



Photo by Amanda Cheung

Gavin Calis, 4, rolls maple syrup onto a popsicle stick during Warkworth Maple Syrup Festival's taffy tasting. This past weekend was the 28th year for the festival. Along with taffy tastings, the festival had horse-drawn sleigh rides, log-sawing contests, an animal-petting farm and much more. Participants also had the opportunity to enjoy pancakes and sausages with maple syrup.

Spectators enjoy a Canadian classic

Good weather brings hundreds to maple syrup festival

By Hannah Eden

Buses drove frantically up and down the icy streets of Warkworth Saturday, working hard to deliver the hundreds of patrons from the town centre to Sandy Flat Sugar Bush for the 28th-annual maple syrup festival.

The Town of Warkworth has been working in cooperation with Sandy Flat Sugar company for 28 years to create a maple syrup festival of the sweetest kind. Children and adults pile into school buses

donated by C. Smith Bus Lines to catch a free ride to the bush in order to experience a little piece of Canadian winter.

Derek VanStam, owner of the Sandy Flat Sugar Bush, said good weather was the reason for the hundreds of patrons this year.

"It's nice, it's busy. The weather has worked out for us. If the weather is sunny and nice, people like to be outside after a long winter."

However, the deep freeze that swept across Ontario may have an effect on the amount of maple syrup produced this year as harvest is slow due to the effect of a cold winter.

"We got a quick thaw and we got a little bit out, but none has come out of the evaporator yet," says VanStam on this

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Owner Derek vanStam

year's production.

The sudden turn from frost to sunshine means that maple syrup companies such as Sandy Flat are now rushing to meet quotas. "Hopefully this week picks up and we start boiling now," VanStam said.

Despite the concerns from farmers

in regards to produce, the syrup was in large supply at the taffy tasting stall on Saturday's festival. Children crowded to the front of long planks of fresh snow to twizzle the sweet sticky syrup onto popsicle sticks.

Tree tapping marks the start to the spring season, not only for farmers but for Canadian citizens too with festivals like the Warkworth Maple Festival bringing out of town guests to the Sandy Flat Sugar Bush.

"I've worked at the festival forever. I was in public school when I started working," said Janet Rusk, a volunteer at Sandy Flat Sugar Bush. "It seems to get bigger, more and more people from Toronto as well!"

Maple syrup tasting isn't the only de-

light in store for guests of the festival, as children pile onto snowbanks with sleds to slide into the forest below or wait in anticipation of the sleigh rides and take a tour through the maple trees.

Volunteers from around the local area are to thank for the success of this community event with local sponsors such as The Warkworth Community Service Club and Cold Creek Cloggers dance group who put on a toe-tapping performance at the sugar bush.

"It's been awesome!" said Curtis Bishop, a local resident who volunteered his time to help with the children's snow-shoe racing on Saturday afternoon. "This is the first day of the festival and we'll be here tomorrow too."

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Protest blockade leads to arrests

No word on whether blockades will continue

By Candice-Rose Gagnon

The week-long protest on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory escalated Saturday, leading to the arrests of four men.

The Ontario Provincial Police broke up the blockade, and there is still no word yet if protests will continue.

Protesters moved from Shannonville Road to the CN Rail lines that cross at Wymans Road, south of Hwy. 2 on Saturday. Several passenger and freight trains were stopped for over two hours.

Police reopened Airport Road at Shannonville Road Saturday morning shortly after 10 a.m., and at 11 a.m. several OPP officers moved in on the protesters that set up on the main Canadian National rail lines.

Protesters caused damage to an OPP cruiser by breaking a window. Four people were arrested, including organizer Shawn Brant. He was charged with two counts of mischief and Matthew Doreen was charged with obstructing police and mischief.

Marc Baille was still being held in bail courts, and was charged with assault with a weapon, possession of a dangerous weapon, mischief over \$5,000, and breach of probation. A court date for Baille was not released and is still pending. John Fox was also arrested but then released in exchange for the protesters leaving the CN line.

The protest was called to begin an inquest by the federal government into the missing and murdered aboriginal women across the country. Brant sent a letter to the prime minister asking for the government to begin the inquest, and



Photo by Dillan Cools

Protesters from the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory face a wall of OPP officers at the cordoned CN Rail crossing on Wyman Road just south of Old Hwy. 2 on Saturday.

gave him until Feb. 28 to respond. The blockade of the CN line also featured men and women who had lost loved ones in recent years.

CN Spokesperson Jim Feeny said that CN was aware that the protest was moved to the rail lines but would not tell media how they found out about the illegal blockade.

After OPP officers broke up the protest, CN officials inspected the rail lines to ensure that the rails were safe for travel. Rail traffic resumed around 1 p.m.

Feeny added that court orders have been served over the weekend to Brant regarding this protest and another protest that blocked rail traffic in 2011. Officials and officers have stated that Brant

is to appear before courts on April 1.

Police presence in the area has been elevated since last Monday, and OPP spokesperson Kristine Rae stated that they would "remain in the area until deemed necessary."

A police helicopter stationed out of Orillia and unmanned air vehicles were also used for surveillance in the area for the last week. Aside from the mischief, OPP commented that the protest was "relatively peaceful and calm."

OPP and CN have been prepared for the protests and have planned ahead. This isn't the first time that Brant protested on the CN line. In the past he has blocked the line for over 30 hours, shut down the 401, and Skyway bridge con-

necting Prince Edward County to the Mohawk Territory.

"We've been here before," Rae said. Brant stated last week that "things are pretty calm here at the protest, and that is a pretty rare for an issue on Tyendinaga. We are a feisty community that takes things seriously."

It is unclear why protesters moved suddenly to the CN line, and why emotions got heated between protesters and OPP officers.

Brant was unavailable for comment.

The blockade also coincided with International Women's Day on Saturday.

For a video look at the protest, go to: <http://www.qnetnews.ca/?p=35505>

Highway pileups this winter a costly venture

By Justin Chin

Multiple pileups on Highway 401 this past winter have emergency workers thinking about next year's budget.

"We have responded to 23 accidents on Highway 401, around 10 more than previous year to date," said Chief John Whelan of Quinte West Fire and Emergency Services.

The Hastings-Quinte Paramedic Services normally budget for one major incident a year. However, there was a significant increase in the last couple of weeks.

"It strains resources at the time," said John O'Donnell, the acting chief of the service.

"This was a trying year but in my estimation we did the best with what circumstances we were dealt," O'Donnell said.

He said it's difficult to predict whether the department would be over the budget this year as it may just be an "anomaly with the rash of incidents."

"Multiple weather related incidents causing the multi-vehicle pileups historically occur in low numbers and so far this year we have seen more than has been the norm," he said. "We know that major incidents are going to happen but we cannot exactly predict their location or frequency so we design our deployment to best service the needs when they occur."

O'Donnell declined comment on the upcoming budget as they will be reviewed by the EMS committee and the county council.

"Sometimes you are ahead of the game (financially) and sometimes you are not," he said.

Currently, there are 13 staffed ambulances that are continuously on the road and serving Hastings and Prince Edward counties.

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