

Quetico celebrates 25th Anniversary

by MARGARET WANLIN

A unique residential education centre, once called a mathematical impossibility, celebrated its 25th anniversary August 12, 1983. Quetico Centre, a Northwestern Ontario-grown idea, which was once called "your average rural slum" is now anything but that.

Built on the idea that there was a need for a place to help people cope constructively with change, the Centre has grown into a multi-million dollar facility. Since its inception in 1958, the Centre has provided its learning services to nearly 100,000 people, mainly from Northwestern Ontario, but also from the rest of Canada and the world.

Feelings ran high as board, staff, past board members, clients and friends gathered for the event. A stone cairn built

by board member Harold Tett and staff member Guenter Bartsch was unveiled. A metal box full of momentos and memorabilia of the Centre's first quarter century was sealed into the cairn to be opened in 2008.

A plaque on the cairn aptly described the Centre's spirit. "1958-1983. Behind is the skepticism of those who thought ordinary people couldn't do extraordinary things. 1983-2008. Ahead are opportunities that will challenge ordinary people to be extraordinary."

As well as being a day for looking back, the event was also, as described by Centre president Cliff McIntosh, a "preversary", a time for looking ahead to the next twenty-five years. A past presidents/chairmen's breakfast asked that group think about what the Centre will be like twenty-five years from

now.

Among their views were that the Centre must broaden the age span of its programming thrust. As the population ages, the Centre must be increasingly able to serve an older group. The idea of helping people cope constructively with change, was viewed as an enduring constant for the Centre. Given technological innovation, high unemployment was seen as continuing. The group saw a role for the Centre in helping to develop new ways of distributing wealth and of finding a worthwhile place in socie-

ty for people who do not hold jobs in the traditional sense.

A "Non-chronological" history of the Centre entitled Prac-

tical Visionaries: Innovators in Learning and Change was unveiled. Written by Werner Bartsch, the book describes the Centre's

development in a highly readable and entertaining style.

If the enthusiasm shared by the 100 guests continued on page 11

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