

# Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

December 2008 • Volume 1, Number 2

## Love of fishing began on Moosomin Lake

Larry Davis grew up in Moosomin, and his love of fishing was kindled on Moosomin Lake. Davis, now a successful Calgary business owner, is featured on the cover of the latest issue of *Retreat* Magazine for his love of fly fishing.

This article appears in the current issue of *Retreat* Magazine.

### Zen and the Art of Fly Fishing

BY MELANIE JONES

Larry Davis' voicemail message tells you everything you need to know: "Hi, you've reached Larry. For golf, press 1. For fishing, press 2. For work, press 7,374,594."

The man has his priorities straight. Despite running two successful pubs in Calgary (and opening a third in December), success, to Larry, is getting out onto the river at least three times a week.

For Davis, fishing began as a bonding experience with his father and brother as a kid. "We used to catch big old Northern Pike with a red and white spoon," he recalls fondly.

In fact, it was his brother who introduced him to the mysteries and challenges of fly-fishing eleven years ago. "I used to fish for steelhead on the West Coast," he said. "Then I went to the Bow and got humbled. Again and again. I got serious, and it turned into an addiction."

Since the 1992 release of *A River Runs Through It*, fly-fishing has become more mainstream, shall we say, attracting people from all over the world with the sport's calm, meditative quality. In fact, the rivers near Missoula, Montana, where the movie was shot, saw three times as many fishermen following the film's release, a disappointment to the die-hards who protect their sweet spots with their lives.

Even Davis won't reveal his favorites. "I'll tell you the rivers," he says, laughing and shaking his head. "But I won't tell you the spots. Especially not for publication."

Western Canada is home to some of the best fly-fishing in the world, including Larry's favorites: the Livingston-Old Man River Valley in the Alberta Foothills, the Crowsnest and

"When fishing a great river like the Bow, one has to be flexible . . . the fishing changes, sometimes by the hour. What worked yesterday won't work today. And what worked this morning won't work this afternoon."

## RETREAT

THE ART OF VACATION LIVING



Elk rivers near Fernie and, of course, the Bow—the number one trout river in North America.

The Bow is known as an angler's paradise, with world-class Rainbow and brown trout galore, especially just south of Calgary.

Like most things, fly-fishing

isn't as easy as it looks. "To be a good fly-fisherman you need patience and the ability to learn," Davis says. "You never quit learning. In 10 years of hard fishing with some of the best in the province, I'm still a rookie."

Davis applies a rare form of devotion to a craft that does not

lend itself to instant gratification. His other passion, golf, is much the same—rewarding only patience and practice, not hotheaded attempts at holes-in-one.

Davis' advice to newcomers is to "read a lot and fish with the best." For those interested in fishing the Bow, he swears

by guide Dee Chatani (Trout Chasers River Company) and dubs James McKenna the "best nymph fisherman on the river." The sport can get extremely technical, with so many types of flies that Davis shakes his head when I ask about them. "Don't go there," he warns, hinting at one reason fly-fishing is a life-long activity. "There's too many."

Distinct from steelheading, in which the fish wait in predictable spots, Davis says fly-fishing is half hunting, half fishing.

"It's not like fishing for pike when you put a big piece of iron on the line and drop it in," says Davis. "In the smaller streams, the water is extremely clear. It's easy to spook the fish. You have to be careful."

And, when fishing a great river like the Bow, one has to be flexible.

"The Bow is challenging," explains Davis. "There are so many nutrients in the water, the fishing changes sometimes by the hour. What worked yesterday won't work today. And what worked this morning won't work this afternoon."

There's an element of psychology as well: reading the various species' personalities and thinking like a fish. "Cut-throat trout are very willing fish," he explains. "Rainbows are good fighters and they're bigger."

Davis has given Brown trout, one of the Bow's most popular quarry, the nickname of Leroy, after Jim Croche's song "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown."

"Now every fish is called Leroy," he laughs. "I'll come home from fishing and my wife will say, 'So, did you catch Leroy today?'"

Davis' wife, Jennifer, bucks the stereotype of the fishing widow waiting at home for her spouse to return from the river.

"On her first trip to the river, Jennifer said it was just like sitting in a postcard," says Davis. She was, as the fishermen say, hooked. What was Larry's solo escape has become a shared passion for the Davises.

Despite fly-fishing's reputation for being complex and intimidating, newcomers can easily appreciate the calming effect of experiencing the great outdoors.

"Fishing is a great battery recharger," says Davis. "For me, it's how I regain perspective. It's a reality check."

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# Trans-Canada twinning completed in Sask

A ceremony was held in Moosomin, Sask. on Friday, Dec. 5 to officially open the newly twinned Trans-Canada Highway through Saskatchewan.

The Trans-Canada Highway is now completely twinned from the Rockies to the Canadian Shield.

Ed Komarnicki, MP for Souris-Moose Mountain, and Wayne Elhard, Saskatchewan Highways and Infrastructure Minister, were both on hand for the opening.

"We are pleased to announce the completion of the twinning of this section of Highway 1," said Canada's Transport and Infrastructure Minister John Baird from Ottawa. "Our government is committed to working with its partners to identify and to accelerate transportation infrastructure projects that help make our country and our economy stronger."

"The Government of Canada is delivering on its commitment to improve Canada's infrastructure," said Komarnicki. "Today's historic highway completion is another example of what we are doing to put people to work, improve road safety and create



A 1957 Chevrolet breaks a ribbon held across the twinned lanes of the Trans-Canada near Moosomin. The car represents the year that the highway was first completed across Saskatchewan.

long-term community infrastructure."

"In 1957, Saskatchewan was the first province to complete construction of its portion of the two-lane Trans-Canada Highway," Elhard said. "Today, we are the first province in the new west to fully twin this important national highway, which links us to port facilities and major Canadian centres from coast to coast. Twinning this corridor will provide us with more efficient links to our major export markets and enhance motorist safety." Saskatchewan began

the final stage of construction on Highway 1 East which involved completing twinned lanes from near Wapella to east of Moosomin, including a new bypass around Moosomin. These new lanes were opened to traffic on Nov. 6, 2008.

The total cost of twinning Highway 1 was \$217 million with \$59 million contributed by the government of Canada through the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF) and the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program (SHIP).

## The Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan

Highway 1 or the Trans-Canada Highway is part of the National Highway System (NHS) and is one of the busiest transportation corridors in the province. It is a primary east-west trade artery, a major tourism route, and a key land link from coast to coast across Canada.

Highway 1 is 655 km in length across Saskatchewan. Average daily traffic in Saskatchewan varies from a low of 4,700 vehicles per day between Maple Creek and Gull Lake, to a high of 22,800 immediately east of the City of Regina.

### History

Construction on the two-lane Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan began in 1950 and was completed in 1957. Saskatchewan was the first province to complete its section of the national highway, originally cost-shared with the federal government and built to agreed standards nationwide.

Four-lane construction on this highway began in 1960 with the first 21 km twinned section opened from Regina east to Balgonie by 1962. The last section of twinned highway around Moosomin was opened to traffic on November 6, 2008, 48 years later.

### Timeline - Highway 1 West of Regina

- 1967-70 - Regina to 2.8 km east of the Mortlach access; and from Swift Current to 1 km west of the Junction of Highway 32
- 1968 - west of the Junction with Highway 4 at Swift Current to 5.3 km east of Swift Current
- 1971-72 - 3 km east of Herbert to 5.3 km east of Swift Current; and 2 km east of the Mortlach Access to 7 km east of Chaplin
- 1975-76 - 7 km east of Chaplin to 3 km east of Herbert
- 1983 - west of the Junction with Highway 32 to west of Webb
- 1987-88 - Gull Lake to 5 km west of Gull Lake; and west of Webb to Gull Lake
- 1999 - 5 km west of Gull Lake to west of Tompkins
- 2001 - from the Alberta border to 19 km east
- 2002 - 19 km east of the Alberta border to 3 km east of Highway 21
- 2003 - 3 km east of Highway 21 to 8.5 km west of Tompkins

### Timeline - Highway 1 East of Regina:

- 1961-62 - Regina to 2 km east of Bal-

gonie

- 1972 - Balgonie to 1 km east of Qu'Appelle
- 1984 - 1 km east of Qu'Appelle to 3.8 km east of Indian Head
- 2001 - 3.8 km east of Indian Head to 3.8 km east of Wolseley
- 2004 - 3.8 km east of Wolseley to 5.9 km west of Broadview
- 2005 - 5.9 km west of Broadview to 3 km west of Whitewood
- 2006 - 3 km west of Whitewood to 1.5 km west of Burrows
- 2007 - 1.5 km west of Burrows to 3.6 km east of Wapella
- 2007 - Manitoba border to 3 km east of Moosomin
- 2008 - 3.6 km east of Wapella to 3 km east of Moosomin

### Highway 1 East

- Twinning on Highway 1 East did not advance for most of the 1990s.
- In 1997, a target to complete twinning Highway 1 East from Indian Head to the Manitoba border (168 km) was set for 2012.
- New construction timelines were set in March of 2003 following the announcement of a funding partnership between the provincial and federal governments. Twinning Highway 1 East was accelerated to 2007.
- Construction began on the 168 km corridor between Indian Head and the Manitoba border in 1998. The province has invested \$107.1 million to complete this corridor while \$50.3 million has been contributed by the federal government. Highway 1 West
- In 1997, a target to complete twinning Highway 1 West from west of Gull Lake to the Alberta border (108 km) was set for 2008.
- New construction timelines were set in March of 2003 following the announcement of a funding partnership between the provincial and federal governments. Twinning Highway 1 West was accelerated to 2003.
- Construction began on the 108 km corridor between Gull Lake and the Alberta border in 1998. The province has invested \$50.9 million to complete this corridor while \$8.8 million has been contributed by the federal government.

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# Saturday night in the sticks

It's Saturday night. Or, as the Bay City Rollers would say, 'S-A-T-U-R-D-A-Y NIGHT!'

I, on the other hand, say 'Saturday night' with a lot less enthusiasm these days. Oh, there was a time when I sang right along with the Bay City Rollers, spelling out that special day of the week with the enthusiasm that only a 16-year-old could muster. There actually was even a time when my singular purpose for living revolved around S-A-T-U-R-D-A-Y NIGHT!. But that was many moons ago, when the weekends used to mean hair spray, lipstick, high heels, friends and nights on the town.

But now that I'm older and living in small-town Saskatchewan, the Bay City Rollers 'albums' have been firmly placed in the past and lipstick is reserved for trips to the big city (aka Regina).

So it was that I found myself all alone in a quiet house, on a quiet street, on a deafeningly quiet Saturday night, with fuzzy slippers on my feet and a Golden Retriever by my side. With my husband and son away, I began to lament what Saturday night had come to mean. The only exciting thing I could think to do was cook up some Kraft Dinner, sit in front of the TV and eat straight out of the pot.

While that was pretty exciting, I finally got fed up with the sad state of affairs and decided to go out for a walk. With the sun just beginning to set, I headed toward 'destination unknown', my only purpose being to break the monotony of an afternoon spent watching endless reruns of Trading Spaces and eating out of a large aluminum vessel.

As we headed north, my dog vanished into the distance and no amount of calling could bring her back. So, I embarked cross-country in the general direction of her disappearance. When I finally found her, she was dining on what looked like a tasty morsel of liver. She had apparently tracked down a rabbit and was enjoying the feast as much as I had enjoyed my KD earlier in the day.

With nothing but time on our hands, I let her swallow a few more bites before descending into the valley that was before us. The soft hills undulated beneath our feet, providing a workout on the way up and a thrill as we ran down. A cluster of rocks perched purposefully on the top of one hill provided perfect theatre seating, so I sat down for a moment, not expecting to see much amidst the passive scene. But the more I looked, the more I noticed.

The distant setting sun emitted a golden glow which fell softly on the winding creek below. The frozen creek surface reflected the light in swirling paisley shapes of orange and yellow. Interspersed between the glowing panels of light were crescents of powdery blue snow that created a twinkling tapestry of color and light.

A half hour passed quickly as the sun continued to drop into the creek, creating evolving patterns of tranquility and peace.



**Christalee Froese**

The only thing that prompted us back into action was the sound of a coyote howling in the distance, and the appearance of six deer over the hill. A large buck with enormous antlers led a group of does down to the water.

As we neared them, they'd sprint off in distress, with the buck lingering at the back of the pack to ensure a brisk escape for the others. We'd climb one hill and be within close range of the deer before they'd dash off again. This dance continued for another 30 minutes, as we climbed through the valley, serenaded by coyotes and led by deer.

With the sun falling beneath the horizon, leaving a trail of magenta, blue and gold in its wake, I realized we were miles from home. It did not matter—it was Saturday night and the only thing awaiting us was another episode of Trading Spaces.

So, I danced. Please don't tell anyone about this—it's a little embarrassing. But, there on that hill, with a popular bush in the distance and miles of glistening sky above, I successfully completed the belly dance routine that I have been struggling to master in my Monday night classes.

I'm sure the coyotes were howling with laughter, and the deer were in stitches too. But, hey, it was Saturday night in the sticks, and if I couldn't be 'out on the town' in high heels, the least I could do was 'dance in the pasture' in boots.

My dog and I returned home in the dark three hours later – utterly exhausted and thoroughly exhilarated.

'S-A-T-U-R-D-A-Y NIGHT!' Saturday night in the sticks ain't so bad after all?

*Christalee Froese welcomes comments at [lcfroese@sasktel.net](mailto:lcfroese@sasktel.net).*



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# Alberta Clipper project hits area next summer

BY CHRIS ISTANCE

An international pipeline project running through the area next summer is expected to bring with it hundreds more laborers, adding to the buzz of activity created by a \$2.8 billion expansion at PotashCorp Rocanville, the oil patch and another pipeline project being conducted by TransCanada Pipelines.

Enbridge's Alberta Clipper Project is a crude oil pipeline running about 1,600 kilometres from Hardisty, Alta. to Superior, Wisconsin. The pipeline, which is scheduled to be in service by late 2010, is being constructed to resolve expected capacity constraints as oil sands development grow in the next seven years. The line will ultimately run up to 800,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

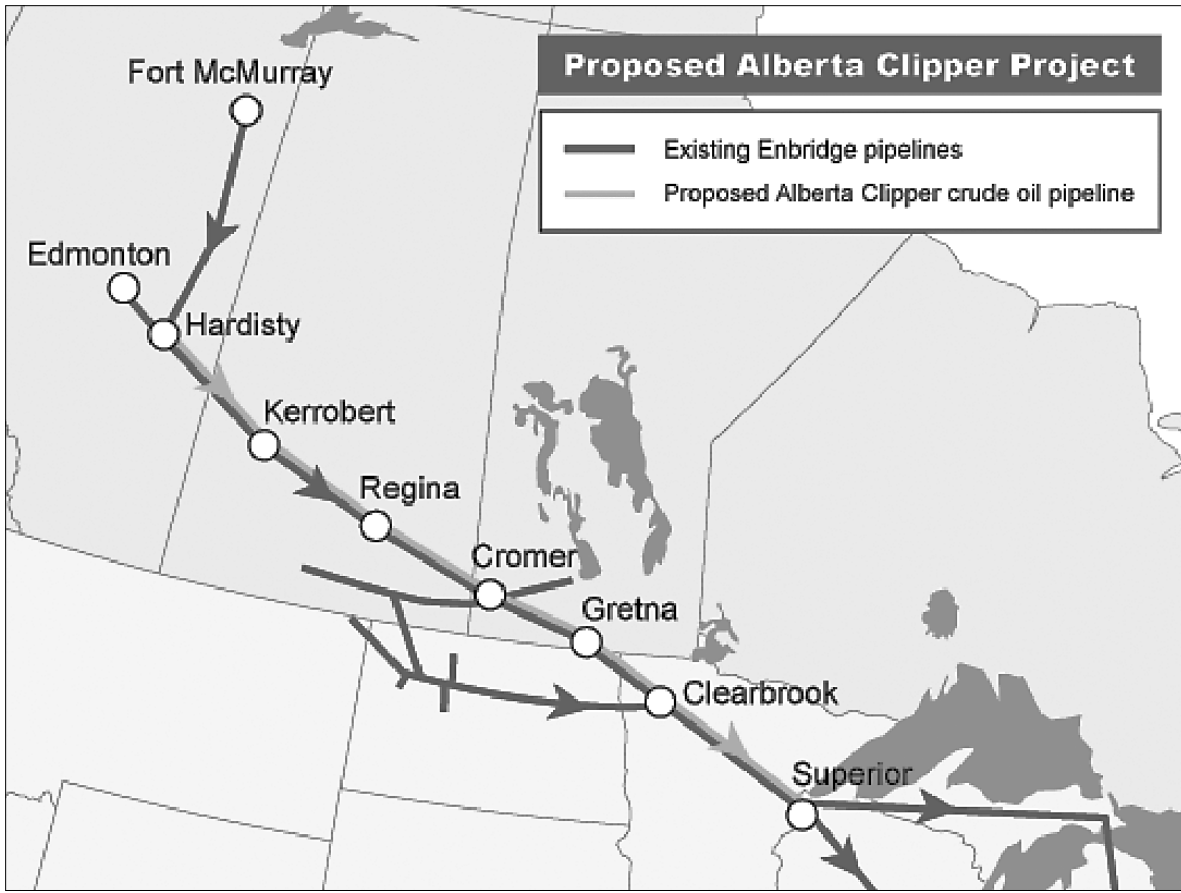
As supplies from the Alberta tar sands increase, oil sands producers and refiners are seeking more capacity to fulfill demand in the American Midwest.

Work on the section of the Alberta Clipper near Wawota—known by the company as Spread 8—is scheduled to begin around June 1, 2009.

Enbridge spokesperson Danielle Bertsch said the project generally employs 400 to 800 people per spread during peak construction.

Spread 8 runs from Glanavon to Cromer, Man. The 36-inch pipeline will run by Kipling, through a pump station near Langbank, north of Wawota, past Fairlight and Maryfield, and into Manitoba.

"Currently, work is taking place between Regina and Montmartre on Spread 7," Bertsch said last week. "We're getting



Work on Enbridge's Alberta Clipper project is currently taking place between Montmartre and Regina, but pipelining crews are scheduled to move into the Wawota-Fairlight district next summer.

ready to complete that shortly after Christmas. The crews will break for Christmas, but we're on schedule with that one."

The first signs of the pipeline project in this area will be crews doing preliminary mowing of the line's right of way. That will be followed by trenching and pipe dispersal along the route. From there the pipe is welded above ground, layed in the trench and

the area is restored as close as possible to its original state.

Pipeline construction on the Alberta Clipper project began this fall following National Energy Board approval earlier this year. Besides the work on Spread 7, Bertsch said construction is also ongoing in the Kindersley area and in parts of Alberta. The entire project is running on schedule, she said.

"The weather has helped with that," Bertsch said referring to the mild temperatures and low amount of precipitation. "The fall in Saskatchewan this year was amazing for pipelining."

Enbridge's pipeline system is the world's longest crude oil and liquid petroleum facility in the world. The company also runs Canada's largest natural gas distribution company, Enbridge Gas

Distribution, which provides gas to 1.8 million customers in Ontario, Quebec and New York State, and is expanding its network into New Brunswick.

## TransCanada Keystone Pipeline

Construction on TransCanada's Keystone pipeline project, meanwhile, began earlier this year and construction crews are currently completing in-line inspections on the system in the Moosomin area.

Like the Alberta Clipper, the Keystone project will move crude oil from Hardisty, Alta. to the U.S. Midwest, with endpoints in Wood River, Illinois, Patoka Illinois and Cushing, Oklahoma. The entire pipeline will stretch 3,456 kilometres, with the Canadian portion of the project following a route 864 kilometres long.

A further 373 kilometres of pipeline, pump stations and terminal facilities will be constructed near Hardisty.

More than 2,200 kilometres of pipeline and pump stations are being constructed in the U.S.

The facility will run at an initial capacity of 435,000 barrels per day and expand to a nominal capacity of 590,000 barrels per day by late 2010.

By the end of 2009, about 640 kilometres of TransCanada natural gas pipeline will be converted from a natural gas system to a line able to carry crude oil.

The conversion included an overhaul of the compressor station located between Moosomin and Welwyn, and the construction of another compressor station south of Whitewood.

All commercial work on this area's section of the Keystone pipeline is scheduled to be com-

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# Kyle Durum wheat is Seed of the Year

Seed of the Year is has announced Kyle, a durum wheat variety, as the winner of Seed of the Year in Western Canada.

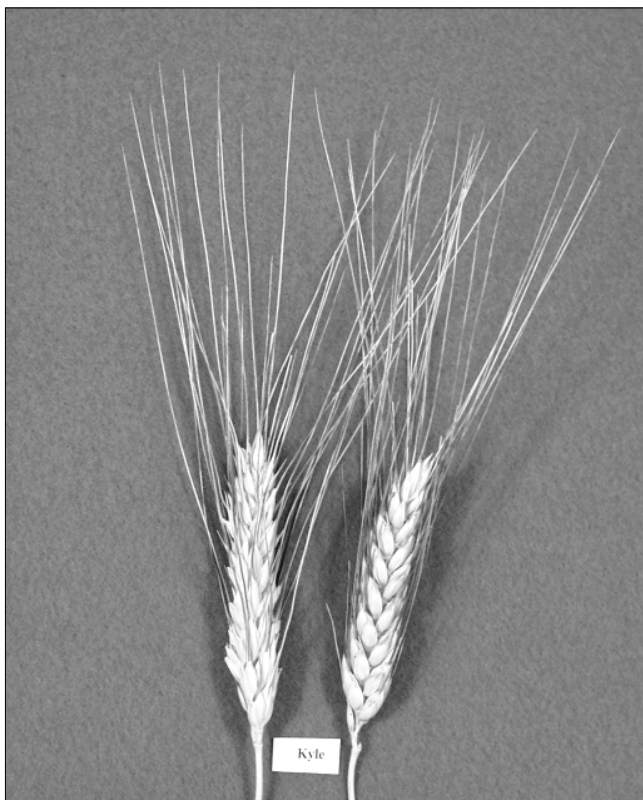
Dr. Fred Townley-Smith and the research team are responsible for Kyle, and the footprint this variety has left on agriculture in Western Canada.

Kyle was registered in 1984 and became the most widely grown durum cultivar by 1988. It predominated until 2005, with peak acreage share of about 78 per cent in 1999.

Kyle has been grown on a total of more than 22 million hectares to date, adding more than \$300 million in additional farm income through higher yield and market grade.

Seed of the Year is designed to provide recognition to publicly-developed varieties that have made a significant contribution to the economy, agriculture, and the Canadian public in general. Although the name, Seed of the Year, indicates the contribution in a particular year, the program is much more broad reaching and considers total lifetime achievement and contribution over time.

Seed of the Year feel's it's important to recognizes the value of the con-



tributions of public plant breeding programs, as well as encourage the entry of new plant breeders to the industry.

Since 2005, Seed of the Year has been in operation in Eastern Canada, and 2008 is the first year the program has expanded to include Western Canada with its own Western Seed of the Year winner.

Part of the western award is a scholarship for \$2,000 that is awarded to a student enrolled in a Western Canadian university and currently completing a masters or Ph.-D in plant breeding or genetics.

This year's scholarship winner is Meghan Rose. Rose is a second year MSc student at the University of Manitoba and is work-

ing on evaluating yield and yield components in winter and spring wheat. Rose truly believes that "plant breeders are the driving force in agricultural innovation, and no matter how many inputs we use on the farm, it all comes down to the genetic capabilities of the crop."

As the breeder of Seed of the Year, Dr. Fred Townley-Smith was asked to select



**Above:** Harvesting Kyle wheat.

**Left:** Kyle durum wheat.

the scholarship winner. Townley-Smith was fortunate to be a recipient of a scholarship when he was finishing his Ph.-D at the University of Guelph.

"I think awarding a scholarship is a great way to keep the research process moving forward, things have really come full circle for me," he said.

"The Seed of The Year award program highlights the importance of plant breeding and the seed industry to crop production in Canada. The scholarship aspect will contribute to the education of a new generation of plant breeders with the skills and dedication of Dr. Fred Townley-Smith and colleagues," said John Clarke, nominator of Kyle durum.



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## White's Ag celebrates grand reopening

White's Ag Sales and Service celebrated its grand reopening on Thursday, Dec. 4. The implement dealer, located in Whitewood, completed a major expansion at their current location south of the tracks in Whitewood.

The grand reopening included a free barbecue lunch and a number of speeches. A large crowd turned out for the event.

Above and right: Pictures of people mingling in the new section of the building, lining up for lunch, and chatting as they look at some of the farm machinery on display.

Jill McGonigal photos



## Tried and True Recipes

by Sandra Johnson



### Shortbread Cherries

1 cup butter	1 jar maraschino cherries
1/2 cup icing sugar	<b>Icing:</b>
2 cups flour	1/4 cup butter
Pinch of salt	1 1/2 cups icing sugar
2 egg yolks, well beaten	Cherry juice
1 tsp vanilla	

Mix all ingredients together, except maraschino cherries. Chill in refrigerator for 1 hour. Take small amount of dough, approximately 1 teaspoonful, flatten in palm of hand and put 1/2 a maraschino cherry in dough, seal edges. Make sure all the cherry is covered by dough. Place cookie on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F for 10 to 12 minutes. Gently remove from cookie sheet. Cool on rack. Ice with icing.

**Icing:** Blend butter with icing sugar. Add enough cherry juice to make thin glaze. Drizzle over cookies. Sprinkle with Christmas sprinkles.

### Farmer's Breakfast

1 pkg sliced bacon, sliced	3 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
2 cups cooked ham, chopped	8 eggs
1 small onion, chopped	3 cups milk
10 slices bread, cubed	1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
2 cups cooked potatoes, cubed or cooked hashed browns	1 tsp dry mustard salt/pepper, to taste

Cook bacon until crisp, add ham and onions, cook and stir until onion is tender, drain. In greased 9x13 inch baking dish, layer half the bread cubes, potatoes and cheese. Top with all of the bacon mixture. Repeat layers of potato, bread and cheese. In a bowl, beat eggs. Add milk, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, salt and pepper. Pour over all. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Remove from refrigerator 30 minutes before baking. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F for 65 to 70 minutes, or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Let rest for 10 minutes before serving. Serves 12.

To order a copy of *Tried and True*, send \$12, plus \$5 postage and handling, to Sandra Johnson, Box 1072, Moosomin, SK, S0G 3N0.

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# New trade case welcomed as cattle producers lose over \$1 million per day

The Canadian Cattle-men's Association (CCA) fully supports the recent announcement that the Government of Canada is requesting consultations with the United States, pursuant to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement, concerning the U.S.' implementation of mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) regulations for meat products.

CCA President, Brad Wildeman stated, "We have been working with the federal government to prepare a possible trade challenge for some time now. We congratulate federal Agriculture Minister, Gerry Ritz, and Stockwell Day, Minister of International Trade for initiating this process to stand up for Canadian cattle producers.

"This is the first formal step that must be undertaken before a trade dispute settlement panel can be established under WTO rules."

The United States implemented the new, onerous COOL rules on September 30, 2008. The resulting adverse impact has significantly impeded Canada's

"This is the first formal step that must be undertaken before a trade dispute settlement panel can be established under WTO rules."

—CCA president Brad Wildeman

ability to market livestock in the U.S.

This law requires beef, as well as pork and other meats sold in U.S. stores, to be labeled with the country where the animal was born. This requires U.S. ranchers and meat packing companies to handle Canadian cattle separately from U.S. cattle.

To minimize their additional costs, many U.S. meat packing companies are now refusing to accept cattle from Canada. The few U.S. companies continuing to process Canadian cattle are discounting those cattle and some are also limiting their acceptance of Canadian cattle to certain days.

The combined impact of the lower prices for Canadian cattle with the increased cost of transporting them greater distances, plus pro-

cessing on fewer days, is estimated to be about \$90 per animal.

The price that Canadian meat packing companies are willing to pay is influenced by their U.S. competitors, therefore the \$90 per head loss applies to all Canadian cattle regardless of whether they are exported to the U.S.

The new U.S. COOL law results in approximately a \$400-million annual loss to the Canadian cattle industry.

"We hope that the initiation of this formal process will encourage the U.S. to adopt greater flexibility in how COOL is administered", Wildeman explained.

"Ultimately we want the U.S. to abide by our trade agreements that require Canadian cattle to be treated as favorably as U.S. cattle."



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# Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

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## Moosomin area businesses giving away a car

Rural retail businesses are facing more competition than ever from big box stores, internet retail sites, and other competitors.

As a result, rural retailers are working harder than ever to attract customers and serve them well.

One thing businesses in the Moosomin area have been doing for the last few Christmas seasons is giving away a massive prize—a brand new vehicle—to reward people for shopping locally.

The promotion is organized by the World-Spectator, and involves businesses from White Bear First Nation to Rocanville, and even St. Lazare in Manitoba.

World-Spectator publisher Kevin Weedmark says the first year he tried the car giveaway, he was taking a risk.

"We are a small community of 2,500, but the business community here is strong and progressive, so I thought with businesses in our own community and surrounding towns we could maybe pool our resources, buy a car, and give it away to reward people for shopping locally.

"We got a good response when we first approached businesses about the promotion, so we went ahead and purchased a car to give away, and thankfully enough support came in from local businesses that this became a viable promotion," Weedmark said.

"This is a pretty big promotion for a small community but our local businesses have been very supportive and we've been able to keep the promotion going."

Businesses support the promotion in a variety of ways. There are two major sponsors, Borderland Co-op, which has locations in Moosomin, Rocanville and Maryfield, and the Moosomin Chamber of Commerce, which supports the car draw as the main Christmas promotion in the community, and also offers smaller draws every Thursday night in December. There are 32 participating businesses from five different communities which each have 500 tickets to give away, and there are also nine corporate sponsors that contribute to the promotion but don't give out tickets.

For the first two years, the World-Spectator purchased a new small car to give away. Last year, the prize changed to a lease on a new truck with a cash option, but because of uncertainty over lease programs from the major auto makers, the decision was made to again purchase a car to give away for this Christmas, the fourth year of the promotion.

Weedmark said the promotion has become a regional promotion involving several communities.

"I like the fact that this has become a real



World-Spectator publisher Kevin Weedmark with the 2009 Pontiac G3 Wave the newspaper has purchased to give away to reward one person for shopping in the local area this Christmas. The newspaper is in the fourth year of its Christmas giveaway promotion.

regional promotion," he said. "You can enter for a chance to win at the Bear Calw Casino, at the Co-op in Maryfield, at the furniture store in St. Lazare, at four locations in Rocanville, and at 25 businesses in Moosomin.

"It's great that the businesses in different communities can work together in a promotion like this. We are all dependent on each other. People spending money at stores in Moosomin pays wages of people living in Rocanville, and vice-versa. Money spent anywhere in our local area helps the entire area, while money spent in the city is lost to the local area."

Studies show that money spent in a small community typically circulates sev-

en times within the local area.

"Our area has certainly received a lot of attention because of this promotion," Weedmark said.

"We get some media coverage because a lot of people think it's amazing that a community of 2,500 and some surrounding towns can pull off a promotion this big. Over the last couple of years we have helped newspapers in much larger markets get similar promotions off the ground."

So does the promotion keep people shopping in the Moosomin area?

"While it's difficult to say if people are shopping in our communities specifically because of this promotion, the car giveaway shows that local businesses appre-

ciate people who do shop locally," Weedmark said.

"I think people really like to know that it's appreciated when they do spend their dollars in the local community, and this promotion is one way for businesses to show people that their business is appreciated."

What's the best part of the promotion?

"For me, it's a great feeling to be able to call someone up and tell them they've won a car," says Weedmark. "We do a lot of draws, and it's always nice to give someone a prize of any sort, but to see the reaction of someone who has just won a car is just great. There's no question that people are very happy with a prize like that."

## Olympic torch relay to visit Moosomin, Virden, Sioux Valley

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

If you haven't solidified your plans for Jan. 9, 2010, you might want to add carrying the Olympic Torch to your calendar.

The Olympic Torch Relay will pass through Sioux Valley, Virden and Moosomin on its way to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

The torch will not be carried on a continuous relay, but will be transported between selected communities, where people will have a chance to carry it.

On Jan. 9, the torch will visit Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, Virden, Moosomin,

and Yorkton.

To apply to be a torchbearer, go to [vancouver2010.com](http://vancouver2010.com), click on "Torch Relays" on the left menu, then click on "Torch Bearers" on the left menu, then click on the Coke or RBC links to register to be a torchbearer. Applicants must be 13 years of age or older at the time the Torch Relay begins on Oct. 30, 2009.

Local organizers are looking at holding an event in Moosomin to welcome the torch to Saskatchewan. Premier Brad Wall has been invited.

There will be 400 people chosen to carry the torch in the various communi-

ties in each of Saskatchewan. Each torch bearer will carry the torch 300 to 400 metres.

Applicants must be 13 years of age or older at the time the Torch Relay begins on Oct. 30, 2009.

The torch will pass through Saskatchewan and Manitoba twice on its 45,000 km journey. On its way east by plane, it will pass through La Ronge on Nov. 7, 2009. After making a circuit of eastern Canada, it will leave Manitoba and enter Saskatchewan on Jan. 9, 2010. It will pass through Moosomin, Yorkton, Melville and Fort Qu'Appelle on its way to

Regina. A few days later it will reach the Alberta boundary at Lloydminster.

Planners say it will be the longest national Olympic Torch Relay in Olympic history, taking about 100 days and involving 12,000 torchbearers.

The flame's journey culminates at BC Place on Feb. 12, 2010, with the lighting of the Olympic cauldron, kicking off the start of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

The last time an Olympic torch passed through southwest Manitoba and southeast Saskatchewan was in the leadup to the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics.

# Major poker tournament draws Canadians

The North Dakota Texas Hold'em Poker Championship is the fourth largest in the U.S., and a number of Canadians travel south to make their mark their each year.

BY KARA KINNA

Every weekday, Barb Cuthill spends her time sorting the mail at the Welwyn post office, dealing with parcels, and shuffling through envelopes.

But on New Year's Eve, it will be a hand of cards that Cuthill shuffles, and her family will be with her, as they take part in the North Dakota Texas Hold'em Poker Championship in Minot North Dakota.

Cuthill took up poker playing not more than five years ago, but when she saw an ad for the poker tournament in the World-Spectator's regional publication, she and her husband Doug decided to take a shot at the tournament.

"We weren't doing anything on new year, and we saw it advertised," she says.

"The very first year we went down, Doug ended up in 14th place.

"It was a lot of fun and we stayed at the Vegas, and so we went back the next year and took the kids with us and played, and had a lot of fun, so we went again.

"Pretty well anyone who went before comes back."

Cuthill is right. The poker tournament south of the border is a major draw not just to Canadians, but to people across the U.S. as well.

North Dakota may not be the most populous state in the U.S., but the North Dakota Texas Hold'em Poker Championship held at the Vegas Motel in Minot each year is actually the fourth largest poker tournament in the U.S., outside of the Las Vegas gaming community.

The tournament is also a major draw to many Canadians in Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba, who head south of the border each year to test their poker skills.

Cuthill says she knows a whole crew of people from McAuley who head south to the tournament each year.

According to Wendy Rupert, General Manager at the Vegas Motel, Cuthill is one of the many Canadians who return year after year to take part in the tournament.

"She's like a little celebrity down here," says Rupert with a laugh.

She adds that the tournament sees a great many Canadians come to play poker year after year, and that there seems to be a particularly large group of people from Virden, Man. and Carlyle, Sask. who attend the tournament yearly. Dwayne Barkley, a resident of Virden, finished eighth in the tournament in 2006.

The tournament is the fourth largest in the U.S., but Rupert says it was started only five years ago.

"We started the poker tournament five years ago to fill a void at a time when there was not a lot of activity in town," she says.

The tournament starts on New Year's Eve and runs until Jan. 3 this year.

Rupert says there was not much going on over the new year, and the Vegas Motel wanted to bring in something that coincided with the name of the motel. Poker was also becoming more and more popular across North America at the time.

"We knew it was a growing craze, and so we marketed the tournament and just got in front of as many poker players as we could," says Rupert.

In the first year of the tournament, 387 players registered and the first place prize was \$19,000.

"Since then we have grown to 1,103 players with a first place prize of \$30,000 in 2007," says Rupert.

This year, the estimated



A bird's eye view of the poker floor at the Vegas Motel.

prize pool for the tournament is \$100,000 with a first prize payout of \$35,000.

"We are shooting for 1,300 poker players this year," says Rupert.

According to Rupert, 75-80 per cent of players at the tournament are repeat players, and this year is likely to be no different.

Cuthill and her family are planning to return.

"We look forward to it," she says, "because, to start with, the tournament is fun, and playing poker is something different—it's kind of adventurous."

"There are a lot of our friends there, and we take our family. It's like a family outing."

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# Manitoba's largest ski resort celebrates 10 years

This season Asessippi Ski Area and Resort, Manitoba's largest ski resort, will be celebrating its 10th anniversary.

"Our first 10 years has been an exciting and educational journey and that excitement really reflects in our guests" said Roz Pulo, director of marketing for the resort.

In the last 10 years, annual visits have increased approximately 63,000 from just over 27,000 in year one to just fewer than 90,000 in year nine.

The number of runs also increase from the original 13 to 25 runs at present, with a new snow carpet introduced in 2006 and a third chairlift being added in 2007. With addition of the expanded terrain,

Asessippi also built a second pump house for snow making and purchased a second Snow CAT for grooming, and the quality of snow has improved dramatically over the decade.

At the village many changes have also taken place, most notably perhaps was the welcoming of two brand name kiosks in the food court, KFC Express and Pizza Hut Express. This season the food court is once again expanding to include Tokyo Sushi. The Business Board Shop also opened its doors on site in 2006 and has since renamed itself to the Switchboard.

On the lower level, no one wants to remember the long line-ups that have since almost vanished at

the ticket counter once the resort created its own infrastructure to bring in high speed internet and converted to high speed credit and debit transactions. The rental shop has now replaced its entire fleet to include only newer shaped skis and all newer snowboards plus enough helmets to offer every child visiting us with a school group a helmet. Asessippi is the first and only resort in Manitoba to make mandatory the use of helmets for school group visits. The total fleet now includes approximately 860 ski sets, 340 snowboards sets, 600 helmets, plus 10 snow-bikes. The rental shop also purchased a base grinder in 2004 and has top quality tuning and repair service.

Asessippi has always been an environmentally conscientious resort and this season has made additional steps toward lessening their impact on the environment. While working with the Manitoba Department of Fisheries, Asessippi has built a second wet well for snow making pumps. That means instead of snow making pumps being placed directly into the river, a gravity filtered system will funnel water from the river into the wet well where it can then be pumped into our snow making system. This important change will better protect the river habitat and diminish shoreline erosion.

This season 27 snow guns are ready to start making

snow. These guns are also environmentally friendly as they use no utilities at the gun location. That means no electrical, saving power, and no generators running on the slopes.

Over the last 10 years Manitoba Hydro has played a large role at Asessippi. Teaching the resort to manage their power better by carefully calculating the time and use of power, Asessippi has saved approximately 30 per cent on electrical usage during our ski season. This season, plans are to convert much of the indoor lighting to compact florescent light bulbs or CFLs.

Asessippi will officially celebrate their 10th Anniversary on the February long weekend.

Saturday, Feb. 14, people are invited to attend the 10th Year Banquet at the Russell and District Community Hall, with guest speaker Olympian Nancy Greene Raine, Canada's Athlete of the Century in 1999, and Matt Houghton, former editor of Snowboard Canada Magazine, now Associate Director, Sports and Action Sports, Sympatico MSN.

Tickets will go on sale in December with all proceeds going to the Asessippi Ski and Snowboard Club. On Sunday, Feb. 15 the resort will remain open until 10 p.m. with lots of great activities for the whole family to celebrate. You can see complete details on their website at [www.asessippi.com](http://www.asessippi.com).

## Asessippi ski resort open for the season

Asessippi Opens, Friday, December 12.

It's been a little touch and go for the snow crews at Asessippi with temperatures staying above seasonal for most of November; luckily with 10 years of experience the team was able to open the ski area and resort on Friday, Dec. 12.

"We have been extremely fortunate, the snow crews always manage to pull it off, with warm weather for most of November and excellent snow conditions for our December opening," said Roz Pulo, director of marketing.

Asessippi expanded their snow making capabilities in 2007 when they opened their third chair lift, so are now able to run approximately 27 snow guns at once and can typically produce enough snow to cover the entire resort in about two weeks, when the temperatures are favorable. Ideal snow making conditions require a temperature of minus 10 with relatively low hu-

midity.

The Asessippi snow crew began their mission in the third week of November, shutting down when temperatures were too warm and starting up again the moment they returned to minus 10.

In other departments, approximately 140 new or returning seasonal staff have already been hired and will undergo training prior to opening.

"It's a busy little place this time of year. All of our stock arrives, new staff need to be trained, everything gets into tiptop shape and we are all one hundred per cent pumped about our 10th season open," Pulo adds.

For up to date snow conditions and number of runs that will open, visit them online at [www.asessippi.com](http://www.asessippi.com)

Asessippi is located approximately three-and-three-quarter hours northwest of Winnipeg, two-and-half hours northeast of Regina and three hours north of Minot.



A snowboarder in action at Asessippi ski area.

## Miniota Archie CDC supports Miniota mechanic

The Miniota Archie Community Development Corporation has been assisting local entrepreneurs starting small businesses since 2005.

"We have proudly supported four entrepreneurs with their dream to start a small business, from the idea generating stage to financing to their grand opening, we have been there," explains Thomasina Charney, Economic Development Officer.

Community Development Corporation's are supported typically by municipal governments who recognize the importance of small business to their community and its citizens.

Small business creates 60,000 jobs in Canada. One-million small businesses exist in Canada. Thirty-five per cent of these small businesses are located in the western provinces and almost half of our popula-

tion is employed by small business.

"Don Blaine always dreamed of starting his own business. He felt the Miniota area lacked mechanical services and he came to the MACDC with a sound business plan. "Because the CDC is local we knew the labor shortages in the area, skilled mechanics were on our 'most wanted' list," said Charney.

"Blaine can fix anything from a push mower to large machinery; he has 20 years experience in the mechanical trade and demonstrated a strong desire to build a successful business.

"At a time when a large number of local qualified trade's people are taking jobs in Saskatchewan or Alberta, it's nice to see one of our own making the decision to stay and build a business at home. The need has never been greater."



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# Kipling student takes the Christmas message to Paraguay

The bustle of Christmas is upon us and the spirit of the holidays abounds. Nowhere is that more apparent than in the Luscombe household in Kipling.

Alyssa, a grade 12 student in Kipling School, left December 5 on a Good Samaritan mission to Paraguay as part of Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse.

"Operation Christmas Child is an international initiative that collects shoeboxes filled with gift items and distributes them to children in impoverished parts of the world who would not otherwise receive a gift," explained Luscombe.

She was selected as a Canadian representative after completing a detailed application earlier in the year. This is her first trip overseas on a charitable mission but she is no stranger to helping others, recalling that from the time she was a young child her family prepared shoebox Christmas gifts like the ones she will deliver to Paraguay.

"I love kids," said Luscombe, who is considering a career in early childhood development. "Now I have the chance to be part of bringing joy to children who don't have the opportunities and the things I have—to see the gratitude they have to someone who didn't even know their name but took the time to prepare a gift for them and send it from a far away place."

Luscombe is traveling with a team of youth 16 to 20 years old from across Canada as well as a nurse, doctor and others.

"We have a layover in Texas on the way, where we may help out in the distribution centre packing shoeboxes," she says. "And then, there's 11 days in Paraguay. Part of the time we'll be working at eye glass clinics. Optometrists here in Canada collect



Alyssa Luscombe holds a Christmas shoebox filled with gifts for children in Paraguay.

used glasses and then the optometrist on our team helps match the prescriptions to the needs of the people who can't afford glasses."

Doing a good deed doesn't mean Luscombe gets out of two weeks of school work. She said she has been preparing for the trip by working ahead on assignments and will catch up over the holidays.

More information on Operation Christmas Child is available at [www.samaritanspurse.ca](http://www.samaritanspurse.ca).

# Lights of Love to raise money for the Broadview hospital

BY DONNA BEUTLER  
OF THE WHITEWOOD HERALD

The big tree in front of the Broadview Hospital is lighting up! Glowing, blue lights are being added one by one in a "Lights of Love" fundraiser.

According to Broadview Hospital's administrator Linda Beutler, the project will give area residents an opportunity to commemorate the life of loved ones who have passed on while at the same time raise money for items and equipment for the Broadview Hospital.

Beutler said the staff of the hospital extends "an invitation to each one in the community of Broadview and surrounding areas to purchase 'Lights of Love' in memory of a loved one" by donating \$10.

Anyone can purchase a light and in fact, can purchase as many lights as they wish. All they need to do is list the name(s) of those they are commemorating on a form and forward it, along with their cheque, to the Broadview Hospital

at Box 100, Broadview, SK S0G 0K0. For people who are visiting or going to the Broadview Hospital, donations, along with the form listing those being commemorated, can be dropped off there instead of being mailed.

In the entrance way of the hospital, a tree resembling the one outside has been set up. This tree will hold the names of those donating and the one in memory, explains Beutler.

As Christmas approaches, area residents will no doubt notice the glow of the blue lights that decorate the outdoor tree in remembrance of the many loved ones that are no longer here. Residents can also take pride in the fact that their donations will help fund equipment for the hospital that is utilized by many Whitewood and residents.

Beutler explains that the fundraising project is now underway and that the hospital sincerely appreciates the support the residents of this area provides the hospital.

Broadview Hospital's  
**LIGHTS OF LOVE**  
Minimum Donation of \$10.00 per Name

Make cheques payable to:  
**Broadview Union Hospital**  
Mail to Box 100, Broadview, SK., S0G 0K0  
Ph: 696-2441 Fax: 696-2611

PLEASE PRINT

My Donation to Lights of Love in Memory of:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00 per name = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Talk about adventuresome accommodations

Keith and I both have wanderlust. Keith's father worked for the Canadian Air Force and I was raised by a construction worker with a wife who didn't mind packing every six months, so life on the road comes naturally to both of us. I can't say first hand what kind of lifestyle the CAF afforded, but construction is feast or famine. Therefore, I'm not afraid of adventuresome accommodations when traveling, and in the past year our family has had our share of 'motel mishaps.'

Probably the most memorable room we've rented recently was in the oil town of Wainwright, Alberta. Our family was returning from our inaugural visit to Fleming, when we arranged to purchase our current home. It's been previously recorded in the pages of this esteemed journal that we came to Saskatchewan from Southern British Columbia on a September long weekend with our three dogs and three children in a Ford station wagon. Now, our children were aged four, two, and six months at the time, and we reached Wainwright after closing the deal on the house at around 4 p.m. Saskatchewan time. That means it was around 3 a.m. when a three bell alarm let us know that the boys had hit their limit. We began the search for a room.

We began to fear the search was in vain. I don't know if you've ever been to Wainwright, but I don't think the district overseer for Holiday Inn has. A strip of seedy and seedier motels lines the highway, and we started at the cleanest looking one. The clerk shook his tired head at me, indicating the parking lot clogged with mud-stained pick-up trucks. He shrugged, "Oil crews." For some reason, 'No Vacancy' signs are not a courtesy motel owners always feel obliged to pay road weary travelers with screaming infants and at least six creatures who desperately have to pee, and we stopped at three succeeding locations before a night clerk kindly called ahead to his brother's place to see if they had a room. This particular motel was characterized by a large, neon-rimmed, caricature of a huge, gently beckoning, cowboy. If only we had known into what he was kindly ushering us.

Keith pulled up outside the office, and I ran in. A well dressed, freshly shaved East Indian man in his early thirties awaited me. "We have three kids and three dogs," I informed him, "They are as well or better behaved than your average roughneck. Do you have a room for us?" The boys' crying could be heard, and I was ready to cry myself if he refused us. He looked at me with evident sympathy in his deep brown eyes and surveyed an assortment of index cards arranged on a bulletin board, three or four of them with keys dangling tantalizingly from their push pins. He pressed a manicured fingernail against his lips and exhaled slowly through his nose. "I have one room," he announced, and looked at me sideways, "with three double beds." "Great!" I said enthusiastically, although I had not heard of this arrangement before nor have I since. Oil crews, right? He nodded slowly to himself, if doubtfully, seeming hesitant to agree with my glowing judgement of the accommodation. His hand hovered over the glistening key. "How much?" I asked. The hand



## Monique McKay

stopped. "One hundred and thirty dollars," he answered. "\$130?" I asked back, working out the cost per hour of sleeping from now until maybe 9 a.m., if we were lucky. The boys had already slept much of the ride, and primarily discomfort was fueling their malaise. They'd probably want a snack and then would take some time to wind down before Keith and I got a chance to catch a brief nap. The clerk sighed dramatically and indicated the parking lot. I know; oil crews. I nodded, and his hand recommenced its journey towards the key and card. "Is it non-smoking?" I asked hopefully, and the hand suddenly stopped. His wet dark eyes were full of heartfelt apology when they met mine. "One hundred and ten dollars," he said, and the sorrow in his voice was for us, not the sacrificed twenty dollar bill. "Thank you," I said, disappointed.

I was filling out the registration card and he was about to hand me key, which had at that late hour become a symbol on par with the Holy Grail, when once again he hesitated in his polite, concerned way. He turned back to the bulletin board with its score of empty push pins and full index cards, as if willing it to say something else to him, to offer him some other choice. His hands were on his hips and he let another slow, exasperated breath escape his nostrils, lips pursed. He turned to me and finally offered the key, as if it were some living thing that despite his best efforts, had regrettably died. I had my wallet out and was counting bills when again, my eyes met his. "It's bad, isn't it?" I asked him softly, as he gently dropped the key ring into my upturned palm. "Ninety-five dollars," he answered solemnly, "no tax."

Children are different. They spawn from the same source, are raised in the same method in the same family culture, but they are born their own selves. They come the way they are, and as parents we get to discover them as time goes on. Our sons are, of course, fundamentally different.

When Alex was three weeks old I took him to a three-day folk music festival in Northern Alberta. We were rained out of our tent the first night, slept in a teepee, danced until dawn every night. He was content in his Snuggly, and to this day will lie down in a field of grass and wake up in a metropolis with no complaint. Environment is a source of interest to him, not a source of comfort.

Coal is willing to be one of two places. Our home, or my mother's. Anything else is to be barely tolerated for the absolute minimum required, and his maximum of traveling with little complaint is three days. After that, he wants familiar walls, sheets, and sounds. Even now if you ask if he'd like to go to town or stay home, he'll often as not prefer to stay home. After we sold our house

in B.C. and moved to Fleming, for months he asked to go home. We explained to him that there was a new family in our old house, and that this was our house now. He looked around him appraisingly, and in his bell-like voice said, "Please take me to Nan's." On this hurtle across the western provinces, we had already tried Coal's patience to its rather limited limit.

We pulled up in front of our room, our Focus fitting snugly between two super-sized trucks, the little chrome that wasn't drowned in mud gleaming softly in the light from bare bulbs adorning the outside walls of the building. I felt badly for the sleeping men, despite all of the trouble they and their occupation had caused us, as we unloaded our screaming children and whining dogs. The doorknob was loose and the key was tight; you could tell even from the outside that the door had recently been kicked in and the lock changed. I sighed as I struggled with it, my family straining behind me.

If we hadn't woken our neighbors before, the blood-curdling scream Coal let loose as he threw himself to the ground in a fit of despair and desperation certainly jolted even the comatose from their rest. "No! No! No!" he howled, desolate, "Take me HOME!" Surveying the room before us, I felt undecided as to whether his reaction was disproportionate to the situation. The rest of us, even the baby, were dead silent. As Coal gave himself over to choking sobs, the only other sounds in the room were the eagerly sniffing dogs, and the sound of our Chihuahua rubbing her back luxuriantly on the thin carpet, trying to wiggle down into it the way she does when she is lucky enough to find something a week dead. I am not exaggerating when I relate that our canine friends found that carpet far too interesting to abandon in favor of blessed sleep. They paced and sniffed and snorted for hours.

The thin, stained, aqua-blue indoor-outdoor carpeting was not the most outstanding feature of the room. Perhaps it was the water and smoke stained paper mural of a faded Swiss Matterhorn that adorned the wall behind the first double bed, on the right hand side. As promised, there were two additional double beds, these on the left wall. A coffee table to our immediate right, a bedside table between the beds on the left, and a chipped pink ceramic lamp on that table completed the furnishings. Both tables looked like they had been wielded as weapons in some kind of dispute. I pulled Coal close to me to calm him, my head already beginning to ache from the indescribable aroma pervading the room; all I can say is that the top note was definitely tobacco, and disinfectant was indiscernible. I began to feel grateful that the bare bulb in the middle of the room was

faltering in its duty to adequately light the scene.

Keith and I changed the babies, agreeing without words to forego any unnecessary forays into the washroom. The drip, drip, drip that was the subtle background to our early morning's travail came from a pair of forgotten work socks that hung in the moldy box shower; ironically, the toilet was clad in one of those thin paper belts intended to assure you its been hermetically cleaned and sealed for your safety and comfort. As the children settled down and snuggled down, as the dogs found favorite corners in which to loll, the shepherd's sharp nose flat against the floor as she inhaled deeply and ecstatically, not unlike some unfortunate with a bottle of nail-polish remover, Keith and I gravitated as one to the defining element of this remarkable room. How had we missed it?

Hanging between the two beds, above the chipped lamp, framed in scrap wood carefully painted to match the carpet, was a painting. "Look," said Keith, "art?"

It was an acrylic painting, the type done with a heavy hand and a palette knife. This technique causes the paint to dry in peaks and valleys, the texture often as not defining the image the artist wishes to depict. The subject in the particular oeuvre was a woman, a blond woman with her head thrown back, her eyes closed, her garish pink lips parted in some silent prayer. She was shown in profile, a men's shirt falling from bared shoulders, her painted fingernails gently cupping... well.

"Look," Keith whispered again, "it's been screwed to the wall." This was perhaps more incredible than the incredible tackiness of the work, which was, by the way, a signed original. I checked. "Look!" I whispered back, "somebody's tried to pull it off!"

It was true. There was clear damage to the wall, frame, and even the painting, where some determined individual had done their best to wrench the piece from the wall. That they had failed was evident, and that some other equally determined individual had come and fixed the piece even more firmly to the wall in some misguided repair too was evident. The mystery was this; why try to pull it off in the first place? Was it so deeply offensive to someone that in a fit of outrage they determined to be rid of its grotesque countenance once and for all? Or instead, was someone so captivated by the artist's portrayal of a certain feminine je ne sais pas quoi, that they were unwilling to leave the grimacing blond behind at check out time? I can't deny that the painting itself, and the question, are imbedded in my brain, and that at times I wonder if it still hangs there, a testament to the questionable taste of certain interior decorators.

Later that same early morning Keith and I were awakened by the sound of dozens of diesel powered trucks firing up and slowly pulling out. I lay on the bed, having opted not to get in the bed, listening to the quiet breathing of our children in the pre-dawn light. The dogs had finally gone to sleep, the Chihuahua still on her back with all four tiny paws in the air. At least they thought the place was cool.

## Tell us your story

Do you have a story or photo that you think would be of interest to people across Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba. Send it to us!

We will not have room for everything, but we would love to see your submissions!



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