

Art show combines local industry and talent



Kevin Lockau, right, Les Neville, left, and Anya Gansterer, centre, pose in front of a Keystone Arch woodpile designed by Lockau and Neville who travelled from Bancroft to take part in the There is Art in Your Woodpile competition in Barry's Bay on Saturday, Sept. 10. Vote on your favourite creative woodpile sculpture until Oct. 8. See more page 11. / SARAH VANCE Special to This Week

By Sarah Vance

It was a race against the clock for the many teams who spent the day creatively stacking wood at the South of 60 Visitors Centre in Barry's Bay.

Storm clouds kept participants on their toes, each was given two cords of logs to stack with style, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Bancroft family mom Kelly Waterbury, dad Andrew Edgar, and children Liam and Rowan, arrived from Bancroft to flaunt their skills as second-time competitors.

"Daddy planned out the design with us," said Rowan as she carved and sawed with her brother. She's in Grade 1. "My favourite part has been stacking the wood."

Calling themselves the Woodchucks, the Waterburys arrived right at the start in the hopes that they would finish their interactive sculpture before the rain hit. They alternated bark and cambium cuts of lumber to form the appearance of a chess board, with darker and lighter squares. The sculpture included large moveable pieces (pawns), styled by the children.

"Art is already in our lives, it is a part of everything," said Anya Gansterer, cultural tourism co-ordinator at South of 60. "We are inviting people to look at their wood pile and to see the art in this rural tradition."

Also from Bancroft, Kevin Lockau and Les Neville designed a circular keystone arch. It was 18 logs long and four logs wide.

"The wedge-shaped piece at the apex of an arch gives structural stability to the design but itself holds the least weight," said mixed-media sculptor Lockau, winner of the 2009 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Art. "We wanted a strong design because of its location. It needs to stand out against the environment."

Sculptures also needed to be structurally sound because they will be on display until the beginning of October. In the meantime members of the community are invited to visit the South of 60 where they can cast a vote for their favourite design.

Petawawa's Dennis and Janice struggled against the clock to construct a railway box car. The design was planned to pay homage to the town that Dennis describes as having a rich manufacturing history.

?We've been planning out the design, we chose for Barry's Bay ? a train town because of the lumber industry,? said Dennis who attended the event last year to sell popcorn.

The Township of Madawaska Valley is promoting this rich heritage using the #ItTakesAForest campaign. Participation in this campaign involves lobbying provincial and federal leaders about the needs of the rural logging industry. It has also seen the installation of a billboard along highway 62 near Combermere, which underscores relationships between logging and job creation. There are 3,200 vehicles per day, and 1,168,000 vehicles per year on Hwy 62. Forests supports rural economic development opportunities with 180,000 jobs in Ontario. It is further estimated that 30,000 wood homes are built each year in Ontario.