

Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

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Historic Bell Barn welcomes the public

BY MONIQUE MCKAY

The Indian Head Bell Barn opened officially to the public July 24.

The historic barn is a replica of the original round stable that was built in 1882 as part of the Qu'Appelle Valley Farming Company.

The corporate farm was a federal experiment when Sir John A. McDonald was prime minister.

Now recognized as the first large corporate farm in present-day Saskatchewan, the farm once included over 100 buildings on 332 quarter sections. One of those buildings was Saskatchewan's first round barn.

The Qu'Appelle Valley Farming Company was more affectionately known as the Bell Farm, so named for the general manager, Major William R. Bell.

In addition to managing the ambitious agriculture project, Major Bell was deeply involved in the community of Indian Head. He arrived a year before the railroad, and in two years oversaw the construction of the huge farm. Much of the materials were brought by ox-cart from eastern Canada or the northern U.S.

Between 1882 and 1889 the company settled over 100 tenant farmers on 53,000 acres. Farming was attempted on such a large scale that 45 binders were sometimes seen harvesting a single field.

The corporate farm didn't last a decade. In 1884 severe drought and frost crippled the operation, and in 1885 so many horses were requisitioned in the name of the Métis uprising that it was impossible to seed; only one thousand acres were seeded.

"It was the modern-day equivalent of the government showing up at the farm and taking the tractor away," said Maurice Delage, Chairperson of the Bell Barn Society.

The farm never recovered, and in 1889 40,000 acres were sold off. The Indian Head Experimental Farm and the PFRA Shelterbelt Centre are established on land that was once part of the original corporate farm.

Although the farm may have failed from one point of view, "It was really the first time dry-land agriculture had been attempted in this geography," explained Delage, who is a farmer near Indian Head.

The bitter cold, the shortened growing season, the nature of the ground; the challenges stimulated the development of practical agriculture for this area. New varieties, agronomy, and tools were born of the Bell Farm experiment, and paved the way for the area to become a leader in agriculture innovation, as it still is today.

When the corporation was dissolved Major Bell bought a significant portion of the farm, including the round barn, and continued to farm it for several years. In 1889 Major Bell left, but the farm's trademark round stable never lost its moniker; it was forever the Bell Barn.

The Holden family purchased the farm



The ribbon is cut and the Bell Barn is officially opened, with the Hon. Dr. Lynda Havestock, former Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan presiding.

Monique McKay photos



Frank Korvermaker, chairperson with the Bell Barn Society, was thrilled to see the four-year long project finally open to the public.

and in the twenties the distinctive building was converted into a dairy. The dairy ceased operations in the fifties and the round stone barn fell into disrepair.

"It was the oldest stone building in the North-West Territories. The farm itself was a major historical landmark for agriculture in Western Canada," said Delage when asked why the Bell Barn Society was formed in 2006. "We recognized that the government was not going to initialize saving the barn," he said.

Over three years the society raised about

\$700,000. The federal and provincial governments made up the difference of the \$1.5 million needed to reconstruct the architectural and agricultural landmark.

Delage explained why the barn was reconstructed instead of restored. "We knew from the beginning that the barn itself would have to be rebuilt because it had essentially fallen in on itself."

"It's on same yard site but it's on public land, not private property, so it's protected into perpetuity," he continued.

The Bell Barn is owned by the Town of Indian Head and managed by the Bell Barn Society.

"It's not just for or from the town of Indian Head—it really is the whole region. Fundraising was regional, local, and national.

"The project has had significant impact on heritage as related to agriculture in Canada," said Delage.

The opening, held July 24, was witnessed by 600 people. The speeches were well attended and the ribbon cutting attracted several members of the media.

"It was a remarkable day," said Delage. "People came for the opening but stayed for the afternoon."

Over a dozen people dressed up in period costumes for the event. Ladies served iced tea and cookies, and there was a team and wagon to tour people around the site.

Twenty-one members of the Bell family were on hand, including one who had traveled from England.

"They've given the Bell Barn Society a number of artifacts,"

Delage said of the family. "Including the registry of the people who visited the original farm house. The family was also very supportive from a financial point of view.

"I think it was very emotional for them," Delage said of the Bell family coming together for this event. "Some of them hadn't seen each other in a long time. It was like a family reunion, and they got to learn a lot about their great-grandfather that they didn't know."

Since the Bell Barn is a replica and not an original building, it can't qualify for national or provincial heritage status, although there are people lobbying to change the legislation. For now, it must sustain itself.

Currently, according to Delage, approximately 200 people a day are stopping to visit the round stone building, with adults paying \$5 a head and school-aged children paying \$3.

Delage is confident that the real revenue will be generated by renting out the second floor loft, which is already booked for a wedding and an art show this month.

The historical landmark is currently staffed by volunteers, but the society hopes to hire someone full time next year.

The Bell Barn is open for the season from 10 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. daily.

"It's been a wonderful experience pulling it together, seeing so many people pulling together. It's wonderful to see it all come to fruition, seeing people pull off the highway and their imagination be stimulated by this compelling story," said Delage of the project.

"It just kind of gets you right here," said Connie Bell MacCrimmon, Major Bell's granddaughter, as she touched her heart. "It gets you thinking . . . we come from pretty hardy stock, from great visionaries." She turned and gazed at the huge stone building. "It makes you so proud."

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Indian Head's historic Bell Barn



Beautiful day in Indian Head . . .

Bottom left: Frank Korvemaker, a chairperson with Indian Head's Bell Barn Society, converses with Connie Bell MacCrimmon, who is one of Major William R. Bell's granddaughters. Twenty-one members of the Bell family traveled to be present for the opening.

Bottom right: A visitor adds his name to the register; over 600 people visited the Bell Barn for its inaugural opening July 24.

Monique McKay photos

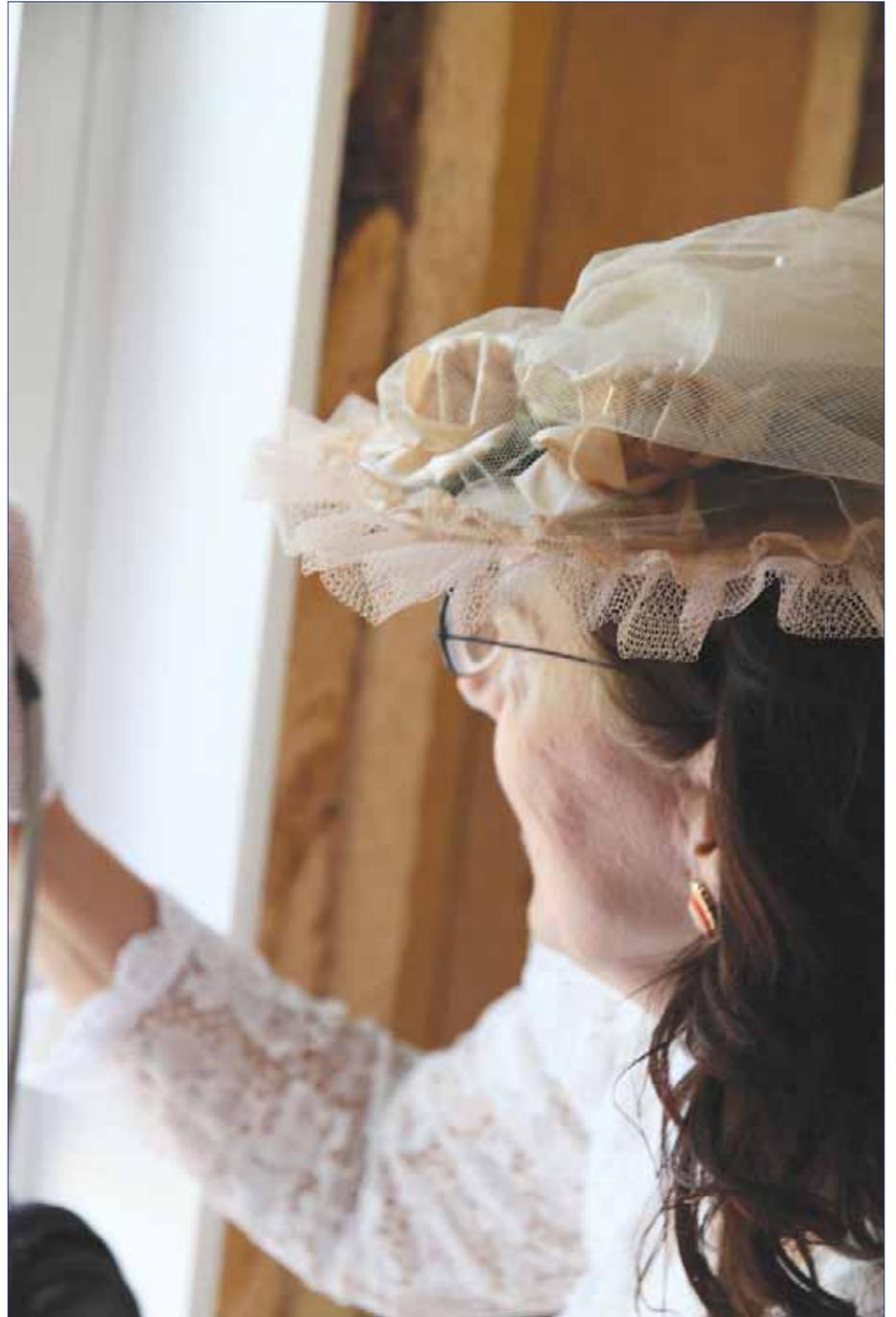


Right: A woman in period costume gazes out of the uppermost window in the historic building.

Top left: The view of the grounds from the second floor loft.

Left: The wagon driver toured people around the grounds.

Bottom Right: Coal McKay of Fleming makes his way down the stairs to the main floor of the fieldstone building.



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Day one an adventure for newborn calf

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Not all domestic animals born in the open lead as adventurous a life as one Simmental calf that strayed from its mother within hours of being born on July 29. Cattlewoman Hazel Morris is very grateful to the 10 young canoeists who came looking for her to alert her to the calf's dilemma and who helped her to rescue it and return it to its mother.

Ten young canoeists ages 13-18 years set out to paddle on the Qu'Appelle River from Camp Monahan, from Katepwa Lake to Crooked Lake, during the last week of July. As they approached the end of their last day on the river, they came across Morris's newborn calf belly-deep in the river. They were able to lift the calf into one of their canoes. They quickly realized that the calf was in shock and seven of the canoeists did their best to dry it off and to keep it warm while the group leaders went in search of help.

Morris had just completed her evening rounds to check on her cows, and had settled in for the evening when three young people sauntered up her driveway. They led her across the pasture in the direction they had come and showed her their predicament. Morris recognized the cradled calf to be



Helen Solmes

the one born that morning to one of more than 230 Simmentals on her ranch in the Qu'Appelle Valley, east of Highway 47. The youth offered to transport the calf downstream to a road where Morris helped them to beach their canoes in an opening adjacent to a bridge—a sippy bog but, nevertheless, the only egress within reach—and to transport the bewildered calf and their gear to her house. By midnight, the paddlers and the calf had been fed and were bedded down on Morris's veranda for the night.

All's well that ends well. By mid-morning the next day, the calf had been reunited with its mother and was back on track, suckling, dozing in the tall grass, and staying well back from the barbed wire fence that separates the herd from the river. The paddlers, on the other hand, were back on the river for the final leg of their six-day adventure.

The 10 canoeists have made a lasting impression on Morris whose faith in young people has been restored. Unlike the "bad actors" that she regularly reads about, these young people were compassionate, helpful, and remarkably astute. One of the young canoeists recognized that the calf had suckled. It wasn't necessarily abandoned, he surmised; rather, it had

probably strayed over an embankment and out of reach.

On behalf of Hazel Morris and one happy and robust calf, Plain and Valley congratulates Cole Hawkins, Jessica Norgaard, Mandy Bengert, Sheridan Hensler, Karlee Devine, Eric Kakakaway, Stephanie LeRuy et Loziak, Laura Schaan, Oden Juba, and Jamie Deis for a job well done.

Turn to page 25 to see a photo accompanying this column.



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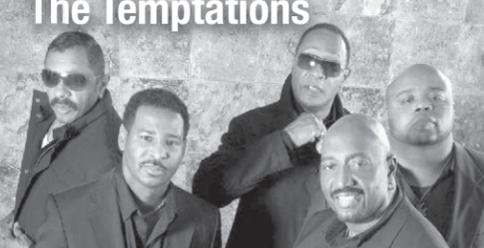

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At the Elkhorn fair

The Elkhorn, Manitoba ag fair was held recently. Above, a little girl feeds her lamb. Right: A competitor in the Pee Wee class horse show.



Monique McKay and Ed James photos

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His purpose was in living

I remember him like it was yesterday—the boyish grin, the razor-sharp wit, the sense of humor that doubled me over almost every time we talked.

The first day we met, he was but 20 years old and the two of us were given the unfortunate task of becoming the male and female representatives of our U of R journalism class. Not knowing each other at all, we were instructed to jointly approach the administrative assistant and inform her of our new roles as “official class reps.”

With one disapproving look, the administrative assistant shrunk each of us down to about the size of a flea, as she wore her disappointed reaction on her sleeve and queried, “They’ve chosen you?”

Sure, each of us looked about 12 years old (and acted like it too), but what can you do when no one else wants the job of class rep?

But without a moment’s hesitation following the “how-could-they pick-you” look, my dearest co-conspirator and the classmate who would become one of my best friends in the world, leaned over and whispered in my ear, “Who was she expecting, Jesus Christ and his mother Mary?”

See what I mean about the razor-sharp wit?

Well, today I look for comfort in all of those funny little incidents, all of those hysterical moments and all of those witty comments. Because this week, my dear Trevor passed away suddenly in a motorcycle accident, leaving a wife and two little girls.

Having lived just 38 years of his life, I’m trying to find meaning in the purpose of his passing. And the conclusion I’ve reached today is . . . there isn’t any.

The purpose was not in his passing, but in his living. The purpose was in the twinkle in his eye when he patted his wife on the



Christalee Froese

belly and announced to us that his second child was on the way. The purpose was in the laughter that followed him wherever he went. The purpose was in his words of wisdom that flowed from a place bigger than his body.

And as I re-read an email he sent to me just 11 days before he passed away, I can’t help but know that there must have been a larger plan for his life.

July 10, 2010

(I should mention that the subject line of the email reads, “Merry Christmas” which he explains was his funny way of acknowledging that it had taken him a little time to respond to my last Christmas greeting—oh the wit!)

“Every year I try to take care of something on my ‘bucket list.’ The sport bike was one of those items a couple of years ago.

. . . I have one more week of work left, then I’m taking two more off. This time, it’s not so uneventful. Nicole has graciously given me some ‘me time’ with my sport bike. A fellow rider, who I’ve become good friends with over the last year, and I are taking our bikes into B.C.’s southern interior in search of twisty mountain roads—the kind sport bikes are made for?”

And so I take comfort in the fact that he left this world doing

what gave him extreme joy. He left this world having touched all of us with his wisdom and his wise-cracks. He left this world having left me with an important lesson—live each moment like it’s the only one you have.

I remember him like it was yesterday—and I hope I always will. Rest in peace my dear friend.

(A memorial trust fund has been established for the children of Trevor Coulombe: 5966 164th Ave. NW; Edmonton, Alberta; T5Y 0B2).

Christalee Froese welcomes comments at Lcfroese@sasktel.net or visit www.westwords.net.

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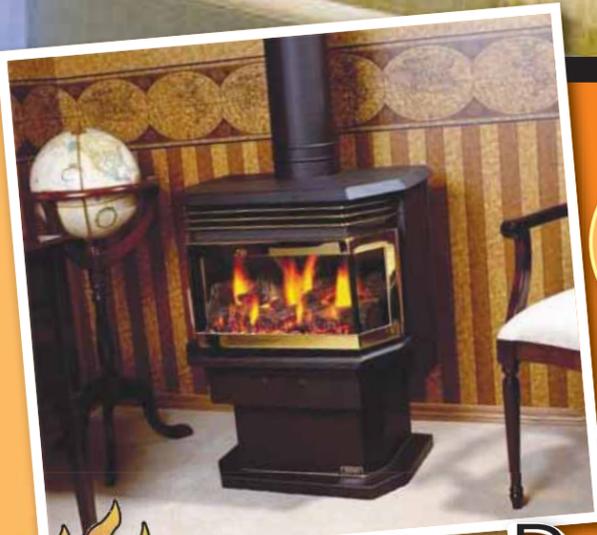
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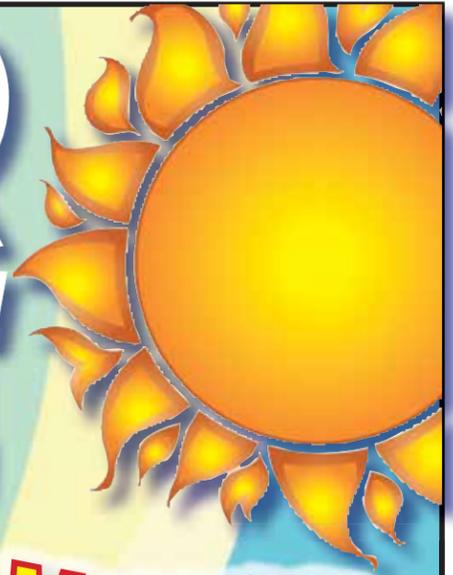
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Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

August 2010 • Page 17

All Folk'd Up in Montmartre a hit

BY CHRISTALEE FROESE

By all accounts, Montmartre's first annual Folk Festival is an event that is sure to become a Saskatchewan tradition worthy of crowds in the thousands.

The hundreds in attendance, including vendors, musicians and audience members, have already committed to coming back next year to experience what the town of 900 residents was able to create.

"It was great to see what a small town is capable of and so very hard to nail down just one or two of the best parts of the weekend," said country singer Blake Berglund. "I'm definitely going to return next year and hopefully have the chance to perform again. I'm so excited to see what this festival becomes, which will obviously be very well-known."

It was a folk fest, but it was more 'fest' than 'folk'.

With entertainers that had the audience singing, clapping and drumming to rock, country and the blues, the 'All Folk'd Up' Festival was a smashing success that had something for every musical appetite.

"I loved this festival because it was so family-oriented and there was something for everyone," said Regina musician Kerri Senkow. "The best part of the festival was knowing that I was part of something that will be remembered throughout the year and will be something people look forward to in future years."

By the end of the three-day festival, the hundreds who were in attendance gave a resounding thumbs-up to the amazing music, camping area, beer gardens, kids' stage, food, organization and folk fest spirit that Montmartre had managed to create in their regional park.

"It was so much fun seeing so many different people embracing the whole experience," said Kathy Kohl, a new resident to Montmartre. "It was such a positive atmosphere to be around and there was such a great variety of music."

Kohl's eight-year-old daughter Lauren echoed her mom's sentiments about the festival.

"I will be back next year because it was fun," said the

Grade 3 Montmartre student. "My favorite parts of the festival were the crafts and the scavenger hunt and buying a thunder stick and whistle."

Some musical highlights of the festival included evening performances by Blake Berglund and instrumental group Let There Be Theremin, as well as a toe-tapping show by youthful Moose Jaw band the Rusty Augers. Memorable daytime performances were given by 15-year-old singer/songwriter Jayne Galloway of Oxbow, Sask., Winnipeg's Ingrid Gatin, Regina's Kerri Senkow band and Regina's Joanne Crofford, who had the whole crowd involved in a drum circle.

"One favorite memory is seeing the children dancing in the grounds as the music played—they seemed to be letting their little bodies experience the music playing through them," said audience member Donna MacPherson, who camped for the three-day festival. "I'll be back next year and I'll bring even more family and friends."

Senkow said she'll be back too.

"I would love to be considered in next year's lineup at the festival because of all the hard work and time the community put into the event. The community of Montmartre was so welcoming, and I could not have asked for a better audience."

Berglund said his only advice regarding next year's festival is, "get your tickets early."

Montmartre's second annual 'All Folk'd Up' Festival has been set for July 8, 9 and 10 (Craven Big Valley Jamboree is scheduled for July 14 - 19). For more information, visit www.allfolkedupinmontmartre.yolasite.com or for tickets, call 424-2835.

Campsites are already being booked and organizers say that if you'd like to guarantee yourself a spot, call now as some festival goers are already reserving their spots for 2011 (424-2040).

Left: 'Sideshow Sid's' kids' stage was a hit with the younger set. On both Saturday and Sunday kids were kept busy singing, dancing, experimenting with instruments, making crafts, and of course, balloon sword-play.



Former Saskatchewan MLA Joanne Crofford involved the entire crowd in her drum circle, whether it was playing a drum, shaking a tambourine or clapping hands. Above, Eden Brown of Calgary tried his hand at a djembe drum, while below a boy finds the rhythm.



Above: Regina's Street Culture Kidz create some crazy creatures at Montmartre's first annual 'All Folk'd Up' Festival. Cassandra Dusyk of Montmartre was transformed into a colorful cat.





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14, 28

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June
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July
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August
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August
6, 20

August
13, 27

September
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Festival committee planning now for next year

BY MONIQUE MCKAY

The first annual All Folk'd Up music festival took place in Montmartre, SK, July 16-18.

Showcasing folk, rock, roots, and blues music from across the prairies, the grass roots festival was the brainchild of three women; sisters Marie Anne Fournier and Jeannine Bujaczek and their friend Ingrid Tourigny. The three women all grew up together in Montmartre.

"We were walking through the park at the Winnipeg Folk Festival thinking, 'Wow—we could do this at Kemoca Park,'" remembers Bujaczek. "That was three years ago; we just planted the seed. But none of us even lived in Montmartre at the time."

Since then, Fournier and her family have moved back from Alberta to the town of 400 where she was raised. Fournier and Bujaczek opened Sisters Boutique and Bistro downtown Montmartre last year, and Montmartre's centennial was held last summer.

"I saw people I hadn't seen in thirty years," Fournier said of the centennial. The sisters considered trying to pull of the festival in conjunction with the town's 100th year, but decided opening up a new business and initiating a music festival was probably too much for one summer. Instead, a committee of four was formed in August 2009, and by last March, the project had really gained momentum.

"The festival is revitalizing," said Fournier. "We just keep centennial spirit alive, keep it going, keep giving people a reason to come back."

Of the nearly 500 people who attended the three days of music, dancing, food and fun in Montmartre's picturesque regional park, many seemed to be former residents of the little town that styles itself as the 'Paris of the Prairies.'

"I know that personally we had a lot of support from people we grew up with; people from Alberta, BC, northern Saskatchewan . . . that was very heartwarming," said Bujaczek.

Approximately 30 volunteers from the community helped facilitate the festival, doing everything from minding the gate to manning the bar to cooking homemade meals for the artists. Montmartre resident Bob Deringer volunteered to prepare lamb kebobs, italian chicken, herbed baby potatoes, and fresh salad throughout the weekend. Volunteer Christalee Froese told the main stage crowd on Saturday, "Last week we realized we didn't have any baking lined up. So I sent out an e-mail that said simply, 'Grandmas; we need goodies!'" She paused as the crowd laughed. "Two days later," Froese continued, "I had to send out another e-mail; 'Grandmas! Stop sending goodies!'"

"We're just so grateful for all of the support we received," said Bujaczek.

"We began to realize that there were so many forces drawing people away," said Fournier, who



Festival founder Marie Anne Fournier takes in some of the acts at Kemoca Park July 18.

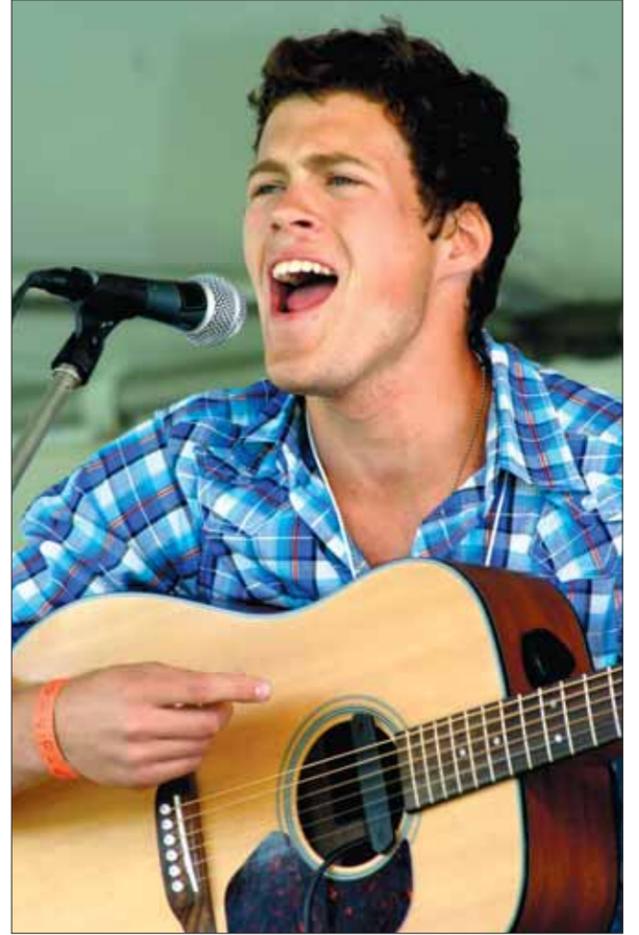
had hoped the attendance would reach at least 700. The Craven music festival had switched its dates to the same weekend, and the Riders were playing on Saturday. "But we're so confident the numbers will be way up for next year," said Bujaczek. "It sounds like people are going to start planning their family reunions around this event," said Fournier. "It's beautiful here and everything's all set up."

Financially the festival is

something of a stretch this year. "We did look for sponsors but we didn't have a lot of time to get sponsorship. Next year we'll start seeking sponsorship earlier," said Bujaczek. Fundraising continued through out festival weekend with fifty-fifty draws and a raffle for two tickets anywhere WestJet flies, while several attendants simply made cash donations to the committee. "We'll have tickets available for Christmas gifts and we'll be looking

for more sponsors, more committee members," Bujaczek said of the committee's future plans.

The committee members feel confident of the town's support. The artisans and food vendors, some of whom were local, did very well. "The whole town is so pumped about it," said Bujaczek. "It took us less than two hours to take down the whole park. Everyone helped." "I was very pleased with our festival-goers and how they



Reid Leniczek of Lemberg, Sask. performs on Montmartre's Main Stage in Kemoca Regional Park. The singer/songwriter was one of over twenty prairie acts to take the Main Stage over the three-day event.

respected our park," added Fournier. "They were so responsible with the garbage, with their recycling, they left it just beautiful."

Next year the committee hopes to engage more francophone and First Nations performers. "Next year we'd like to focus more on French language music and First Nations talent," said Fournier. "We have some fabulous pow wow dancers here." Performers can apply to the festival on their website.

All of the performers from this year's festival want to come back, said

Fournier. "They were so impressed with the quality of the sound, with the venue, the hospitality, and the good. They had some great suggestions to tweak it and make it better but the feedback was all so positive."

"I thought it was a smashing success," said Fournier. "I remember sitting on the grass with my daughter, listening to a band, looking around at everyone relaxing in the sun and enjoying the music. My daughter looked at me and said, 'I can't believe we're in Montmartre! I just laughed and said, 'Neither can I!'"



Regina world music duo Winoski and Horn were joined by some of their friends on-stage Sunday afternoon at the first annual All Folk'd Up music festival in Montmartre, Sask.

Arcola takes health care into its own hands

Sun Country Health Region eliminates nursing position at Arcola hospital just as it reopens

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK
The people of the Arcola area got tired of waiting for the Sun Country Health Region to recruit doctors to staff the local hospital. They got together, formed

a corporation, built a clinic, and have hired three doctors to serve the community. Just as they announced that they had done what the health region couldn't, and had recruited a group

of doctors, Sun Country announced it would eliminate one registered nurse position at Arcola.

Arcola Health Centre resumed full services July 19, at 7 a.m. But it will operate an inpatient ward, an outpatient service and emergency service with just one registered nurse on duty. There were two RNs on duty during the day when the health centre was on restricted services.

The Moose Mountain Health Care Corporation has hired three doctors so far and has a fourth starting in the fall. It will operate on the same model as the Moosomin Family Practice Centre, with the doctors operating a clinic in Arcola, sharing call at the local hos-

pital, and operating satellite clinics in smaller surrounding communities. The first satellite clinic will be set up in Stoughton, and the second will open soon in Lampman.

Dr. Lise Morin, Dr. Sameer Paruk and Dr. Tasnim Gaffoor will work out of Arcola Family Health Clinic. One doctor in Carlyle will be taking call at the Arcola facility along with the three doctors in Arcola.

Greg Maher of the Moose Mountain Health Care Corporation board told a public meeting on Tuesday, July 20 that the local community had to take charge of their health care because the health region wasn't doing its job.

"I believed that we are entitled to health care, certainly as entitled as urban citizens, and that our government, health ministry and health

authority were obligated to provide those services," Maher told the crowd at the public meeting. "I would have suggested that efforts to ensure adequate health care in our communities should be political and channelled through campaigning and appealing to those bodies which are obligated to provide it."

"After hearing and digesting a lot of information about the efforts and challenges of the recruiting committee I concluded that those agencies lack either the mandate, the will, the resources, or the ability, and that if we realistically expect to preserve our rural health care facilities and services, and to attract physicians to our communities, our communities would have to co-operate, collaborate, and work with unity to achieve this."

The Moose Mountain Health Care Corporation is modeled on community clinics in Regina and Saskatoon. Doctors are employed by the health care corporation on a contract basis. The corporation will bill Saskatchewan Health for the doctors' services, and will use the income to pay the doctors, support staff, and clinic operating costs.

Scott Hislop of the recruitment committee explained at the public meeting that several local RMs and towns have contributed to the local health care corporation, providing funding for the local clinic, for recruitment efforts, and for housing for the doctors. Fundraising has also been important to the corporation.

Dr. Lise Morin, who was recruited from Wakaw, said she believes the group practice will work. "I quite like the vision of what they wanted to do here," she said. "They were looking at the well-being of both parties—of the doctors and the patients. One of the issues for doctors is lifestyle. The biggest worry is that the doctor gets burned out after a while. The vision here is giving the doctors a guarantee of the amount of money they will make, but letting them have their freedom."

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Fairlight celebrates 100 years

The village of Fairlight, Sask. held its centennial celebration on the August-long weekend. Shown here are some moments from the weekend.

Left: Alena Mckennit gathers as much candy as she can between parade floats

Right: A handsome Clydesdale pulls Bill and Karen Aulie in their traditional horse and buggy down Main Street.

Below: Bob Bennett and John Rayner of Kenosee wait, along with everyone else in town, for the parade to begin.



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A better way to keep cool

We all have our preferred temperature. Me, I like it cool. My poor college roommate can attest to that, since I just about froze him out of our room, aided by the fact I was tall enough to easily reach the air conditioning controls and he wasn't. But hey, that was in Arkansas, and in Arkansas in late summer, I needed all the air-conditioning I could get.

Humans, despite having originated in hot parts of the world, have long looked for ways to make buildings more comfortable in hot weather. The first attempts in the 19th century involved circulating air over blocks of ice, but modern air conditioning first had to await the invention of mechanical refrigeration.

Liquids absorb heat from their surroundings when they evaporate or boil, and you can control the temperature at which that happens by controlling the pressure: the higher the pressure, the higher the boiling point.

William Cullen first demonstrated refrigeration using this principle in Glasgow in 1748, but it was 86 years before Jacob Perkins of London patented the first practical ice-making machine, and it wasn't until 1911 that Willis Carrier invented a practical air-conditioning system.

In both a refrigerator and an air conditioner, a liquid is boiled in an evaporator. It absorbs heat as it expands, and the warmed vapour is then compressed (which makes it even hotter) and run through pipes that allow it to radiate that heat away (which is why the back of your refrigerator is so hot). In other words, both refrigeration and air-conditioning boil down to (sorry) transferring heat from whatever you want cooled to a place where you don't mind that heat being released.



Edward Willett

The most common refrigerants for the last 80 years have been were chlorofluorocarbons. Although later implicated in the erosion of the ozone layer, they were actually developed as a safe alternative to the much nastier refrigerants that preceded them, such as sulfur dioxide. Stable, incombustible and non-toxic, CFCs made air conditioning practical in office buildings, hospitals, apartments, trains and buses, and, by 1950, automobiles.

There are new ozone-friendly refrigerants in use today, but refrigeration-based air conditioning still has its problems. For one thing, it's energy-intensive, as those with central air-conditioning well-know from their sky-high electricity bills in hot weather.

But now comes word that the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) has invented a new kind of air-conditioner that could potentially use anywhere from half to a whopping 90-percent less energy than standard systems.

The new system, called DEVap, is based on evaporative cooling rather than refrigeration. In a really dry climate that doesn't get too hot or too humid (say, Denver),

you can cool and humidify air simply by flowing water over a mesh and then blowing air through the mesh.

Unfortunately, evaporative coolers don't work well enough to cool really hot air to a pleasant temperature, and in a humid climate they actually make things more unpleasant by increasing humidity while hardly cooling the air at all.

DEVap combines an evaporative cooler with desiccants, chemicals that absorb water from the air (you know, like those "Do Not Eat" packages you find in electronics packaging). It uses highly concentrated syrupy solutions of salts such as lithium chloride and calcium chloride that can create very dry air.

One challenge with desiccant-based cooling systems has been their complexity. DEVap has simplified things immensely by using thin membranes that are hydrophobic--water beads on them instead of soaking through them. This allows the membranes to control the flow of liquid within the cooling core, keeping the water and the desiccant separated from the air stream.

What that means in practice: hot, humid air flows into the core and in a fraction of a second becomes cool, dry air that can then be directed into the space to be cooled.

The NREL has patented the DEVap process, and will be refining it over the next couple of years with the goal of eventually licensing it to manufacturers.

It won't help this season. But in a few years, you may be able to enjoy a cool, comfortable house without any heart-stopping power bills, all summer long.

Edward Willett is a freelance writer in Regina.

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6-26

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6-29

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Guardian Angels seek to rescue animals



BY HELEN SOLMES
A mutual love and concern for the welfare of all animals, particularly domestic pets such as cats and dogs, has brought a core group of individuals together to search for ways to improve the lot of animals who are abused, neglected, or injured.

The Guardian Angels are not dog catchers. They are not professional animal control officers, either. Rather, they are everyday concerned citizens with big hearts who are willing to pitch in and help in whatever way they can, be it to provide temporary shelter for animals that have been removed from a bad environment, to provide cash for emergency treatment of abandoned or injured animal, or to match pet lovers with orphaned pets in what the Guardian Angels hope will be a permanent "fur-ever" home.

The fledgling group has many hurdles ahead of it. Yet Terry Tocker, Traci Malinoski, and Mark McManus are determined to do whatever it takes to raise money to help defray the cost of emergency care for injured animals that come into their care, and to build a network of public officials and volunteers who are

committed to improving the welfare of all animals.

To date the group has worked closely with veterinarian Dr. Audrey Tataryn, of the Prairie East Clinic in Langenburg, who has been willing cared for the Guardian Angels' orphaned pets at discounted fees and has pledged the clinic's support in their fundraising efforts.

With the help of volunteers and donated materials, the group plans to build a temporary shelter in Melville to accommodate rescued dogs.

The response has been reassuring. On one occasion, one of the Guardian Angels set out to buy a shockingly large supply of dog food. When people in the store lineup asked what she was doing, some were so moved that they handed her money as a donation to her cause.

"Our mission is to help animals in need, in whatever way we can," Tocker said. "Our little group may be just a drop in the bucket, but we are willing to do whatever we can."

"We know that it may be trying and that we can't do it alone. We won't always be able to drive to, say, Moosomin, to help rescue a dog, so, if there are oth-

ers out there who feel as passionate as we do and who are willing to form a group or simply take in a rescued animal, please let us know."

The Guardian Angels are developing a screening process to help them identify foster homes for rescued animals.

"We don't want to take an animal from a bad situation and plunk them into an equally bad situation," Tocker said. "Volunteers need to know that when they take a rescued animal into their homes, it's not always going to be easy. The animals are traumatized and they need human contact."

For more information, please call Terry Tocker at 745-7144, Traci Malinoski at 728-2313, or Mark McManus at 896-2855.

Rescued calf

A young Simmental calf stays close to its mother after having been rescued from the Qu'Appelle River and transported by canoe to safety by 10 young canoeists who were paddling from Camp Mahonan on Katepwa Lake to Crooked Lake, in July.

Inset: Cattlewoman Hazel Morris overlooking the Qu'Appelle River where 10 canoeists delivered her day-old calf to safety within an hour of having found it belly-deep in water, in a state of shock.



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Sun Country Health Region

Schmidt borrowed \$75,000, never paid back

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Court documents indicate that Hal Schmidt—the Sun Country Health Region vice-president of finance and corporate services—borrowed \$75,000 from St. Mary's Hospital in New Westminster, B.C. when he was CEO, and never repaid the loan.

When he missed the deadline to repay the loan, he was sued by the Fraser Health Authority. St. Mary's Hospital had been closed down by that point and a forensic audit was ordered for the period Schmidt was CEO. A default judgement was issued by the B.C. Supreme Court against Schmidt in 2005 ordering him to pay \$82,401.86 sought by the health authority, as well as \$1,524.43 in interest and \$2,215.44 for costs.

The judgement has not been collected and the debt is still outstanding.

Schmidt loaned himself \$75,000 from St. Mary's Hospital funds on April 27, 2001, when he was CEO of

the hospital, and agreed to repay the principal plus interest by April 27, 2004.

The World-Spectator reported earlier that Schmidt had investigated for improper use of his credit card and making personal loans to himself from hospital funds at St. Mary's.

Last week the World-Spectator obtained documents from the B.C. Supreme Court detailing the claim against Schmidt and the judgement against him.

The Fraser Health Authority filed a statement of claim against Schmidt in the British Columbia Supreme Court on Dec. 3, 2004.

As the World-Spectator has reported, Schmidt was fired from IWK Health Centre in Halifax in early 2004 for falsely claiming to be a chartered accountant.

Despite dozens of newspaper reports at the time about his firing for falsely claiming to be a CA, Schmidt told the World-Spectator he had never claimed to be a CA. The

World-Spectator received a copy of Schmidt's CV showing that he did indeed claim to be a CA.

Sun Country board chair Sharon Bauche said she believes Schmidt's explanation that he didn't actually claim to be a CA.

Schmidt also claimed that there was no evidence of wrongdoing when he was CEO of St. Mary's.

In a written statement issued June 9 defending himself, he wrote "The truth is I have never faced charges regarding the use of public funds. The libellous statements made in this package of information are not true. Furthermore, you can be sure that if the accusation had any truth to it, any responsible public official would have followed through quickly with an investigation and charges."

According to the Statement of Claim filed by the Fraser Health Authority, "The defendant failed to repay the principal amount

and accrued interest on or before April 27, 2004, as required by the loan agreement."

Also according to the Statement of Claim, "By letter dated November 8, 2004, the Plaintiff provided the Defendant with notice of the Assignment and made demand upon the Defendant for the immediate repayment of \$82,401.86. Notwithstanding this notice and demand, the defendant has refused or neglected and continues to refuse and neglect to pay the amount owing."

Schmidt could not be located to be served notice of the claim, so a statement of claim was published in the Saturday, August 13, 2005 issue of the Vancouver Sun addressed "to Harold E.

Schmidt, also known as Hal Schmidt, Defendant, last known address of 1051 Lee Street, White Rock, B.C."

According to the legal notice, "the Plaintiff's claim is for judgement in the amount of \$82,401.86, interest and such other relief the Court may deem just in connection with a Loan Agreement entered into on or about April 27, 2001."

A default judgement was issued by the court Sept. 19, 2005. The judgement states: "The defendant not having filed an appearance to the writ of summons in this action and the time for doing so having expired, this court orders that the defendant pay to the plaintiff the sum of \$82,401.86, together with interest as claimed pursuant to the Court Orders Interest

Act from November 9, 2004 to September 16, 2005 in the amount of \$1,524.43 and \$2,215.44."

Court records show that Schmidt filed a statement of defence in August 2006, a year after the judgement against him, but there is no copy of that statement of defence in the B.C. Supreme Court's file on the case.

Fraser Health Authority spokesperson Joan Murray told the World-Spectator last week that all she can say about the case is "this matter is unresolved."

The World-Spectator has filed a Freedom of Information request with the British Columbia Health Ministry to uncover a copy of the forensic audit conducted into Schmidt's tenure at St. Mary's.

Sun Country seeks legal advice on Hal Schmidt

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Sun Country CEO Cal Tant says the Sun Country Health Region is taking the latest information uncovered by the World-Spectator about vice-president of finance Hal Schmidt seriously and has asked its lawyers to look into the matter.

As the World-Spectator reported recently, Schmidt borrowed \$75,000 from St. Mary's Hospital in New Westminster, B.C. when he was CEO, and never repaid the loan.

When he missed the deadline to repay the loan, he was sued by the Fraser Health Authority. St. Mary's Hospital had been closed down by that point and a forensic audit was ordered for the period Schmidt was CEO.

A default judgement was issued by the B.C. Supreme Court against Schmidt in 2005 ordering him to pay \$82,401.86 sought by the health authority, as well as \$1,524.43 in interest and \$2,215.44 for costs.

The judgement has not been collected and the debt is still outstanding. The Fraser Health Authority says the matter is still unresolved.

"We're taking it very seriously," Tant told the World-Spectator Thursday.

"The first thing we're doing in light of the new information, the board and myself have instructed our lawyers to find out everything they can about the allegation."

He said the lawyers have been asked to uncover any information they can about the

lawsuit. "We have not heard anything from the lawyers yet," he said. "As you know, it doesn't happen overnight."

"As soon as all the information is received we will be informing all those in the region the results that are found."

Tant said that, while he was aware when he hired him that Schmidt had been fired from IWK Health Centre in Halifax for falsely claiming to be a chartered accountant, he was not aware of the loan Schmidt made to himself from hospital funds and failed to repay, or that he was sued by a health authority trying to recover public funds.

Schmidt is away on vacation and couldn't be reached for comment.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister of Health has met with Tant and Sun Country chair Sharon Bauche to discuss hiring issues and the hiring of Schmidt specifically.

As a result of that meeting, an independent consultant will be hired to examine hiring practices in Sun Country and to determine if proper processes were used in the hiring of Schmidt.

"As you know the board has developed terms of reference to hire a third party company," Tant said Thursday.

"They haven't confirmed a timeline with the board chair. They are leading that to ensure that things are arms length and objective."

Minister to meet with Wawota group

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Saskatchewan's health ministry is trying to set up a meeting between Saskatchewan Health Minister Don McMorris and Wawota's Save Our Beds Committee.

"The minister's office has received a request for a meeting and the hope is that a meeting can be arranged within the coming weeks," said health ministry spokesperson Joan Petrie. "The minister is interested in hearing the concerns of residents, however health regions are in the best position to make operational decisions based on local needs."

The Save Our Beds com-

mittee was set up after the Sun Country Health Region announced the closure of five beds at Deer View Lodge in Wawota to save \$110,000.

Committee chair Dale Easton said his group will go into the meeting with the aim of reversing the bed closures.

"The original priority is still to reverse their decision and get the five beds back. That has always been our number one priority," said Easton.

"Ideally we would like to hear that they would reverse the decision made by the Sun Country Health Region and put the beds back where they were."

"The next issue would be to take a look at the Sun Country Region and see if it is properly run. We're questioning how these health boards operate and how they're governed."

He said people in Wawota are more frustrated than ever following a public meeting with Sun Country officials. "People are frustrated and angry now that they actually saw how Sun Country display themselves and speak for themselves," Easton said.

"It sure made it evident to 400 people how they operate. I don't think they impressed anyone that night from the people I've talked to."

Health ministry waiting on human resources review

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

The World-Spectator directed some questions about the situation in the Sun Country Health Region to Saskatchewan Health Deputy Minister Dan Florizone last week.

Florizone said the government is waiting on a human resources review of the Sun Country Health Region by a consultant before passing judgement on the hiring of Hal Schmidt as vice-president of finance. Schmidt was fired from a previous job for falsely claiming to be a chartered accountant, and was sued by the Fraser Health Authority in an attempt to recover \$75,000 Schmidt loaned himself from hospital funds and failed to repay. The B.C. Supreme Court ordered Schmidt to repay the loan, interest, and costs, but the Fraser Health Authority says the matter is still outstanding.

Florizone also responded to questions about the decision to close five beds at Deer View Lodge. He said he hopes the board "would remain open-minded to new information that may be brought to its attention on any matter relating to a previous decision."

Following is the complete text of the questions and answers.

The World-Spectator: The review into Mr. Schmidt's hiring, and hiring practices in Sun Country, would not be taking place without information revealed by this newspaper's investigative journalism. Does this indicate a failure of the system in this one health region, or do hiring practices across all the regions need to be looked at?

Dan Florizone: First of all Kevin, I'd like to acknowledge your paper's investigative journalism. Journalists play an important role in society of bringing information to light and holding organizations accountable to the public. It's true that your media coverage caused the ministry to request more information from the health region, culminating in a meeting with senior officials of the region

"We need to have competent, qualified board members who know what sort of questions they need to be asking of their administration, and Ministry of Health officials have been working with the Sun Country Board to ensure they understand their responsibilities in this regard."

—Deputy Health Minister Dan Florizone

and the ministry. As it has yet to be determined, I don't think that requesting a review necessitates a failure of the health region, much less of the entire system. But it is a wakeup call to remind other regions and also to ensure that boards are aware of their responsibilities as the body to which the region must be accountable.

The World-Spectator: Does the minister plan to intervene in this case or does he have the power to intervene to ensure the health board deals with its staffing issues?

Dan Florizone: Theoretically the minister has the power to issue orders to any region. However it is impractical and unwise for the minister to become involved in human resources issues. The board of directors needs to exercise that duty, as the CEO is accountable to the board. In accordance with the Regional Health Services Act, the board is the employer.

The World-Spectator: Does the minister have confidence that competent officials and proper procedures are in place in the Sun Country Health Region?

Dan Florizone: It would be premature to respond to that question. The review by the independent consultant will inform that matter.

The World-Spectator: Regarding the decision by the

Sun Country Health Region to close five beds at Deer View Lodge in Wawota, is there any process to review a decision by a health board if it appears the board made a decision with incorrect or incomplete information at hand?

Dan Florizone: There is no formal review process, however the minister can issue an order to any health region. I would hope that the region's board of directors would remain open-minded to new information that may be brought to its attention on any matter relating to a previous decision.

The World-Spectator: Moosomin MLA and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Don Toth says he believes health boards should be elected so they are accountable to the people they serve. Does the province have any plans to look at moving to elected health boards?

Dan Florizone: Many years ago we used to have elected health boards but there was an issue getting people to both run and vote. That said, in the coming year or so, we need to take another look at board structure and governance. There are a number of models possible. We need to have competent, qualified board members who know what sort of questions they need to be asking of their administration, and Ministry of Health officials have been working with the Sun Country Board to ensure they understand their responsibilities in this regard.

The World-Spectator: The Sun Country board says it had to cut patient services because of provincial funding restrictions. When such restrictions result in a loss of patient care capacity, would the government ever consider providing additional funding instead of eliminating beds? In this case the cost of keeping five beds open is \$110,000.

Dan Florizone: The region has many options at hand for achieving cost efficiencies government asked of it, so it is unlikely more funding would be provided.



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