



The Downtownner™

KIWANIS CLUB OF ROCHESTER, Rochester, MN

www.kiwanisroch.org

Dec. 17, 2021

Programs not posted yet



Dan Carlson and his newest friends in Churchill, Manitoba. Most of us were unaware of the significance of

Churchill, but Dan filled in the story for us. He and his wife, Hope, took a great



trip to the area this past summer and shared it with the club last week. As is Dan's style, he had a few pictures of the area to make his talk come to life. Dan, a retired special ed teacher, has had many

years 'in the front of the class.' He is a very good speaker and almost convinces us to take the trip.

To me, some of the many interesting stories he told, were related to his travel mode to get there. They took a Bus from Rochester to Winnipeg Canada, pretty much straight north of MN. From there they flew 600 miles north to Churchill, the 'Polar Bear Capital of the World.' It has that name because of the large number of polar bears. Churchill is a city with a low elevation of '0' and highest elevation of 29 m. Population of 899. It is situated on Hudson Bay at the mouth of the Churchill River. This is far above most the population of Canada. The main segment of their economy is Tourism in the Polar Bear season of October and November. If one is inclined, one can watch beluga whales in June and July.

Views of the aurora borealis (the Northern Lights to most of us) can be spectacular.



The port of Churchill is the terminus of the Hudson Bay Railway. The port handles shipments of

grain and other commodities around the world. The Churchill Northern Studies Centre also attracts visitors and academics from around the world who are interested in sub-arctic and Arctic research. Churchill is situated along Manitoba's 1400 km coastline, on Hudson Bay.

Polar bears were once thought to be solitary animals that would avoid contact with other bears except for mating. In the Churchill region, however, many alliances between bears are made in the fall. These friendships last only until the ice forms, then it is every bear for itself to hunt ringed seals. Starting in the 1980's, the town developed a sizable tourism industry focused on the migration habits of the polar bear. Tourists can safely view the bears from specially modified vehicles built to navigate the tundra terrain. Utilizing a set of trails created by the Canadian and US military, responsible tour operators are granted permits to access these trails for wildlife viewing. Staying on these established trails ensures no further damage is done to the tundra ecosystem. October and early November are the most feasible times to see polar bears. Thousands of which wait on the vast peninsula until the water freezes on Hudson Bay so they can return to hunt their primary food source, the ringed seals. There are also opportunities to see polar bears in the non-winter months, with tours via boat. The tours go by boat visiting the coastal areas where polar bears can be found both on land and in the sea. Many locals even leave their cars unlocked in case someone needs to make a quick escape

from the bears in the area. Dan described the Polar Bear Jail that is maintained by some locals where bears, primarily adolescents, persistently loiter in or close to town. They are held after being tranquilized, pending release back into the wild when the bay freezes over. All in all an area with unique wildlife and minimum invasion by man. But, man has made the area accessible to observe and study. Thanks to Dan and Hope for going to Churchill and then presenting pictures and talk on the area. Well done. I'm sure most of us will never take the opportunity to visit the area.



Beluga Whales.....

**** Addendum to Churchill story.

Dan said that the polar bears can be about #700 and able to run 35 mph. Don't get close to them!

**Bell Ringing Schedule for
Salvation Army Dec. 15
HyVee North on 37th ST.**

**9-11 Austin Jorgenson
Charlie Graham**

11-1 Linda & Mary

1-3 Bonnie S.

Ron I.

3-5 Don Borch.

Roger Krsnak

5-7 Clare & June Warren

7-9 Colleen

Dan ?



Linda and Mary did the shopping for the Adopt a Family drive this year. The club allocated about \$500 for them to purchase gift cards of types that the program desired. Thanks, you two, for doing this (again) You are making a lot of people happier this season.