daughter with her because she would remember that she was a part of this history and she was the future and they were walking for future generations. She was also very proud that she did the offering to the water before they had their celebration feast. Laura Horton, who went to

Vandalism is costing everyone



By Marlene Deschamps

The beautiful Fountain of Hope at the Lions Park was once again shut down because of vandalism. Someone put dish washing soap into the fountain. This clogs up the fountain, including the lights that make it so appealing. Doug Brown, Manager of Public Works got the call on Sunday, June 5th in the morning about the fountain so he had to call in workers. It took eight hours to drain and clean up the fountain. This was week end work so it ended up costing \$150 in wages. Along with all the clean up costs it was a total of \$929 to get the fountain operating

again. Brown said this happens all the time lately and there was vandalism in the washrooms as well. They now have to be locked up at night and over the weekend to prevent further damage. He is very frustrated because the sixteen hours wasted in dealing with this prevented them from getting to planting the flowers at the cemeteries. He made note that this, along with the vandalism at the other parks, hurts the whole community. Although the parks are a major attraction for tourists to stop at, they are also visited on sometimes a daily basis by Fort Frances residents besides the schools holding

various event at them. He did mention that he has heard that some of this vandalism is not being perpetrated by local youth but by outsiders. It is no matter who is doing this damage, but what is causing them to do it. There is obviously no respect for any public places, for anyone's right to enjoy the parks, for the taxpayers who have to foot the bill or even for themselves if they engage in these types of acts. Not to be totally gross, but there have even been incidents of persons smearing feces on the walls of the washrooms and one has to wonder what kind of mentality would prompt someone to do this. Brown would like anyone who sees any form of vandalism at any parks, public places or even their own backyards to immediately notify the police as they can't be at all places at the same time. For those doing this damage-you should hang your head in shame-you should join a group that promotes you becoming good citizens or at the very least you should refuse to go along with any of your so called friends when they embark on this type of behaviour.



Hilda Atkinson, Josephine Mandamin's adopted daughter, who has circled four of the great lakes.

Walk returns and the prayer continues. The 2011 Water Walk unites all the water of our Mother Earth and will bring water from the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic Ocean and Hudson Bay to be carried by hand in copper pails to the shores of



Sheila McMahon from UNFC with Talyn Bay 3 1/2 year old daughter who travelled with mother Debbie Danard and was part of the ceremony at Hudson's Bay.

Washington and Montana, the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba and the states of North Dakota and Minnesota before arriving in Wisconsin.

On Wednesday, April 20th the Southern Water Walk left Gulfport, Mississippi travelling through the states of Mississippi, Tennessee, Illinois, Iowa and into Wisconsin.

Walkers from the east left Machais, Maine on Saturday, May 7th and their walk takes them through the provinces of Quebec, Ontario and into the states of Michigan and Wisconsin.

Churchill, Manitoba was the

Winnipeg to greet the walkers and was going to return home to join the walk at Rainy River First Nations decided she would walk from there. And indeed she did walk all the way from Winnipeg to Pithers Point. For someone who made that long of a journey, sometimes in not so friendly weather, she still had a lot of bounce in her step as she reached the Northern Arm where the Rainy River and Rainy Lake meet. Laura told those gathered that this water would flow into the Hudson's Bay and the healing waters would come from Bad River, up to this spot before

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