

Geocaching : A Unique Way to Explore Local History

By Brian Choptain

If you're looking for a neat and fun way to learn about the history of Lac du Bonnet, geocaching is the way to go.

Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the cache (container of stuff) hidden at that location.

Geocaching is a fun, family activity for both young and old. All that is required is a GPS device and a desire to go hiking in nature.

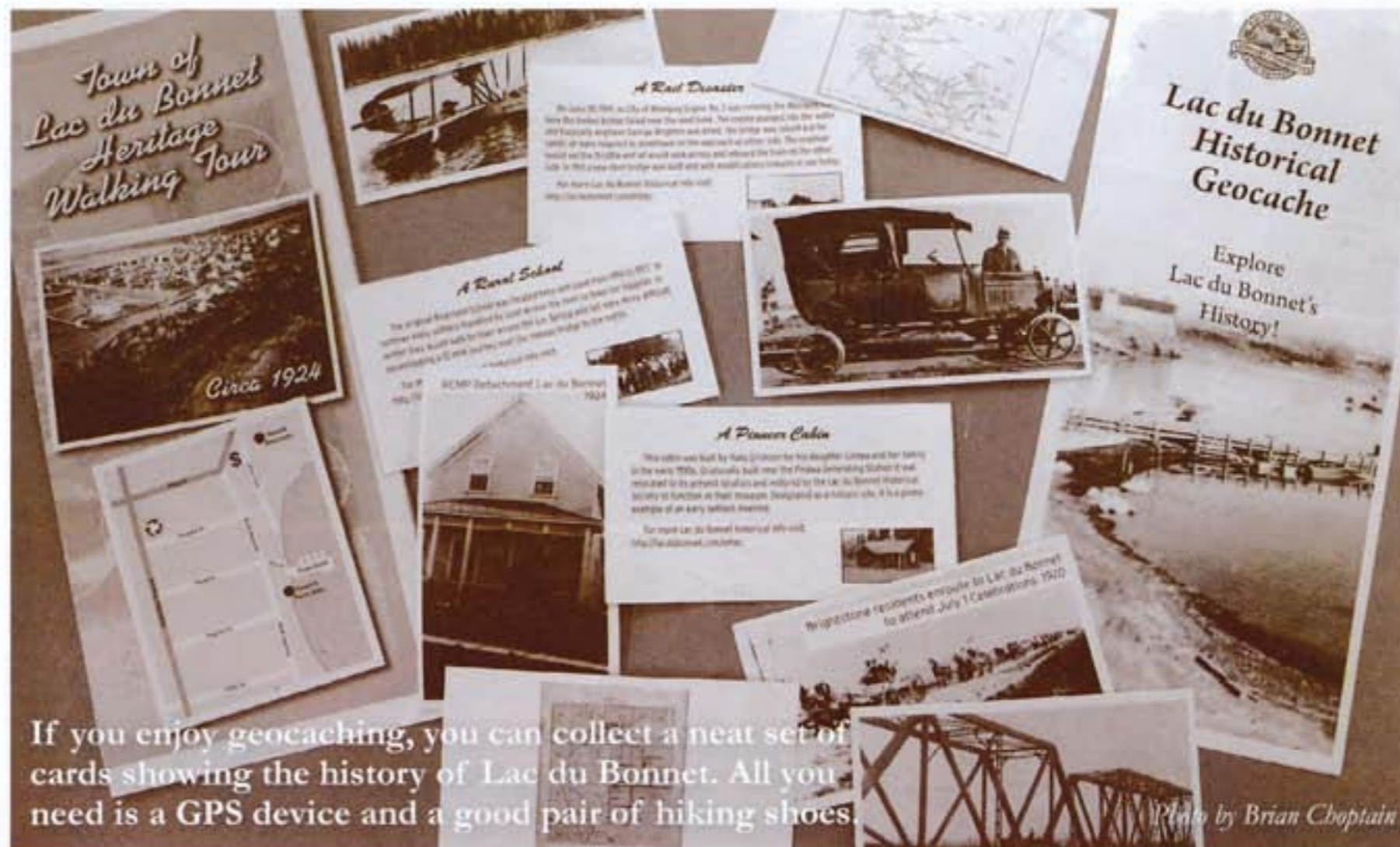
Caching, from the word cache, has two different meanings, which makes it appropriate for the activity.

A French word dating back to the late 1700s, the original definition referred to a hiding place someone would use to temporarily store items.

The word cache stirs up visions of pioneers, gold miners and even pirates.

Today the word is still used to describe hidden locations of various items.

The second use of cache has more recently been mentioned in technology. Memory cache is computer storage that is used to quickly retrieve



If you enjoy geocaching, you can collect a neat set of cards showing the history of Lac du Bonnet. All you need is a GPS device and a good pair of hiking shoes.

frequently used information.

A web browser, for example, stores images on your computer so you don't have to download the same image every time you visit a particular page.

The combination of earth, hiding and technology make geocaching an excellent term for the activity.

In Lac du Bonnet, there are 10 little cards, in boxes, and a notebook and a log for people to write in, hidden throughout the summer.

throughout the area.

The cards contain some very interesting information from why the community is named Lac du Bonnet, to aviation history, to early pioneer settlements in the area, added Lyle Stevenson, committee member of the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee.

The geocache is put out each May to October. Stevenson said he checks on the caches three or four times throughout the summer.

"You can find the pamphlets at the Town and RM of Lac du Bonnet office, or at the museum," said Stevenson.

Geocaching is rated on two things: the difficulty in finding the location and the terrain.

"Only one geocache was not found last year," said Stevenson, adding he is working on putting the locations on the Internet.

An international phenomenon, there are 2,312,404 active geocaches and over 6 million geocachers worldwide.