

The Westend Weekly

Bringing Communities Together



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Are there enough trees?



Ed McLeod checked out the display. He worked in the Woodlands Division for 37 years from 1959 to 1996.



Bill Morrison Sr. and Ed Haglund shared a few laughs about their time at the mill, carrying the trademark lunch kits.



John Rafferty, MP, stands by the wall of photos showing retirees from the Mill



Doug MacDonald (standing) chatted with Al Smith who worked in the environmental department for 37 years. Doug worked with Sherry George to put together the history of the Mill as part of his work towards his Honours Thesis in the Bachelor of Arts Program at Lakehead University. His thesis is about the History of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Fort Frances.



Neil Whitefield is one of the few employees still working at Resolute who will be done in a "week or so". He is the Pulp Superintendent and has worked at the mill since June 1977. "The exhibit is excellent. Well done. It's very informative and brings back a lot of memories", he said.



Carla Kibiuk retired in 2009 from the Fort Frances Mill after working there for almost 39 years as the Purchasing Manager. She reminisced with Don Dickson who worked in Woodlands for 24 years before retiring in 1998.

By: Teresa Hazel

It was during the opening of the Fort Frances Museum's summer exhibit, 100 Years of Logging, that the question, "Are there enough trees", was asked and answered by 35-year woodlands employee, Jim Krag.

"People often questioned me, 'will there be enough trees to get my mortgage paid off', 'will there be enough trees for me to get to retirement'", recalled Krag during the opening remarks portion of the welcoming reception.

"I have pride and confidence in the state of our forests", reported Krag although admitted that it was the shift in markets due to the information age that decreased the need for the products that were being produced from the trees and ultimately led to the closure of the pulp and paper mill in Fort Frances.

He thanked the museum for

recognizing the importance of the forest industry to the area.

Member of Parliament, John Rafferty spoke and also delivered a message from MP, Sarah Campbell.

"It is important for me to be here in light of the events in the last couple of weeks", said Rafferty who went on to say that it was a, "bittersweet event".

It is sad for workers and families and communities. Thirty eight thousand jobs have disappeared in the forest industry in Northern Ontario.

We have called for a National Strategy on Forestry. We are battling for severances and pensions and we continue to fight on behalf of families", noted Rafferty who also serves as the NDP Forestry critic.

Rafferty also reflected on the commitment of workers to the local mill over the years.

"A lot of blood, sweat and tears have gone into the indus-



From l. Jim Krag, Woodlands Manager (Resolute Forest Products), Sherry George, Curator (Fort Frances Museum), John Rafferty, MP, and Roy Avis, Mayor of Fort Frances.

try over the past 100 years", he said adding that it is reflected on the photos being displayed. "There are many faces on the walls".

Mayor Roy Avis also wel-

comed the guests and visitors to the celebration. He extended sincere appreciation to the 100th Anniversary Committee, to the Friends of the Museum and to the Curator of the Museum, Sherry George.

He spoke about the generations of families that have earned a living from the logging industry.

He spoke about the sale of the Fort Frances Mill throughout the years and the period marking the end of the "glory days" when Boise Cascade Canada sold it.

Mayor Avis also extended appreciation to the employees of the mill and logging industry.

"We will bring Fort Frances back to the prosperity that we once enjoyed", pledged Avis.

"This is a celebration of the past, but we also have to look at the future".

Curator, Sherry George then wrapped up the remarks.

"It's hard to ignore the big elephant in the room", noted George as to the announcement one week prior to the 100th anniversary of the mill opening, that it would be permanently closed.

"I lost my own job with the mill in 2009", said George

adding that she went through a period of grief and felt sad.

"We have a community of hard working people. We are resilient and we are resourceful", she said.

"Rather than grieving over what could've been done, we're ready to meet the future head on", she said with confidence and added that of the ten people let go in 2009, they have all moved on to better things.

She spoke about the need for a small pause for reflection on where we have come from.

"The community's future is out there. The best is yet to come".

The guests were then invited to explore the many photos and memorabilia on display throughout the Museum (upstairs and downstairs), and help themselves to complimentary refreshments.

Many people could be seen visiting and reminiscing. Long-time employees, employees who have moved to different

areas, and retired employees were there to remember.

There was also an email message posted from former General Manager, Marty O'Brien. Although he couldn't be in attendance, his words brought many fond memories of his time here.

"I am very proud to have been associated with the mill and its employees. My tenure with the mill was the highlight and the most rewarding of my career", he said. "I have very fond memories of the mill, its personnel and the Town itself", he added, congratulating the Museum on its exhibit.

The Exhibit will run throughout the summer months at the Fort Frances Museum and Cultural Centre with a speaker series lined up as well. Contact Sherry George at the Museum for scheduled times and further details at 807.274.7891.

Summer hours are daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Photographers' showcase



What a face.

Photo by Emily Fraser, Pinewood



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