



North Bay police Chief Paul Cook and St. Joseph Separate School student Sara Pratte talk about the history of the North Bay Police Service, the topic of Pratte's Historica Fair presentation, Monday. BRYN WEESE, THE NUGGET

# Students celebrate Canada's past

## University hosting regional fair this week

BY BRYN WEESE  
*The Nugget*

From Tommy Douglas to bannock and all points in between, St. Joseph Separate School students celebrated almost all things Canadian at their Historica Fair Monday.

The fair encourages students from senior kindergarten to Grade 8 to pick a Canadian history topic and get enthusiastic about it, said Grade 4-5 teacher Richard Cazabon.

"I'm blown away. The projects are unbelievable because the kids really take the research and just go with it because it's something they chose, it's not delegated to them by the teachers," Cazabon said. "It's interesting to see the various topics that are chosen. You can tell they're very personal to the students. They're just so passionate about them."

The only condition for projects in the Historica Fairs, which include more than 230,000 students nationwide, is that the topic deal with some aspect of Canadian history.

At St. Joseph, some students chose topics like Shania Twain and the history of Canadian horses, while others

looked in-depth at local subjects, like the history of the North Bay Police Service.

"I thought (the city's police) would be an interesting subject and I wanted to research something that had to do with the community," said Sara Pratte, a St. Joseph student.

Wearing an authentic police uniform lent to her by a neighbour who is a retired city police officer, Pratte said she isn't thinking about joining the service when she's older but wanted to present a topic that many people know little about.

As part of her presentation, she arranged to have police Chief Paul Cook attend Monday's fair.

"I'm honoured that such a young person would be interested in learning more about the police service and put together a project on it," Cook said, noting Pratte's timing is perfect, given that this year marks the 125th anniversary of the city's police force. "I think any time we've got an opportunity to interact with youth in a setting like this we've got to take advantage of it."

Twenty-five students from Monday's fair will participate in the Regional Historica Fair Thursday and Friday at Nipissing University.

Four winners from there will go to the provincial competition in Ottawa. The nationals take place in July in Lethbridge, Alta.

**'I thought it would be cool to discover about my past'**

# Student delves into her family's history

150 local students showcase work at Historica Fair

BY BRYN WEESE  
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Meghan Buckle didn't shy away from the shady topics of Canada's past with her Historica Fair project.

The Grade 7 St. Hubert School student focused on the internment of Italian Canadians in Petawawa during the Second World War — specifically her great-grandfather, Maggiarino Marco Pellarin.

"My great-grandfather was interned at Petawawa and I heard my mom and grandma talking about it one day," Buckle, 12, said about how she chose her topic. "I thought it would be cool to discover about my past."

She was among 150 students showing their projects at the Education Centre gymnasium Friday.

After researching the topic, Buckle said her view of her country changed a little.

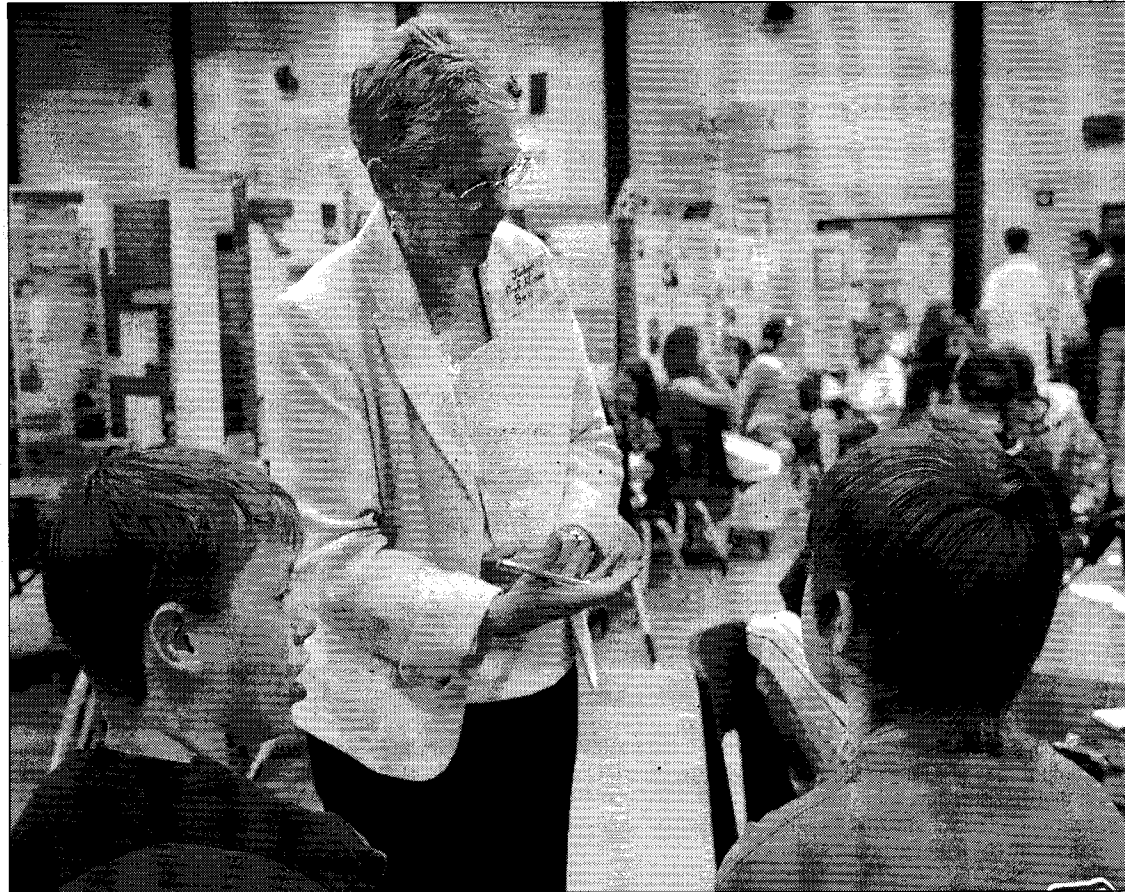
She realized that governments can sometimes be mean, but they can also admit when they're wrong. As part of her presentation, she had a letter of apology for her great-grandfather's internment. He died in 2000.

"I didn't know anything about (the internment) and I only knew my Nonno for a little while," she said. "He was a quiet guy — he kept to his own — and maybe that's why he was so quiet, because he went through all that."

The gymnasium was turned into a history buff's mecca Thursday and Friday for North Bay's regional Historica Fair.

Students from grades 7 to 9 showcased their Canadian history projects, which highlighted everything from the Haida people to Tim Horton, the hockey legend and his coffee.

"What we try to encourage is that the students choose something that has a personal connection, so it might be something that their great-grandfather



Brodie Hele, 12, left, and Nick Scott, 11, both Grade 6 students at E.W. Norman Public School, answer questions from Alison Bell, a judge, during the North Bay Regional Historica Fair at Education Centre gymnasium, Friday.

PAUL CHIVERS, THE NUGGET

was involved with or something about how their family first came to Canada," said Wayne Hugli, an Ontario co-ordinator for the Historica Fairs program. "The fair is a chance for them to share that story, something about their own family or their own personal histories, with other people in the community... and that, I think, is what makes the difference."

There are four regional fairs in Northern Ontario this year. Across the province, there are 21 regional fairs involving more than 250,000 students. Eventually, Hugli said, Historica wants to see every child in every school across the country participate in a fair

at least once during their elementary school career. Honing research and presentation skills complements the curriculum, he said.

Doug Gosse, an education professor at Nipissing University, has been involved with the Historica Fairs movement for the past 12 years. He currently chairs the North Bay regional fair committee.

"Their enthusiasm is incredible," he said about this year's fair. "It's what learning should be about. It gets them (the students) interested and inspired."

History is "the most loathed of any subject," he said, perhaps because of the stuffy books and ancient literature

traditionally associated with historical studies.

"But Historica is one way to change that in Canada because the kids get to choose their topic, choose how they research it, and how they present it," he said. "They just light up and are passionate about history."

Four students will learn early next week they are going Ottawa May 16 to 20 for the provincial fair, where one student will be chosen to represent Ontario at the national fair in Lethbridge, Alta., in July.

On the web:  
[www.historica.ca](http://www.historica.ca)