

Fort Frances Times

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INSIDE



Woollard honoured by RCMP

100-year-old Veteran Gordon Woollard was the guest of honour at the RCMP Musical Ride last Wednesday in Emo.

See story on A5



Rainy River celebrates 120 years

A parade and concerts and many other festivities were held as the Town of Rainy River celebrated 120 years since its founding.

See photos on B1



Ryll wins Quest

There were many brilliant performances at Quest for the Best 2024 but Jaykob Ryll took the crown.

See story on B8



Motei Demers (left) and Ian Waterer took the crown at Fort Frances Canadian Bass Championship last weekend. The team was the only crew to bring in a bag over 19 lbs for each of the three days of fishing. This was the team's second win in Fort Frances having won in 2022.

—Allan Bradbury photo

Ian Waterer, Motei Demers win Fort Frances Canadian Bass Championship

By Allan Bradbury
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2022 champions Ian Waterer and Motei Demers went wire to wire over three days to win for their second time on Rainy Lake after a second place finish last year.

It was an up and down tournament for most teams. Many teams told MC Shane Beckett that it was a grind while others came in with heavy bags each day.

But only Waterer and Demers managed to be over 19 lbs all three days. Despite finishing each day with the highest total weight, it wasn't easy.

"It got harder and harder every day," they said. "First day we had what we had at noon, second day two, and today it wasn't 'til three o'clock, so by the skin of our teeth. This morning I think we lost two or three nice ones and I think it took five years off my life. It's all over now but man was I stressing."

"I kissed his forehead, I swear on my

life," they said. "It was emotional, that's for sure. We didn't wait, when the last one got in the net we pulled the trolling motor and said we're done. Second and third are two of our best friends so we couldn't be happier with how everything turned out."

Rounding out the top three were the team of James Hill and Chris Viel with a total of 57.50 and Mike Badiuk and Kyle Turgeon with a total of 57.32.

Last year's champions Bryan Gustafson and Mike Luhman found them-

selves in a hole early after a day one bag of 16.45 pounds and fell to the 29th position. But a pair of 18-plus lb bags got them back in the money and they managed to finish in ninth place.

Former Bassmaster champion Jeff Gustafson and his partner John Peterson came into the big tent in 10th place but a good bag at 19.88 lbs on day three saw them outlast several other top-10 teams and finish in fourth with a three-day total of 56.18 lbs.

For more results, see A8

Hallett Brewing celebrates first year of business and building connections

By Ken Kellar
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
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It may have only been open for a relatively short time, but one local business is celebrating a milestone anniversary that is a decade in the making, and are planning a party to celebrate with all those who have helped them through a successful first year.

Hallett Brewing, located on the 400 block of Scott Street in downtown Fort Frances, is marking one year in business this Sunday, July 28, 2024. Owners Tanya and Andrew Mueller have been working on

the business in one way or another for more than four years, initially conceiving of a local spot to sit down and enjoy a craft beer and watching it develop over this past into a beloved fixture of the community.

The Muellers shared that the idea for a craft brewery in Fort Frances extended in some small way back to when the pair met while they were both living in British Columbia.

"I worked at breweries for almost 10 years when I was in Vancouver," Tanya explained.

"That was how we met, he used to come in and drink craft beer where I worked. But he was visiting craft breweries at the same time I was working

at them before we met, and he was always talking to the brewers and was really interested in it."

"It's when we moved back, and there were no breweries around," Andrew continued.

"The closest ones were Kenora and Bemidji, and there wasn't that much selection at the LCBO. A couple of months goes by, you've tried all of them."

Fort Frances is hometown turf for Andrew, but the pair returned to a town that was a far cry from Vancouver when it came to craft beer. In order to help scratch that particular itch, Tanya said she purchased her husband a craft beer brew-

ing kit for Christmas. While he didn't get around to using it for a few months, once he and a friend finally gave it a shot and wound up with something Andrew said was "pretty decent," some small spark ignited.

"That was an Irish Red Ale, and I was like, 'oh, this is pretty decent,'" he recalled.

"So then I just got hooked. Then I got another kit. The way those kits go, [the first] was an extract kit, so it was a beginner kit, it's just almost like syrup, there's no grains involved. The second kit I got was an all grain, which means they crushed up

the grains, but it's still a kit. The third one, I just went online and found this program and just made a recipe. I think it was the Hoppy Blonde, which we actually continue today. I made that and it was decent, so then I just got hooked and I just started brewing. I was brewing quite a bit."

At the time, Andrew was a roofing contractor, which he said was a job he knew wouldn't be sustainable for a long time, and Tanya had almost a decade of front of house experience from her time working the

Please see "Road" on A2



Hallett Brewing owners Andrew and Tanya Mueller, centre, stand in the middle of their bar, surrounded by patrons and supporters, during one of the trivia nights they play host to each week. The brewery is celebrating its first anniversary this Sunday, July 28, 2024, with live music and a BBQ.

— Ken Kellar photo

New Gold suffers fatal accident this morning

Staff

New Gold has announced a fatal accident in its open pit this morning.

"New Gold Inc. deeply regrets that early this morning, July 24, 2024, an employee operating a piece of equipment in the open pit was fatally injured at the Rainy River Mine in north-western Ontario," stated a release issued by the company.

"The health, safety and wellbeing of our employees is our top priority. The Company is working closely with local authorities and an investigation is underway. Operations have been voluntarily suspended. The thoughts of management are with the family, friends and colleagues who have been impacted by this tragic incident," said the release.

New Gold added that the company will provide additional information as appropriate.

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"Our reputation is your guarantee"

Road to Hallett opening saw hurdles, but one year in business has built a network of support

More from A1

Vancouver bar scene. The Mueller's recalled one of their favourite haunts in Vancouver, The Alibi Room, a fixture of the Gastown neighbourhood that prided itself on serving dozens of varieties of local craft beer. Since a taphouse of that kind wouldn't work in a town with no local breweries, and with the nearest craft breweries located hours away, the Mueller's decided that their homemade beer had gotten good enough that they could cut out the middleman and start their own craft brewery. The only question was, where would a business like that go?

"I was going to get groceries, literally driving down the street and said, 'no shit.'" Tanya recalled of the moment she saw the building on the 400 block of Scott Street that had just gone up for sale, the very same building that became the home of Hallett Brewing.

"I took a picture and sent [Andrew] a text right away. We came and saw it the next day. We saw it and then we put an offer on it. It all happened so fast."

Buying the building was not the beginning of their story, but it came close to being the end when, after owning and working on the structure for a year, the COVID-19 pandemic shut most of the world down.

"That really put a damper on things, because for one, no financial institution really wanted to touch anyone," Andrew said.

"That was when we went to RRFDC [Rainy River Future Development Corporation] to get a loan. Basically, that year, I was picking away, but at the same time, we were sinking a lot of our own money into it. I just picked away and tried to do a lot without spending a lot."

"It's crazy to be in a place where you're investing everything into your dream to move forward, when the same thing that we're trying to do, those businesses were closing down," Tanya recalled.

The Mueller's spent three and a half years working to bring their dream to life. Andrew said there were a lot of hail marys made during that time, like when ordering equipment without necessarily having all of the money for payments in place, or trying to ship items around the world in the middle of a pandemic and global tensions that could boil over at any moment. The pair also had to work to convince the town to allow them to move forward with their business as well, which

they said was a process that had its ups and downs, but eventually worked in their favour.

"In the end, I was like, 'there's no way we're not going to let this not happen,'" Tanya said.

After years of hard work shaping the building into their dream, the first test of their fledgling business came with the soft opening they held on July 1, 2023.

"That date I picked because it was getting to the point where I just told Andrew the dates, 'this is going to be our soft opening date, and this is going to be our grand opening date'" Tanya said.

"Now we were at the point where we just need to make it happen. Everything was still falling into place. But Andrew wasn't going back to roof that summer, and we needed to open our doors."

To put that soft opening into perspective, the Mueller's shared that equipment and other parts of the building were still going up in the lead-up to that date, with the signature garage doors having been installed only three days before. The glass separating the tanks from the sitting area had to go in. Kegs were borrowed from another local business. The Point of Sale system hadn't yet come online. Everything was coming down to the wire.

Nevertheless, when the doors opened that Canada Day, the Mueller's and their brand new business were flooded with supporters stopping in to try their beer and congratulate the couple on their efforts.

"The support really exceeded our expectations," Andrew said.

Following a successful first day of business, the rest of the month in the leadup to their grand opening on July 28, 2023, was spent training staff, making more product and generally getting everything ready to go for the big day. The Mueller's had put everything into their business, and wanted to ensure that when people came in to their brewery that expectations of a small Fort Frances craft brewery weren't just met, they were surpassed.

"It was very exciting, but when you're in it, you just have so much on your plate," Tanya said.

"It's like your baby. You want it to meet those expectations, and that whole vision you had be moved forward, and nothing less than that. The days leading up were exciting. It's a roller coaster. It's your own business. You never check out from it."

"Some of my favourite places in Vancouver, I wanted to meet

those expectations," Andrew said.

"I knew Tanya could do the front of house, so the pressure was making a good product. For me, that was probably the scariest, like, hopefully people will drink the beer. Or like the beer. Because you don't know what the demographic is in a small town. Turns out there's a nice wide range of a demographic for craft beer."

Hallett Brewing's first year has been marked by its successful openings, but also by its growth into a venue that champions collaborations between other small local businesses, as well as a destination that provides another opportunity for those living in town to go out and have fun, or reconnect with friends they haven't seen in a while. Lacking a kitchen for preparing food, the Mueller's have established partnerships with local vendors so that Hallett Brewing has something to offer for patrons to eat, to say nothing of the frequent stops by the Talk on the Street Eatery food truck. They have held special live music nights featuring local and guest entertainment. And each Tuesday, the Hallett plays host to a trivia night. In becoming a hub of sorts for different parts of the community, Hallett Brewing is helping to support other small businesses to help make the entirety of Fort Frances a better place to live.

"We have had so much support and been consistent in a way that will allow us to get to be where we need to be so that Hallett Brewing will always be here, that's my hope," Tanya said.

"Having to flex to realizing you're not just a brewery, you're not just pouring craft beer. That



Above, Andrew and Tanya Mueller pose with longtime employee Giselle Smith, who has been a part of the team since the beginning, behind the bar at Hallett Brewing, which has become a popular fixture in Fort Frances. Below, the brewery opened on July 28, 2023, with a ribbon cutting attended by mayor Andrew Hallikas, RRFDC staff and more.

— Ken Kellar photos

draws people in, but it's so much more than that. It's the place where people can come and just sit and see somebody they haven't seen in two months. I wanted to bring in local artists and get people in to do things, like you're not just coming to sit at a table and just drink all the time. The same with the trivia nights and just supporting other businesses in our business and really drawing in that local economy and keeping it growing."

Speaking of growing, Tanya said her hope for the next year of business for Hallett Brewing is just to continue to see it grow as it has since the grand opening, allowing for them to involve more local businesses in some way and team up with the community more. Andrew echoed the sentiment, adding

that expanding a bit more on the equipment side of things would also be nice.

Hallett Brewing will be celebrating their one-year anniversary this Sunday, July 28, 2024,

from noon until 5:00 p.m. with live entertainment and a special BBQ by Eat Best Charcuterie, so be sure to stop in, have a drink, and say a cheers to your local craft brewery.



The **2024 Quest for the Best** was an **absolute success** and the Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the following **Businesses and Individuals...**

Thank you to all our sponsors:
The Window & Door Store, Badiuk's Equipment Ltd., Good Impressions, Super 8 Motel, Green's Brandsource Home Furnishings, The Standard Insurance, NCDS, Causeway Insurance, The Faculty, M.L.Caron Electric

A huge thank you to our awesome band,
The Faculty, for all the time and hard work they put into making this year's Quest such a big success.

To Jonathon Price from 93.1 The Border, a very heartfelt thank you for being such an amazing Emcee for our event.

A special thank you to John Dutton, Dr. Jeff Gustafson, Ken Kellar, and Callahan Armstrong for being our judges.

To all the contestants who participated this year we offer a "Job Well Done" you made it very difficult for the judges to choose winners from such a talented group.

Thank you to Causeway General Insurance for helping to sell tickets.

To all the following volunteers who donated their time to help before, during and after the event we extend our gratitude and thanks: Jessica Ogden and The Window & Door Store Employees, Barb Everett, Cathy Emes, Cathy Tysz, Kasey Johnson, Bonnie Faragher, Sylvia Clifford, Joanne Bliss, Josie McLeod, Chantal McLeod

A Special Thank You to all the Bass Tourney Directors and Volunteers who set up the tables and chairs. You are all our heroes!

Finally we want to thank the Fort Frances Bass Championship Board for all the encouragement and helping hands they provided as well as allowing us to once again hold Quest for the Best in conjunction with the Bass Tournament.

Congratulations to the Graduates of 2024!

HAVE I NOT commanded YOU?
BE STRONG and COURAGEOUS
DO NOT be afraid
DO NOT be discouraged
FOR THE LORD your GOD will be with you WHEREVER you go

JOSHUA 1:9

May God continue to bless you and guide you along your journey.

The Northwest Catholic District School Board
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Congratulations!

MCAMMOND-Born to Hailee Barnard and Connor McAmmond of Fort Frances, Ontario, a girl, Ruth Margaret, weighing 7 lbs 10 oz, on July 8, 2024 at LaVerendrye General Hospital, Fort Frances, Ontario.

NOBLE-Born to Arsha Baby Joseph and George Noble of Fort Frances, Ontario, a boy, George, weighing 6 lbs 7 oz, on July 10, 2024 at LaVerendrye General Hospital, Fort Frances, Ontario.

MALPASS-Born to Tyler and Shilo Malpass of Fort Frances, Ontario, a girl, Frankie-Rose Sandra, weighing 6 lbs 3 oz, on July 10, 2024 at LaVerendrye General Hospital, Fort Frances, Ontario.

MCNEIL-OTTERTAIL-Born to Summer McNeil and Mason Ottertail of Fort Frances, Ontario, a boy, Mateo Keith, weighing 6 lbs 8 oz, on July 11, 2024 at LaVerendrye General Hospital, Fort Frances, Ontario.

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✓ **August TBA**

✓ **September TBA**

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