



THE COBALT LODGE

Newsletter of the Cobalt Historical Society



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P.O. Box 309
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“Greetings from Ontario’s Most Historic Town”

Where our history continues to grow through one of the warmest summers in years.

FROM PRESIDENT JACK – *I am pleased to report the explanatory signs have been erected at displays at the Jack Koza Memorial Park and the Willet Green Miller Site.*

The Annual General Meeting of the Cobalt Historical Society will be held on Tuesday, September 20th, 2005 at 1:30 p.m. at the Society Office - the Willet Green Miller Site. If you wish to join our Board, please let me know. Meanwhile, my advice to trail visitors and rockhounds is “Do not lick the rocks, and wash your hands before dining”.

AMALGAMATION

The Great Debate continues between Cobalt, Coleman Township, Latchford and nearby Townships. Cobalt Council see benefits; Coleman Township says “No” and urges ratepayers to send their views to Queen’s Park. Latchford and Gilles Limit Township are in favour of a union but have local problems to clear up first. Cobalt resident, Ernie Tresidder, published a full-page letter in the March 16th issue of “The Chronicle” supporting Dan Cleroux’s stand for Coleman’s answer – “No to Amalgamation”.

MINER’S FESTIVAL 2005, JULY 29-31

The Mosher Run around Cobalt Lake opened activities, followed by the Jack-Leg Drilling and Mucking contests. The Classic Theatre offered 3 performances of “We Lived a Life And Then Some More”. A new event, “Kids Summer Olympics” organized by the Cobalt Fundraising Committee was held at Bass Lake. Over 100 kids participated in a 10 game program under the direction of Judy Belanger and her many volunteers. All enjoyed the finale over hot dogs and pop. The 2006 program is already in the planning stage. Throughout the weekend the ball diamonds at Cobalt and Bass Lake were busy with Slo-Pitch Tournaments.

THE TEMISKAMING NORDIC SKI CLUB

A fundraiser concert held August 12-14th called "The Fred Eaglesmith's Great Northern Picnic" provided a non-stop weekend of music at the Loon Lake site. Proceeds from this popular event are shared by the Temiskaming Nordic Ski Club and the Temiskaming Hospital CAT Scan Foundation.

THE COBALT MINING MUSEUM

It was another busy summer for this gem of displays. As of mid August there were 3,450 paid visitors to the Museum and 710 tourists to the underground tour at the Colonial Adit. As always, the site-crafted silver jewelry is in great demand. This season, 4 summer students are employed as guides and one of them is sponsored by the Cobalt Historical Society. On July 31st, 2005, during the Miner's Festival, the Museum inducted four new members as "Founders" and "Mining Partners". Ivan Tresidder and Victor Kingston Stevens are now on the Founders Wall located in room number 5; Harry George Miller and Jim Price are on the Mining Partners Wall in room number 5. Their photographs and biographies are proudly displayed.

THE CLASSIC THEATRE

The highlight of the Summer Program was "I Lived a Life and Then Some More", a sequel to the 2004 play "I Lived a Life and Then Some". As a fundraiser for district charitable projects, The Classic raised \$65,000.00 during the 2004-2005 period.

AUTUMN PROGRAM

- September 24 – Elton John on Piano
- October 1 – "Canadian Comedians" – Standup Comedy
- October 15 – Lawrence Morganstern and Rob Ross – Comedy
- October 29 – Derek Edwards and Jim McNally – Comedy
- November 19 – "Sun Spirits" – First Nations Stories
- November 26 – Louise Pitre – Mama Mia

HISTORIC SILVER TRAIL

No major construction is being carried out this season. Our main efforts are concentrated on maintenance and repairs to signage. We are also drafting additional directional and location signs for other notable sites and properties not as yet included on the official trail. Some of

these are the O'Brien Mine, the Nipissing 407, the Silverfields, the Kerr Lake and the Silver Miller at Brady Lake.

THE COBALT PUBLIC LIBRARY

It was a busy summer, with many tourists checking old photos and the Dr. Drummond Exhibit. Glenda McAnual retired as of July 29th, 2005. Board members took her out to dinner and gave her a painting of the Library by Marg Arthur, also a silver letter opener and bookmark. We will all miss her. Mrs. Peggy Leaper has replaced Glenda and our new assistant librarian is Jennifer MacDonald, both are a real asset.

THE "COBALT TREE" – A large spruce tree in the center of Cobalt's downtown park became the center of a controversial landscaping plan.

In late June the Town Council approved requests from the Public Works Department and the Steering Committee of the Historic Cobalt Mining Camp Project to remove the tree thus providing easier access to a water main and a clearer view of the monument wall behind it.

A petition signed by 104 individuals prompted Council to review its decision. Most of the signers called the spruce "Cobalt's Christmas Tree".

Before a final decision was reached an individual wearing white socks and sneakers at about 2:00 a.m. July 10th carried out "The Chainsaw Massacre" and fled.

The tree remained standing but the deep notches rendered the plant a hazard to public safety and the town works crew removed it.

ARSENIC IN COBALT AREA – The Temiskaming Health Unit has found elevated levels of arsenic at several mine sites including Cobalt Lake. Accordingly, they have requested the Town of Cobalt to post signs warning the public of this potential hazard if using the lake for recreational use. The Town has refused, putting the onus back on the Health Unit. Several Heritage Trail sites were also listed for arsenic and metals content. The Health Unit does not believe the sites represent an immediate health concern but wish to warn the visitors of accidental ingestion. Further studies are planned.

Meanwhile, local swimmers including, the Reverend H.L. Wipprecht, continue their regular swims in Cobalt Lake. The Minister points out that arsenic has been used for many years for medicinal purposes and in health spas and mineral hot springs.

The Arsenic compounds found in the area in minerals such as Cobaltite, Smaltite, and Niccolite have been with us for over 1 billion years.

STATUS REPORT – HISTORIC COBALT MINING CAMP PROJECT

The project has progressed very well throughout the year.

Bunker Relocation – The Cobalt train station is now shared with the Bunker, The Welcome Centre and a new Exhibit Area about Cobalt's development. Feedback on the Bunker adjustment has been very positive since the other areas were opened. Funds are being received through both donations and admission fees. However, more work remains to be done to put the library and office area into shape.

Great Canadian Mine Show – The HCMC acquired the Great Canadian Mine Show, a 48ft trailer equipped with two slideouts which expand the total area to approximately 800 sq. ft. The trailer contains a number of interactive displays which cover mining from exploration, to business development to closure and remediation.

Welcome Centre – A new Welcome Centre was opened at the train station on July 28th. The Grand Opening was well attended, as was an open house for the community on July 30th. The new exhibit on Cobalt's development has received many favourable comments. These new areas will be vital to our future success with an expanded tourist product.

Consultants – Throughout the winter and still continuing, a wide variety of consultants have been hired. These include historians to complete baseline research for future use as the site develops, business and marketing consultants who have created long term plans, branding consultants to ensure Cobalt is marketing an effect identity, site conservation planners to ensure long term development reflects the historic themes of the National Historic District and an archeologist who is researching lost artifacts and will also make recommendations on future developments within the Camp.

Marketing – A wide variety of marketing efforts have been carried out to raise the profile of the area. These include new magazine ads, a tour van for Colonial Adit and Silver Trail tours, new brochures in French and English and attendance at trade shows to promote Cobalt.

Future Work - Much still remains to be done to meet this year's goals. However, the progress to date has already created a buzz about the Historic District. We are receiving notice from tour bus companies and travel magazines. Fundraising will be critical in the coming year. Your support will be appreciated. If you know of or have a good contact with a major corporation that would support this project, please let me know.

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