

# Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

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## Laich finding success in NHL

BY CHRIS JASTER

For the first time in his National Hockey League career, Brooks Laich has been given an opportunity to play in a more offensive role, and he's making the best of his chance.

As of press time, the 26-year-old Wawota native had scored nine goals and recorded 12 assists in 25 games. That puts Laich well on pace to destroy his last year's mark of 53 points, the most points Laich has recorded in his four full seasons in the NHL.

Laich gives credit to his offensive outburst this season to his coaches for changing his role on the team. For the last few years, Laich has been on a checking line, where he showed flashes of his scoring ability. This season, Laich is getting second-line minutes and has been put on the same line as Brendan Morrison and Alexander Semin.

"It's fun to play offensively," said Laich. "At the same time I know my game is a two-way game and I have to play in both ends of the rink. Definitely it's fun to play offensively and it's fun to play with very talented players."

"Brendan Morrison is very easy to play with. He distributes the puck and he is a very smart player. Alex Semin is one of the most talented players in the world. When you're playing with those guys most nights, odds are you're going to get a point here or there."

As talented as Morrison and Semin are, their abilities can't compare to Alex Ovechkin, who Laich said is the best player in the NHL.

"I got to play with Ovy, and Nicky (Backstrom) on Nov. 21 in Toronto and playing with those guys is great," he said. "I play with them on the power play."

"But whether you're playing with Ovechkin, Semin or Morrison, any way you look at it it's a pretty good day and they're pretty good players to play with. I don't have a preference of one over the other. It's a pretty good

situation to be in."

Even though he's holding his own on the ice, Laich doesn't get the air time in the national media Ovechkin and Semin receive. Laich is fine with that, since he has never had an interest in personal glory.

"If you've known me, the thing I care about is winning hockey games," he said. "Individual success is great, but that only comes with team success. We have fantastic players and I'm the first advocate of them to promote them because I see it every day. I think the world of these guys because I know them as people and I know how badly they want to win."

"They're very humble guys as well. They'll be the first to deflect credit. If Ovy has 65 goals, he'll be the first one to say Nicki Backstrom is the reason he has that."

The support the fans give the Capitals also keeps the players humble.

Hockey doesn't have deep roots in the United States' capital city. To compensate for that, the Capitals have a wide open practice facility and their fans are welcome to watch practices every day.

The players are approached by children after every practice so they can get an autograph or a photo with their favorite hometown hockey stars.

"Some days we'll be out there for 20 minutes or a half hour before we can get to our cars," said Laich. "You see the smile on their faces and they're almost nervous to ask for an autograph and you say, 'Buddy don't be shy. Come on up if you want a picture.' It puts a human aspect to them."

"A lot of people think of professional athletes as up on a pedestal or inhuman. We're very human. We're regular people with an extraordinary ability and I think our guys in Washington do a great job of showing people that and I think a lot of kids go home and say 'Mike Green is awesome' or 'Nick Backstrom is awesome. I got to meet these guys and I want to be just like them.'"



Getty Images

Wawota's Brooks Laich fights off Toronto's Ian White during an NHL game in Washington.

The number of requests the players receive in the parking lot is so overwhelming, Laich makes sure he leaves the practice facility with defenceman Mike Green to divide the kids so they can get to their car in half the time.

His fans in Wawota are just as intense as the children in Washington D.C. Instead of sending Laich messages, his parents receive them and pass them on.

"I get feedback from Mom and Dad," Laich said. "There's people that phone the house and ask if they saw I scored. Mom and Dad are like, 'Yeah, I know. I watched the game,' but it just means people are following me in Wawota."

"There aren't always letters and Christmas cards and stuff, but just the general support is always there and I get the pipeline from

Mom and Dad."

He is also critiqued by his dad from Wawota. Harold Laich got Brooks into hockey and coached him for 14 years.

He watches Brooks' games with great interest and often yells at the television when Brooks makes mistakes. His keen eye for details in his son's game, however, has benefitted Brooks even at the NHL level.

"If I'm struggling I'll call him and he'll say I'm trying to make too many moves. Just make one move and go to the net," said Brooks. "Just subtle things he sees coming into the game, like if I'm reaching too much instead of skating. He's the eye in the sky that sees."

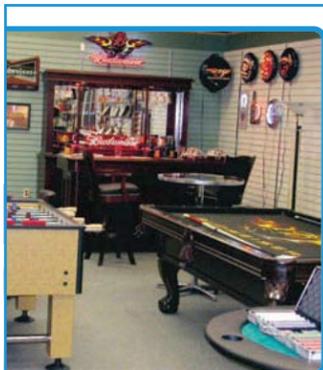
"I respect his opinion and trust that he's guiding me the right way."

Despite having great coaches throughout his junior and professional hockey career—like Boudreau, Dean Evason and Dean Chenoweth—who have helped him become more offensive and succeed in hockey, Brooks credits his dad for his success in his hockey career.

"Ultimately I think it starts and finishes with Dad," he said. "He was the guy that got me into hockey and taught me all the fundamentals and somebody I still discuss hockey with to this day."

The family connection runs deeper than just to his parents. Brooks is looking forward to the Olympic break so he can return to Saskatchewan to visit his sister and new niece. He also wants to practice with his brother's senior hockey team, the Bienfait Coalers.

*Continued on page 2*



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## Laich doing well in NHL

*Continued from front*

Laich hasn't forgotten about Wawota, either. Brooks' ultimate goal for his career is to win the Stanley Cup, and he plans to bring it to his hometown for the one day he gets it to himself should he win hockey's Holy Grail.

"No doubt about it," he said. "If I could do it, I'd invite everybody from all around in Moosomin and Carlyle, Redvers, wherever. People who wanted to come see it could see and maybe we could have a game of road hockey. I'd just enjoy the day, but definitely that thing would come to Wawota."

The Capitals lost out in the second round of the Stanley Cup playoffs last season to the eventual champion Pittsburgh Penguins in seven games.

Watching Pittsburgh win it all last year seems to have added more fuel to the Capitals' fire this year,

and it started with Ovechkin, their biggest star.

"He would trade in every single individual award he has won for a Stanley Cup," said Brooks. "I was there at the awards where he was awarded the Hart Trophy and Maurice Richard and he was not a happy guy because Pittsburgh had just won the Stanley Cup. I remember talking to him about it and we went out to celebrate his awards and he was saying 'I hate this that Pittsburgh wins the Stanley Cup and I get these two awards. It sucks.'

"That's contagious amongst our other guys. I think our Canadian and U.S. guys are very focused on winning a Stanley Cup. Traditionally Europeans are more focused on winning world championships and that kind of stuff, but I don't see that in our locker room."

And despite having the

second best record in the NHL as of press time, Laich thinks the team hasn't been living up to its potential.

"I hope people don't think I'm cocky or arrogant when I say we haven't played well and we're still in first place, but I've been around this team for a few years and I know how good our players are and how good we can be," he said. "I think right now we're underachieving. I think we have a lot more to give and can be better than we are right now."

As for his personal play, Laich just hopes he can keep up the pace he started the season with.

"I've been very happy so far with my first half. Usually I'm a second-half player meaning I don't score a whole bunch of points in the first half, but so far I'm enjoying a hot start and hopefully it continues."

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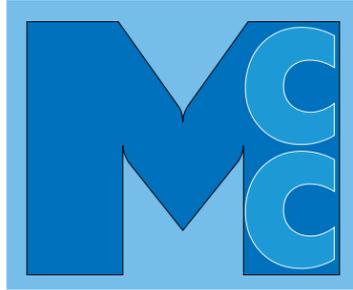


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Hundreds of cookies, packaged and ready to send to Canadian soldiers who are serving in Afghanistan over Christmas.

## Montmartre families send a taste of home to Canadian soldiers

BY CHRISTALEE FROESE  
Canadian soldiers serving in Afghanistan over the Christmas holidays will not have many of the comforts of home. But, thanks to the Kohl family of Montmartre, the soldiers will have a taste of home, and a taste of the true spirit of Christmas. "The son of one of the people my husband works with has been deployed to Afghanistan and we just wanted to

do something for her and her son that would make things a little easier," says Kathy Kohl of the project her family took on over the course of the past two weeks. "We decided to put the word out that we were going to send homemade cookies to the soldiers, and it was just amazing how the community responded." After spreading the word and forwarding a few emails, the Kohls be-

gan to receive dozens of cookies from Montmartre and area families. A grand total of 74 dozen cookies have been collected, along with cards, notes and well wishes for Canada's soldiers serving in Afghanistan. "Jaynanne was so touched with all the support from our community," says Kathy of the mother whose son, Cpl. Glen Flannery, has been deployed overseas.

## Moosomin volunteers spreading Christmas cheer to Canadian troops

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK  
A group of volunteers in Moosomin, Sask. wants to spread a little Christmas cheer to Canadian troops serving in Kandahar, Afghanistan. "A few of us were talking after the Julian Austin concert in Moosomin (a fundraiser for the Moosomin Legion) and decided it would be a nice thing to do," said Sheila Kelly, who is organizing the effort. The local volunteers want to collect 140 boxes to supply one regiment of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry soldiers serving in Afghanistan. Kelly says lots of people have volunteered to help out already. "So far the Moosomin Legion Auxiliary has volunteered to do 10 or 12

shoebboxes, I've done three myself, I have about 20 lined up privately, and we're hoping for a whole lot more," Kelly said. Kelly said shoebboxes can be prepared and marked for men or women. Items suggested to include are beef jerky, small board games, playing cards, crib boards, magazines, gum, candy (but no chocolate), wet wipes, hand sanitizers, crosswords, and find-a-word books. People can fill a shoebox and drop it off with Sheila Kelly or at the Moosomin Legion. Kelly has also come up with a novel thing to include in some of her boxes: "I'm sending some Tim Horton's gift certificates, because there is a Timmy's on the base at Kandahar,"

she said. Once she collects all the shoebboxes, Kelly plans to take them to CFB Shilo and the military will get them to Afghanistan. "We want to have everything by December 12," Kelly said. "The deadline has been extended to give people a chance to get stuff together." People can wrap the shoebboxes if they want. Kelly said she spoke to some of the PPCLI soldiers after the Remembrance Day service in Moosomin, and she believes the soldiers will appreciate gifts from back home. "I think it will be appreciated," she said. "Something from home has to be appreciated." Anyone who wants to put together a box can contact Kelly at 306-435-3260.

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# Thomas Merritt was all about his family

BY CHRIS JASTER

Thomas Merritt made sure he did the little things in life to make sure his family knew how much he loved them.

He would take the time to give his wife and children a hug and a kiss and tell them he loved them before he left to work at the Mosaic potash mine near Esterhazy.

Now, his family is left with only those memories. Merritt suffered an untimely death at the mine on Nov. 28 when the bottom of a storage bin containing raw ore broke. A 40-year-old co-worker was sent to hospital, but survived the accident.

Merritt, a 28-year-old father of two, was buried when the bottom of the bin and 500 tonnes of potash ore fell on him while he was working underneath it.

"This has easily been the hardest thing I've ever had to deal with," said Russ Sheppard, Merritt's uncle. "I've dealt with a lot of situations and I thought I'd be prepared for something like this and I feel completely unprepared and at the mer-

cy of my grief. It has been very hard for all of us.

"He was that prototypical Hollywood nice guy that everybody likes and has the right thing to say and is always positive. Let me put it to you this way, if this was my funeral and everyone was sad, Tom would be the guy to come into the room and bring cheer and a positive outlook. He had an unbelievable demeanor and an infectious smile."

Merritt moved to Esterhazy from Calgary in 2005 to start working at the mine. He enjoyed his work and kept busy playing old-timers hockey and doing some contract work as well.

Everything Merritt did, however, was to benefit his seven-year-old son, four-year-old daughter and his wife. In fact, Merritt spent his last day with his daughter. He even commented afterward how amazing it was to have that opportunity to spend that much time with her.

"He was a focused family man," said Sheppard. "He worked hard to make

"He was that prototypical Hollywood nice guy that everybody likes and has the right thing to say and is always positive."

—Russ Sheppard

sure his little girl, his little boy and his wife were able to have some of the finer things in life like money to play on the local hockey team or the fact that his wife was able to focus on the things she wanted to do and not have to work 9-5 to make ends meet. He worked really hard to make sure that was in place and really had a sense of family.

"I used to teach in Nunavut and fly through Calgary. It didn't matter if I gave him five minutes' or ten minutes' notice, he would come see me every time. He was that guy that would drop everything for you."

As difficult as this time is

in the lives of Merritt's family, they have received a lot of support from both the community and the mine itself.

"The mine have been more than amazing," said Sheppard. "They have dealt with the entire situation with their hearts first."

"The president of Mosaic, along with some other officials from the mine, did a personal visit (Wednesday) morning. They were very true to their emotion. They flew in to console and to deal with the situation and make sure Vicki understood the mine wasn't walking away on a procedural base. They were looking out for her best interest and want to work

with her to make sure this is an experience she's able to move forward from."

Occupational Health and Safety is investigating the matter. They are focusing on identifying a sequence of events that led to the incident and identifying any way to avoid incidents like this from happening again.

Brad DeLorey, Mosaic's director of public affairs, said it's common for crews to work under the bins and he has never heard of a bin breaking before.

The hardest thing the family is dealing with is explaining the situation to Merritt's young children. Father Albert Schmitz, who led the funeral service at Our Lady of Victories Church in Esterhazy on Thursday, has helped Vicki, Merritt's wife, with this.

"I told her to explain to the children that God didn't make this happen, but these things happen in life all the time," he said. "But God is there with his love and understanding and compassion. He's there

for the grief that we share.

"At times like this it causes great sadness to people that's overwhelming but it brings people together."

Sheppard hopes miners everywhere learn an important lesson about their family from Merritt.

"I hope miners use this as an opportunity to refocus on what's important and to make sure before they head to work every day that they give their kids and their wife and significant others that extra 30 seconds and give them a hug and a kiss and tell them they love them," he said. "Tom left no doubt to his wife and kids that he loved them because he did those little things."

Donations may be made to the Thomas Merritt Childrens Trust Fund at the North Valley Credit Union in Esterhazy. The fund, which was created by the family, will be used to fund things Merritt would have made sure his children could participate in, like hockey and school trips.

## Community gets behind Dunhams with fundraiser

BY MONIQUE MCKAY

The strawberry blonde toddler with clear blue eyes is very busy, doing absolutely everything most nearly-two little girls do; she's trying to keep track of her favorite blanket while cajoling a juice box out of her mom, while managing to drive her big sister a little crazy at the same time.

A knock at the door; "Grandma!" cries the little sprite in a lime green flowered sleeper as she runs to greet her visitor. "Hold hands!" she demands as she and her grandmother go off to the living room to play.

It's easy to see how this

little girl could draw a crowd. She may not be a Hollywood celebrity baby, but Lacey Dunham has her own devoted following in the local area.

Thanks to the care and support shown her and her family by the people in the community, more than \$20,000 has been raised thus far to contribute to her care as she and her family continue their courageous battle against cancer.

Lana Dunham said that although she knew a lot of people at the fundraiser held Nov. 21 at Moosomin's Uptown Hotel, she was still surprised by the force in

which the community came out.

"We seated 300 for dinner," said Kim Kempin of the Uptown. "It was very successful."

Carol and Neil Russell organized the silent auction component of the fundraiser. "It's the most items we've ever had," said Carol, "and this is our fifth fundraiser."

"I thought it went fabulous. We can't thank the town and surrounding towns enough for all their support; it was really a community-wide fundraiser, with all of the surrounding towns."

Lana realizes that the townspeople have a

strong interest in Lacey and her welfare. "A lot of people come up and ask how she's doing," says the Registered Nurse, who has just returned to work part time. She is thankful to have the support of the community, and especially of her family, including her eldest daughter Julie,

who is "a big help."

Lacey's doctors will continue monitoring the two-inch growth in her abdomen, which appeared after her initial surgery. If the tumor continues to grow, Lacey may have to undergo chemotherapy.

Comedian Derek Crelin performed at the fund-

raiser, as did country and rock and roll band The Strait Pipes. "It looked like everyone had a great time," concludes Kempin. "This community and the surrounding communities should be very proud; they really pulled together to help this little girl. It was such a good cause."

## Olympic torch coming to Moosomin

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

The town of Moosomin is making plans for the Olympic torch's arrival in town in January.

The torch will arrive in Moosomin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 9, 2010.

Moosomin has been chosen as a route community, and the torch will travel on a route through town.

Moosomin is the first route community in Saskatchewan. Following the events in Moosomin, the torch will be taken to Yorkton.

The theme for Moosomin's events is "Welcome the World to Saskatchewan."

Organizers are planning a barbecue, pep rally, and Mini-Olympics to round out events for the torch run.

"We want to have the youth of the community involved as much as possible," said Moosomin rec director Mike Schwean.

"We want to integrate our region's youth in the events to allow them to fully experience and understand the



Olympic experience. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and we are up to the task of ensuring this experience is not lost on our youth."

Schwean said he is hoping the event will ignite the Olympic spirit in the community.

"We were visited by an organizer with the Vancouver

Olympic Committee who ran an inspiring CD on the Olympic dream," Schwean said. "Our vision is to instill that into every Moosomin and area child."

The organizing committee is focusing on getting the entire community involved in the local torch relay events.

Businesses will be asked to decorate, people will be encouraged to participate in the mini-games and to line the street for the arrival of the torch.

The Olympic flame is currently being carried on the longest torch run in Olympic history—45,000 km within the boundaries of a single country. It left from Victoria, B.C. on Oct. 30, crossed northern Canada from West to East, and is now in the Maritimes on its way back west. An estimated 12,000 torchbearers are expected to take part in the relay before the torch is used to ignite the flame at the Vancouver Olympics on Feb. 12.

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The Moosomin Kinsmen Club presented a cheque for \$27,000 to Southeast Integrated Care Centre manager Sharon Wood this year for the purchase of TVs for the hospital rooms in the new facility, which serves southeastern Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba. The funds were raised through the Kinsmen Club's annual Lotto 365—a major fundraiser for the Kinsmen who in turn find ways to redirect the funds back into the community. From left to right in this photo are Jeff DeMelo, Dave Latery, Sharon Wood, Ryan Thorn, Kurtis Meredith, and Tyler Thorn.

# Local lottery has raised more than a quarter million

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

The Moosomin Kinsmen Club has begun its eighth annual Lotto 365, a fundraiser that raised more than a quarter million dollars in its first seven years.

In fact the lottery has raised about \$280,000 so far, all of which has gone to local community projects. The lottery has sold out every year but one, leading organizers to expect that it will raise \$40,000 for local

projects again this year.

The motto for the lottery is "Live Free For a Year," and the prize allows people to do just that—the grand prize is \$1,000 a week for a year.

Tyler Thorn of the Moosomin Kinsmen Club says the promotion is the club's main fundraiser for the year.

The main beneficiary of the lottery over the years has been the Southeast Integrated Care Centre in Moosomin, which has received \$125,000 over the first seven years.

Proceeds this year are earmarked for the Moosomin Community Theatre—which is raising money for a new digital projection system—the Southeast Integrated Care Centre, the Moosomin Curling Club, and the Moosomin Golf Club.

Thorn said that, after seven years, the lottery runs like clockwork.

"A lottery like this has to be organized just right, but the logistics of it get a little easier every year," he said. "You get the process set up, and then it's just a matter of getting out and selling the tickets."

A total of 1,300 tickets are sold in the annual lottery. "The tickets are sold across southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba," says Thorn. "About half of the tickets are sold outside our local area. We spend the money in ways to benefit our whole community, and it's good to have the support coming in from outside the area."

Organizers have to sell about 900 tickets to break even, but Thorn isn't worried about not selling enough tickets to make the lottery a success.

"After doing it for seven years we're fairly confident that we can sell out or come close to it," he said.

"We always sell out on the last day," he said. "We like to have half the tickets sold before the final three days."

"The one year we didn't hit that mark, we were 50 or 60 tickets short, and every other year we sold out."

Thorn said the tickets are usually easy to sell, and many people buy the tickets year after year. "It's to the point where people come in wanting to buy them," he said.

"The thing people seem to like about ours is the number of tickets," he said. "Most other lottos sell 3,500 tickets or 4,000 tickets. People like the odds on ours."

Lotto 365 winners have been from throughout the area.

Thorn said that much of the work comes within a few days of the draw date, which will be Feb. 7, 2010 this time around.

"It's quite an experience," he said. We set up a bank of phones. As many guys as can be there are there. The phones are ringing. We have a little assembly line set up with some people taking orders over the phone, some people filling out the tickets, some people running the numbers through the credit card machines. It's a lot of fun, actually."

Organizers like to sell the tickets as early as possible, however, the more quickly the tickets sell, the less cost is involved in the final radio blitz to sell the last tickets.

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**Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Method of Payment:**  
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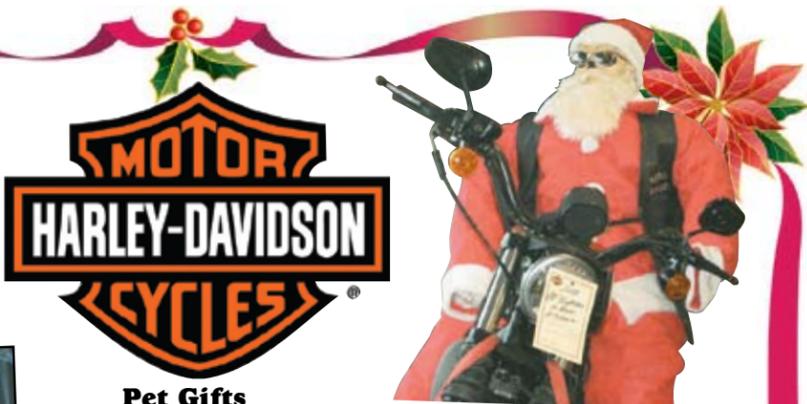
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Way to go - so nice to have a paper that promotes rural communities.

Cheers,  
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### Headframe for new PotashCorp mine shaft complete

The headframe for the Scissors Creek service shaft being developed as part of the PotashCorp Rocanville potash mine expansion rose over 10 days from Nov. 20-30. A steel superstructure will be built at the top of the headframe. Once the structure is complete, the task of freezing the ground to allow shaft sinking through water bearing formation, and actually sinking the shaft will begin. The \$2.8 billion expansion will be completed in 2013.

Below, and at right, are some photos taken during the development of the shaft.

Kevin Weedmark photos



Workers on the top deck above the slipform as concrete is pumped into the form. Workers up top place rebar and finish the concrete as the slipform rises.



The headframe continued to rise through the week. This aerial photo was taken one week after the pour started with the help of local pilot Rob Austin.

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# Elkhorn's Mitchell returning to Team West

BY CHRIS JASTER

Garth Mitchell will be a familiar face behind the bench for Team West at this year's World Under-17 Hockey Challenge.

The Elkhorn village administrator has been named an assistant coach for the second consecutive year.

"It's always an honor to get to represent your province and definitely the two branches together," said Mitchell, whose team is made up of 11 players from Manitoba and 11 players from Saskatchewan. "I had the opportunity last year to serve as assistant coach when we were in Port Alberni, so it's the second go round for me. So I'm pretty positive about it all."

The tournament, which runs from Dec. 29 to Jan. 4 in Timmins, Ont., is equivalent to the World Junior Hockey Championship for players under 20. There are, however, five teams representing different regions in Canada instead of one team representing the entire country.

Having more Canadian teams doesn't mean teams relax and play a slower-paced game.

"The level there is very close to the World Junior speed and ability so it's definitely a step up for all our players," said Mitchell, who currently coaches the Yellowhead Chiefs, a midget AAA team. "Even

the ones playing junior hockey usually come out of the tournament saying it's a little quicker pace than what they're used to seeing. For the most part it's just a big step up in the calibre of play for everybody."

Although the players will have to adjust to the faster pace and higher level of play, Mitchell views the tournament as a chance to improve his coaching skills as well.

Mitchell has coached at every level in Manitoba from novice through intermediate. He has also been involved in Manitoba's Program of Excellence for the last 20 years where he has held virtually every position—including regional evaluator and camp evaluator. He has participated in a lot of coaching and mentorship programs throughout Manitoba as well.

"I think from the coaching perspective, it's just a great opportunity to be exposed to the European style of the game and get exposed to some of the best coaches in the game internationally that are around," he said. "It's a great opportunity to work with some great coaches in Manitoba and Saskatchewan as well. I view it as a learning experience and a really good opportunity for me to improve my coaching abilities."

While in Timmins,



Submitted photo

Garth Mitchell is back as an assistant coach for Team West at the 2010 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge.

Mitchell will have the opportunity to watch the other teams practice and play games. He will also get the opportunity to talk to other coaches—both from Canada and other nations—about different coaching strategies.

Mitchell, who will be assisting head coach Mike Vandenberghe from Regina

Beach along with Melville's Jamie Fiesel and Winnipeg's Dan Eliasson, said the coaching staffs from the other four Canadian teams are usually fairly open with their discussions. The international coaches, however, are a little more reserved. He said the language barrier is partially to blame for that as well.

Mitchell and Team West's coaching staff have a difficult challenge ahead of them at the World Under-17 Hockey Challenge.

Team West, which finished fourth last year, has been put in a pool with Sweden, Finland, Quebec and Ontario. Quebec and Ontario are traditionally strong teams and usually get a few extra practices since all the players are from a single province.

Team West won't have that luxury.

"We don't have any time to get together before the tournament," said Mitchell. "Basically we'll all meet in the airport in Toronto. We'll have the opportunity for a couple of practices before our only exhibition game against the Czech Republic and then we get right into our round-robin play. From a coaching staff perspective, it's a real challenge to get the team up to speed as quickly as we can."

It may not take too long for the team to get up to speed since it will have a defence-first mentality.

"I don't think we're going to be an offensively dynamic team," said Mitchell. "I think goal scoring is going to come as a premium, but we have a lot of good two-way forwards that are going to be able to contribute some offence and will definitely be good defensively."

"I think the strength of our team is going to be on our defence. I think we have a really good defensive crew and I think our goaltending is going to be solid as well. I think we're going to be a team that will be difficult to play against and try to limit good scoring opportunities against and capitalize on the ones we do get."

And there is a lot of pressure on Team West to perform well at the event.

Hockey Canada states in its mandate that it wants to see Canadian teams sweep the medals, and teams must finish in first or second place in their pool to qualify for the medal round.

There is also pressure from within to show how talented hockey players are in the Prairies even though the population isn't as high as Ontario's or Quebec's.

"As for Team West going into the tournament, it's always a proving ground for us," said Mitchell. "Definitely the Ontarios and Quebecs and the Pacifics (B.C. and Alberta) have people with higher credentials and more players playing major junior than what we have. So we always look at it as an opportunity to prove our strength as Team West and show the calibre of players we have in Manitoba and Saskatchewan."

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# Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

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Submitted photo

Kristy Stewart and Jocelyn Fisk met this person while they were on the field for the Grey Cup's halftime show that featured Blue Rodeo.



Submitted photo

TJ Shire, Joel Merkosky, Aaron Norton and Dominique Lamotte at McMahon Stadium during the 97th Grey Cup.

## Grey Cup devastating but enjoyable

BY CHRIS JASTER

Joel Merkosky couldn't move. He just sat in his seat in Section Q at McMahon Stadium after Damon Duval's game-winning 33-yard field goal sent him into shock.

"My jaw dropped," he said. "We couldn't move or think a lot for 20 minutes. It was just . . . wow."

"I just sat there and watched them award the outstanding player award to Avon Cobourne. I didn't even care about the awards of the Cup, we just couldn't leave."

Garry Beckett was sitting in the end zone, right behind the uprights the game-winning field goal went through. He knew Duval's initial 43-yard attempt was wide as soon as it left the kicker's foot.

"We thought we had it," he said. "I thought 'Oh my God, we're actually going to win this! Yay! If we blow hard enough we'll blow that ball out of the uprights.'"

"Then when he kicked it I could see he missed it right away. Then one of the players went down on his knees on the field and one of the refs told him as he was running past him it was a penalty on us. The guy was on his stomach basically and I couldn't believe it."

Beckett was like most Rider fans and quietly left the stadium immediately after Montreal won the game. Like most people dressed in green and white, he realized the trip was enjoyable, even though the result didn't go his way.

In fact, the Moosomin town councillor, who went to Calgary with his daughter Kari, even made it on TSN.

The pair went to McMahon Stadium around noon for the pre-game tailgate party. The party stopped for a bit, so they could help the official broadcaster of the Canadian Football League.

"They had a band there revving up the crowd and they led us through an introduction of TSN's Grey Cup coverage," said Beckett, who was at the Grey Cup for the first time. "We all had to practice our line for the opening credits for the credits for TSN."

"Our line was 'You're watching the Grey Cup on TSN. Go Riders go!' Then the place went nuts and the band was just givin' er and smoke was flowing out and people were jumping all over the place and going crazy. But they made us do it a half dozen times before we got it right because it was garbled, so we finally got it in unison."



Submitted photo

Garry Beckett and his daughter, Kari, sat in the north end zone at McMahon Stadium for the Grey Cup.

Jocelyn Fisk and Krista Stewart didn't just get on TV, they also got on to the field for the halftime show.

The pair were approached by two Winnipeg Blue Bomber cheerleaders during the second quarter and were asked if they were willing to sign a waiver so they could watch Blue Rodeo's performance from in front of the stage.

"The people sitting behind us said go for it," said Stewart, who sat in the southwest corner of the stadium. "So I signed this thing not even knowing what it said, just knowing that they'd give me a wristband and I'd get to go on the field."

"It was a whole different perspective on not the game, but the atmosphere itself. We were looking up from what the players would see and it was just wow. It was a neat feeling to look up."

"It was so much fun," added Fisk, who is grateful to her coworkers who switched shifts to allow her attend her first Grey Cup. "You looked up at the crowd and realized how much green there actually was in the crowd. Everyone that went down

there was ready to party and we were winning, so we were pretty pumped."

And there was a lot of green in Calgary. Green was virtually the only color people could see as they rounded the corner from the C-Train station to the bridge that took them to McMahon Stadium. Calgary even sold out of watermelons during the weekend.

Even though Roughrider fans completely overtook Calgary, Rob Austin found the Calgary residents were still enjoyable to be around.

"It was all good fun," said the dentist who used his brother-in-law's season tickets. "We traded barbs back and forth. A lot of Calgary people were probably rooting for Saskatchewan, but we were surrounded by a group of long-term season-ticket holders who were hoping Calgary would have gotten in. But it was all good fun."

Even though the Grey Cup is supposed to be Canada's party, none of Beckett, Merkosky, Austin, Fisk and Stewart didn't attend any official Grey Cup festivities outside of the pre-game tailgate party at

McMahon Stadium.

Austin, who was attending his fourth Grey Cup, decided to spend time with family in Calgary. Merkosky, Fisk and Stewart decided not to wait four hours to get into Riderville, so they hit Calgary's bar scene instead.

Merkosky—as well as TJ Shire, Aaron Norton and Dominique Lamotte who he went to Grey Cup with—also hit the bars after the game before making the long trip back to Rocanville.

If their low spirits from the end of the Grey Cup game didn't make the trip seem long, the weather sure did.

"We drove back on the Monday," said Merkosky. "It was awful weather. Between Swift Current and Moose Jaw the storm started. There were two storms, one was behind us and the other ahead of us. It was just brutal. We slowly made our way to Regina and then stayed there and drove in the morning."

Despite not enjoying the final four seconds of the game, everyone agreed the weekend was a lot of fun and they think the Riders will be back in the Grey Cup next year.

"It was a wonderful experience," said Beckett. "It was a great thing to do with my daughter. She's not a rabid Rider fan, but she has her eyes open."

"She said she hardly knew any university students going, so she's going to be bragging about being there. I bought her a T-shirt so she could rub it in to her friends. If they only won it would have been a little sweeter."

"There's always next year and with the way they played on Sunday they'll be back," said Austin, who lost his voice from screaming at the game. "They're a good solid team. They play as a team and you could see that on Sunday. There's no hot dogs and a good quarterback. They have a bright future."

And it sounds like the Riders may have company whenever they return to battle for the trophy donated by Earl Grey.

"We're already planning for next year," said Stewart.

"And we'll be a lot more hungry for the Cup next year," added Fisk.

"We've already made a pact we're going to every one from now on," said Merkosky, who made the pact with the three other people he went with. "It was a ton of fun other than the one hour between the dirty flags and the bar. It was still a lot of fun though."

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# Froese turns writing and art into rural tribute

"Colour has always made my heart beat faster," says journalist Christalee Froese, who is best known for her Rural Roots column and dedication to promoting small-town Saskatchewan.

While writing has been the focus of the Montmartre resident's life for over 20 years, painting was something she discovered recently.

"I was on the Board of the Centre 48 arts and education centre and they needed to fill an acrylic painting class," says Froese, adding that she had no idea at the time that she could paint. "I thought I'd help out by being the fifth person in the class, making it possible for the course to run."

With Glenavon's Beryl Fournier as her teacher, Froese loved the class, but her art work was not very good.

"I actually threw away the landscape painting I had done in the class because it was really awful - I should have kept it for evidence," chuckles Froese. "When I look back, I guess I just hadn't found the right subject matter yet."

A sunflower on the cover of a magazine caught Froese's attention about a year later, and with the paints from her art class still in her closet, she gave the flower a try.

"When I was finally brave enough to start showing people my paintings, they were amazed and very en-

couraging," says the writer and painter. "That kind of gave me the boost I needed to continue painting and trying other mediums like oil painting."

This year Froese combined her love of writing and art to produce an art card that pays tribute to rural communities. The card features one of Froese's oil paintings on the front, and a tribute poem to small-town Saskatchewan on the back.

This art card, and others, are now being carried in various local gift shops: Flower's First in Indian Head; Kipling's More than Just Flowers; and Sisters' Boutique and JoJo Beads in

Montmartre.

The gift shop in Regina's Government House is now also carrying Froese's art and art cards, a development that still surprises her.

"They phoned the other day and said a painting had sold and I just couldn't believe it," says Froese. "I'm still getting used to the idea that people actually want to hang my work on their walls."

Right: Christalee Froese poses with some of her paintings.

Below: Some of Froese's paintings.



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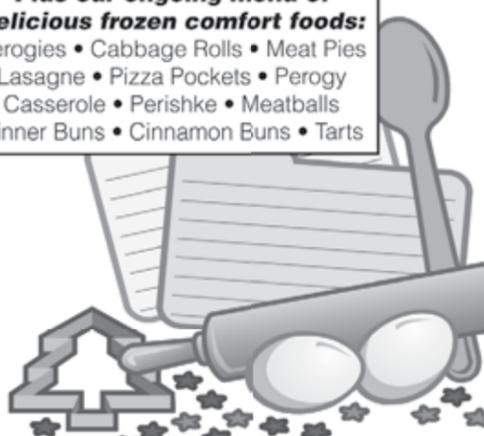
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# I had a brother . . .

Grief, I think, is hard to understand. It's hard to put into words. I guess that's why, when faced with loss, it leaves us at such a loss. It leaves us with that "heart too full, hands too empty" kind of feeling.

I think that for many, it is a constant companion. I know that it is for me. A hole was torn into me, a rend that hope doesn't mend and joy can't patch. It's a dull pain that I've just gotten used to, like an old injury that aches so constantly you don't really deign to notice it anymore, until something pokes at it and it flares up, raw and fresh. Sometimes it doesn't feel like a hole at all, but more like a lump. A dark tumor that my body has embraced, a hard and heavy dead thing that I can't ever put down or put out.

Grief, I guess, can be compared to an impossible relative. It's not something I can ever make sense of or expect to be able to control completely, but it's something I have to live with. Because it's not going away.

Three years ago this November my 18-year-old brother died in a car crash.

Another interesting thing about grief is how horribly common it is. It's like a bad stain; it blemishes and clouds your world view, injures your sense of self. Then you start looking around, you start talking to your friends and neighbors, and you learn that you've gained membership in a club that's none too select.

People you've known, some for weeks, some for decades, people who have been walking around in their lives—unconcerned some might seem—well, you learn they're carrying their own big black rock too. We used to hire a girl to watch the kids. Her sister was murdered. A guy who chops wood for my mom every winter, his grandbaby died in his arms, of cancer. The widow who sits by herself in front of us during Sunday worship; pneumonia took her baby as they tried to make their way through the snow to the doctor, so many years ago. Sometimes I don't know how we bear it, but we do. We just do, because there's no other choice. You can't fight it; you just have to take it.

Despite all of the difficult things that had happened to me before my brother died, like overcoming childhood abuse, being diagnosed with cancer, getting out of a dangerous marriage, and nursing a sickly child that some questioned would survive, I never lost my feeling of invulnerability. You know, that adolescent, absolute, "nothing can really touch me," feeling. I remember, in my



**Monique McKay**

youth, walking through early morning fist fights in dark Montreal bars, unconcerned. No one was going to hit me. They'd see it was me, mid-punch, and they would stop. Foolishly, I expected the same of the universe. My near brushes with tragedy only seemed to reinforce my self-deceptive "magical thinking."

My brother died in a street racing incident. The night of the crash, over 50 kids and parents were milling around on the highway, wrapped in blankets, holding each other, crying. You would have thought it was a plane crash, not a car wreck, and all those stumbling people were the walking wounded. Anyway, my mom decided that since Dan was so young and kids are so crazy, it would do the community good to have a viewing. So we set up an open casket at the funeral home and invited the high school.

About 200 kids came, came and went. They came shuffling in alone and looking at their feet, and in great crying clusters. Some looked and left, and some stayed for hours, gossiping in groups on the orange plastic chairs, and there always seemed to be someone busting out in a Beatles song, with others picking up on the chorus. The funeral director, oddly, was thrilled. "This is really good for them," he told me, delighted. He took my arm, in sudden concern. "Did your brother like babies?" he asked me. "Umm, he liked mine." "Oh good," he said, relieved, "it's just him and a little baby I'll have down there tonight. A little baby named Neveah." He patted my arm, doing his best to extend his strange comfort. "That's heaven spelled backwards," he added helpfully.

I didn't stay all night, at the viewing. My father and his wife and I went and drank scotch in a tiny hotel bar, leaving the teenagers to their adolescent grieving rituals. Before I left, one of Dan's childhood friends approached me, and asked if he could have the hemp necklace Dan was wearing around his neck. He had asked it of my mother and she had said yes.

I approached the coffin and looked at my brother. He

was wearing a brand new straw cowboy hat that my father and I had purchased for him, because the battered one he practically slept in was ruined in the crash. I looked at him very carefully, because I knew it would be a long time until I saw him again, and I was unwilling to accept that. I reached behind his neck to undue the bead clasp of the necklace, and handed it unseeing to Brett. Once my hand was on my brother's flesh, it was hard to take it back. I was surprised at how cold he was. His skin was heavy and resisting against mine. My palm was splayed on his chest, over his heart. I could feel the fine stitches in his skin, from the autopsy. And I willed him to breathe. And he wouldn't. That is the moment I learned just how vulnerable and exposed I am.

As hard as it is to have lost my brother, I think it must pale when compared to how hard it is for my mother to have lost her son. I say quite frequently that we never really want to learn exactly how strong we are, exactly how much we can bear. The limits of my own strength and endurance are something I hope I am never forced to meet. I think about this when I look at my mother, and at my four young sons.

My mother was up recently, and we were hanging around in the bathroom, the way girls will. She was putting on her mascara and we were gossiping, listening to the boys playing Lego in the room across the hall. She stopped, the wand poised, and her eyes met mine in the mirror. "You know, sometimes I wonder, 'Did I ever even have a son?'"

It's like that. It's either like he was never here, or like he just died yesterday. My husband never met him. He is a legend, a story to three of our children. Our dead are like our very young babies; they're truly precious only to us. To everyone else, they kind of look the same.

Anyway, Dan was eight years younger than me. Oddly, we looked a lot alike. We were mistaken for twins from when he was about seventeen. When he died I shaved my head and wore his jacket around town for awhile. Scared the crap out of a few kids he went to school with.

The other day I cut my hair. It was pretty long, and I was beginning to feel lost in it. As 12 inches of hair hit the floor at the hairdresser's, I saw the bones and plains of my face emerge. And I saw something else. Rather, someone else. Older, stronger, with thinner lips and a sharper chin, but the same eyebrows and cheekbones. And I thought to myself, yes, mom, you had a son once. And I a brother.

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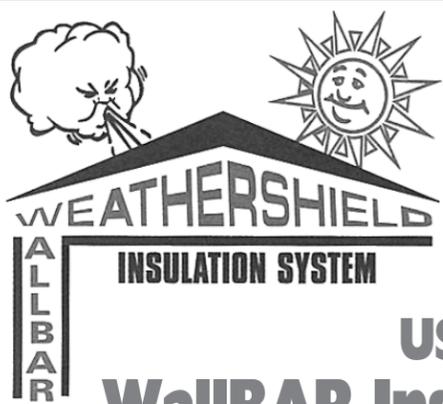
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Snowmaking at Aseissippi Ski Area and Resort.

# Aseissippi Ski area opening Dec. 18

Finally after such a beautiful November it seems winter is here and for those in the ski industry not a moment too soon.

Aseissippi Ski Area and Resort made the decision last week to move their tentative opening date from December 11 to the 18.

"Now that the temperatures have dropped we will be able to get the snow flying," said Roz Pulo, director of marketing for Aseissippi Resort.

The science behind snowmaking is fairly simple but it is dependant on two uncontrolled factors: Temperature and humidity. This is also referred to as Wet Bulb temperature.

There are a number of different snowmaking methods available but Aseissippi Ski Area and Resort utilizes two high pressure water forced systems capable of converting 1,400 gallons of water into snow per minute under

ideal conditions. Aseissippi can begin to produce good quality snow when the temperature reaches about minus 10 if the humidity is low. The humidity affects evaporation, or the amount of heat a tiny droplet of water can release as it is blown high into the air. When there is high humidity less evaporation can occur and the droplet of water cannot crystallize or will remain slushy.

At Aseissippi there are two pumping houses, one at the bottom of the Squirrel Chair and the second installed in 2007 is located at the bottom of the Porcupine Chair. Water from these pump houses is moved underground to the over 80 hydrants strategically placed over the resort.

The snow crew manually connects either a snow pix or snow gun to a water hydrant and can direct snow into all areas of the resort. A snow pix or gun

is left in place for a number of hours (24-48 hours, or more depending on conditions). This creates a large pile of snow. The amount of snow or how many piles of snow are required for each run does vary on the width and features of each run. The piles of snow are then left to "dry" as excess water drains away for up to 48 hours.

Once the snow pile is dry the snow is spread evenly over the run using one of the two Snow Cats (Caterpillars). This process can take up to 8-16 hours on just one run. The snow is again left to dry and measured to ensure there is a good two-foot base over most of the run. In some areas where special features will be installed, like jumps, rails or moguls, extra snow is left.

Final grooming is done within the last few days before opening and any fresh snow will be tilled into the mixture, leaving a wonder-

ful corduroy surface for guests to enjoy.

Aseissippi also stockpiles additional snow and hides it in sheltered areas. This is so they will have an adequate supply of snow in the spring. While all of the runs at Aseissippi face north to protect the snow there are a few spots that will begin to melt, at which time

they will just move that stored snow out of hiding and will be ready for excellent spring skiing until the very last day.

This season the resort will remain open for the Easter break until Wednesday, April 7, 2010.

The forecast is showing a good decrease in temperatures in December and all

of our snowmaking crews are standing by. Watch our website [www.aseissippi.com](http://www.aseissippi.com) for snowmaking progress.

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

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Holiday late nights to 6 pm

## HOLIDAY HOURS

Dec. 18-23	9:00 am - 8:00 pm
Dec. 24	9:00 am - 4:30 pm
Dec. 25	- Resort Closed -
Dec. 26-30	9:00 am - 8:00 pm
Dec. 31	9:00 am - 11:45 pm
Jan. 1 - 2	9:00 am - 8:00 pm
Jan. 3	9:00 am - 4:30 pm

All hours/days are tentative.

See [www.aseissippi.com](http://www.aseissippi.com) for updates.

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# Work continues on Bell Barn at Indian Head

Hahn Construction began work on the final phase of reconstruction of the Bell Barn north of Indian Head in early November. The Fort Qu'Appelle firm will be responsible for installing the concrete floor and building the wooden loft and roof structure of the barn. Construction activity is expected to continue through to the end of March.

"The first phase of construction, the rebuilding of the stone wall, went well and was actually completed ahead of schedule," reports Jerry Willerth of the Bell Barn Society's construction committee. "Hahn Construction is now taking over for the remainder of the work."

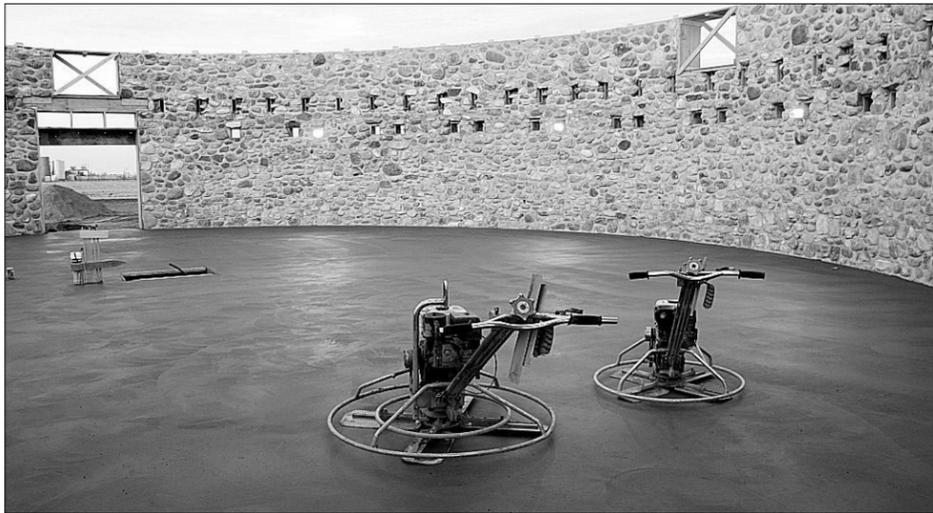
In preparation for Hahn's activities at the site, the parking lot had to be cleared out and the piles of rocks left over from wall construction had to be hauled away. This was done in late October, and the parking lot is now ready to be used as a storage area for the wood and equipment required for the upcoming construction.

Hahn workers started by preparing the floor area of the barn, and the concrete was poured on Friday, November 6th. The original horse barn, built back in 1882, did not have a concrete floor, but the reconstructed barn, which will house an interpretive center, will have a floor of concrete.



Dan Loran photo

November 6, 2009 Hahn's concrete crew hard at work on the barn floor.



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2006 Chev X Cab 4x4 White 85,000 km ..... \$16,995	2005 Monte Carlo SS, Leather, S.C. Blue 77,000 km ..... \$14,995
2005 Chev X Cab 4x4, White 121,000 km ..... \$15,995	2005 G6 4 dr, V6, 115,000 kms, Grey, ..... \$9,995
2005 GMC Quad Cab 4x4, Pewter 199,000 km ..... \$13,995	2004 Impala Tan, 98,000 km ..... \$7,995
2005 Dodge 1500 Hemi, Quad Cab, 4x4, Blue 96,000 km ..... \$16,995	2005 Aveo Ltd. auto, Beige 111,000 km ..... \$5,995
2005 Dodge 1500 Quad Cab, 4.7L, 4x4, Grey 91,000 km ..... \$16,995	2004 Aveo LS auto, Orange, 83,000 km ..... \$5,995
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2004 Chev X Cab 4x4, Silver 125,000 km ..... \$14,995	2001 Sunfire 4 dr, auto, Silver 101,000 km ..... \$5,995
2004 Dodge 1500 Quad Cab 2WD Black, 124,000 km ..... \$10,995	2002 Sunfire 2 dr, auto, Silver 130,000 km ..... \$4,995
2003 Dodge 1500 Cab 4x4, Diesel, Black 240,000 km ..... \$14,995	2001 Grand Am 4 dr, auto, Brown, 163,000 km ..... \$5,995
2003 Dodge 1500 Quad Cab 4x4 Black, 155,000 km ..... \$13,995	2000 Grand Prix (GTP) 4 dr, Super Charged, Red, 223,000 km ..... \$5,995
2003 Chev 3500 X Cab 4x4, Dualy, Diesel, Grey 230,000 km ..... \$15,995	1998 Escort 2 dr, 5 spd., Zx2 White, 130,000 km ..... \$3,995
2003 Chev 2500 X Cab 4x4, Diesel, Black 240,000 km ..... \$14,995	1997 Mustang GT V8 5 spd., 2dr, Black, 150,000 km ..... \$8,995
2002 Ford XLT X Cab 4x4, Red 131,000 km ..... \$8,995	1994 Olds Delta 88 V6, Black 225,000 km ..... \$1,995
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2006 Chev Equinox LT AWD, Black 137,000 km ..... \$13,995
2005 Chev Uplander 7 pass., Grey, 99,000 km ..... \$9,995
2005 Grand Caravan, Beige, 175,000 km ..... \$7,995
2005 Jeep Liberty 4x4, V6, Auto, 115,000 km ..... \$11,995
2004 Chev Venture White, 110,000 km ..... \$8,995
2004 PT. Cruiser Auto, Grey, 90,000 km ..... \$7,995
2003 Explorer Sport XLT 2 dr, Leather, 4x4, Black 123,000 km ..... \$9,995
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2001 Chev Savanna 15 Passenger, ..... \$8,995
2001 Suzuki GR, Vitara LTD 4x4, Grey 165,000 km ..... \$6,995

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2007 Chrysler 300 Touring AWD	3.5L, leather htd seats, loaded, 72,000 km	silver steel	\$19,995
2005 Chrysler Sebring Touring	V6, auto, a/t/c, pw, pdl, 120,000 km	min gray	\$9,995
2005 Buick LeSabre Custom	3.8L, auto, 156,000 km, all power options	white	\$9,995
2004 Pontiac Bonneville SE	3.8L, V6, auto, all power options, 189,000 km	gray	\$9,995
2004 Chrysler PT Cruiser	2.4L, 4 cyl, a/t/c, pdl, pw, 125,000 km	gold	\$10,995
2004 PT Cruiser	2.4L, turbo, loaded w/ leather	black	\$9,995
2002 Chrysler Concorde LXI	V6, auto, loaded, leather, 262,000 km	brown	\$4,995
2002 Chrysler Concorde LXI	V6, auto, loaded, cloth, 171,000 km	silver steel	\$5,900

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2007 Dodge Ram 1500 Laramie Q/C 4x4	5.7L, loaded, 120,000 km	black	\$26,900
2006 Dodge Ram 1500 SLT Q/C 4WD, Hemi	5.7L, HEMI, 107,000 km	flame red	\$24,995
2006 Dodge Ram 1500 SLT Q/C 2WD, Hemi	5.7L, HEMI, MDS, all power options, 107,000 km	khaki	\$18,995
2006 Dodge Ram 2500 SLT Q/C 4WD	5.7L, HEMI, auto, all power options, 72,000 km	red	\$24,900
2005 Dodge Ram 1500 SLT Q/C 4WD, Hemi	5.7L, HEMI, all power options, 94,000 km	Black	\$18,995
2002 Dodge Ram 1500 Q/C 4WD	4.7L, auto, pdl, pw, all power option, 120,000	red	\$14,995
2001 Dodge Ram 1500 SLT Q/C 2WD	5.2L, auto, a/t/c, pdl, pw, 132,000 km	brown	\$8,900

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2004 Ford Ranger Edge 2WD SuperCab	4.0L, V6 auto, a/t/c, pdl, pw, 90,000 kms	gray	\$9,995
2003 Ford F-150 XLT S/C	V8, auto, all power options	black	\$13,995

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2008 Jeep Compass North 4x4	2.4L, a/t/c, pdl, pw, sunroof, 49,000 km	black	\$18,995
2006 Jeep Liberty Sport	V6, auto, a/t/c, pdl, 126,000 km	khaki	\$15,995
2006 Jeep Liberty Sport Diesel	2.8L, auto, a/t/c, pdl	green	\$17,995
2003 Dodge Durango SLT Plus	4.7L, fully loaded leather	silver	\$14,995
2003 Jeep Liberty Sport 4x4	3.7L, auto, a/t/c, pdl, pw, 172,000 km	silver	\$9,995**

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2008 Dodge Grand Caravan SXT	3.3L, auto, a/t/c, pdl, pw, Sto-N-Go, 30,000 kms	inferno	\$23,995
2007 Dodge Caravan SXT	3.3L, auto, all power options, 69,000 km	black	\$17,995
2007 Dodge Gr. Caravan SE	3.3L, auto, DVD, Sto-N-Go, 67,000 km	white	\$17,995
2006 Dodge Caravan SE	3.3L, a/t/c, pdl, pw, Quad seats, 67,000 km	butane bl	\$16,900
2005 Dodge Gr Caravan SE	3.3L, auto, all power options, pwr door pkg, 70,000 km	gold	\$15,995
2005 Dodge Gr Caravan SE	3.3L, auto, a/t/c, pdl, pw, Sto-N-Go, 87,000 km	gold	\$15,995
2004 Pontiac Montana SE Extended	V6, auto, 68,000 km, all options,	grey	\$12,995

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Kevin Weedmark photo

This was the scene from Highway 600 on Sunday, Dec. 6 where a CN train derailed near Spy Hill, Sask. The area was closed and designated a no-fly zone. The burning propane and plastic pellets that were loaded on the car continued to burn, sending a black plume of smoke into the sky.

# CN train derailed near Spy Hill

Crews were busy at work recently extinguishing a fire that sent up a thick plume of black smoke from the scene of a derailed Canadian National train near the Saskatchewan-Manitoba boundary.

Kevin Franchuk, a CN spokesman, says 36 cars left the tracks on the company's main line early on the morning of Saturday, Dec. 5 near the community of Spy Hill, Sask., but no

one was injured.

Propane and plastic pellets that were loaded on the cars caught fire, but Franchuk says environmental experts monitoring the site determined that the smoke did not pose a health hazard.

Six rural families in the area were ordered from the area as a precaution, but were allowed to return home temporarily to take care of any

urgent matters, while a safety perimeter remained in place around the accident site.

Highway 600, which runs close to the scene of the derailment, remained closed and a no-fly zone.

CN traffic on the main line was rerouted and Franchuk said a temporary track was being built around the site to allow for the return of regular scheduled service.

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# Sask leads in job numbers for six straight months

For the sixth consecutive month, Saskatchewan's unemployment rate is the lowest in Canada according to the November Labour Force Survey released Dec. 4 by Statistics Canada. Saskatchewan's rate of 5.2 per cent (seasonally adjusted), is well below the national rate of 8.5 per cent.

Among major Canadian cities, Saskatoon (4.6 per cent) and Regina (4.9 per cent) continue to lead the way, ranking first and second respectively.

After a couple of months of job losses, there were more people working in Saskatchewan in November. There were 521,600 people working in Saskatchewan in November 2009—900 more than in November 2008. Canada as a whole lost 193,700 jobs during that same period.

"Saskatchewan's growing number of jobs and low unemployment rate point to the relative strength of our economy compared to other parts of Canada," Advanced Education, Employment and Labour Minister Rob Norris said. "Through the worst of the recession, Saskatchewan's economy has remained strong and continued to create jobs."

Norris said the government is also working hard to help employees in those sectors hit by layoffs.

"We are always concerned when layoffs take place and we are working across the province to provide services and advice to all of those affected," Norris said. "As of September 30, our staff have assisted almost 3,500 Employment Insurance beneficiaries in becoming reemployed."

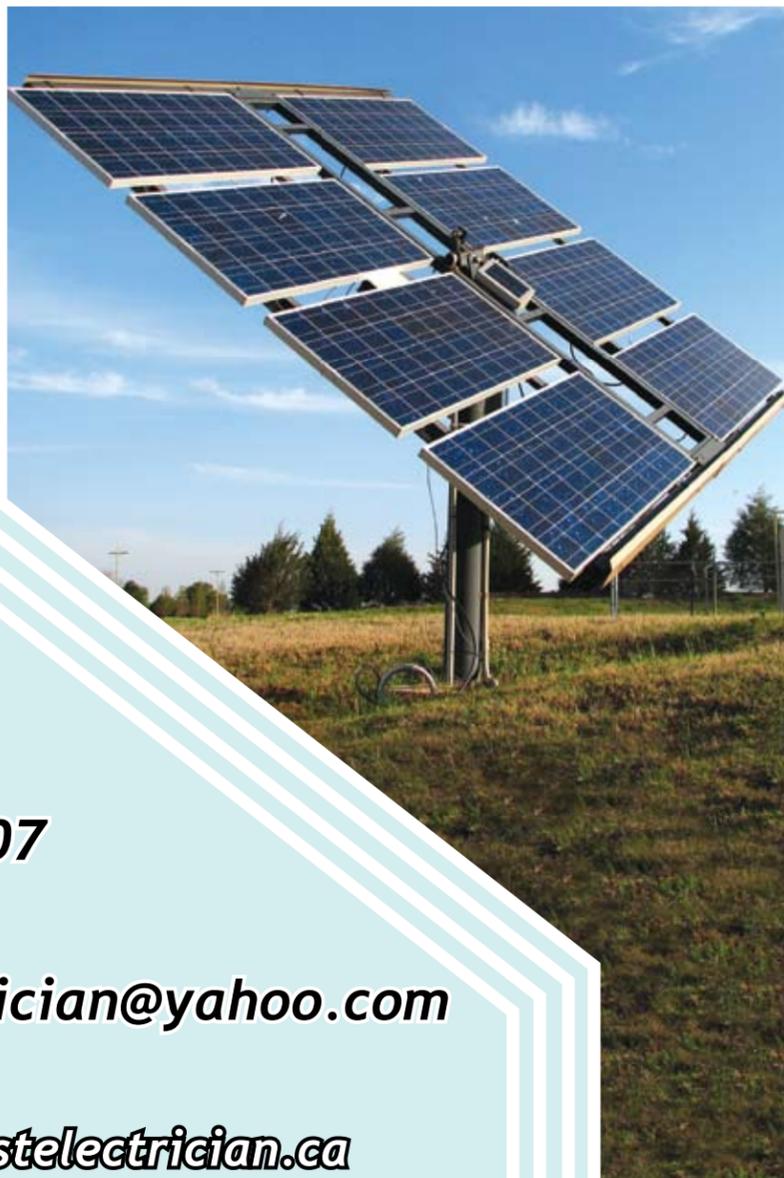
Norris also pointed to the saskjobs.ca website as a sign that opportunities are still available.

"Right now, there are more than 5,400 opportunities on saskjobs.ca," Norris said. "Since April 1, we've seen more than 70,000 vacancies posted to the site, including 7,900 in November."

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### COMBINES

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YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
1999	Caselh	2388	Axceller, specialty rotor, chopper, spreaders, rock trap, pu hdr w/ swathmaster pu	\$109,500
1997	NH	TX66	Chopper, pu	\$64,500
1994	MF	8570	Chopper, cs, swathmaster pu	\$48,000
1989	Caselh	1680	Chopper, spreaders, pu	SOLD
1986	Gleaner	R50	PU, chopper, spreaders	\$22,500

### COMBINE HEADERS

1996	NH	973	30', flex, PUR	\$12,500
1994	MF	9700	30' PUR	\$11,000
1991	MacDon	960	25' PUR	\$10,000
1994	Gleaner	400	25', PUR	\$9,500
1987	Gleaner	330	30', batt & air reel	\$7,500
1983	Gleaner	324	24', batt reel, fits L3	\$2,500
1997	MF	9700	30', HCC PUR	\$10,900

### HAY TOOLS

2008	MF	1756	5x6, auto tie, demo	BLOWOUT
2008	MF	3743	manure spreader, 430 bu., loaded	MUST GO
2008	MF	9125	18' hay hdr, loaded	DEMO
2002	Hesston	856A	5x6, full auto Mesh wrap	\$22,900
2001	Hesston	856A	5x6, Full Auto	\$19,900
1999	Hesston	565A	5x6	\$13,900
1999	Hesston	565A	5x6, auto tie	\$14,900
2000	NH	688	5x6 baler	COMING
2002	Hesston	1275	16' s/s, reverser	\$20,900
1999	MacDon	5000	16', s/s rollers	\$12,500
2002	MacDon	5020	16', s/s rollers	COMING
2005	Highline	7000	lh discharge	\$8,500
	Bale King	3100	rh discharge	COMING
2005	Bale King	3100	rh discharge, fine cut	\$10,900
2005	Bale King	3110	rh discharge, fine cut, grain tank	SOLD
	Morris	1400	Hay Hiker	COMING

### SWATHERS

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2000	MF	220 II	30', p/u reel, gauge wheels, sch drive	\$48,500
1999	MF	220 II	26' DS, PU reel, sch drive	\$46,500

### TRACTORS

1984	Steiger	CM325	325hp, duals, Atom Jet Hyd Kit	\$34,500
1981	JD	4840	180hp, duals, 5350 hrs	\$28,900
1983	MF	4880	300hp, duals, pto	\$23,900
1989	Deutz Allis	9130	135hp, fwa, 18 sp ps	COMING
1996	NH	8240	96hp, fwa, loader/grapple	COMING
2009	VERS	435	800 duals, loaded, 46 hrs, 145hp, loaded	SOLD
2008	MF	6480	145hp, loaded	RENTAL RETURN
2008	MF	5475	135hp, loaded	RENTAL RETURN

### COMPACT TRACTORS/LAWN & GARDEN

2001	MF	1225	24hp, diesel, fwa, hydro, ldr, mower, snowblower	\$18,900
2008	MF	RT470	3pt, 48" rototiller	\$1,900

### SEEDING & TILLAGE

2009	SEED HAWK 600	56' w/12" spacing, 600 bu cart, VR, loading auger, loaded	SOLD
1995	Flexi Coil 5000	34', 550 trip, 3 1/2" packers, double shoot, 2320 TBH cart, 3rd tank, loading auger, exc.	\$39,500
1999	SEED HAWK 357	44', 12" spacing, onboard seed and fertilizer, shedded	\$72,500

### MISCELLANEOUS

2005	Spray Air 4371	13"x71' swing auger, hopper mover, mint	\$16,500
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# Why men and women shop differently

They shuffle along with blank faces and dead eyes, unseeing, unthinking, lost in some private hell that you as passerby can only pray never similarly engulfs you. You scuttle by, eyes averted, as though they have some horrible contagion against which neither face masks, Tamiflu nor vaccination can defend . . . and yet the odds are that for all your precautions, before Christmas arrives you will join their tormented ranks.

What's that? Yes, zombies are big in pop culture right now, but what's that go to do with . . . ? Oh, I get it.

No, sorry, this column isn't about zombies. It's about husbands going shopping with their wives. It turns out there's a solid scientific explanation for why women shop the way they do . . . and why men find it baffling.

At least, that's the claim of Daniel Kruger of the University of Michigan School of Public Health. According to his study, about to be published in the Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology, it all goes back to our evolutionary heritage.

"It's perfectly natural that men often can't distinguish a sage sock from a beige sock or that sometimes women can't tell if the shoe department is due north or west from the escalator," is how the university's press release about the study puts it.

"From an evolutionary perspective, it all hearkens back to the skills that women used for gathering plant foods and the skills that men used for hunting meat," the press release continues.

Kruger conducted his study during a winter holiday trip with friends across Europe. (Nice work if you can get it!)

He says that after exploring sleepy little villages and finally reaching Prague, the first thing the women wanted to do was shop—and the men couldn't understand why.

It makes sense, though, if you think of it in terms of a gathering strategy, Kruger says. "Anytime you come into a new area you want to scope out the landscape and find out where the food patches are."

He points out that in hunter-gatherer societies, gathering edible plants and fungi is traditionally done by women. The women return to the same patches of land where they have previously successfully found food, usually staying close to home and using landmarks as guides.

Foraging is a daily activity, often social, he goes on, and can include young children if necessary. The gathering women have to be adept at recognizing the colors, textures and smells that ensure safe, quality food, and must also be able to recognize how long it takes a patch of land to regenerate a quantity of food after it has been harvested.

How does that translate to modern terms? Women, says Kruger, are much more likely than men to know when a specific type of item will go on sale, and spend much more time choosing the perfect fabric, color and texture. They're usually willing to take their kids shopping with them.

Men are usually the hunters in hunter-gatherer societies. Once they've killed something, it's important to get meat home as quickly as possible. Taking children along on a hunt isn't safe and could make success harder to achieve.



Edward Willett

Fast-forward to modern times: Men usually have a specific item in mind from a store, and want to go in, get it, and get out as quickly as possible, preferably unhindered by having to look after a child at the same time.

Having made that connection, though, Kruger backs away from it a little bit, admitting that of course these

behaviors aren't genetically determined and don't apply to everyone. Nevertheless, they're common enough stereotypes that he believes there's value in considering them as a result of what his paper calls "evolved foraging psychology."

"The value is in understanding each other—both your own shopping strategy and the strategy of the complementary sex," Kruger says. "It helps demystify behaviors—guys, myself included, have been puzzled by why women shop the way they do."

Similarly, women can have a hard time understanding a man's aversion to shopping, he says.

As for practical applications beyond mutual understanding—well, Kruger doesn't mention any, but personally I think the next time I'm asked to go shopping, I'll demur on the grounds I have to go kill a woolly mammoth for supper.

I'm sure that will be an acceptable excuse. Won't it, dear?

Edward Willett is a freelance writer in Regina, Sask.

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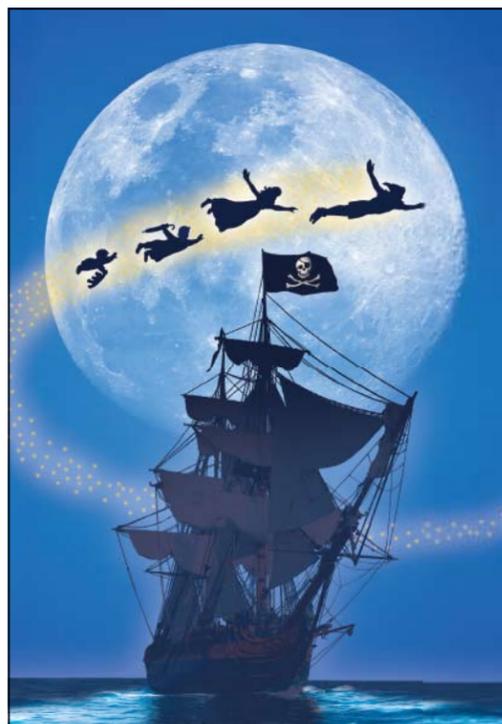
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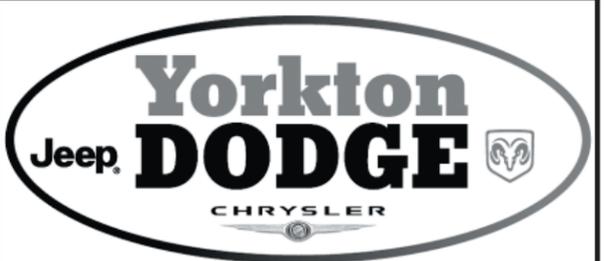
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# Sask girl's honey heads to Whistler, Afghanistan

A Grade 10 Saskatoon student is reaching out to the world with her honey, in hopes of creating a sweet-spot for her Saskatchewan-made product.

In December, 14-year-old Nicole Hein was showcasing her "honey in a tube" at the Whistler Film Festival, in addition to shipping out tubes of the locally-made produced delicacy to Afghanistan. And this March, her honey will be featured in Ottawa as part of Agriculture Canada's museum display called "Bees, A Honey of an Idea."

"It still amazes me how many doors have opened since I came up with the idea of honey in a tube and decided to jump into business," says Hein, who founded Tu-Bees Honey in 2007 in an effort to pay for the horse of her dreams.

With business taking off, Hein is thrilled to now have her horse Diesel, as well as spare change to take care of him.

"I call him my honey

horse," says Hein, who came up with the unique idea of creamed honey in a tube when she was just 11 years old. "I sometimes still can't believe that I actually own a horse and that I now have a thriving business too."

The story of a young girl, and the lengths she went to for a horse, caught the attention of an upscale Vancouver gift company that showcased Tu-Bees honey at the Whistler Film Festival (Dec. 3-6).

"Nicole contacted me by email some time ago and I immediately thought that this product is innovative and it's a cool Canadian brand that is family run and comes with such a great story," says Gabrielle Durning of The Uptown GiftBox Company. "There could not be a greater appeal than the fact that such a young person started this great company to fuel her passion."

The Uptown GiftBox Company placed Tu-Bees honey, paired with Saskatoon tea and chocolates,

into "swag bags" that went out to some of North America's top film producers, actors and A-list media members.

While Tu-Bees honey is widely available in Saskatchewan, the 14-year-old entrepreneur says getting Tu-Bees out to an upscale North American crowd is an exciting opportunity.

"This opens up a whole new audience for us, and because Tu-Bees was given out along with a unique travel mug for tea, we think people would use the honey right away in their hotel rooms and immediately see what an ingenious idea honey in a tube is."

Tu-Bees honey will be making another trek in December, this time to Afghanistan.

"I think it will just be cool to give the soldiers a bit of a taste of home," says the Grade 10 business whiz. "I just think it's a nice gesture and I've always wanted to give something back, and now I can."



Nicole Hein with her horse Diesel and a tube of her "Tu-Bees" honey (left). Hein has used her Tu-Bees honey to pay for Diesel, the horse of her dreams. The idea of honey in a tube came to Nicole when she was only 11 years old.

## Tax changes promote job growth in potash

Incentives have been introduced for Saskatchewan's potash industry to encourage the creation of more corporate office jobs in the province.

Effective January 1, 2010, a deduction in determining the profit tax portion of The Potash Production Tax will apply to each new corporate office job located in the province. A lesser deduction will apply to positions already located in Saskatchewan. After five years, each new job would be treated as an existing job.

Energy and Resources Minister Bill Boyd said the changes represent a "win-win" situation for Saskatchewan.

"The net effect is expected to be an increased corporate presence in Saskatchewan for one of its key resource industries," Boyd said. "There are the obvious economic spin-offs that increased employment offers. It also reinforces Saskatchewan's positive climate for economic growth. This is a good place to be for all phases of your operation, not just primary production."

The cost of the incentive in foregone tax revenue should be offset by the additional revenue generated through job creation in the form of more corporate office positions located in the province.

Three companies currently operate mines in the province. Planned expansions to existing mines are expected to mean an additional \$9.4 billion in investment by 2020. A number of other companies are also exploring the possibility of developing new mines.

Boyd said the mining industry continues to be a primary engine of growth

in Saskatchewan.

"This province's potash reserves are massive," Boyd said. "Despite the cooling-off in sales in 2009, the various expansion

plans show the industry remains committed to the province. We want to see all phases of their operations here. That's what this is about."



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Lisa Hebert, Curtis Taylor, and Tyson Coleman played the roles of the Holy Family and Pedro the donkey helped set the scene at Moosomin's third annual Bethlehem Live Nov. 27 and 28.



Guide Greg Nosterud leads a group through a tour of Bethlehem Live.



Dan and Deanna MacDonald offer their pottery for sale in the noisy, crowded marketplace, one of the most lively and vibrant areas on the tour.

Ed James photos

# Great crowds, great weather for Bethlehem Live

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK  
Organizers were happy with the turnout as hundreds of people attended Moosomin's third annual Bethlehem Live event Nov. 27 and 28.

The warm weather those nights also made things go very well for the actors involved.

"I think the weather co-operated with us very nicely," said assistant coordinator Isabelle Dietrich. "I think we were really blessed with the weather."

A total of 757 people toured through Bethlehem Live over the two days. "We received a phenomenal response from the community," said Dietrich.

Dietrich said everything went well from her standpoint.

"The actors did an excellent job in playing their roles, the entertainment in the church was excellent—it's hard to believe what incredible talent we have in our area," she said.

"Everything just seemed to come together. It was wonderful."

She said the committee already has some ideas for how to improve and expand Bethlehem Live next year.

"We have lots of ideas for how we can improve it next year," Dietrich said. "The actors did a very good job, but I think there are ways we can improve their job even more. Even in the marketplace we see where we can add things for next year."

Dietrich said she was happy with the turnout for the event.

"I'm just very pleased

with how many people came out, and that everyone seemed to enjoy it or get something out of it.

"There are people who went on the tour for the first time and the kids wanted to go do it over again right away."

One thing Dietrich would like to improve is

the outreach to neighboring communities.

"Next year I would like to reach out to other communities more," she said. "I think each year when you're organizing it, you think what could we do better, and I think that's one thing we could improve."

Dietrich said it was fun being involved in the event for the second time.

"It is absolutely as fun the second time," she said. "I've been involved for two years, and I found it very very rewarding last year because I had never been involved with it before. This time I

knew what to expect and I found it rewarding and enjoyable.

"I encourage people to get involved in any way they can. I think everyone who is involved really enjoys it."

Dietrich said she has only heard good things from people who attend-

ed the event.

"Feedback I got was all good," she said. "There was a lot of encouragement from the people. People enjoyed everything from the talent in the sanctuary to the actors to the marketplace. Everyone involved should be proud of themselves."

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# I've tried and tried, and I just can't stop

I can't stop. After all of this time, I just can't stop. Oh, I've tried—believe you me.

I've tried gripping my steering wheel with a python-like embrace, I've tried avoiding eye contact with my fellow drivers, and I've even tried driving with my head down (I don't recommend this and nor do my curb-clipping shock absorbers).

The fact is, I just can't stop waving at other drivers. Now, it's not a big wave, so I don't feel too bad. It's just a little itchy bitsy wave. You know, the one-fingered variety.

Without even directing my index finger in any way, it'll just pop up unexpectedly and give a wave all on its own.

Having driven in the city a lot, I do know better than to wave at every car. Experience has taught me that you can sure *try* to get a "wave-back" from every vehicle on the Ring Road, but the success rate is rather low (try zero per cent).

So I can't blame this strange "one-finger-wave" affliction on ignorance—I do know better. I know I don't know any of these anonymous drivers, so why would I wave at them. I know they don't know me. I know they couldn't



**Christalee Froese**

be bothered to lift their index finger for a complete stranger. I know waving at every single vehicle in the city is not an effective use of my time or finger strength. I know. I know.

But yet, when I least expect it, that finger independently makes the split-second decision to wave all by itself. It has a mind of its own—I swear. It's sure not my mind saying, "How about you wave at all 25 strangers that are currently driving your way."

To cover my addiction, I've become particularly adept at "covering up" the finger wave by bringing my raised finger up to scratch my nose, while avoiding eye contact with my fellow drivers by pretending to look in the rear-view mirror.

But, unfortunately, 40 years of small-town conditioning can't be covered up so easily. You see, I've spent my whole life watching just about everybody I know wave that way. So how could I help but become a finger waver with that kind of constant influence on me.

I tried not waving one time, only to be called "stuck up" by a long-time friend (true story). So, now I don't dare let my index finger get too comfortable as I'm driving through town. I keep it poised and "ready for action" at all times.

And if I happen to see the fine gentleman who made the unfortunate "stuck up" comment, he gets way more than a one-finger wave. I pull out all five fingers and give him the full "I'm-so-excited-to-be-at-this-parade" wave.

Now you know why breaking the habit is so hard. I just can't stop.

So if you see someone on the highway waving sheepishly at you with their index finger, please wave back—that'd make her day.

*Christalee Froese is a former World-Spectator journalism intern. She welcomes comments at [Lcfroese@sasktel.net](mailto:Lcfroese@sasktel.net) or visit [www.westwords.net](http://www.westwords.net).*

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