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SERVING ERICKSON, OHANOLE, WASAGAMING, SANDY LAKE, ELPHINSTONE, ROLLING RIVER, KEESEKODWENIN AND SURROUNDING AREA

FREE TAKE ONE

RMNP not immune to water woes

□ For the first time in years the Park is fighting to stay ahead of spring run-off

Grass turning green, flowers starting to bloom, and trees beginning to bud, is how spring normally arrives in Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP). Located on top of several watersheds, RMNP generally does not have to battle flood conditions like other places throughout the province. In most cases Parks Canada staff are able to address the minor inconveniences spring produces with temporary weight restrictions and the occasional road closure.

This spring however, RMNP has not been immune to the extreme weather and for the first time in many years, Parks Canada staff finds itself in a battle to stay ahead of the damage caused by the spring run-off and continual rainfall. With over 200 mm of rainfall since April every effort is being made to minimize the damage.

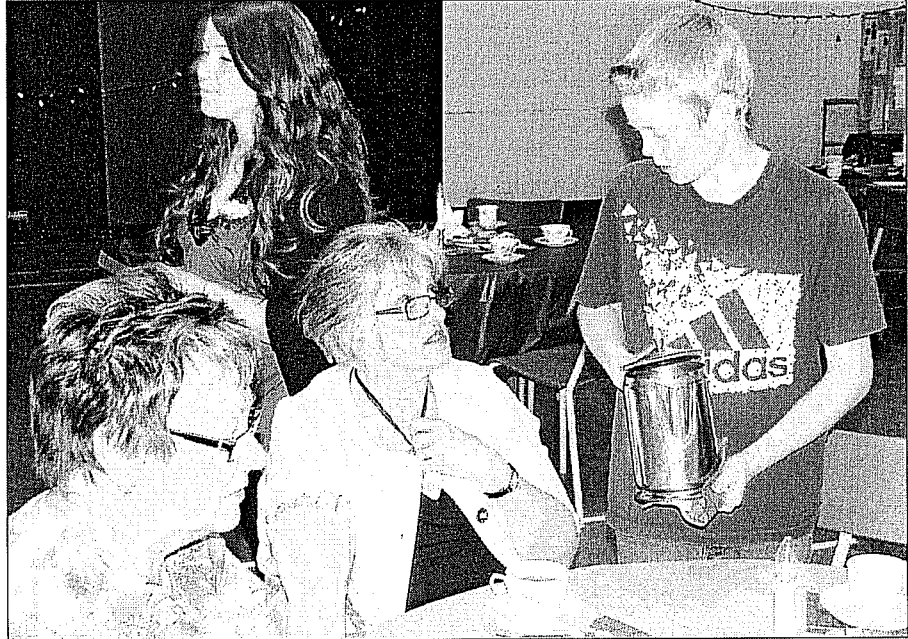
"We are monitoring the roads daily, maintaining culverts, repairing sinkholes, pumping water, all in effort to keep the roads open. However to ensure public safety some road closures have been necessary," explained Cory Vitt, Technical Services Officer with RMNP. According to Vitt, additional resources have been dedicated to address the problems and there is still an incredible amount of work left to be done.

Road closures

Public safety along roadways throughout the park is one of Parks Canada's primary concerns. To ensure public safety, more road closures and traffic restrictions have been necessary. Highway #10 through the park was closed to all trucks and buses with three or more axles effective 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 2. The main concern was the possible loss of highway structural integrity at km 49. According to Vitt the area experienced 101 mm in one rain event and the situation has worsened with continual precipitation and the excessive spring run-off. In addition to the truck and bus closure all other vehicle traffic is urged to drive with caution and obey speed reduction zone of 40 km/hour at km 49.

The damage to the roads is not limited to Highway #10. Both Highway #19 and the Lake Audy road through the park remain closed and Parks Canada staff is doing all they can to ensure a timely re-opening of these roads. The damage on portions of Highway #19 has been significant, with water flowing across the road in places.

See "Repairs must wait" on page 9



Tea for two

Mary Nichols, centre, requests a top-up for herself and Arlene Waddell from Erickson Collegiate student Viktor Popp during a fundraising tea at the school on Friday, June 3. The two were among the many community members who enjoyed a hot beverage in support of a campaign initiated by STAR (Students Taking Action for Rights) to raise funds for the construction of a new orphanage in Haiti. The event brought in close to \$650, which will be forwarded to the Organization d'Aide pour la Connaissance des Enfants Haitiens.

Sandy Lake landmark re-opens

□ Drive-In gets a new lease on life courtesy of Sonia and Leonard Park

By CANDY IRWIN
for South Mountain Press

Talk about being positive and upbeat - Sonia and Leonard Park just love the town of Sandy Lake! "There's everything you need and it's all really convenient," Sonia explained cheerfully.

The Parks have spent the last four years enjoying their motor home in the campground, which Sonia says is so well maintained, that staying there is a pleasure. "The lake itself is lovely and the people are so friendly," she added.

The Park's enthusiasm for Sandy Lake is what prompted

Sonia and Leonard to re-open the defunct drive-in restaurant, now known as the "S.L. Creamie Drive-In" or "The Creamie" for short.

Building in good shape

Both Sonia and Leonard were raised in Shoal Lake and now live in Virden, where Leonard is a diesel mechanic. Sonia says the former owners kept the closed building well maintained, but she and Leonard have been busy 'sprucing it up' by installing an emerald green roof, in keeping with the surroundings.

Customers can sit outside at picnic tables to enjoy the food and ambience of the lake, or call

ahead and pick up their orders. The menu includes homemade, 100 percent ground beef burgers, fries and poutine, onion rings, deep fried mushrooms, and battered, southern fried chicken. Or, maybe you would rather have a foot-long 'Moon Dog,' followed by an ice-cream treat.

Sonia had my full attention when she said that there are 24 flavours of soft ice cream - so much so that I barely heard her when she said there are also twisters, hard ice cream, sundaes and shakes! My friends and I plunked right down and enjoyed butter pecan, chocolate and cheesecake flavoured cones.

The Creamie opened for

weekends on May 14 and is now open seven days a week until the long weekend in September or perhaps later, depending on the weather. Sonia was warmly enthusiastic about the 'lovely staff' she has been able to hire, to help her in her efforts to serve customers well.

When you pop by you may meet Kelly Koversky, Kailey Wozney or sisters Stefanie and Janine Hosmann from Sandy Lake, Janelle Arnault from Erickson, Abby McKay or Beverly Bone from Elphinstone or Laurisa Delorme from Keesekowenin First Nation.

See "Business" on page 2

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