



Winter/Spring 2014

Important Highlights:

- History Day
- Hymers Fair
- Project updates

Inside this issue:

President's Report	2
Hymers Fair	2
Project update: North-Gunflint Lake	3
Project update: Highway Dedication	3
Upcoming events	3
About Us/Membership	4

The Silver Express

History Day 2013

Saturday, August 10th, 2013 was a historic day for the society. That day we hosted our first ever event, History Day 2013. This was the second annual installment of History Day, but the first for the society. It was very well attended and very successful, which bodes well for the 2014 edition.

Planning for the event began back in the spring, and the first order of business was to secure the guest speakers for the event. Gilbert Erickson, Elinor Barr, Elle Andra-Warner and Co-President Dave Battistel all graciously agreed to speak on topics of local history. Society Co-President Shelley Simon again offered the use of the station as our venue for the event.

The weather that day was perfect compliment to our day; warm and sunny and not too hot. Shelley arranged for the Old Mill Clydesdales to be at the station, and the carriage rides were a hit with young and old. People slowly began to trickle in after noon in preparation for the beginning of the main event; by two o'clock a sizable crowd had assembled inside the station.

Although a number of our local

politicians could not be present for History Day, Thunder Bay-Rainy River MP John Rafferty did make it out to join in the festivities. Master of Ceremonies Dave Battistel began by welcoming everyone to the event and explaining the purpose behind History Day.

The speakers that came to History Day provided some fantastic insight into the storied past of the Silver Mountain area. Gilbert Erickson spoke about the Silver Mountain Mines, Elinor Barr spoke about Dorothea Mitchell, Elle Andra-Warner spoke about the famous people of Silver Mountain and Dave spoke about the Pee Dee Railway and the ghost town of Leebtain. We thank them all for sharing their knowledge with us.

The second half of the event was highlighted by two very special events. First was a presentation made by Shelley on behalf of the society and Silver Mountain Station. Assembled in the crowd were a large number of members of the Wolframe family.

Jim Wolframe, a WWII veteran and retired firefighter, sadly passed away in March, 2013.

During his life, he made an indelible mark on the history of Silver Mountain. It was through his hard work and passion that the station we call our home is still



Author Elinor Barr

around today. A portrait of Jim was unveiled by Shelley and Jim's family that will now reside on the mantle of the fireplace he built at the station.

The formal portion of the day was concluded by musician Rodney Brown. Known for his songs about our local history, Rodney wrote a special tribute to Dorothea Mitchell and the Silver Mountain Station. This haunting song's debut was met with a cho-



Wolframe Family

rus of cheers and applause.

Continued on page 2



Next society

General

Meeting:

March 22, 2014



President's Report

Where has the time gone? At this time last year we were celebrating the incorporation of the society; how fast times flies! The time since then has been filled with many firsts for us and we are certainly looking forward to the year ahead.

Our society membership has continued to grow, from a mere handful of friends to now over 60 people. Those numbers will only continue to climb as the society becomes more established and well-known in the local communities. Two important events last summer helped to raise our public profile.

As was mentioned on page one, History Day was by far our biggest splash of the year. The speakers and Rodney Brown were absolute-

ly fantastic, and the presentation to the Wolframe family was very touching. We are very excited for the 2014 edition and we hope to attract even more people to the station to celebrate the history of the area.

The decision to have a presence at the Hymers Fair was a bit last minute, but paid big dividends. With a little more planning, we hope that our booth will be more interactive this year.

Board of Directors

Shelley Simon, Co-President

Dave Battistel, Co-President

Sherry Hickin, Treasurer

Secretary (vacant)

Kyle Duckworth, Director

Leonard Kantola, Director

Elle Andra-Warner, TBMHS rep

Our historical projects are coming along, and tangible results becoming more evident as we move forward. As we become more established, we can begin accessing government funds that are available for such projects.

One thing the society could really use is an infusion "people power." The board can always use help when it comes to organizing and planning events. Sometimes an extra hand can go a long way. If you'd like to help out, contact one of the board members list below.

shelley@silvermountainhs.ca

dave@silvermountainhs.ca

sherry@silvermountainhs.ca

kyle@silvermountainhs.ca

leonard@silvermountainhs.ca

elle@silvermountainhs.ca

History Day 2013/Hymers Fair

Continued from page 1

You can view the song on the Society's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/silvermtnhs

The reminder of the afternoon was highlighted by mingling and conversation. A wonderful dinner buffet was offered by Shelley and musician Dave Smyth provided the ambiance.

History Day 2013 was an unqualified success. The society received a lot of positive feedback from those in attendance. Planning has already begun for History Day 2014 and we hope to see you there!

Hymers Fair

The annual Hymers Fall Fair has proved to be a very popular local event since its inception in 1912. Upwards of 10,000 people pass through the gates every year.

At the Board of Directors meeting at the end of June, it was decided to purchase display space at the fair. Our proximity to Hymers, our shared history and opportunity for increased exposure made for a natural fit.

Our booth at the fair was a bit austere, but we certainly learned a lot from our first experience at the fair. The booth was manned on the Sunday by Co-President Dave

Battistel and on Monday by Director Kyle Duckworth.

There was a steady flow of traffic past our booth, even though we were not in the most ideal location. The visitors that did stop were genuinely interested in our efforts and it did result in a few new members to the society. We're already looking forward to this year's event.



Society booth at the Hymers Fall Fair.

Project Update: North-Gunflint Lakes Historic Corridor

Work continues on the preservation of historic sites in the North-Gunflint Lakes Historic Corridor. These locations date from Archaic-period Natives, fur trade era voyagers and 19th/20th century railway, logging and mining ventures.

The initiative is being spearheaded by Co-President Dave Battistel, who has been working on this

project since before the inception of the society. Things are progressing, albeit very slowly.

We are now working with a cultural heritage specialist based out of Toronto who has been very helpful and understanding with our goals. It is our hope that the pace of progress will increase in the future.

We will continue to provide information as it becomes available on this important project. Please visit our blog for the latest news and updates.



Rock oven at Leeblain.



Project Update: Highway Dedication

The society is continuing to pursue the re-dedication of a portion of Highway 593 in honour of local pioneer Dorothea Mitchell, the "Lady Lumberjack."

The process of dedicating Highway 593 (Devon Road) requires that approval must be received from the local township road boards before an application can be made to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO). The letters were

sent out last year and we are still awaiting a response from some of the boards.

At this moment there is no indication of the cost of the project. Once approval is received from the roads boards, then the application can proceed to the Ministry. The MTO will then make a determination on the cost of signage, etc.

Dorothea Mitchell was a vital part

of the history of Silver Mountain and the surrounding area. She ran a sawmill, lumberyard and was postmistress of Silver Mountain Station. She was the first unmarried woman in Ontario to be granted a homestead, right here in Silver Mountain. She was a significant part of our history, and her imprint in Silver Mountain deserves our appreciation.

Stay up-to-date with the society blog. Visit it at silvermountainhs.com

Upcoming events: Annual General Meeting

The society Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place on Saturday, March 22nd, 2014 at the Kakabeka Legion. The meeting will begin at 1:00pm.

Current and new members are encouraged to attend. 2014 membership fees can be paid at the meeting; only paid members will be allowed to vote on any positions or resolutions.

The board will present the current state of affairs and provide updates on current projects and initiatives. Questions and answer time will follow.

The society is currently seeking new members for the board of directors. We have an opening for the position of secretary; any interested individuals should express their interest via email to shelley@silvermountainhs.ca

Stayed tuned for other upcoming events, such as the 2014 installment of our very successful History Day program.



Rodney Brown at History Day 2013.





SILVER MOUNTAIN AND AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 7
RR #2 Nolalu
Silver Mountain, ON
POT 2K0

info@silvermountainhs.ca
www.silvermountainhs.ca



Preserving the history of Silver Mountain and beyond.

The Silver Mountain and Area Historical Society (SMHS) was founded in October 2012. We are a non-profit organization committed to preserving the history of the Port Arthur, Duluth and Western Railway (PAD&W), the Silver Mountain Station and the surrounding area.

Our mandate includes the promotion of the railway, as well as the preservation of the remaining physical traces of the line and structures. We are also interested in the cultural and economic history of the area, such as settlements, mining and logging. Our geographic area stretches from the former railway stop at Sellers west to the US-Canada border at Gunflint Lake.

The SMHS is governed by an elected board of directors and is affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society (OHS). We are headquartered out of the historic Silver Mountain Station, which was built in 1907 and is the last remaining station on the PAD&W line.

Membership

The Silver Mountain and Area Historical Society welcomes any and all new members.

Membership benefits:

- Invitation to special events and gatherings
- Regular newsletters
- Volunteer opportunities
- Voting privileges at the Society's Annual General Meeting



For more information on how to join us, please visit our website or email us at info@silvermountainhs.ca



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