

The Westend Weekly

Bringing Communities Together



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Fog puts a damper on planes for Fly-in BBQ



Flipping pancakes in front right Austin Morrison, left Kristina Wolff and back Oryn Albanese.

by Marlene Deschamps

The #908 Rainy Lake Air Cadet Squadron held its annual Fly-In-Drive-In breakfast and BBQ on Saturday September 12th at the Fort Frances Airport. The fog was so thick that there were no fly-ins for that part of the event. The whole of Northwestern Ontario was fogged in to such a degree that it was not considered safe for any of the expected pilots to take a chance to fly anywhere. Bruce Caldwell said it was too bad the event wasn't held on Sunday when the weather was

great but no one can predict these unexpected changes in weather and they still had five cars, 10 motorcycles and about 1/2 dozen radio controlled airplanes to make it a fun day for all. He noted that Ed Halvorsen again won the peoples choice for his car entry. Although there were well over 200 who attended last year in comparison to the limited number who were here this year, Bruce said the family members, volunteers and cooks were satisfied with the way the breakfast and BBQ

went. Mayor Avis, along with Councillors Albanese and Perry were present to enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast.

The #908 Rainy Lake Air Cadet Squadron is led by Civilian Instructor, Doug MacDonald. He has an aviation background, is a private pilot and likes working with kids. He has been on the job for five years and appreciates all the help he gets from dedicated volunteers that make events like the annual Fly-in Drive-in, breakfast and BBQ a success.

Rainy River hosts Winkler bus tour group



Rainy River locals who kept everyone entertained are Andrew Hartnell in the back left and, next to him in the white hat Eltjo Wiersema. Pictured smack in the center, the tiny but hugely enthusiastic tour guide Gill Stamler.

By Gill Stamler

On Friday August 28th, 2009, a new venture took place in Rainy River! In May, Gord Armstrong came up with the idea of promoting the town by running a bus tour from Winkler, Manitoba to Rainy River and the surrounding district. It came to fruition on the last weekend of August through the efforts of local citizens who wanted outsiders to see what an undiscovered treasure Rainy River and its environs really is. RRFDC represented by Janette Cawston, worked out a budget and the venture was given a grant which meant the visitors would have a "free" weekend!

Eltjo Wiersema volunteered to do the driving in one of Pokey's Vans (Fort Frances) and safely delivered the guests to the Roadrunner Motel in time for lunch at the Roadside Restaurant. After an excellent meal, the twelve visitors and their guides, Gill Stamler & Andrew Hartnell did a "walkabout" of the town, visiting the "4008" then exploring the park, etc. As the weather was co-operating, a barbeque was held at Hannam Park. The food was awesome, thanks to Patti Diebel (CN Hotel) and the lovely musical entertainment - by Willie and Rhodi

Longnecker closed the evening.

Saturday morning after the breakfast at the bakery, the group embarked on two pontoon boats, courtesy of "captains" Linda Armstrong and Archie Wiersema. The sail down the river was followed by a shore lunch at Oak Grove Camp where Linda Budreau spoke to the group about "Hungary Hall". Gerry & Gail Jolicoeur provided a real feast of walleye and all the trimmings! Eltjo then drove to McInnes Creek Chapel where Vivian Locking was the guide, the old Schoolhouse at Harris Hill, with Carolyn Kreger doing the honours, and finally to the lighthouse in Morson where Laurie Pentney talked to the group. Harris Hill Resort was the residence for Saturday night - Cheryl Gauthier made a fabulous steak supper, she and Gary were gracious hosts.

Later the group went to the Pow Wow at Big Island, which was an eye-opening experience for them! They thoroughly enjoyed it. A big bonfire on the beach at Harris Hill Resort was a great ending to the day.

Sunday morning, breakfast at the Roadside - many thanks to Deb and Kim for opening especially for the visitors. Back on the bus and off to Barwick

where the lighthouse and museum were visited. The museum is awesome, a hidden treasure in it-self, showing so many facets of the history of this area. The final step on the tour was the Mounds Interpretive Centre. The lunch was great as was the tour afterwards. Sherri Wilson was so knowledgeable and able to answer the many questions thrown at her! The visitors all belong to the Winkler Horticultural Society so they were very interested in the various plants on the site, especially their medical uses. Sherri talked about the history of the burial mounds and that of the area which was a busy First Nations camping site hundreds of years ago.

After the tour it was time to say "au revoir". Many said they wished the time in the area had been longer, a very positive reaction. Many photographs later the group left for home, saying they would definitely spread the word that Rainy River and district is a great place to visit. Here's hoping their experience will encourage others to visit the town. As they said, they came as visitors and left as friends. Maybe this will be the start of something bigger.

Mine Centre School opening ceremony



Everyone enjoyed a healthy delicious feast at the end of the ceremony.

Staff and students, including the new Junior and Senior Kindergarten students of Mine Centre School attended the school's Opening Ceremony on September 10, 2009. The significance of this occasion extends beyond the opening of the school for another year of learning. It reinforces the school's partnerships with local First Nations communities, and encourages staff and students to embrace Aboriginal culture and traditions.

The ceremony began with an Ojibwe blessing from First Nation Elder, Rose Marie Allen, whose message included the importance of preserving the clan to respect self. Staff and students were reassured that their native language will always be with them, spiritual-

ly. Her message also urged individuals to learn as much as possible about First Nations' traditions.

Students, school staff and Board leadership took part in a nutritionally healthy feast of strawberries and blueberries at the conclusion of the ceremony.

This was the first Mine Centre School Opening Ceremony for Principal, Leslie Barr Kellar, who replaced newly retired Principal, Brenda Ferris-Hyatt. Leslie Barr Kellar has held leadership positions in several Rainy River District School Board schools, and began her career 24 years ago at Mine Centre School. "I began my career here at Mine Centre School in 1985. I spent the first thirteen years of my career here and left to pursue opportunities

with the Rainy River District School Board," she noted. "Although I've been gone for 11 years, the school environment is much the same as I remember it. It is a very warm and welcoming school community. It's somewhat like being in a twilight zone for me this year as I see the faces of the students I taught so many years ago in the faces of our students here today. I look forward to re-connecting with old friends and establishing positive relationships with our entire school community. I'm a firm believer that it takes an entire village to raise a child; I welcome the opportunity to work with parents and community to prepare the students of Mine Centre School for the future," she enthused.

Lakers President addresses Council



Milton Strachan

by Marlene Deschamps

During the Budget Meeting held on Monday, September 14th, the newly formed hockey team, The Fort Frances Lakers President Milt Strachan, addressed Council. The Fort Frances Lakers are a junior hockey team that was set up

after the demise of the Fort Frances Jr. Sabres. The Lakers are a community owned not for profit junior hockey team and they are asking for some assistance from the town.

Milt Strachan made note that there is no bigger events in Fort Frances than hockey, partly because they operate for around six months of every year. The games and the many tournaments put dollars into the community through hotel rentals, restaurants and Main Street businesses. He also mentioned all the players put back into the community and cited the Sabres adopted a school program that was a big hit with the students, teachers and Board. They also helped by being assistant coaches for minor hockey teams and took part in the evaluation camps at the beginning of the seasons. Milt also spoke of drawing both players and fans from throughout the district and mentioned the communities involved from Rainy River west to Atikokan east plus south of the border. Milt also asked the Board

Members present to stand so Mayor and Council could see and acknowledge all their volunteer work. The Lakers are asking for: reduced cost for ice time for early morning practice which is considered dead time; permission to take over and run the summer hockey school and a percentage of the canteen proceeds. Milt closed by adding they had a strong volunteer contingent involved in all aspects of running the Fort Frances Lakers and volunteers were the price one paid to be part of a community while affirmative action is the cost to Mayor and Council for an active society.

The Lakers are prepared, and stated so, to meet with the Town representatives to keep this newly formed hockey franchise in Fort Frances for Fort Frances. This new team obviously has a lot of fan support seeing their exhibition games drew more than 350 to the arena for their Saturday night game---which they won in an exciting overtime 4-3 win.



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