

Wollaston Heritage is off and running

By **Jim Eadie**

The Wollaston Heritage group met on Jan. 27 at the municipal office, and hit the road running for another year, even if the road was a bit slippery.

Edith McCaw confirmed that the annual Warriors' Day at Coe Hill will not be taking place this summer, and that this committee is not meeting currently.

‘We are getting too old for this,’ she said. ‘Everyone liked it, but we couldn't seem to get any hands-on help, and it was just too much.’

Added to that was the increasing difficulty accessing tourism grants that were an indispensable help in the past to put on such a first class show. McCaw did not rule out what might happen next year. ‘But at least for this year ? no!’ she said.

Work towards upsizing and upgrading the display space at the new Heritage Centre in Coe Hill will continue, and include the possibility of increasing the size of the present building by another one third. The present Heritage Centre building is a small part of a larger plan for the ‘Coe Hill Mine Heritage Centre’ that will occupy the former mine location. Conceptual drawings of the proposed site are posted on the Wollaston Heritage web site at www.wollastonheritage.com.

Recently the group has received some donations of railroad equipment that will fit into the theme of the project. The old Central Ontario Railroad, Coe Hill line, ends at the heritage centre site, where it at one time loaded and carried iron ore to Trenton in the late 1800s.

One of the items currently being restored is an old railroad baggage cart, looking much like a heavy-duty hand wagon. Also donated from the same couple is a velocipede: a device looking much like a heavy duty bicycle with wheels that fit on the railroad track, and a third wheel on an arm reaching over to the other rail. These devices were either pedaled down the track, or operated by pumping a handle. They would have been used in the late 1800s by railroad employees checking the tracks, or to run down the line to the next station; for example Ormsby to Coe Hill.

‘The donors were a lovely couple,’ said McCaw. ‘They saw our heritage centre and its displays, and they were very very impressed. They wanted the items to go to a museum.’

McCaw noted that these items and others are under restoration at the present time. The heritage centre is always looking for anyone interested in volunteering to help doing restoration work.

On the old mine location, work is underway to clear it of trees and brush, and there are several large piles of brush to be burned. The Heritage group decided to organize a community bonfire on Saturday, March 12, complete with a wiener roast and hot chocolate.

Further information will be released shortly.

For further information about Wollaston Heritage and its activities, visit their webpage, or call 613-337-8770.