

March demands action on global warming



The North Hastings People's Climate March calling for action on climate change ahead of the United Nations landmark climate summit, are crossing the footbridge after leaving Millennium Park on Sept. 21.

By Jim Eadie Special to This Week

After watching a three-hour hard downpour of rain at Millennium Park in Bancroft on Sunday Sep. 21, organizers of the local Peoples Climate March were literally stunned that less than five minutes before their march start time of 1 p.m., the rain stopped and the sun came out.

?Amazing,? said organizer Deb Jeffrey, ?can you believe it??

March participant Bancroft Councillor Paul Jenkins quickly noted that it was a gift from the Town of Bancroft.

The local march was organized by the North Hastings Community Sustainability Group in concert with tens of thousands of other marches being held worldwide the same day to show world leaders that there is huge public support for the call to address climate change.

?This is an event to help save the planet,? said Jeffrey. ?This will be the largest ever global mobilization on climate.?

Thirty marchers left Millennium Park at 1 p.m., and walked peacefully to the new boardwalk on Bridge Street to have their photograph taken beside the Arne Roosman historical mural by the York River.

?Canada is the worst country in the developed world for addressing carbon emissions,? said Jeffrey.

?There are some good initiatives at the municipal and provincial level, but not at the federal level.?

She noted that due to our position and geography, climate change is less noticed in our part of the world at first.

?If you don't think climate change is a huge issue, you have horse blinders on,? said Jenkins.

?The federal government is not on board, unfortunately. At the municipal level, we make sure everything we do is thinking green, and we need investment in infrastructure for the coming changes. But we need federal help.?

Zen Trozi, a 16-year-old student, found out about the local contribution to the global demonstrations on the Internet, and decided to come out.

?We can't leave it up to world leaders,? he said. ?I think people need to stand up, stand up to big companies, and we must stop polluting our own habitat.?

Bill Kilpatrick brought two of his children, Brynn, 5, and Joey, 10.

?They know there are problems, and there is change, because we talk about it at their level,? he said. ?A march like this makes people in town aware, and talk about it.?

The United Nations landmark climate summit opens on Sept. 23, and there is hope by march participants that world leaders from governments, finance, business and civil society will take note of the mobilized grassroots demands for action.

Jeffrey expressed her worry that she senses many young people feel that governments and industry never respond to public demonstrations, and feel hopeless about participating.

Michael Walder, owner operator of Mahua Farms was even more blunt in his posting on the North Hastings Community Sustainability Group Facebook page:

‘We all get it ? oil is bad. I don't understand how tired protests against oil are going to accomplish anything,’ he said in part. ‘When folks at these protests move against oil themselves by a natural sustainable existence, then change may happen in society ? until that time, as protesters go home to their oil created existence these protests will only be a clanging cymbal, forgotten as the day ends on it.’

‘I believe that people who protest are doing their best to tell those who hold power on development decisions to make better choices,’ said Jeffrey.

‘Getting together with others who are concerned can also galvanize personal change. Creating a strong collective spirit at least has the potential to influence our behaviour both politically and personally,’ she concluded.