



SOUTH MOUNTAIN PRESS

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FREE TAKE ONE

SERVING ERICKSON, ONANOLE,
SANDY LAKE, ELPHINSTONE,
WASAGAMING, ROLLING RIVER,
KEESEKOOVENIN & SURROUNDING AREA



A TASTE OF SUMMER

PHOTO BY TANYA SMITH

A bull moose reaches for a taste of summer while walking through a meadow near Moon Lake in Riding Mountain National Park. Summer is a time of growth as moose benefit from the nutrients in new growth and buds. For the male members of the species, this helps with the development of antlers, which are shed in late fall/early winter, only to sprout again in the spring. The velvet covering encases blood vessels which feed the antlers until they reach their maximum growth and begin to harden. In late summer/early fall, the velvet dries up and bull moose rub against shrubs and trees to dislodge, revealing their showy rack just in time for mating season.

Under the gun at Camp Wannakumbac

>> Brandon Police Tactical Squad just one of many groups to make use of local facility

CANDY IRWIN
for South Mountain Press

Imagine you are Camp Wannakumbac's Manager, Mitch Gusdal.

There is a group in residence at camp, but it's quiet and their presence is not evident, so Gusdal decides it's time to do some of the more mundane, but obviously necessary, chores.

He retrieves one of several large boxes of toilet paper and descends the outside stairs that lead to the basement storage area beneath the main building. He opens the door into the darkened space, reaches for the light, turns it on – and finds himself facing eight police officers in SWAT-style body armour, legs akimbo, all with assault rifles raised!

Having grown up at Camp Wannakumbac (CW) not much surprises Gusdal. "But, I jumped a little and dropped the box, 'humouring' them by raising my hands," he said, laughing. The men, he explained, were members of the Brandon Police Service Tactical Squad, performing training exercises at the camp. "I'm pretty sure that particular experience is something I'll never forget!"

In contrast, CW recently provided their facility to the Manitoba FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) Coalition who hosted a workshop entitled "Looking After Each Other," a program, open to all, "committed to promoting the dignity of those impacted by FASD."

Four teepees were erected to facilitate the group's activities.

"We were thrilled," said Gusdal, "to host a gathering like this that furthers the work of reconciliation, as set out in the 'Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action,' bringing communities together to listen and learn from one another."

Gusdal further explained, "Our camp is located on traditional Treaty 2 Territory. We love sharing our beautiful space with everyone and couldn't think of a more suitable use of the facility."

"It's so fun, what we do," said Gusdal, referring to his partner Sarah-Anne and their staff.

SEE FUNDRAISING, P2

SEE ROOFING PROJECT, P2

Students hope to head north in 2020

>> Erickson Collegiate 2020 grads planning to make the 990 km trip to scenic Churchill

CANDY IRWIN
for South Mountain Press

Gee Whiz! My Grade 12 class graduation 'trip' was an evening aboard Winnipeg's now defunct 'Paddlewheel Queen!'

But, if they can get all their polar bears in a row, the Erickson Collegiate Institute (ECI) 2020 grads will be going on a science trip to Churchill, 990 kilometres north of the school.

The trip is organized under

the auspices of Math and Science Teacher Ruth Frey of Onanole. In years past, Frey's students have taken a trip to NASA's (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Astronaut Training Program at Cape Canaveral in Florida.

This year, however, the students were obliged to chose from two Canadian options, one being Vancouver, BC and the other being Churchill.

Josie Sallows (15) is in Grade

10 now and one of the prospective 2020 graduates. "As a class, we took a vote," she explained, "and we decided on Churchill, as most figured they wouldn't go to Churchill on their own."

"We are planning to drive to Dauphin and then take the train directly to Churchill." This will be a 40-hour trip each way, requiring the students to sleep on the train for four nights.

While in Churchill they will be accommodated at the Chur-

chill Northern Studies Centre, a not-for-profit research centre founded in 1976.

During our interview, I asked Sallows, "Is the trip meant to be educational, fun, an adventure or all three?"

"I believe this trip will be a mix of the three," she responded. "As it is a Math/Science trip, we will be taking part in an educational Parks Canada Program.

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“We host family and church groups, who organize their own programming, while we provide the space and the food.

Year after year, CW hosts the Westman Youth Choir, who stay for eight days and rehearse, because they love the beautiful acoustics in the old pavilion, said Gusdal. CW also hosts the Arts West Artists Retreat, as well as quilting and scrap-booking clubs who just want quiet, uninterrupted time to pursue their specific interests, he said.

“And, it’s very nice, very gratifying, when we can provide meeting space, meals and accommodation for some of our sponsors, like retreats for credit union employees or the Manitoba Elks Association, so they can see and experience what their funding is used for.”

The Gusdals have even been asked to host a Furry Convention – which was respectfully declined, – but the point is that you just never know what’s around the corner!

Several things are new

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within the last few years. One of their cabins, the summer-time nurse’s residence, is in use as an Air B & B, generating a bit of income in the off-season.

Another cabin, ‘Aspen,’ can accommodate 15 people, who may rent it and cook for themselves. Otherwise, CW can feed and accommodate up to 100 guests at a time.

This year has seen the completion of an on-going project to cover all the roofs in long-lasting tin, rather than the shingles of the past.

And Sarah-Anne, a massage therapist with an interest in sports injury rehab, provides services to guests should they desire them.

Also recently certified as a yoga instructor, Sarah-Anne will offer classes to CW clients, as well as under her own banner, “Candid Wellness.”

It was fun spending time with Gusdal, gaining some insight into what goes on ‘in our own backyard.’



The Brandon Police Service Tactical Squad took part in training exercises during a recent stay at Camp Wannakumbac.

PHOTO COURTESY CAMP WANNAKUMBAC

Fundraising will help offset costs

“We will learn the history of Churchill, as well as wild-life biology of the local animals. We will also be learning how to build/create a functioning, smaller scale, rocket! We will have time to explore the area and bunk with our friends, which will be fun! We are also going on a Tundra Buggy to view polar bears, which will cover the adventure part of it!

“As of right now, we have 14 Grade 10 students signed up, but there are 21 spots available.”

The empty spots will be available to Grade 10’s or Grade 9’s who decide to join in.

The group will be accompanied by Frey, another, as yet unnamed, teacher and one parent chaperone.

“The cost to participants will vary, depending on the number of students attending and the total monies raised from our fundraising efforts,” explained Sallows.

“As a class, we are each

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responsible for organizing one or two fundraisers. We started in November with Canteen Sales and a Christmas Dainty Sale. From there we have done pizza sales (one time selling 160!) and a few pancake breakfasts.

Coming up on Saturday, June 15, the students are embarking on a major fundraising effort, hosting a Yard Sale, Car Wash and Barbecue, as well as an overlapping pancake breakfast.

“The trip is scheduled for October 2020, so we have until September, 2020 to raise as much money as possible to offset our expenses,” said Sallows.

“South Mountain Press readers can help by participating in our fundraisers whenever possible. It will be a wonderful learning opportunity for the ECI students,” said Sallows.

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