

COTTAGENORTH

FREE

A MAGAZINE ABOUT LIFE IN NORTH CENTRAL CANADA

MAY JUNE 2015

Fun the 4-H way

Restarting a club in The Pas

Snow Lake Mining Museum

New Cranberry Portage museum too

Chaga: natural remedy of the North
Thompson Mud Bog
Fishing derbies in Flin Flon & The Pas



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Photo by Jennifer Pitre

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ON THE COVER

Contributor Cheryl Antonio caught this shot of 4-H Helping Hands member Emilie Bercier visiting newborn chicks at a LeSann family farm in The Pas. Read all about the 4-H Club on p. 20.



COTTAGE NORTH

A MAGAZINE ABOUT LIFE
IN NORTH CENTRAL CANADA

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Patience and perseverance. These words come to mind as I consider the stories that fill Cottage North this month.

In "Chaga," Shannon Smadella interviews locals who head out into the boreal forest to find an elusive mushroom that, according to one harvester, is found on just one of 15,000 birch trees.

In "Mining the Past, Prospecting the Future," Morley Naylor introduces us to the Snow Lake Mining Museum, and the volunteers who created a Manitoba Star Attraction from an old garage and a stockpile of retired mining equipment.

Within these pages, you'll also learn about the Cranberry Portage Heritage Museum, scheduled to open to the public after over a decade of paperwork and extensive renovations to a historic train station.

The volunteers behind these museums could have given up many times, and they would have been forgiven for it. From writing grants to fundraising to tearing down walls, these projects required passion, faith, and patience.

For those who seek out chaga, a whole day of hunting can go by without a single mushroom found, but confidence in the health benefits of



Libby (Elizabeth)
Stoker-Lavelle

chaga, and the joy of discovery, keeps harvesters trucking along, scanning the forest for treasure.

In so many things in life, the greatest challenges can bring us the greatest rewards, if we have the courage to persevere.

In "Helping Hands," Cheryl Antonio shares her story of rebuilding The Pas 4-H club from the bottom up. One look at the grinning faces of these kids — feeding baby cows, planting seedlings, or relishing a meal they made themselves — and it is clear that, in this case, the effort has been well worth the rewards.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Stoker-Lavelle".

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Submissions

We welcome submissions of photos, art and articles at all times. Please contact us if you have something to share!

Letters to the Editor

Do you have an opinion, a photo or a brief story to share with Cottage North readers? Send in a contribution to our Letters to the Editor section!

Dear Editor,

I was so thrilled to see the photos of the red fox in March's magazine. I lived at beautiful Rocky Lake until December. At Rocky Lake, I always had red foxes in my yard. The female would come right up to me, and I would feed her a treat.

Last spring, she brought her baby foxes up to play on my front lawn. They are the cutest wild creatures. I just love them. I think she was teaching them how to hunt.

I used to feed hundreds of birds all winter and my hummingbirds in summertime. So I want to thank you for the photos of Red Fox and the article "The Fox" by Gerry Clark.

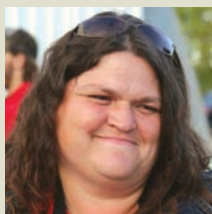
Living at Rocky Lake in a beautiful home my husband built for us, surrounded by all the wildlife, was living in Paradise.

Yours sincerely,
Doreen Duncan
The Pas, MB



A red fox photographed by Mel Reich on the cover of last month's issue.

Contributors



Cheryl Antonio

"Helping Hands" p. 20

Born and raised in The Pas, Cheryl has been involved with The Pas Helping Hands 4-H Club as a member, project leader, and head leader. Active in many other organizations, Cheryl enjoys bringing the community together.



Morley G. Naylor

"Snow Lake Mining Museum" p. 11

Morley was born in Sherridon and has lived in Flin Flon since. For 32 years, he has travelled all over northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan with CBC TV and CBC Radio. Morley is a regular contributor to *Cottage North* magazine.



Sheila Marchant

"Rhyme and Reason" p. 9

A longtime resident of northern Manitoba, Sheila enjoys capturing the natural beauty of this region in poetry. She gathers inspiration everywhere, but particularly from her scenic views on her monthly bus rides from Flin Flon to Prince Albert.



Shannon Smadella

"Chaga" p. 30

As a charitable business professional, humanitarian and former Miss Canada, Shannon has travelled the world aiding various causes. She enjoys writing for various publications in her free time. She is a mortgage specialist with RBC, yoga instructor, reiki practitioner and touring motivational speaker.



Penny Byer

"Loud trucks & mud" p. 26

Penny Byer moved to Thompson in the late '70s to open up the CBC North Country studio. An editor of employee publications with a mining company and freelancer, she also teaches courses on communications and leadership.



Harry Hobbs

"A Place Called Home" p. 8

Originally from Cobourg, Ontario, Harry was a teacher-librarian at Hapnot Collegiate for 23 years. He is an active member of several community organizations. An avid writer, Harry has published one novel, and has another novel in the final stages of revision.



Calendar of Events May | June 2015

The fun keeps going at
Thompson's Nickel Days

Photo by Ian Graham

Thompson

May 1-29: A Crash Course in Genomics exhibit, Heritage North Museum

May 19-20: Festival of the Arts Highlights Concert

May 20: Shrine Circus, Heritage North Museum, C.A. Nesbitt Area

June 1-30: From Dinosaurs to Mammals exhibit, Heritage North Museum

June 18-21: Nickel Days Festival

June 20: Lynn Lake-born Canadian rocker Tom Cochrane will perform as part of the Nickel Days Festival

The Pas

April 2-May 31: From Dinosaurs to Mammals exhibit, Sam Waller Museum

May 4: Jordin Tootoo, Canada's first Inuit NHL player, presenting at UCN Gymnasium, 7 pm

May 7-9: The Pas & District Chamber of Commerce Trade Show & Sale

May 23: Country Blend: live old time country music and dinner, Carrot Valley Club

May 29-30: MBCI Drama Club presents *Through the Looking Glass*

Need more info?

Creighton Recreation: 306-688-3538
Denare Beach Recreation: 306-362-2050
Flin Flon Arts Council: www.flinflonartscouncil.com, 204-687-5974
Thompson Recreation: www.thompson.ca, 204-677-7952
Heritage North Museum: 204-677-2216
E.A. Rawlinson Centre: www.eaerawlinsoncentre.ca, 866-700-ARTS
The Pas Arts Council: www.sites.google.com/site/artscouncilthepas, 204-623-7035
Sam Waller Museum: www.samwallermuseum.ca 204-623-3802

Flin Flon, Creighton & Denare Beach

May 1-3: Flin Flon Community Choir presents *Les Misérables*, Flin Flon Community Hall

May 12-14: Bike Rodeo, Creighton Sportex

May 21-June 10: First Ink, an exhibit featuring local printmakers, NorVA Centre

May 23: Denare Beach Community Yard Sale

June 9: Creighton Community Appreciation Barbecue, 5:30 pm, Creighton Recreation

June 21: National Aboriginal Day celebrations, Flin Flon Friendship Centre, 1- 5 pm

Prince Albert

May 28: The Debaters Comedy Tour, E.A. Rawlinson Centre for the Arts, 8 pm

June 14: Pine Needle Mountain Bike Festival, Little Red River Park

June 20: 12th Annual Downtown Street Fair

June 20: Summit Run: 2k, 5k, 10k and 21k races

June 27-28: Parkland Artisan Tour



Trout Festival

coming in July

Canada Day celebrations on Wednesday, July 1 will headline five days of fun, including the much-loved Trout Festival.

Activities start early on Canada's birthday with a pancake breakfast and parade, followed by an afternoon of games, races, live entertainment at the ball diamond in Creighton and fireworks in Denare Beach.

The Flin Flon Trout Festival kicks off with a free barbecue at Pioneer Square on Thursday, July 2, followed by two days of the Main Street Days midway, a battle of the bands, canoe races and a new rubber duck race event.

The Trout Festival Committee is premiering a free family concert at the Creighton ball diamond on Friday, July 3, featuring local performers and two Flin Flonners in the fire spinning team Dragon's Fire.

The annual Beaver Lake Day festival will be held on Sunday, July 5, with lots of lakeside fun.

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Capturing Aurora

By Libby Stoker-Lavelle

Dayton Moreton, a photographer living in The Pas, captured the drama and scope of a Northern Lights display in an enchanting time-lapse film called Neon Waltz.

Moreton sat down with Cottage North to share some insights on his technique.

CN: *Why did you decide to produce a time-lapse video of the Northern Lights?*

DM: Time-lapse photography has always captivated me. There is plenty of beauty in many different facets of nature that we are oblivious to, due to our linear perception of time. It's satisfying to be able to use a piece of technology such as a camera to uncover some of this hidden beauty and share it with others.

CN: *How long were you capturing the sky?*

DM: This particular video was composed of two separate nights. Each night I had enough storage in the camera's memory card to capture roughly 4.5 hours worth of images.

CN: *Where was your camera set up?*

DM: In my backyard in The Pas, Manitoba, Canada.

CN: *What are some of the major challenges you face when photographing the Northern Lights?*

DM: Often auroras happen with only 30 minutes of warning. Being ready with your camera gear when the storm hits is the most important part. You are at the mercy of Mother Nature as well, and it only takes a thin layer of cloud cover to mask the display.

CN: *How do you work around these challenges?*

DM: There are a variety of services available that give info on solar activity that I utilize to gauge the timing and intensity of a storm. Learning to be proficient with the many settings my camera has to offer is also essential to capturing the best image.

Visit the Cottage North website to find the link to this remarkable piece of video art, or find the video at vimeo.com/122803922.

Still shot from Neon Waltz, a time-lapse video of the Northern Lights.

Photo by Dayton Moreton

■ **BOOK SPINE POETRY**

A Place Called Home

By Harry Hobbs

Where the highway ends
Between Beaver and Athapap
Child's garden of rocks
Smelter smokers
From First Avenue
Wanderlust and wildlife
Wolverine Creek
Trickling waters
Three feet of ice
Northern boundary trail
Why?
Flight calls
One with the spirit

Flin Flon writer Harry Hobbs wrote this piece of "book spine poetry" for the annual poetry night on April 10. Every line in this poem is the title of a book written by a Flin Flonner, past or present. How many authors can you identify?



Through a northern lens

By Libby Stoker-Lavelle

Building on the success of the inaugural Storytellers Film Festival in 2014, The Pas hosted a second festival at the Royal Canadian Legion on March 22. Award-winning director Kevin Lee

■ **STORYTELLERS FILM FESTIVAL**

Burton produced the festival, with Dr. Bernhard Friz as executive producer.

"The goal of the festival was to promote film culture in the North," says Lorie Galenic, festival coordinator, "and to open up creative possibilities for promotion and support for filmmakers that live north of 53, so that they do not feel so isolated from the rest of the filmmaking world."

The event included five short films, two features, and a special children's component with 10 short films.

Cam Bennett and Kim Bell of the MTS Stories from Home project also presented to the audience, sharing information about grants and support available to northern filmmakers.

■ **HELPING**

A walk to remember

By Libby Stoker-Lavelle

A springtime walk is not only good for your own health; it can help others too.

The MS Society has coordinated fundraising walks across the country throughout May including, in northern Manitoba, The Pas and Thompson on Sunday, May 24, and Flin Flon and Swan River on Sunday May 31. In northern Saskatchewan, walks will be held in Prince Albert on Sunday, May 3 and Candle Lake on Saturday, May 23. Walkers are encouraged to collect pledges for the MS Society, in teams or as individuals, or contribute a \$20 donation at the beginning of the walk if they are unable to collect pledges. Funds raised go towards research, government advocacy, financial support and programs and services for Canadians affected by multiple sclerosis.

According to the organization, Canada has the highest rate of MS in the world, with approximately 100,000 Canadians living with the disease, for which there is currently no cure. MS is a complex disease that can affect vision, hearing, memory, balance and mobility.

Each MS Walk takes a scenic route through public parks and sites of interest – in Flin Flon, participants take a wooded route through Bakers Narrows Provincial Park, while in Thompson participants will enjoy an urban tour beginning at Heritage North Museum.

To join an MS walk, fundraise, or cheer on the walkers, contact your local representative. In northern Manitoba, contact Lori Bogoslawski by email at Lori.bogoslawski@mssociety.ca or by calling 204-622-2941. In northern Saskatchewan, contact Kami Brooks by email at kami.brooks@mssociety.ca, or by calling 306-244-2114, ext. 5052 or 1-800-691-0890.





Photo by Libby Stoker-Lavelle
A giant pencil crafted by Duncan Goodman and Ethen Olivier was a conversation piece at the art show opening on April 11. Stacy and Bryce Lair, Noelle Drimmie, and Mike Spencer were among the 22 attendees.

■ **ART**

High school artists join forces

By Libby Stoker-Lavelle

Young artists showed off their hard work at a joint Hapnot Collegiate/Creighton Community School art show. The show, which was held at NorVA from April 11 to 22, highlighted diverse work by high school students, including batiks, tattoo studies, mixed media collages, paintings, self-portraits and even a flying Spiderman.

■ **POETRY**

Rhyme and Reason

By Sheila Marchant

I can't imagine what life would be without the gift of poetry.
To look inside and be able to see the words that describe a scene to me
To capture them before they flee and write them down,
then set them free.

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■ EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

From coloured blocks to rabbit snares

By Libby Stoker-Lavelle

Indigenous cultural integration is becoming a key element of early childhood education (ECE) classes at University College of the North (UCN).

Professor Barb Carlson was part of the curriculum design group for the post-secondary early childhood education course offered at UCN. Knowing that most of the students in the program, and many of the children these students would teach, would be of First Nations background, the team designed a two-year program that would reflect a true integration of Indigenous and Western knowledge and approaches to learning.

For example, while most ECE educators learn to teach language through music, the UCN students develop this skill with an added layer of cultural understanding. “We take them through the process, so each one of the students will make a drum with an Elder, learn about the customs and traditions around the drum, the significance of the drum, and then they learn how to use it to teach language through song,” Carlson explains.

The program is offered in The Pas and Thompson, with 18 graduates this year. Land-based lessons also extend learning for the ECE students. “We have them involved with going out on the land to learn about ice fishing and rabbit snaring...things that are relevant to children in the north,” says Carlson,



Photo contributed UCN Early Childhood Education student Kulwant Kambo learns how to craft a traditional drum with professor Barb Carlson

“so they have some understanding of the background of the children in the northern areas, and how they can bring that into the childcare centres when they’ve graduated.”

While the primary goal of this integrated curriculum is to help ECE students better meet young children’s needs, a secondary purpose is to help the adult students connect with another part of themselves.

“Most students are First Nations, but many haven’t encountered these traditions before,” says Carlson. “It’s reconnecting them to their roots, and how they can carry that on, and pass that on to their children and to the children that they work with.”

Carlson has found a great deal of interest internationally in the school’s approach to cultural integration. She presented twice at the World Forum on Early Care and Education and also welcomed a visit from an Australian professor who wanted to learn more about the techniques used in the UCN ECE courses.

“I think we’re one of the unique ones,” says Carlson.

Mining the Past



Local artists
Cam Booth,
Bob Southern
and Pam Fisher
created the mural
that greets visitors
to the Snow Lake
Mining Museum

Photo by Morley G. Naylor

Prospecting the Future

STORY BY MORLEY G. NAYLOR

It's late summer and we're off to explore a unique treasure house of mining history. The Snow Lake Mining Museum, not yet 20 years in operation, has attracted country-wide recognition.

Impressive as it is today, this museum grew from humble beginnings. In 1993, a group of Snow Lake residents with New Futures, a local community de-

velopment organization, got together and acquired the former Northern Bus Lines garage, which dates back to the days when HBM&S employees were bused to outlying mines such as Osborne, Stall, Anderson, Chisel and Ghost. The garage would become the home for a new museum focused on mining.

A Brief History of Mining in the Snow Lake Area

In 1914, four prospectors crossed the 19-kilometre (12-mile) portage from Hargrave Lake to the south end of Herb Lake (now Wekusko Lake). They staked the gold discovery that later became the Rex Mine.

The Rex Mine opened in 1917 and produced 7,000 ounces of gold before closing down in 1925. Renamed the Laguna Gold Mine, it was put into production again in 1934, and from then until its final closing in 1939, 48,000 ounces of gold were produced.

Two other gold properties in the area were not so profitable. Work began on the Bingo Mine in the early 1920s, with a 50-foot shaft sunk by hand – but the quantity of gold was insufficient to make mining feasible. Another property known as Ferro, a small mine three miles east of the Herb Lake settlement, opened shortly after Laguna closed and stayed in production until 1943.

Although records show a geological survey party visited the Snow Lake area in 1896, and again in 1913, the original claims were staked by Christopher Richard Parres in 1925 on the property that became Snow Lake.

Nor-Acme Gold Mine

Nor-Acme Gold Mines was incorporated in 1938 to manage the property, and in 1941 Howe Sound Exploration optioned the property. Between August 1941 and April 1942, a diamond drilling program was conducted. Howe Sound signed a lease in October

1943 to develop and mine the property. A large low-grade ore body was outlined. During World War II, work on the property was discontinued until 1945. After the war, town planning and preparations for mining operations proceeded, with the first bullion poured on April 22, 1949. The Howe Sound operation ran for about nine years, milling 5.5 million tonnes of ore, producing mostly gold, with some silver.

By 1958, the ore body was deemed uneconomic due to the price of gold and the cost to mine the ore. The mining town of Snow Lake was faced with extinction.

HBM&S comes on the scene

During the Howe Sound years, Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting accelerated its exploration activities in the area, and in the spring of 1956 discovered the Chisel Lake deposit. In 1958, an agreement was reached to purchase a number of Howe Sound assets including the electrical transmission line to Snow Lake, mining plant, and town site buildings. A boom era was beginning for Snow Lake in copper and zinc mining.

Growth

The opening of the Chisel Lake mine in 1958 ushered in an era that lasted 50 years with many more HBM&S mines coming online: Stall, Osborne, Anderson, Dickstone, Ghost Lake, Lost Lake, Rod, Spruce Point, Photo Lake and Chisel North.

Nor-Acme/New Britannia added to the impressive list as well: in 1988, Nor Acme Gold Mines merged with High River Resources Ltd to create High River Gold. The property was re-named New Britannia Mine and the gold mine went into production from 1995 to 2004.

The Snow Lake area mining legacy continues under HudBay, with mining for zinc, copper and precious metals underway, a world class mine at Lalor with a projected life of 15 years and a smaller operation at Reed Lake with an estimated life of five years.

WHAT'S IN A NAME:

HBM&S to Hudbay

The Hudson Bay Mining & Smelting Company was incorporated in 1927. In the early 1960s, Anglo American PLC became a major investor in the company, and became 100 per cent owners in 1991. The HBM&S name was retained throughout this period.

IN 2004, ONTZINC Corporation, a Toronto-based company, acquired HBM&S. At the time of acquisition, ONTZINC changed its name to HudBay Minerals Inc. In 2012, all operations were aligned under the brand of "Hudbay," marking the demise of the name HBM&S.

“The Town of Snow Lake is very fortunate to have this one of a kind mining museum in its community. We are very proud of it.”

Kim Stephen **SNOW LAKE MAYOR**

“Local mines were all shutting down,” recalls museum board chairman Paul Hawman, a retired HBM&S staff member. “It was a way to diversify and offer something for the tourism aspect of the town and area.”

Today, the museum is a beehive of activity. Volunteers are leading tours and moving equipment, and summer students are scraping and painting equipment in the yard outside. In summer, the facility is also a tourism booth, selling local souvenirs and handing out directions to visitors.

We are warmly welcomed to the museum by Hawman and curator Dori Forsyth. Forsyth has been involved with the museum’s development for 20 years; she works as an employee during the summer and as a volunteer the remainder of the year.

Forsyth is one of many volunteers who keep this operation humming. In the early years, they had their work cut out for them: crews were needed to clear out the garage, procure display equipment, and scrape, clean, paint, and build exhibit spaces. Three years later, in 1996, the museum opened to the public, backed by its mandate: “To preserve a working way of life whereby the North country was opened up by exploration and mining.”

Visitor attendance was low at first, but word spread about the unique northern museum. In 2006, Travel Manitoba awarded the facility Manitoba Star Attraction status. In the 2014 season over 1,000 visitors toured the site.

A large part of the museum’s ongoing success is owing to a pool of retired HBM&S employees who share their expertise from the mining, surveying, planning, geology, mechanical and heavy equipment sectors of the mining industry.

In addition to the work of volunteers, funds from corporate and private donations and government grants are essential to the museum’s survival.



Photo by Morley Naylor
Curator Dori Forsyth and museum board chairman Paul Hawman have been leaders in the museum’s development



Photo courtesy of Snow Lake Mining Museum
Renovations took three years and involved frequent “work bees” led by volunteers.

VISIT SNOW LAKE



Snow Lake Mining Museum



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A mine of the past: a tour

The Snow Lake Mining Museum and the outdoor display area together contain an incredible number of artifacts from the mine operations in the area—pieces of history that you just can't find anywhere else. "If we had not rescued this equipment, it would have disappeared for scrap iron," notes Hawman, "and would not be available for future generations to see and understand."

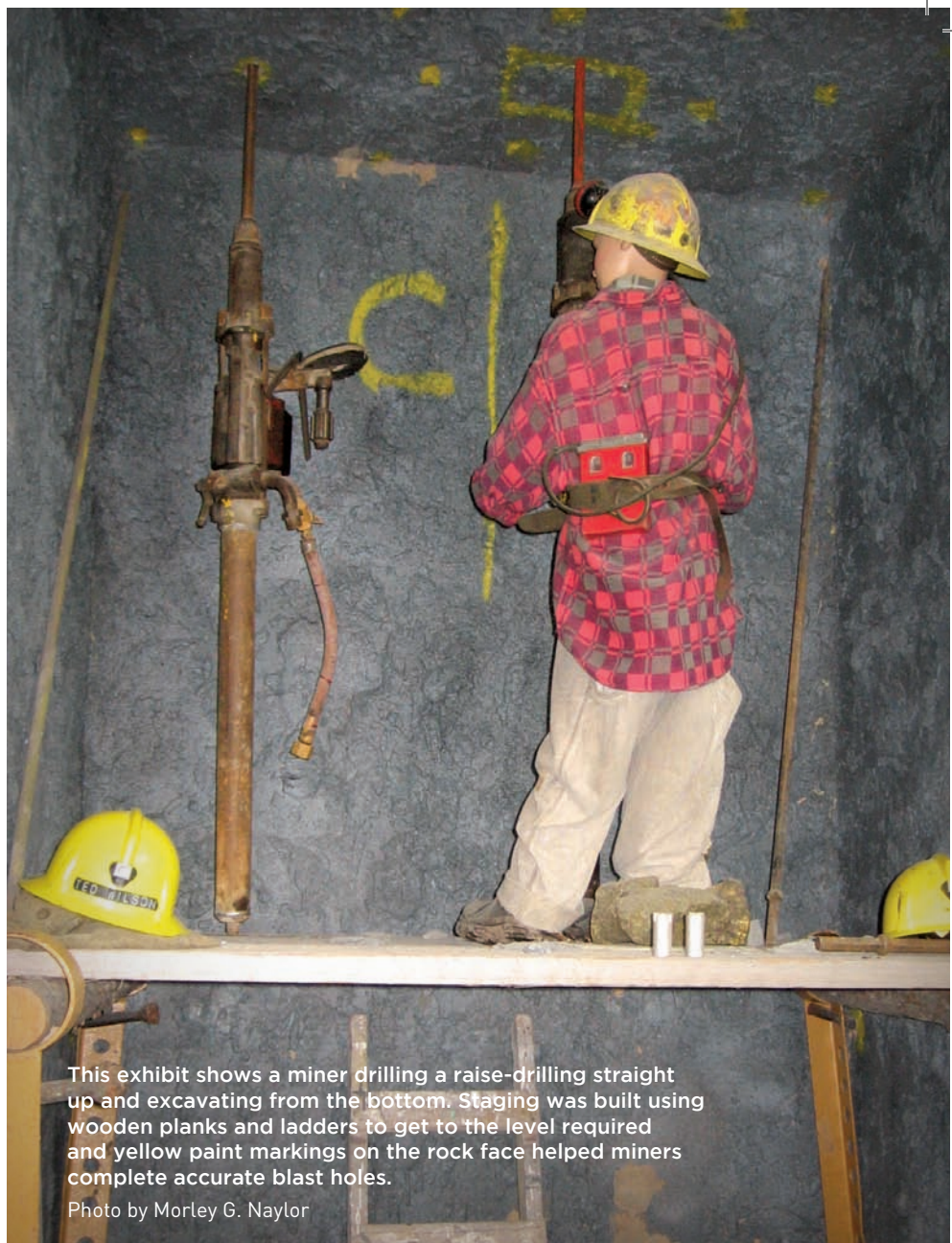
While it would be near-impossible to mention all of the fascinating items on display, the following description attempts to give a sense of the museum experience. It includes highlights from the various exhibits and artifacts in chronological order — the order they occur in the mining process.

Rock, minerals & exploration

A mine exploration program consists of identifying an area of interest and gathering information, staking and recording claims, and identifying geophysical anomalies by prospecting, rock sampling, and air surveys.

Ground follow-up may include trenching before the most important phase: drilling. Drilling produces rock cores that can be closely examined to determine mineral concentrations and depths. A widely spaced pattern of drill holes gives information as to the size, geometry, and grades of ore present in the deposit. Drilling is expensive, accounting for 50 per cent of exploration spending.

A diamond drill unit, which uses hollow drill rods to bring to surface



This exhibit shows a miner drilling a raise-drilling straight up and excavating from the bottom. Staging was built using wooden planks and ladders to get to the level required and yellow paint markings on the rock face helped miners complete accurate blast holes.

Photo by Morley G. Naylor

Glossary of terms

BLAST HOLE: A hole to be filled with explosives.

BULLION: Precious metal in bars or ingots.

CAGE: The conveyance used to transport men and equipment up and down a mine shaft.

CORE: Long cylindrical rock recovered by a diamond drill.

DIAMOND DRILL: Rotary drill with a diamond cutting bit. Hollow rods recover the drill core.

DRIFT: A horizontal passage underground.

DRILL BIT: Cutting end of a drill steel. Always detachable, with carbide inserts.

GEOPHYSICS: The study of the physical properties of rock formations, which may include magnetism, specific gravity, electrical conductivity and radioactivity.

HOIST: Machine used to raise and lower a cage or other conveyance in a shaft.

MUCK: Ore or waste rock broken by blasting.

ORE: A mixture of minerals that are processed for profit.

RAISE: A vertical or incline underground normally excavated from the bottom up.

SHAFT: A vertical excavation for servicing a mine, equipped with a hoist at the top (surface).

SHEAVE WHEEL: A large wheel on top of a headframe over which the hoisting cable passes.

SKIP: A large self-dumping bucket used in a shaft to haul ore or waste to surface.

STOPE: An excavation in a mine in which ore is being or has been removed.

TRAM: To haul cars of ore or waste in a mine.



Photo by Morley G. Naylor

A small capacity gravity dump mine car is exhibited inside the museum.

“The museum preserves a way of life, an industry that opened up our entire area and sustains it today. It shows today’s kids what mining was and still is, what their dads do for a living, what supports their families. If not for mining, Snow Lake would not exist.”

Paul Hawman **MUSEUM BOARD CHAIRMAN**

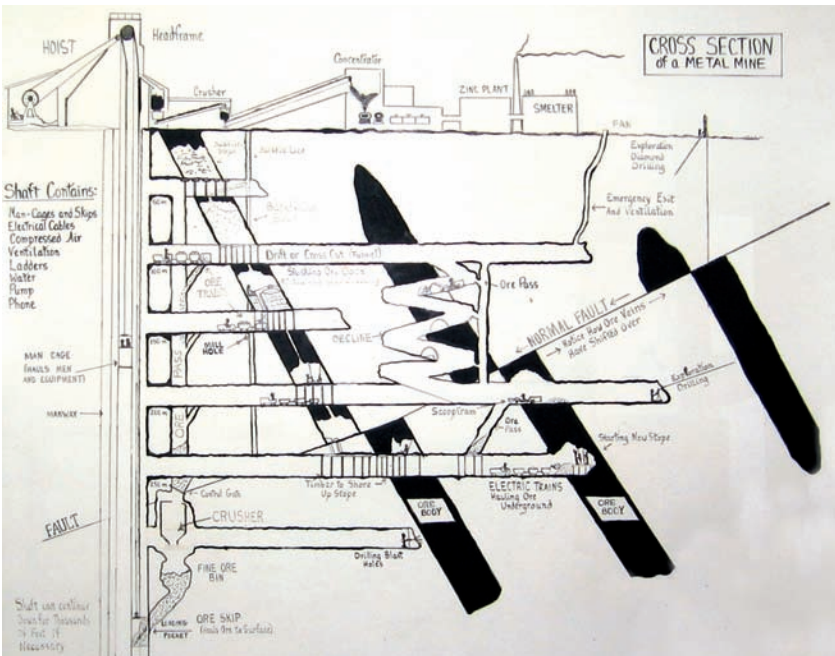


Photo by Morley G. Naylor

In the museum, a large display board with a cross-section diagram of a metal mine brings the various steps of the mining process into focus.

SNOW LAKE MINING MUSEUM

a core sample for evaluation, is on display in the outside yard.

A new interior exhibit area is in the works for a rock and mineral display and exploration exhibit, complete with drill core, diamond drills, and field equipment.

Shaft sinking & mine development

The majority of Snow Lake area mines were shaft mines, where once an ore deposit was proven viable by drilling and other geological testing, a mine shaft was sunk to open up the mine. In the outdoor display area, we discover a shaft sinking bucket for conveying men and muck, and a Cryderman, a clam device for removing muck during shaft sinking.

Drilling

Drilling is the process by which the rock face is drilled with a sequence of holes in a pattern, preparing it for explosives.

In the museum, a mock-up shows two life-size manikins drilling a raise heading (vertical, excavated from the bottom up) and a drift heading (horizontal), using the tools used for drilling from mid-1940s to 1980s, including a jackleg and a stoper, air powered hard rock drills with an air leg to push the drill bit into the rock.

Blasting

With the blast holes finished, we move on to the blasting phase which is the process of loading, priming and detonating the explosives in the pre-drilled holes.

Here we find a display of the high explosives that were employed in the 1960s, as well as the detonators and safety fuses available to detonate the loaded holes.

SNOW LAKE MINING MUSEUM

Haulage/Tramming

A mine blast results in broken rock, referred to as muck. The muck must then be moved out to the shaft area for hoisting to surface. This procedure is referred to as haulage, or tramming. Artifacts on hand here tell the history of moving ore or waste rock by tracked mining (small gauge railroad). A pony trammer, Eimco rocker shovel, rocker dump muck car, Clayton trammer, and side dump muck car will bring back memories to those who once used this equipment.

Laid out on the floor is an interesting item known as a slusher, used to claw across the muck pile and drag the rock out to an ore car or ore pass.

Hoisting

Hoisting involves transporting men, equipment, and muck up and down the mine shaft to different working levels of the mine. The museum has a real treasure in this area: a mock-up hoist room featuring a 1920s-era steam hoist from the Faro Mine of the Herb Lake area, with hoisting cables, controls and mine level indicator intact.

In the outside display area, we discover a mine cage used for transporting men and equipment, a skip for hoisting ore to the surface, and a yellow sheave wheel which would have been mounted on top of the head frame, over which the hoisting cables pass from the hoist to the cage or other conveyance in the shaft.

Reaching into the community and the future

These days, visitors to Snow Lake have more to discover outside the museum, with three large mining artifacts now displayed throughout Snow Lake: a 40-cubic-foot rocker-dump muck car, an old bit-forming machine, and a historic sheave wheel.

As the museum, and tributes to the town's past, continue to evolve, it is clear that this is a community undertaking that all residents take pride in.

"It preserves a way of life, an industry that opened up our entire area and sustains it today," says Hawman. "It shows today's kids what mining was and still is, what their dads do for a living, what supports their families. If not for mining, Snow Lake would not exist."

Additional photos of the Snow Lake Mining Museum can be found on our website at www.cottagenorthmagazine.ca.



Photo by Marc Jackson
Local confidence in mining is exemplified by the Mine Sign in Snow Lake at the memorial site, which was completed last October. The sign shows the name, distance, and direction to every mine in the Snow Lake area that produced ore from 1917 to present, with plenty of space at the bottom for the mines of the future.

A museum opens in Cranberry

STORY BY LIBBY STOKER-LAVELLE



Submitted photo

After an extensive restoration, the Cranberry Portage Heritage Museum, housed in the town's former railway station, will open to the public on Sunday, May 31.

According to museum curator and manager Mary Ann Playford, the idea for the museum was sparked by Cranberry Portage Homecoming celebrations in 1978 and 2003. Visitors loved the display of local historical photos, documents, and artifacts at these events.

"I saw the enthusiasm at the 2003 Homecoming, and I thought . . . this should be available to people," Playford recalls. As residents began coming forward with artifacts to donate to a community museum, the idea grew.

Local grade-seven and -eight students canvassed door to door, asking community members if they would like to see a museum built in the small town.

"The undisputed reply was 'Yes'," says Playford.

An elected board of directors established the Cranberry Portage Heritage Museum in 2004. The board set out to acquire the community's historic CNR station, a natural location for a museum. Built in 1929, the station was a busy centre of activity for a rail line that serviced local mines and transported hunters and trappers in the North. In 1992, the building was registered as a federal heritage building.

Acquiring a heritage building requires plenty of red tape, and for the Cranberry Portage museum board, the process took eight long years.

The work of dedicated volunteers will be rewarded when the Cranberry Portage Heritage Museum opens to the public May 31. A second phase of renovations will be coming soon.



The museum before work began.

Submitted photo

In April 2012 the board finally acquired the building and surrounding lot and prepared to take on its next challenge: renovation and restoration.

The CNR station had been badly neglected, with broken windows, graffiti-covered walls, broken plaster, moisture damage to the interior walls, ceilings and basement, and smoke damage from a fire that occurred in a warehouse room of the building.

CRANBERRY PORTAGE MUSEUM

History Buff?

The great museums of our region thrive thanks to the volunteers who dedicate countless hours to promoting and preserving history. Here are a few gems to visit this summer:

Flin Flon Station Museum

Highway 10A, Flin Flon MB
(204) 687-2946

Royal Northwest Mounted Police Post Museum

216 Creighton Avenue, SK
(306) 688-3538

Northern Gateway Museum

Moody Drive, Denare Beach SK
www.northerngatewaymuseum.com
(306) 362-2141

Sam Waller Museum

306 Fischer Avenue, The Pas
www.samwallermuseum.ca
(204) 623-3802

Prince Albert Historical Society

(Six museums)
10 River Street East, Prince Albert, SK
www.historypa.com
(306) 764-2992

Heritage North Museum

162 Princeton Drive, Thompson, MB
www.heritagenorthmuseum.ca
(204) 677-2216

Snow Lake Mining Museum

163 Poplar Avenue, Snow Lake MB
(204) 358-7867

Cranberry Portage Heritage Museum

102 Railway Ave, Cranberry Portage MB
www.cpmuseum.ca

Over the last three years, museum volunteers have mounted what Playford calls a “momentous undertaking” to restore the building, document artifacts, renovate to 21st century standards—and secure grant funds and donations to cover all the costs. Three years later, an end is in sight as the board prepares to showcase part of the museum to the public on May 31.

As Playford explains, the CNR station is split into two parts, a two-storey section with living quarters and an attached warehouse.

The two-storey section, which will be open on May 31, has been restored as a replica of a 1920s heritage home, with three bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen and a great room, as well as a

large office and waiting room. Various historical artifacts, largely donated by local people, can be found exhibited throughout the rooms.

Restoration is still ongoing for the warehouse section of the building, which will be designated as an exhibit space for the earlier history of the area, specifically highlighting the Aboriginal explorers and trappers who first used Cranberry Carrying Place, as Cranberry Portage was once known.

The museum opening will run from 1 to 3 pm and will include a celebratory lunch and an announcement of the opening hours and dates for the upcoming season.

To learn more, visit the website at www.cpmuseum.ca

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A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a hermit crab. The crab is resting on a light-colored wooden surface. The person is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. The crab has a patterned shell and its legs are visible.

4H CLUB OF THE PAS

Helping hands

The revival of the 4-H Club
in The Pas

STORY BY CHERYL ANTONIO

Jorja Steele shows off her hermit crab, Hermie, for a small animals project.



What's the secret to rebuilding a community club from the bottom up? Cheryl Antonio and The Pas Helping Hands 4-H Club might just have the answer.

4-H is not just about cows and horses. The Pas Helping Hands 4-H Club opens up new doors to our young members with enriching outside-the-project-book activities, from building parade floats to creating our town's first-ever community garden.

The Pas Helping Hands 4-H Club was established approximately 40 years ago in The Pas. In the early days, the club was predominantly attended by farming families. By the early 2000s, Helping Hands had dwindled to as few as four members.

In 2013, Stephanie Hadiken approached me and suggested that we rekindle the club. That set the ball rolling, and within two weeks, we were ready for registrations.

We were able to offer five projects to the community and we successfully registered approximately 20 children.

Since then, we have toured several farms, giving the kids hands-on knowledge of bees, bison, cattle, horses, chickens, pigs, and grains. We toured the recycling centre, the butcher's shop, Westoba Credit Union and the vet clinic. Our past mayor opened the town council chambers for us to hold a general meeting. We held a night to meet our local celebrities, where we had the mayor, Fur Queen, citizen of the year, and radio disc jockey give presentations. We have held many workshops, from gardening to scrapbooking to Ukrainian egg painting. We entered floats in the Santa Claus parade and Trapper's Festival parade and won first place in both! We even met with Minister of Agriculture Ron Kostyshyn when he visited.

Since we reorganized, we have jumped into community events including the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, the We Scare

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4H CLUB OF THE PAS

Hunger food drive, the Thrill the World flash mob, and The Pas Arts Council's Christmas sale. 4-H members also marched in the Remembrance Day Parade, and educated over 400 people about the importance of bee populations at the Kelsey School Division's sustainability fair.

In May 2014, the Carrot Valley Community Centre invited us to help prepare a meal fundraiser. The kids cooked and set up tables complete with white tablecloths and elegant place settings to serve 200 people. One of the performers of the evening was a pianist from the United States. He surprised us with a speech about how 4-H changed his life when he was a boy. The event went so well, we're putting it on again this spring.

4-H members also help support our local animal rescue organization, The Paw Local Dog Rescue. We have made and donated dog toys and treats, and we take part in their puppy play dates on a regular basis.

Last spring, we partnered with The Pas Community Renewal Corporation and built The Pas' first community garden. Through grants and donations, we were able to secure a lot and dirt, and had the dirt spread. The garden flooded twice in higher than usual spring rains. It was late July before we could plant anything substantial and we were only able to use a small portion of the garden. Unfortunately, an employee who did not know about the garden mowed it down, but we were not put off and we are continuing to see a vision for our garden.

4-H members have an opportunity to sit on their own board of directors. They participate in workshops to learn the roles and responsibilities of executive members. They nominate and elect their own president, vice-presi-

dent, secretary, and treasurer. We had so many kids volunteer to be treasurer and reporter that we created a finance committee and yearbook club!

The executive members run the monthly general meeting. They take minutes, make motions, and decide what they will do with their fundraising efforts. The members are in the process of creating a whole new set of bylaws and policies for themselves. Our club is the first 4-H club to go paperless, and is utilizing many technological tools to hold these meetings.

Since 2013, The Pas Helping Hands has grown and we are now able to offer projects in nutrition and cooking, sewing, crafts, camping, animal care, money management and babysitting. We've also started a Cloverbud project, where younger 4-H members can learn all about the program. As we continue to grow, we can offer even more.

Every 4-H member has a different reason for participating in the club. Here are a few:

"I love that 4-H is full of activities to help me learn," says Jessalyn Nahnybida, 13, a 4-H reporter.

"We keep on going on cool trips and doing fun things," says Jorja Steele, 8, who won second place in her age category in a 4-H regional public speaking event

"It's helped with leadership skills," says Quinn Young, 11, junior president.

"4-H keeps me so busy, I never really watch TV anymore. And, I don't miss it," says Jayden Antonio, 14. Jayden is a finance committee member and was the second place winner in his age category in a regional 4-H public speaking event.

We are so lucky to be having so much fun!

See Q&A with Cheryl Antonio on p. 25



fun the 4-H way

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE

Tazmyn and Aleksy Reinfort visiting Jake the parrot with mom Shaunarae Reinfort.

At Trappers Festival 2014, 4-H members met Manitoba Minister of Agriculture Ron Kostyshyn. Back row, from left: Jade Ackland, Minister Ron Kostyshyn, Hannah Karpan, 4-H Rep Lori Forbes, Devin Snow Front row, from left: Aaron Shawaga, Jayden Antonio, Hazan Suwarek.

Jayden Antonio and Hazan Suwarek take a picture break during the annual highway cleanup.

Dakota Kotz enjoying her freshly made burger during the exploring foods class.

Jayden Antonio and Dakota Kotz proudly stand by their freshly planted garden.

Hannah Karpan feeding an orphaned calf at a LeSann family farm visit.



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Q&A

with Cheryl Antonio

Q: *You've done a great job maintaining interest in 4-H over the past two years. Can you share some advice for engaging kids and teens in community clubs?*

A: Let kids take the lead and do what comes naturally to them, and they will engage themselves. Positive feedback and trust gives them the encouragement they need to get the job done!

Kids also love working together. The 4-H motto is "learn to do by doing," and that's just what we do. We dig in and get our hands dirty (and usually our clothes, too). We all love that hands-on experience. 4-H is very much a family; when we can, we invite the entire family to join in our activities.

4-H updates its research frequently, and continues to maintain age-appropriate projects and activities, as well as a wide variety of programs.

Q: *You successfully got a community garden off the ground. What tips can you share for other groups hoping to create a similar project?*

A: Community gardens are all the rage, especially here in the north. Starting a garden is as simple as getting the word out there. Our club has been lucky to receive so much support for our gardens, via local aid as well as provincial and federal grants. All you need is a couple of people to spearhead the project with some legwork and it all comes together.

I am a board member of The Pas Community Renewal Corporation and we had secured funding to build garden boxes and create a community garden. When it looked like nobody in town wanted to take it on, I thought it would be great for 4-H. The Manitoba Métis Federation donated money because we asked for it, and the Ag Society donated land because our kids made a great presentation requesting it.

There is a lot of money out there for this type of project. I did a simple Google search and was surprised to see what's out there. In Motion groups and public health government agencies are perfect places to start.

We have an active Facebook page where 4-H families connect. Anyone who was able to help posted on the page; we also organized group activities such as a gardening workshop and planting day.

Q: *Can you share some strategies for helping kids build leadership skills?*

A: Our pledge is: "My head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, my health to better living, for my club, my community and my country." We say this at the beginning of every event and meeting; as the kids get older, they begin to really understand what that means.

Let kids be themselves. Teach them respect for one another and themselves. Let them laugh, play, and be silly often, and let them know when it's time to get down to work. Each youth is unique and displays leadership in his or her own way. Getting to know them, and encouraging them to shine is the best way to teach leadership. Let them spread their wings. Through volunteer work and community service, the kids work together to accomplish that positive, end-of-a-good-day feeling about themselves and their club.

Q: *How do you introduce modern kids to what some might consider "traditional" skills, like gardening, taking care of animals, and sewing?*

A: Put it in front of them and let them go! Kids naturally have curiosity and kindness in their hearts. They are naturally sociable. They love to do things and to look after things, and they want to be independent.

We have been able to incorporate technology into many of our lessons. Much of our small animal research is done on computers and iPads, and the first year cooking class got into reality TV by watching *Master Chef Canada* at home and talking about it during class.

That said, kids seem to prefer going to the farm and handling the animals in real life. They love going to the grocery store, learning how to make a meal plan and budget, and seeing the end results of their craft or sewing projects. They absolutely love tasting the outcome of their cooking classes!

Kids haven't really changed — just the times have.



LOUD TRUCKS

The annual Mud Bog grows into Thompson





THOMPSON **MUD BOG**

& MUD

STORY BY PENNY BYER



“It’s nothing, at 4:30 am, to have five guys in someone else’s driveway, changing his tires to help him get ready for the race — even though they’ll be racing against one another later that day.”

Dennis Foley **MUD BOG ORGANIZER**

What is it about loud trucks and mud that would attract more than 700 spectators to a weekend event? “It’s the loud trucks and mud,” quipped Dennis Foley, the main organizer behind Thompson’s annual Mud Bog event.

In its simplest terms, a mud bog event involves driving a four wheel drive vehicle through a pit of wet, greasy clay-like mud. To win, you have to be able to drive all the way through the 200-foot long pit in the fastest time. Competitors can enter one of several classes based on the modifications that have been made to their vehicles, ranging from stock (no modifications) to open, where almost anything goes, including changes to the size of tires and type of fuel used.

Thompson’s 2014 Mud Bog was held on August 31 and September 1.

“Last year, we celebrated our fifth year, and we had more than 30 competitors. One year, we had a professional racer who made it the whole 200 feet in less than three seconds,” said Foley.

“The event keeps growing each year. I think that’s partly because this is the only event in Thompson that involves automotive competition. But it’s also because of the atmosphere we create. And no doubt, it’s also partly because the event is free to the public.”

Atmosphere like a carnival

The atmosphere he describes is almost like a carnival, with live entertainment, concession stands, dozens of prize giveaways and a special performance by the Live Ammo Freestyle snowmobile/ATV group. And, of course, there are the loud trucks and all-terrain vehicles trying to get through the pit of slick, wet clay in the fastest time.

The people who compete in this event, for the most part, are local off-road vehicle enthusiasts. They are supportive of one another to the point of helping each other get their vehicles ready or loaning truck parts. “It’s nothing, at 4:30 am, to have five guys in someone else’s driveway, changing his tires to help him get ready for the race—even though they’ll be racing against one another later that day,” said Foley.

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Photo by Jennifer Pitre



Photo by Jennifer Pitre

Dennis Foley (above) not only promotes off-roading events such as the Mud Bog, but with five years and six events under his belt with no injury, he also promotes safe riding and off-roading.

Kenneth Wark (left) prepares for a race.

“One year, a part on a drive shaft broke on one guy’s vehicle, so Kelly Kopechuk took the parts of his street truck for the other guy’s race truck so they could compete against each other. It’s not often you see that.”

Competing is fun and challenging, but how does a person decide to organize such an event? “Well, actually, a group organized a mud bog event at [Thompson’s annual summer festival] Nickel Days about six years ago,” recalled Foley. “I participated and had so much fun. It helped that I came in third with my \$500 truck. As it turns out, the group that organized that event wasn’t able to carry it on, so I talked it up with some of my buddies, got lots of positive feedback and we decided to try our own.”

The enthusiasm was so strong among Foley’s friends that they formed a group called Northern Manitoba Off-Road Association. The organization aims to promote safe, responsible and fun off-roading. The members decided to host their own Mud Bog that August. They developed their own rules, garnered support from local businesses and hosted a successful first event. Since then, the group has acquired a laser timing system with a large light-up board, attracted more sponsorship, more competitors and larger crowds.



Photos by Jennifer Pitre

Winning a Mud Bog competition (top) is not about prize money. It is about getting your vehicle through the mud in the fastest time possible, then having a trophy on your mantel for bragging rights.

Marc Klym (above) navigates his jeep through the challenging terrain.

A sled demo at Thompson's Mud Bog wowed the crowd.

Thompson businesses offer outstanding support

“We were overwhelmed with the support we got from the Thompson business community,” said Foley. “And that support keeps growing every year. I think they support us because we don’t charge the public, or maybe because they like this type of entertainment, too. Whatever their reason, it’s very humbling to have businesses support you to such an extent year after year.”

The support ranges from the in-kind work of digging and contouring the pit to gift certificates for flower arrangements to cash. “We appreciate any type of donation, as we can use it to make our event more fun for everyone,” said Foley. “Last year we had about 100 people sing ‘We Will Rock You’ to get free stuff. It was awesome.”

Many people who were involved with organizing the first Mud Bog under the umbrella of the Northern Manitoba Off-Road Association are still involved. Ray Compton is the treasurer, but also the “mud man”. He trudges through the pit to hook on a towing cable to the vehicles that don’t make it through.

THOMPSON MUD BOG



The popularity of Mud Bog events is growing in northern Manitoba. Last year, Snow Lake hosted its first event, with several people travelling from Thompson to compete.

Photo by Larry Hall

Brent King is the “pit boss” and is in charge of the staging area. There are some other familiar faces, as well as new ones.

“People often ask how they can become involved. I just say, ‘Show up at a meeting,’” said Foley. “We don’t have a membership fee. That structure doesn’t fit us. Or just show up on a weekend and come off-roading with us and have fun.”

To learn more, look up the Northern Manitoba Off-Road Association on Facebook.

Neil Cook, a student in an outdoor education class at Many Faces Education Centre, shows off freshly harvested chaga.

Photo by Craig McIntosh



Chaga

Natural remedy of the North

STORY BY SHANNON SMADELLA

Wellness writer Shannon Smadella takes a look at a local forest product that is gaining popularity in our region ... and around the world

My interest in the unique chaga mushroom came about one sunny afternoon while I was sitting down for a cup of tea with Al and Johanna McLaughlan at their Rocky Lake East home. As I was drinking my tea, I realized the aroma and taste was completely new to me. "It's called chaga," Al said.

"So," I asked, "What exactly

is chaga?"

Al left the room and returned with a piece of birch with an odd black growth on it.

"This is chaga."

A fruitful forest find

If you've been out for a walk in any forest in the North, or even your own backyard, and noticed a birch tree with a large

black lump growing out of it, you have come across the chaga mushroom. Chaga, or *Inonotus obliquus*, is a growth which propagates naturally on the birch tree over five to seven years. Chaga is hard and woody, bearing no resemblance to most mushrooms. Instead, it looks more like a fractured piece of burned charcoal. Its dark colour is due to a con-

centration of melanin, the same pigment that colours human skin.

Chaga grows around the world, though only in cold regions of northern latitudes, and has been used medicinally for hundreds of years in communities from Siberia to northern Canada.

A fledgling industry

After some research, I found that chaga is being harvested by numerous residents of our northern communities and is becoming something of a commodity around the world.

Rod Forbes harvests, processes, and sells chaga through his business, Forbes Forest Finds, which is based in The Pas. “I first started gathering and selling Seneca root,” says Forbes, “and as my journey for markets continued I had many inquiries about all kinds of non-timber forest products. I started taking and filling orders from companies for medicinal plants that grow all around us. On one order, I noted the buyer was inquiring about raw chaga.

After some additional research and discussions with some experts in the field, I grabbed my machete and started collecting and selling chaga.”

Al and Johanna McLauchlan sell chaga as an extension of their birch syrup business, Rocky Lake Birchworks. “We began research on the nutritional benefits of the birch tree when we first started our small hobby of making birch syrup back in 2004,” Johanna recalls. “Chaga was part of my research for a project with Manitoba Agriculture and Rural Initiatives.” In 2011 the McLauchlans began producing chaga tea.



Ground chaga, ready for brewing into tea.

Photo by Libby Stoker-Lavelle

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NATURAL REMEDY

With greater attention being paid to chaga in the media, there seems to be something of a fledgling industry growing in the North. “There is sporadic interest in chaga,” says Sherron Russell, who stocks regional chaga products at her specialty grocery store, The Big Dipper, in Flin Flon.

“I get people coming in with amazing stories about it helping with eczema or turning around a cancer diagnosis. It seems to help people.” While there does seem to be a market for local chaga, the industry’s growth is limited by the rarity of chaga itself, which keeps the price point quite high for buyers.

Tracking the mushroom

Although we enjoy an abundance of birch trees in northern Manitoba, chaga is pretty hard to find.

“It is actually quite rare,” says Forbes. “If you find one in an area you are likely to find others in the vicinity; however, you may have to search for quite a while to find the first.”

Craig McIntosh, a teacher living in Flin Flon, has been harvesting chaga for personal use for three years. For him, it is a practice in patience.

“Only one in 15,000 birch trees has a growth on it, and the trees are said to only spore once in a lifetime,” he says. “You really have to know what you’re looking for.” When McIntosh first started harvesting chaga, two friends, Rick Hall and Dale Wride, taught him how to recognize chaga in the bush.

Last year, McIntosh began passing on these skills to his students as part of a wild edibles unit in an outdoor education course at Many Faces Education Centre. “We spent a week looking for it, in the afternoons,” he recalls. “They think it’s pretty cool. Some had heard

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Leon Janvier shows off a piece of local birch with a chaga mushroom. Janvier takes chaga as a supplement to his cancer treatment.

Photo contributed

about chaga, but the finding, processing, and consuming part was all new to them.”

It seems many of those who hunt for their own chaga find the experience of harvesting a health food from the wild, and sharing it with loved ones, to be a spiritual practice.

Penny and Leon Janvier, who live in Flin Flon, started taking chaga as a health supplement following Leon’s diagnosis of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. While Leon went through chemotherapy and a stem cell transplant, the family harvested and prepared chaga tea as a natural remedy. “The thrill of finding it in our own backyard at our cabin, and preparing it and sharing it, and offering gratitude for the use of it, brings rise to healing in itself,” says Penny.

From tree to tea

Whether harvesters seek out chaga for their own use or for a commercial production, the harvesting process requires the same simple tools: a chisel and hammer.

“By pounding the chisel with the hammer around the mushroom, the mushroom will pop out of the tree,” Johanna McLauchlan explains.

The work doesn’t stop there. Chaga itself is indigestible for humans, so it must be extracted.

“The first option is to make it into chunks or powder form to be made into tea,” says Forbes, “so it can go through the stomach lining and get into the body.” The chaga is dried out, ground into a powder, and prepared much like regular tea, steeped for 45

minutes to several hours before drinking. According to Forbes, high quality chaga will make a very dark brown tea.

When processing chaga for personal use, a little goes a long way. According to McIntosh, “A small mushroom will yield a pound or a half-pound worth. At two cups a day, this would last me a month or so.”

Ethanol extraction is a more complex way to produce a concentrated chaga product. “Put the raw chaga into alcohol and let it sit for approximately six weeks,” Forbes explains. “After this tincture has sat for six weeks, the liquid is strained through a coffee filter and stored in a dark jar.” The user can then put a couple drops of this concentrated chaga under their tongue or add it to any drink.



Photo contributed



Photo by Tomas Cekanavicius

Through his business, Forbes Forest Finds, Rod Forbes (top) markets chaga tea and other wild edibles.

Chaga can be difficult to find in the wild, making a walk through the woods all the more fun.

Commercial producers are starting to create a wider range of products with chaga, including drops, syrup and skin creams.

Nature's medicine?

So why exert all this effort for a mushroom? The short answer is health. Fans of chaga tea say that it is a healthy tonic that improves the complexion, detoxifies, boosts the immune system, and gives an all-around sense of well-being. The most passionate proponents of chaga say this northern mushroom is a life-changer that can help prevent various cancers.

When one hears of a new remedial agent, it's common to question its validity in curing medical problems. While it can be hard to pin down the facts about chaga, numerous scientific studies have been conducted to assess the properties of the fungus and its effects on the human body. Chris Killham, a medicine hunter and ethnobotanist, outlines the foundation for the cancer-fighting claims around chaga.

In a 2013 article for Fox News, "Chaga: A Potent Immune Enhancing Virus," Killham writes, "Chaga is rich in natural antioxidant and anti-inflammatory phenols, containing the compounds betulin and betulinic acid—which derive directly from host birch trees. Both betulin and betulinic acid demonstrate anti-tumour effects, which explain why chaga is known as an anti-cancer agent. Additionally, some science shows that betulin can play a beneficial role in controlling metabolic disorders, such as obesity and metabolic syndrome. A group of compounds in chaga called lanostanoids also appear to play significant anti-cancer roles.

"The exact anti-cancer activity of chaga is not completely understood, but some compounds in the fungus boost immune activity, some specifically prevent cancer cells from replicating, and others cause premature cancer cell death. This argues for the utilization of a whole chaga extract, rather than isolating a single compound. In chaga, many agents appear to be active against cancer."

Dawn Straf, an orthopedic and remedial massage therapist in Flin Flon, has been taking chaga through tea, tinctures, and creams for 29 years and has researched the mushroom extensively over the years.

"I was introduced to it in my teens by a coworker at a veterinary clinic who had moved to Canada from Poland," Straf recalls. "He used it for himself and for many effective medicinal purposes in animal care. I read a book, *The Cancer Ward*, by Alexander Solzhenitzyn, about the health benefits of chaga... it is one of Russia's state secrets for power and strength and was heavily used by champion Russian athletes."

Initially, Straf ordered her chaga from Siberia and Russia,



Photo by Craig McIntosh

Students enjoy chaga tea in Craig McIntosh's outdoor classroom.

where it grows naturally. Now Straf harvests her own chaga locally near Flin Flon. When asked about the benefits, Straf lists numerous qualities, including the following: "It contains wild-source minerals and is particularly high in copper, calcium, potassium, manganese, zinc and iron. Its most potent ingredient is a special substance known as superoxide dismutase (SOD), an enzyme. Its function is to halt oxidation, especially the toxicity of a free radical known as singlet oxygen. This is the type of oxygen which is responsible for oxidizing and damaging the tissues, which results in aging."

While Straf is dedicated to using chaga on a regular basis, she emphasizes that it is not a miracle cure. "Remember there is no one magic pill or remedy—it's a lifestyle choice."

While studies are ongoing to determine the utility of chaga as a natural remedy—some sources say 1,600 experiments have been done on the mushroom—there is still much to be learned about the uses of chaga and

possible drawbacks or conflicts with medication.

Nevertheless, in times where it seems that natural foods are few and far between in the North, it's amazing to know that there is a product with so much potential growing right in our own backyard.

Where to find local chaga

Processed, packaged, and ready to make into tea, northern Manitoba chaga can be found at various local retailers. Here are a few:

The Pas: Pete's Pro Tackle, Tri-Family Health, Berscheid Meats, Sam Waller Museum

Wanless: We-Ste General Store

Flin Flon: The Big Dipper

Thompson: The Thompson Museum, Heritage North Museum

Churchill: Lazy Bear Lodge

Be sure to read labels with care and see if there are any other additives to the products that you are buying. Always consult a doctor before trying a medicinal plant.

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Don't Let Investments Take a Vacation

LENNA GOWENLOCK, EDWARD JONES

At long last, summer is almost here — which may mean it's time to put together your travelling plans. Still, while you and your family may enjoy a summertime trip, there's one part of your life that should not go on vacation — and that's your investment portfolio. So, what can you do to help your investments keep on working all year long, year in and year out? Here are a few suggestions:

Don't chase after "hot" investments

Many times, you will hear about a "hot" investment, usually a stock. However, by the time you hear about such an investment, it may already be cooling off. Even more importantly, it might not have been appropriate for your needs — and any investment that has either "flamed out" or wasn't right for you in the first place will not be a "hard worker" in your portfolio.

Monitor "lazy" investments

Under the right circumstances, just about any investment could be of value to you. However, under different scenarios, those same investments may not be doing as much for you. To cite one example, when interest rates are at historic lows, as has been the case recently, and your portfolio contains a relatively large amount of short-term fixed-rate vehicles whose interest payments don't even keep up with inflation, they could be considered "lazy" investments.

Look for the "multi-taskers"

In most aspects of life, "multi-taskers" are valuable — and it's the same in the investment world. Can you find a particular type of investment that may be able to achieve multiple goals at the same time? Consider dividend-paying stocks. If you need the income to supplement your cash flow, you can cash the dividend checks. And since some companies tend to increase their dividends, your investment in these stocks can serve as a source of potential for rising income, helping keep you ahead of inflation. Furthermore, if you don't actually need the dividends to support your income stream, you can reinvest them to increase your ownership stake — a method of building your overall wealth. Finally, many dividend-paying stocks also offer significant growth potential. Keep in mind, though, that there are no guarantees, because companies can lower or discontinue their dividends at any time. And, as you know, stocks are subject to market risk, including the potential loss of principal invested.

Don't take a "time out" from investing

The financial markets regularly move up and down. During the down times, it's important not to get so discouraged that you decide to take a "time out" from investing until "things get better." No one can really predict when a downturn will end, but you don't want to be on the investment sidelines when the market turns around — because

the biggest gains can occur in the early stages of a rally. And in any case, if you're not constantly investing, or at least exploring new investment opportunities, your portfolio could begin to stagnate — or even become "unbalanced," in which case it may no longer fit your objectives or your risk tolerance.

By following the above suggestions, you can help keep your investments working for you this summer — as well as fall, winter and spring. The road toward achieving your financial goals is a long one — so try to keep moving.

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a good taste

Gimme s'mores!

As camping season begins, we polled the staff of Cottage North and The Reminder for their favourite treats to roast over the fire.

What's your favourite campfire dessert?

I have been carefully cultivating the perfect s'more for years. Lately, I've been using Nutella with a couple pieces of Cadbury Fruit & Nut chocolate and a golden marshmallow. I think I'll try a layer of peanut butter next time.

— Libby, Cottage North editor



Sandwich your marshmallows and pieces of Jersey Milk bar between graham crackers. If you're so inclined, add a generous dab of peanut butter. If you're in the woods anyway, why not pick some blueberries to throw into the mix? Wrap the whole thing in tinfoil and heat it up over the coals. Goes great with plain chips.

— Jonathon, The Reminder editor

Marshmallows, toasted golden.

— Rose, receptionist

We used to dip bananas in maple syrup, roll them in chopped nuts, then roast them on a stick over the fire. Also, try putting a Caramilk square in your s'more. You can't go wrong with caramel goodness.

— Danita, graphic designer

Slice a banana lengthwise, fill with marshmallows and chocolate chips, then wrap it up in tinfoil and set it in the coals.

— John, production manager

Roast your marshmallow and then make a dip in the top, pour in a small amount of a sweet liqueur like Baileys, Kahlua, or butterscotch schnapps. You can make it messy and add it to chocolate and a cookie or graham cracker.

Roasted apples are great too, chopped up with cinnamon.

— Kelly, reporter

Plain jane marshmallows, burnt black. They only take a few seconds!

— Shannon, ad coordinator



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Bill Bannock Classic

Photos by Trent Allen/Opasquia Times



2015 Northern Manitoba Trappers' Festival Fur Queen Jeanelle Quiring (left) was out selling tickets to help with the fundraising efforts.



Despite the ample amount of water on the ice, hundreds of fishermen and fisherwomen were out once again, vying for some big prizes. Over 50 fish were landed on the day, one of the highest totals ever for the Bill Bannock Classic.



While the sun was out and the day was hot, a strong breeze definitely had people working to stay warm or dry, depending on how much water was on the ice around you.

PHOTO ESSAY

Angling for a prize

STORY BY
LIBBY STOKER-LAVELLE

Rotary Clubs from Flin Flon and The Pas joined forces this April to pull off what was billed as the ultimate fishing weekend: two tournaments in two days.

On Saturday, April 11, the 21st annual Bill Bannock Classic was held at Clearwater Lake, and on Sunday, April 12, the first Flinty Ice Fishing Derby was held at Sally's Beach in Bakers Narrows.

The two derbies were major fundraisers for their prospective clubs, drawing anglers from all over northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. With a chance at winning new quads, fishing boats, and even a cash prize of \$25,000 for an elusive tagged fish, who could blame them?

Thanks to a raft of generous volunteers and sponsors, both events went off without a hitch.

"It warms your heart to see all the volunteers working together, and you look at what you can accomplish if people buy in and contribute. It renews your faith in human nature."

Glenn Smith

FLINTY FISH DERBY CO-ORGANIZER



Mildred MacKenzie of Stanley Mission was all smiles at the first annual Flinty Fishing Derby on Lake Athapap.
Photo by Libby Stoker-Lavelle

Flinty Ice Fishing Derby

Photos by Libby Stoker-Lavelle



Creightonites Jody Suski, Bodey Watson, age 3, and Carla Watson enjoyed some sunshine on the ice.



Flin Flon's Darren Whitbread (second from right) took home an impressive prize for catching a 75.25 cm trout, one of nine fish caught during the three-hour event.



John Dumes was one of many anglers visiting from Pukatawagan.



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