

# route **NORTH** roots

m a g a z i n e

- Chasing rainbows
- Extreme snowbirding
- The diving helmet
- Northern Forest Diversification Centre
- The Rez Boyz
- Regional bugs
- Northern Juried Art Show
- Station Museum

**Free** July 2004



# Shorty, me & TNT

**Dave Negrych**  
Contributing writer

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The fishing was kinda bad that year,  
We couldn't catch a thing.  
The month was mid-August,  
And we'd started in the spring.  
Shorty took almighty pride at pullin' lunkers out,  
Whatever kind we could get,  
mostly walleye, pike or trout.  
We'd get 'em and we'd split 'em, and at the end of day,  
We'd fry them up for supper, or we'd give them away.

Shorty and I wallowed in piscatorial delights,  
With those golden-sided pickerel,  
or a godly pike that fights!  
But we couldn't catch them that year, 'til we began to  
feel,  
Incompetent and worthless,  
with a rod and reel.  
Then Shorty got to musing,  
"I know I'll get it  
right,  
If we resort to  
tried and true, old-  
fashion dynamite!"

Such methods were,  
even then, frowned  
upon by law.  
He loaded up a pack-  
sack with sticks of the  
stuff,  
Then brought anothe-  
r sackful, to be sure  
we had enough!  
And some 'caps  
wrapped in a rag, and rolls of  
fuse, then,  
Equipped with this madcap fishing gear,  
we set out again.

For there isn't too much to it, if the method's known.  
Cap is pinched onto the fuse, push in,  
light-up and throw.  
Then paddle rather quickly, canoe must go some yards,  
Or all that's left of me and Shorty are some human  
shards!  
He worked the explosives, while I the paddle gripped,  
And said a prayer to Those above, that Shorty didn't  
slip.

The TNT sank to the deep, resounding a bang and boof,  
The bubbles floated to the top,  
but somehow we musta' goofed.  
With chunks and slurps, the paddles burped,  
returning hurriedly,  
Expectantly and hopefully, but no fish did we see!

Bubbles, bubbles, everywhere, gallons of muddy debris,  
That blasted up into the air, a-covering Shorty and me.  
With all that mighty dynamite, we made so many thuds.  
We churned up ol' Hammel Lake into a sea of mud.  
With booms and blams and awful noise, some muskrats  
did we scare,  
And puzzled and a-wondered why there were no fish in  
there.



One final time we'd try it, after much  
stretching of our brains,  
Determined to bump-off  
some fish, we had to try  
again!

Our last hurrah, down  
on the end, near  
Annabelle Creek  
Shorty bit the cap unto the  
fuse, a-dangling by his  
cheek,

Then lighting up the  
sizzling string, tossed  
it into the drink,  
Unaware that the cur-  
rent of the creek, would  
never let it sink.

A sudden roar beneath  
the floor; we sailed  
into the sky!

I did not have time to wave my  
sawed-off partner a good-bye.  
We landed near a mama bear, who did not want us  
there!  
Swimming, slopping, sliding, in all that sticky goo,  
Attempting to outrun the sow, we made for the canoe.  
Such noise draws attention, we had to escape,  
Before a lawman appeared to investigate.  
But we were apprehended, alas, it was too late!  
Wet and winded and shook-up, a-sitting in a cell,  
Canoe, fish, and dynamite,  
we'd learned our lesson well.

Since then I don't go for them, not by any means,  
And when I want to eat some fish, I buy myself sardines!



### On the Cover

Photo by Frank Fieber.

Opportunity - like a dandelion in bloom - only hangs around for a while until it blows away or someone picks it up and puts it in their pocket.

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## Editor's note

**Frank Fieber**  
route NORTH roots

**A** good idea is like found money. It's been laying there, perhaps blowing about in the wind until it finally finds itself anchored in a crack in the corner or blown against the fence.

New ideas can be time sensitive - a window of opportunity. If you don't pick it up and run with it someone else will or perhaps nobody will pick it up until it's too late. Some ideas are timeless, like a gold coin. Pick it up 10 years later and it still has value.

Some ideas are like the paper money on our cover - they have to be picked up before it rains or before they blow into the fire or the lake or into someone else's yard.

Dave Buck found money with his idea of the Northern Forest Diversification Centre in The Pas.

Technological advances, new approaches and new linkages are all like found money.

Our website [www.northroots.ca](http://www.northroots.ca) is a way of giving our readers more. Since rNr magazine is distributed free, our readers are really getting more for nothing - extra pictures, stories and information at the click of a mouse. Online you'll find Doug Eryou, who taps birch tree sap, great stories by Jim Parres and Don Carruthers, more pictures of The Follies and The Northern Juried Art Show and a whole lot more. The site is webmastered by Heather Johnsgaard, an up-and-coming website designer.

Thank you to all 16 of our contributing writers who so generously contributed for issue two.

To all those readers in the region and to those scattered around the world - welcome back to north of 53°. I hope this issue makes you feel like you found a gold coin on a sandy beach.



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**For these nature-based businesses; it's not so much about logging the land as knowing the land.**



**Buck examines poplar buds destined for the pharmaceutical industry.**

- PHOTO BY FRANK FIEBER



# From the forest

**Frank Fieber**  
route NORTH roots

**H**erbal teas and medicines packaged in driftwood boxes and shipped around the world. Natural soaps and salves sold in gift shops across Canada. Antler jewelry sold in New York City.

This is the new face of forest harvesting.

Non-traditional forest products, from natural soaps to sweetgrass braids, are providing hope for a new generation of entrepreneurs.

For these forest-based businesses, it's not so much about logging the land as knowing the land.

"We've got orders to ship 3,000 pounds of Senega root and 3,000 pounds of poplar buds this year," says Dave Buck, manager of The Northern Forest Diversification Centre (NFDC) in The Pas.

"Just yesterday we got an order from a jewelry chain in New York city for 1,000 units a week of antler jewelry. That's more than we can handle right now, but it shows you the interest.

"Imagine 1,000 units a week."

"Part of empowering people is just pointing out the wealth of non timber products right in the community," says Buck, a for-

mer conservation officer and a wild rice grower. After that, it's giving people the basic skills to make the most of them.

"We give the training and let the entrepreneurial skill take over," he says.

Keewatin Community College (KCC), now offers a 10-day training course focusing on local resources, plant identification and basic ecology, sustainable harvesting and handling practices, low-tech, value-added processing and marketing.

Specialty workshops include soap making and salve making, wreath making and antler jewelry. There are no age or education restrictions. The NFDC employs a full time marketing manager and markets products from 250 harvesters in 22 communities.

"(This industry) brings not only a measure of economy, some hope for the future, but also brings a renewed sense of ownership and empowerment," Buck says.

"I see a network of micro industries across the north."

At the facility, the smells of the forest fill the centre as balsam wreaths and fresh-cut diamond willow compete with sweet grass and mint.

The drying room racks are loaded with freshly picked poplar buds; they'll be shipped by the 1,000 pound lots to pharmaceutical manufacturers.



Another room contains 50 pound bags of dried labrador tea leaves or highbush cranberry bark. Senega root picked near Grand Rapids also sits in huge polyfibre sacks awaiting shipment.

One of the wildly successful products is antler jewelry. It's made by a group in Boggy Creek, using deer or caribou antler "sheds" found in the forest. Thin slices of antler are polished and an image is cut with a scroll saw to make earrings and necklace jewelry.

There are teas made from Boreal products in the tradition of northern herbal medicine - wild mint soothes the stomach and relieves gas. Pison tea - a blend of mint, labrador tea, rosehips and raspberry leaves - will help fight off colds and flu. There are northern natural salves and baths salts, all packaged beautifully in tin or foil containers.

Gift boxes are made of driftwood gathered on the shores of Cedar Lake. In fact, there's a shoreline on Cedar Lake which contains a mountain of diamond willow driftwood, an unexpected bonus created by the flooding for the Grand Rapids hydro forebay. This wood is being turned into walking sticks, candle holders and rustic furniture.

There's a line of sweetgrass, cedar and sage products for smudging. The "Spirit Quest" smudges are for meditation, spiritual work, or just to add a natural fragrance to your home. Many products are packaged with instruction and information for their use.

The NFDC catalogue offers more than 100 unique products. The marketing strategy includes the phrase a "Manitoba Wild Harvested Product."

The mission of the NFDC is to work with communities and individuals to develop economic opportunities based on local resources, for the benefit of local people.

A small loan for a piece of equipment can be huge in

an isolated community. Just opening a bank account can be a stumbling block, so basic training in microbusiness is important.

"Ethical wild crafting from our perspective requires not only education and training, but also the empowerment of the forest communities to protect and manage this resource for themselves and for their children," Buck says. "Anything else is just not good business."

Northern Manitoba is home to 60 First Nation/Metis communities, marginalized with little or no economic base, other than the traditional activities of trapping,

commercial fishing, guiding and working for local or regional governments.

There are only so many animals to trap, or fishing licenses to be had; 60 to 90 per cent unemployment has been the norm for decades.

This new industry offers a new hope.

In Cormorant, MB, a community of 500 to 600 and a 45 minute drive northwest of The Pas, two sisters are making soap. When Betty Myers and Anna Shlachetka began they were buying three or four-litre containers of the oils they needed for soap making. Now they're ordering oils by the 45 gallon drum. Raw material from the nearby forest provides the unique ingredients they need for infusion. The ingredients are ground up and placed in hot olive oil to infuse the essence they need for each type of soap - tamarack, cedar, sweetgrass, sage, diamond willow and mint.

The process takes about five weeks. Packaging and marketing help come from the



**Shlachetka and Meyers, sisters from Cormorant, with the products gathered for infusion in soap making.**

- PHOTO BY FRANK FIEBER



**Sweetgrass braids.**

NFDC. The last batch they shipped held 1,336 bars of their fragrant soaps.

"We can't just go for a walk anymore," says Myers, "we see everything now."

In Lynn Lake, MB they want to make wild berry fruit leather from lingonberries (mossberries). In Barrows, MB Brenda Gaudry is opening a storefront for her teas, smudges and jewelry.

Internationally, it's a multi-million dollar industry.

"We've had exchange visits with Russian forest community dwellers," Buck says. "They taught us birch bark weaving and they were very interested in what we were doing in non timber forest products."

"We want to create the greatest good for the largest number of people for the longest time."

For more information on the program, call the centre at 204-627-8681.

The complete catalogue can be viewed online at [www.nfdc.ca](http://www.nfdc.ca). Products can be ordered online or purchased at the Sam Waller Museum in The Pas, at the Trading Post of Bakers Narrows Lodge outside Flin Flon and at Indianheart Creations in Creighton. ■

**Myrna Guymer**  
Contributing Writer

**T**he cold weather was the clincher.

Christmas was a bummer. For nearly two weeks, temperatures clung to minus 40 degrees. Family visitors nursed stuffed heads and runny noses. Wads of kleenex looking like snowballs accumulated on every indoor surface. No skiing or winter wiener roasts or gazing at northern lights. And definitely no winter camping. Cabin fever caused more misery than the colds.

The wood pile dwindled faster than it could be fed into the stove. Later that winter a flu bug knocked us both flat for weeks.

During the summer, my husband Glen's frost bitten ears perked up each time he heard the ravings about warmer climates from snowbird friends. Come fall while in the bush cutting firewood, a log kicked back, punching a hole in his shin that required months of painful treatment.

"That's it," he announced. "I'm outta here."

"Are you coming with me?" he asked. Thinking of the interests I would have to leave behind, I hesitated, but only for a moment. This could be a great adventure, I thought as I began packing.

So, our annual exodus to Mexico began.

With our Hyundai car bulging with camp gear, cameras, scanty clothes and high expectations, we mapped the



"A dancing girl - where?" says Glen. "Hold on old man," says Myrna, "or it's back to the snow country for you."

- SUBMITTED PHOTO

## How two snowbirds from Denare Beach became known as the

# Tent people of

shortest route to the sunny pacific shores of Mazatlan. I envisioned a peaceful hideaway on a secluded sandy shore, surf whooshing rhythmically, lulling us to sleep each night.

Mother nature gave us a grand farewell. We plowed through snowstorms in Manitoba, in North Dakota and in South Dakota. Still snow in Nebraska and didn't it ever quit? It followed us. Into Kansas. I had hopes of seeing something new. For a break and knowing that Glen fancied himself a cowboy in another life, a Gus from Lonesome Dove sort of guy, I convinced him we should visit Dodge City.

Still wearing parkas and long johns, we tramped the original site of Boot Hill Cemetery - the burial ground for drifters, troublemakers and unknowns from 1872 to 1879. For a Boot Hill Buck, we purchased a glass of sarsaparilla that put me back to childhood days and the best root beer in the world. Harley "Doc" Holladay, an actor who looked the image of the real "Doc", told tales as long as the bar top about the historical characters of the old West. We hit the road refreshed.

We had wanted to camp in the central states but the cold kept the tent curled up in the trunk of the car. Forget any more sight seeing too, Glen said.

"Let's just get to Mexico." But mother nature was not letting us forget yet.

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Nogales, the Arizona border city into Mexico, greeted us with six inches of snow and the second biggest storm since 1952. City hall and schools were shut down.

Minutes away — the actual border and entry to Mexico. My hands trembled with worry as I sorted through all our papers. Did we have everything? Passports, tourist cards, birth certificates, drivers licenses, insurances, copies of this, copies of that. There seemed to be as many required papers as the snow flurries we couldn't seem to shake.

After two hours of shuffling papers and stumbling over directions in Spanish, we drove over that imaginary line into Mexico. We'd made it — to sunshine and heat. Off with the underwear. On with the shorts and t-shirts.

With the radio drumming the beat of Mariachi bands, my stomach fluttered with childlike excitement as I realized where I was. I flipped through the Spanish dictionary looking up words on signs. "Tope" was one we learned the hard way. After hammering into several while driving through

# Mexico

villages and seeing Mexicans bending over with laughter, we realized "tope" meant speed bump.

On the highway, I waved at passing trucks loaded with smiling Mexican children piled in the back. They returned my waves with grins as wide as the narrow roads. I marveled at their abandon. Hundreds of shrines, some just simple crosses, others were buildings as large as garden sheds, adorned the highway edges as memorials to loved ones and their free spirits.

The first toll booth, (Mexico is improving their roads with this fee) was where I encountered the first bare-foot kids begging for money. And where I cried over their poverty. We were to meet many more. And each



**It's raining a river, but at least it's not snow!**

- SUBMITTED PHOTO

time, I had to stifle the guilt I felt at our fortune in life. Close to 10 tolls later, through lush agricultural areas, we drove across the Tropic of Cancer. The Pacific Ocean beckoned on our right and after two weeks on the road, we were anxious to get settled.

Trailer parks were plentiful but they didn't allow tents. Only motor homes were welcome. After hours of driving around the city, San Bartolo Trailer Park took pity and allowed us to pitch our two small tents — one to sleep in and one to hold our gear. People loaned us a small table and two camp chairs.

January nights in Mazatlan can be cool. Each evening we zipped our winter jackets to the neck.

Huffing on our fingers for warmth, we played cribbage under the street lamp. We couldn't convince the lady across the way that we were quite fine sleeping at night. She thought Glen might catch "his death of cold" and pulled a colourful toque that looked like a tea cosy onto his head. All around us motors hummed. Washers, dryers, dish washers, microwaves, televisions and flush toilets whirred, buzzed, sang and gurgled, reminding us that we were in the midst of another breed of campers.

We became known as "the tent people". We were sure that we were thought of as old hippies and probably a bit daft. A five-day downpour created rivers in the campground roadway. Our area seemed quite safe, so afternoons we donned our bright yellow foul-weather gear with yellow boots and

walked the Venice-looking streets.

When the rain clouds cleared, the iguanas came out of hiding. These colourful lizards skittered from under the sidewalks and sewer outlets and hung and fell from the trees. Our neighbours constantly warned us about the scorpions. "Keep your tent zipped," we heard from the lady across the way.

One evening we followed a long trail of ants. They circled our tent. Then we discovered they were leaf cutter ants and they had no intentions of moving in. Their mission was to carry their leaf cargo from a tree outside the campground to their hole far from us. Fascinating creatures.

More fascinating was a woman from a fifth wheeler. Every morning, with coffee cup in hand, she visited campers in her see-through nightgown. Then she returned to her site, hauled out her stereo and danced. With arms and legs flinging, she threw herself and her breezy gown to the winds. Another fascinating creature.

One day after five weeks in tents, our lady across the way introduced us to Francisco Gonzales Dadda, "Paco". He had a room for rent. To Glen's delight, Paco also owned two sailboats. Thus began a lasting friendship and ended our Mexican identification as "the tent people."■

*Myrna Guymer and husband Glen Campbell have spent the last eight winters in Mexico and the two will provide readers with a glimpse of extreme snowbirding in coming issues.*



## Time saving tips for your yard and garden maintenance.

# Wright on Gardening

**Mary Wright**  
Contributing Writer

**S**ome gardeners love to spend every spare moment in the garden weeding, watering, dead-heading, and keeping everything neat and trim.

For others, there are many ways to have a nice yard without being tied to it.

Your lawn will need watering, mowing and fertilizing. A deep watering once a week (at least one inch of water) is better than more frequent smaller waterings. If you have tree or shrub roots underneath, you need to do a deeper watering.

Allowing the grass to grow long and then cutting it short stresses the lawn. It is better to remove no more than the top third of the grass, and mow more frequently. Cutting to a height of two to four inches helps the grass withstand hot dry weather and helps to shade out weeds.

Of course, the best way to minimize lawn care is to have less lawn, or none. You could go for a deck, patio or garden that makes use of any of a variety of mulching materials, from gravel and rocks to shredded bark.

Landscape fabric is another helpful time saver - laying it on top of the soil and under the mulch prevents weeds from growing through the mulch, minimizing the need to weed. Pockets of plantings in a mulched area can make this

an attractive alternative to a lawn.

Trees and shrubs provide cooling shade, and give the house and yard an attractive, natural appeal. There are several hardy ones from which to choose, but some are easier to maintain than others.

Don't choose a tree that's too big for your yard. It is better to choose a small tree than to try to keep a naturally large tree like Green Ash or Blue Spruce from getting too big.

Crabapples, Mountain Ash, Amur Maple and Hawthorn are smaller trees (or large shrubs that can be grown as a small tree).

Some people love to prune and shape shrubs. For those who do not want to be doing a lot of pruning and shearing, there are some shrubs that naturally have a nice rounded shape, such as Sweetberry Honeysuckle, Globe Caragana and Alpine Currant.

To research the habits of trees and shrubs hardy in the Prairies I recommend the book *Woody Ornamentals for the Prairies* by Hugh Knowles, ISBN 1-55091-025-6, and the CD *Woody Plants in the Prairie Landscape*, Remphrey Botanical Publications.

The use of perennials in flower beds can also reduce time spent on maintenance, but again, only if hardy, well-behaved perennials are selected.

A mixed border containing shrubs and perennials can be an attractive, low-maintenance area. Fall bulbs can also be incorporated. A shrub and perennial bed is easy to maintain if you choose your plants carefully, and if you mulch the bed. Shredded bark mulch works well for me. The mulch helps retain soil moisture, helps prevent the soil from compacting, moderates soil temperature, minimizes weeding, and helps prevent frost heaving. And during a heavy rain, it prevents soil from splashing all over your plants. The mulch will break down slowly over a few years, and will need to be replenished every three or four years. It can be moved aside when you need to get at a plant.

There is one more solution to minimizing garden maintenance - but I don't think we're ready to welcome winter yet!■

*Mary Wright lives in Denare Beach and has been gardening for many years. She can be reached at [landscapes@aski.ca](mailto:landscapes@aski.ca).*

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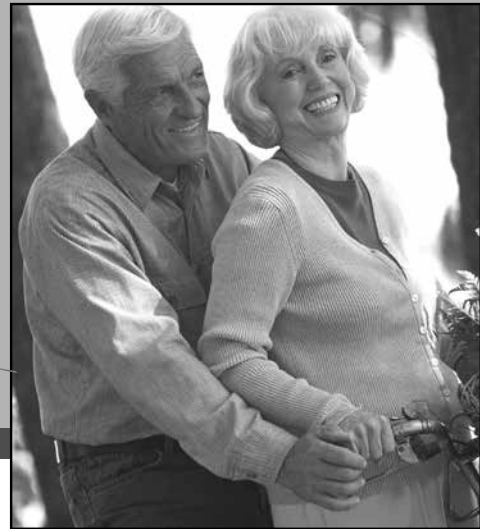


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**FROM FARMING TO FISHING, WE HAVE IT ALL!**

# Facts about

# West Nile virus



West Nile virus is transmitted by *Culex* mosquitoes. Most people who are bitten by an infected mosquito do not become ill, and for those who do, the symptoms are usually mild. In some cases, serious illness and death can occur.

## Reduce standing water – reduce mosquitoes

The fewer *Culex* mosquitoes that hatch, the lower the risk of West Nile virus. *Culex* mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Mosquito eggs left in standing water, even small amounts allowed to stand for a week or more, can develop into adult mosquitoes.

To reduce the places where mosquitoes might lay their eggs around your home, eliminate unnecessary standing water by:

- regularly cleaning and emptying your eaves troughs, pool covers, etc.;
- cleaning and emptying your bird baths weekly;
- ensuring that openings in rain barrels are covered with mosquito screening or tightly sealed around the downspout; and
- making sure your yard is clear of children's toys, pet bowls, old tires or other debris that collect water.

## Reduce your risk

Manitobans are at greatest risk of being bitten by a West Nile virus-infected mosquito in July, August and September.



You can reduce your risk of being bitten by:

- reducing the time you spend outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active;
- wearing light-coloured, loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when you are outside;
- applying insect repellent containing DEET; and
- checking that your door and window screens fit tightly and are free of holes.

## Report dead crows and jays

Crows and other birds in the crow family are very susceptible to West Nile virus and many die soon after becoming infected. You can help detect West Nile virus in your area by reporting dead crows, blue jays, magpies or ravens to Health Links at 788-8200 in Winnipeg or outside Winnipeg by calling toll-free 1-888-315-9257.

Not all reported birds will be picked up. Once West Nile virus is identified in a particular area, no more birds are required for testing.

## To learn more

For the most up-to-date information, please visit our website at [www.gov.mb.ca](http://www.gov.mb.ca) or call Health Links at 788-8200 in Winnipeg or toll-free 1-888-315-9257 from anywhere else in Manitoba.

## Fine dining at Northern Lodges

There are some well kept secret dining spots in our region. I

picked five lodges which offer the Lodge dining experience without having to be a registered guest at the lodge. You get to enjoy great food and a view of the lake.

**Rocky View OTA** is located on Amisk Lake, Saskatchewan, 15 miles west of Flin Flon at Denare Beach. This is a beautiful log building set high on a rock ridge. The lake view from the outdoor deck is awesome and the dining room is open 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. all summer. Friday is prime rib night and Sunday they serve a brunch from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in the air-conditioned dining room and lounge. They can handle up to 70 people. (306-362-2630)

**Bakers Narrows Lodge** 20 minutes east of Flin Flon on lake Athapap has a great deck with a view of the lake. New owners, Peg and Rod Baynton and family, have modernized the entire operation and offer a full menu with licensed dining. There's also a great walking trail out back so you can enjoy an after dinner amble around the area. (204-687-7944)

**Paradise Lodge**, also on Lake Athapap, a few miles further south on

Highway 10, is an established lodge with an intimate dining room. You have to call ahead to reserve, but the service and quali-

ty are worth the wait with one meal sitting nightly at 6:30 p.m. Prime rib, chicken, roast pork, pickerel and ribs are rotated so pick your night. (204-687-8175)

**Caribou Lodge** is on 1st Cranberry Lake, just east of Cranberry Portage. Caribou is another well established Lodge and the cook actually teaches cooking, so you are guaranteed a fabulous plate. They offer licensed family dining seven days a week. (204-472-3351)

**The New Vickery Lodge** on beautiful Clearwater Lake near The Pas is open 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. through the summer. They can seat 40 people and offer a full menu of licensed dining. The Coyne family owns and operates this lodge with full northern hospitality. Clearwater lake is one of only a handful of true blue lakes in the world. (204-624-5429)

We've only talked about the dining here but each of these lodges has bonus features that can only be appreciated by visiting to experience for yourself. ■

- Editor

## RECIPE



## Dandelion wine

**Harry Antoniw**  
Contributing Writer

### Ingredients

8 cups (picked) dandelion petals  
3 lb. white sugar  
Juice of 2 oranges and 2 lemons or 1/2 oz. citric acid  
1 campden tablet  
1 tsp yeast nutrient  
1/2 package wine yeast  
\* For sweet wine add extra 1/2 lb. sugar

**W**ith scissors, cut dandelion petals in the field. Take as little green as possible. If too much green is taken with some of the white milky juice, wine will be bitter. I pack an ice-cream pail full for eight cups.

Place petals in large pot and pour boiling water over to cover. Simmer for at least half an hour. When cool, (65 degrees to 70 degrees) strain through colander, then through cloth and pour juice into a crock, two gallon or larger, or in a large enough plastic vessel. Add all other ingredients except yeast. Stir to dissolve sugar. Add enough luke warm water to make up one gallon (or better). Sprinkle with yeast but do not stir. Cover the crock with plastic and tie tightly to prevent fruit flies from entering. Keep at room temperature and stir daily for seven days.

On the eighth day siphon wine into gallons. I prefer glass gallons, sometimes there are problems with certain plastics. Attach fermentation lock. Keep at room temperature and siphon off again in three weeks time. Again attach fermentation lock and store in a cool area, a basement will do, for six months or when clear. You may now bottle your wine if clear. Before bottling my wine I use stabilizer powder to prevent renewed fermentation, otherwise bottles may blow.

I prefer to siphon off or rack my wine two or three times during the six month period, this will clear your wine much faster and rid of any yeast.

Enjoy your wine, but remember, wine improves with age. I usually wait for six months to one year after bottling.

"Can you wait that long?" ■

*One final note: use only the freshest of ingredients and start with sterile equipment and bottles.*

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**Wanless Jamboree** - third weekend in July  
Bring your camping gear - listen to Country and Western music.

**Wanless Homecoming** - July 30 - August 1  
75th Anniversary of Wanless  
They're having a reunion for all who have ever lived there. If it's anything like the reunion held in 1989, it will be a great spot to find all about Wanless history. The last reunion was very interesting - a 60 year book was produced with all the pioneers contributing their stories.

**Opasquia Agricultural Exhibition** - June 19 - 20  
Dawn to Dusk rodeo activity

**York Boat Days** - Norway House - August 2 - 8  
Celebrates the fur trade history and route linkages where the York boats carried freight to and from York Factory. The festival is a week of baseball tournaments, marathon running, talent shows and of course the only York boat races in the world. Saturday morning is the final race for the professional class. Seven km race, first prize \$25,000, second prize \$15,000, third prize \$10,000. These are eight man teams - six rowers, a steersman and a caller. 16 team limit. This is becoming an international event. For information call Wayne Clarke 359-6721. ■

L-R: Dennis Borshewski, pork and beef surgeon.  
Chris Feuerstein, single and eligible intern.



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**Brenda Schmidt**  
Contributing Writer

Every time we drive down a northern road to look for birds, I marvel at the skill of those who construct and maintain roads through the forest and around the lakes, swamps and rock of the Canadian Shield. Take the Maraiche Lake Road for instance. I often wonder who passed down the road before us and who took a chainsaw to clear a fallen tree that was obstructing the road.

At the same time, I shake my head as our small car straddles tunnel-like ruts and creeps over the exposed culvert. We're birders. Why, oh why, don't we own a truck?

By the time you read this we will have travelled up and down the Maraiche Lake Road and the grid from Denare Beach to the Sturgeon-Weir River many times.

For us, a typical birding trip takes the better part of a day and looks like this: every few kilometres we stop, look and listen.

We compare GPS co-ordinates of many birds such as the Winter Wren, the Black-throated Green Warbler and the Chestnut-sided Warbler to those of previous years. Harvey takes photographs while I sketch and make notes.

When we get home, we report significant sightings so they can be included in the provincial records. This spring, for example, we saw three Canada Warblers, an uncommon bird in Saskatchewan and one we haven't seen along these roads before.

In late June or early July we conduct a Breeding Bird Survey of the Grass River route in northwestern Manitoba. It's an annual event.

We get up at 2:30 a.m. to drive to Iskwasum Lake, where the survey begins at daybreak.

Every 0.8 km along the 40 km route, we stop and record every bird seen and heard in a three-minute period.

Everyone in the north knows what the early morning forest sounds like in June.

Imagine trying to decipher the



**Spruce Grouse sits quietly in the sun.**

- PHOTO BY HARVEY SCHMIDT



**Brenda Schmidt**

# Birding down the road less travelled

songs and calls of everything from the Common Loon to the Connecticut Warbler to the Marsh Wren, and get it all down on paper.

Needless to say, the survey takes most of the morning and requires a lot of coffee, sunscreen and mosquito repellent.

The survey results are recorded electronically and mailed to Environment Canada.

The surveys not only provide information about population, but they are also used to create range maps in field guides such as the National Audubon Society: The Sibley Guide to Birds, a guide widely respected by birdwatchers.

On any given trip, birdsong leads the birdwatcher on many a merry chase.

As we traipse down the road, across the ditch and through the bush with binoculars around the neck and a spotting scope and backpack over the shoulder, trying to get a good look at a Connecticut Warbler, a Blue-headed Vireo or the rare Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, we keep in mind property rights and safety issues.

Occasionally a conservation officer or a guide will stop us.

Last year in Saskatchewan, we were kindly warned about bear bait stations along one stretch and in

**Songs and calls  
in the June  
morning forest:**

**Common Loon, Canada Goose, Common Merganser, Red-necked Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Mallard, American Kestrel, Merlin, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Marbled Godwit, Common Snipe, Herring Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Yellow Rail, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Gray Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Boreal Chickadee, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Orange-crowned Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Connecticut Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Slate-colored Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, White-winged Crossbill, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren.**

Manitoba we were found wandering in the range of a troublesome bear. We always appreciate the heads-up. No one knows what waits down the road.

That old saying applies to birds and birding in the most exciting way. Take a walk or a drive down any northern road. Harvey's Spruce Grouse photo is just one example of the beauty that is waiting. ■

*Brenda Schmidt is an award-winning writer and artist. Brenda and Harvey Schmidt have been birding in the north for over 17 years. To find out more, go to <http://www.sasktelwebsite.net/schevv>*

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# Black flies

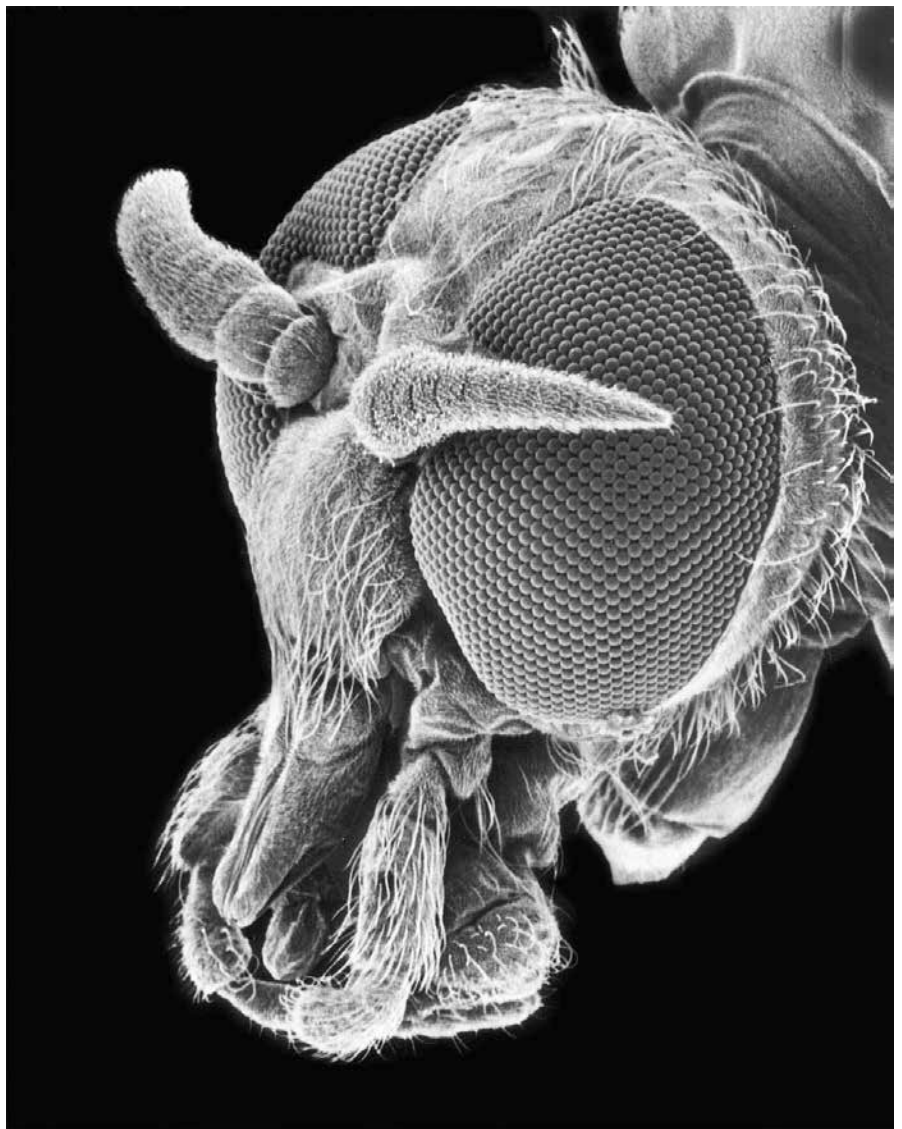
**Getting up close to understand local insects that share our region.**

**Dr. Andrew Keddie,  
University of Alberta  
Contributing Writer**

---

**O**ne of the experiences shared by residents and visitors alike during summers in northern Canada is the scourge of biting and bloodsucking flies. Horseflies, deerflies, mosquitoes and black flies can ruin a pleasant summer day or evening, as you are all aware. During summers at Denare Beach, I unwillingly donated substantial amounts of blood to these insects.

Each species has its own special form of irritation. Horseflies are adept at biting flesh exposed while at the beach, seemingly taking special care to target the middle of the back where they can't be slapped. Clouds of mosquitoes make trips around muskeg areas especially painful. A summer spent as a surveyor's helper on the highway to Thompson proved that insect repellent — or at any rate the brand we used — can be useless. One of our early morning rituals before setting out to work was to soak ourselves with bug repellent, exposed skin and clothing alike. We would have barely left camp when swarms of mosquitoes would find us, land on exposed skin and start to feed, poking their mouthparts through a



**The head and mouth parts of an adult black fly.**

- ELECTRON MICROSCOPE PHOTO BY DOUG CRAIG, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

---

thick film of oily fluid. The repellent's only effect seemed to be to prevent the blood-filled mosquitoes from making a quick exit.

Among my most enduring memories, however, are the swarms of black flies (we usually called them sand flies) that left puddles of blood on any exposed skin. I did think sand must have been part of their habitat but this is not the case; it just seemed that where there was sand there were black flies. My worst experience with black flies occurred one summer when I spent a few days at Goldsand Lake north of Lynn Lake. I was learning the operations at a Federal Fisheries Research Station. One day I was assigned the task of fixing a chicken-wire fish trap that a moose had damaged. At

the deep end the trap was in about five feet of water. I started there, reattaching the wire to the posts driven into the lake bottom and gradually working my way to the shallower end near the shore. Since I was the new kid (and the water was very cold), the rest of the crew sat watching me. Once near the shore, I noticed several of the crew chuckling. Of course I thought I must have done a bad repair job. Then I noticed with some alarm that I was covered in blood. Actually the water droplets on my skin mixing with my blood made it appear much worse than it was. I also realized I was being bitten by black flies. The numbing effect of the water had made the bites painless. I am sure most northern residents have had similar experiences

## BUGS

with biting flies. These encounters made a strong impression on early European visitors' too. A missionary traveling in the Ottawa Valley in 1624 reported that "if I had not kept my face wrapped. . . I am almost sure they would have blinded me, so pestiferous and poisonous are the bites of these little demons. . . They make one look like a leper, hideous to the sight. I confess that this is the worst martyrdom I suffered in this country." (Quoted in Roger W. Crosskey, *The Natural History of Blackflies*.)

One might think that my experiences with insects would have resulted in a personal dislike for them. To the contrary, these experiences stimulated my interest and led me to become an entomologist. Entomologists study insects partly because they are fascinating and often beautiful organisms but also with the goal of understanding their biology. A complete knowledge of a particular species can lead to the development of effective management strategies, especially for pest species. In many

### **Of the more than 1,500 species (of black flies) described throughout the world, approximately 100 are known in Canada.**

cases this knowledge also leads to the realization that management can be difficult, even impossible, with our current techniques. Black flies are an excellent example of this, and so I want to give you a brief introduction to them.

Black flies are true flies, members of the family Simuliidae in the order Diptera. The adults have a single pair of wings and they undergo complete metamorphosis. Of the more than 1,500 species described throughout the world, approximately 100 are known in Canada. One common aspect of these insects is their need for running water; immature stages live in this habitat. Eggs are deposited by females in the water or attached to

water vegetation. Once the larvae hatch they may drift, but they must attach to a substrate such as rocks or vegetation. After attaching, they begin to feed using special fan-like structures to capture and filter out food as it passes over them. While still in the water, they undergo metamorphosis during the pupal stage. When they emerge as adults, they leave the water in a bubble of air in search of mates and very different food. Both males and females feed on plant juices or nectar to load up on nutrients. Once energized, males may aggregate in swarms over a landmark such as a small shrub, stump or fencepost. Females enter the swarm and are soon joined by a male. The pair falls to the ground to complete the mating act. So far so good! Unfortunately, females of biting species then look for blood.

Since blood is a wonderful source of nutrients for eggs, these species willingly endure the risks associated with feeding on biting (and fly swatting) animals. Following a blood meal, females lay their eggs in running water and the cycle is complete.



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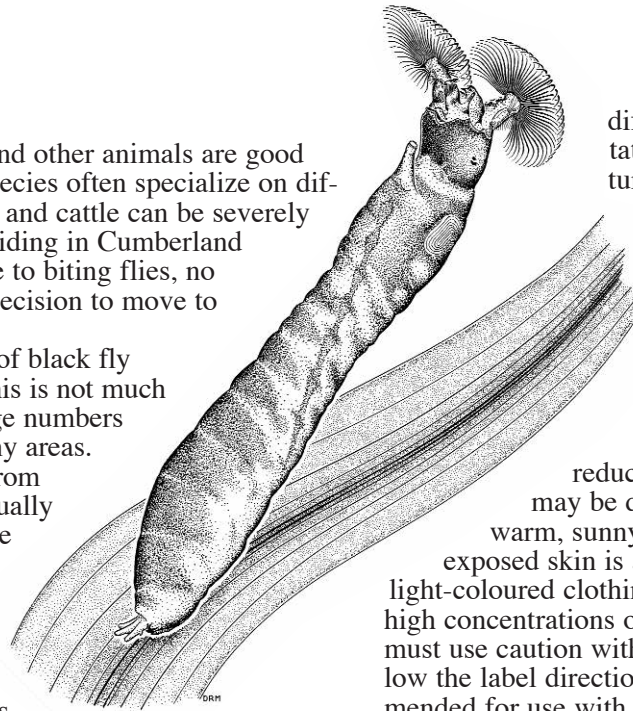


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**Flies, from page 15**

Birds, humans, livestock and other animals are good sources of blood. Different species often specialize on different animals. Poultry, sheep and cattle can be severely affected. My family while residing in Cumberland House lost most of their cattle to biting flies, no doubt playing a part in their decision to move to The Pas in the 1920s.

A relatively small number of black fly species likes human blood. This is not much of a consolation given the large numbers of such flies that occur in many areas. They can fly great distances from their breeding grounds and usually attack during the day. A female lacerates her victim's skin and injects an anticoagulant, a substance that keeps the blood flowing while she sucks it up with her proboscis. Blood continues to flow well after the engorged female has left. Victims' reactions to black fly bites vary from slight redness and localized swelling to secondary infection brought about by scratching the wound.



Controlling these species is often difficult given the running water habitat in which they live during the immature stages. Dumping insecticides into running water is hardly practical given the impacts on non-target species. Even if you don't care about the other insects that are killed you might worry about the fish that rely on these species for food or the quality of the water you drink.

There are some practical ways of reducing black fly bites, although some may be difficult to put into practice on a warm, sunny day. Reducing the amount of exposed skin is always a good start, and wearing light-coloured clothing also helps. Insect repellents with high concentrations of DEET also are very effective. One must use caution with these repellents, however, and follow the label directions carefully. Most are not recommended for use with small children.

Insects are the largest group of animals on this planet - over one million species have been identified. Some estimates suggest there are thirty million species yet to be identified, mostly tropical. Canada has more than fifty thousand species most of which are beneficial. In following issues I will describe some of my favorites. If you have insects that interest you I will try to provide more information. However I will need specimens. The easiest way to preserve them is to put them in a bottle then in the freezer.

If you have a specimen, contact Frank at route NORTH roots and he will forward to Keddie for analysis.

Above, larval black fly filtering food from flowing water. Drawing by David Maddison, University of Arizona. ■

*Dr. Keddie was born and raised in Flin Flon and will be writing about bugs in coming issues.*

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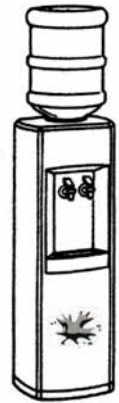
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# The Rez Boyz

The Rez Boyz from left, Dwayne Michel, Corny Michel, Gabe Michel, Darrell McCallum, and Dave Gunn.

- PHOTO COURTESY OF FRAN REIBEN

## The Rez Boyz, a showcase band from Pelican Narrows.

**Jeff MacKinnon**  
Contributing Writer

**W**hen Darrell (Boots) McCallum was 12 a local man came to his house in Pelican Narrows carrying a violin. He handed the violin Darrell and said he no longer had use for it. McCallum immediately tucked it under his chin, ran the bow across the strings and made it screech.

"The very first night I got it I tried and tried and tried. Within two years I started to master it," the 34-year-old says.

"Corny (Michel) told me once that a mandolin was tuned the same way and I'm a natural guitar picker, so that's how the mandolin came into play."

McCallum plays fiddle, mandolin, guitar and is the lead singer for The Rez Boyz, a five-piece band that includes three Michel cousins from Pelican Narrows - Corny on fiddle, Dwayne on bass and Gabe on drums - and Dave Gunn of Flin Flon playing lead guitar.

The Rez Boyz formed six years ago and are now in big demand because they play a wide range of tunes, have a tight sound and know how to show the audience a good time.

"We're not you're ordinary band," says Gabe Michel, who co-founded the band with McCallum and handles its bookings.

"We're a showcase band. People just stare; they don't dance. Some bands play so good you just want to watch them. That's what's been happening with our band lately."

Gabe Michel and McCallum have been playing together for 17 years, since high school, which was where a then-skinny McCallum got his nickname Boots because of his resemblance to a scrawny character in a movie. They used to be in a band

called Hard Country.

The Rez Boys now play everything from Brooks and Dunn to Elton John to U2 to traditional Cree music. McCallum's passion is gospel music; he's recorded a couple of gospel CDs in Cree and is working on another.

McCallum is clearly the focus of the band, though Gunn says Corny Michel's fiddle playing is a big hit during shows on the reserve because then the crowd can have a square-dancing contest.

"(Darryl's) got a deadly, powerful voice that needs to be exploited," Gabe Michel says.

He also gets quite animated on stage, which he says he can't help.

"When I get up there, man I tell you, I start dancing with Corny when he's playing the fiddle because it sounds real good up there. It's kind of like I'm in my own little world up there. It's my way of letting out some stress. I've got a very stressful job," says McCallum, who is the education director at Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and looks after 2,000 kids in two schools.

## MUSIC

### “(Darryl’s) got a deadly, powerful voice that needs to be exploited,”

Corny and Dwayne Michel are also original members. Gunn joined two years ago, after the band gave their lead guitarist the boot because they weren’t getting along. His association with the band started when he supplied sound equipment for some of their gigs. Whenever they needed a guitarist he would also jump on stage. Now he’s one of the Rez Boyz, even though he’s a white guy from Swift Current.

What Gunn loves most about The Rez Boyz is the lack of attitude that is often a major component of bands.

“What I like about playing with these guys is they instinctively know it’s not about them, it’s about the crowd and entertaining the crowd,” says Gunn, the oldest member of the group at 48.

“Nobody’s trying to be a hero and play too loud and dominate the show. Sometimes in bands you have egos to deal with, but not with these guys. That’s rare and I really like that.”

What also appeals to Gunn is the exposure he gets to another culture. He’s jumped right in, too, by learning to speak Cree, which he uses on his radio spots to advertise his music store, Gunn Sound and Light. He also

teaches a beginner’s Cree speaking class in Flin Flon.

“I get to go places that I wouldn’t go

otherwise. I’m almost always the only white guy there, except for maybe a school teacher. I can do my part by showing them we’re not all oppressive racists,” Gunn says.

“We can help each other out and do some good. That’s what interested me the most about playing with them.”

Not everybody gets it, though. Gunn says he has been accused of being a Native-wannabe, while it was a comment from someone at a show once that led to McCallum naming the band what he did. He was called a ‘rez boy’ one night. But instead of letting it stand as a negative he says he wanted to turn it around to show that positive things happen on the reserve.

The name is as far as the band’s social politics extend. They don’t preach on stage, they just play.

“It’s all about having fun and playing music that people enjoy. It’s about showing people a good time,” says Gabe Michel.

To hear samples of the Rez Boyz go to [www.rezboyz.ca](http://www.rezboyz.ca). ■

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**Raymond Gauthier had a secret  
weapon for fishing rainbow  
trout — but it took a Lucky  
break for him to find it**

# Chasing rainbows



**Raymond Gauthier**  
Contributing Writer

---

**A** large fish, a scenic view, large numbers of wild life seen or caught. All these things make a place special to us.

One day on Barbe Lake I caught three rainbow trout larger than any that I had caught previously. I did it with a lot of help from my dog Lucky. In the spring, just at ice out, spawning rainbows gather in certain places along the shoreline to spawn. Through the years I had tried many things to catch them while they were spawning, but I had had little success.

This day I was going to try marshmallows. I brought a bag of marshmallows, talked my wife into visiting her parents in The Pas for the day and then got her to drop me off at Barbe Lake.

Of course, I had to take Lucky.

As soon as I got to my favourite spot I was greeted by large numbers of huge rainbows cruising the shoreline. Excitedly, I tied on a single hook and opened the new bag of marshmallows. I took one out of the bag and put it on the hook. I rushed to the shoreline leaving the bag laying beside my packsack. I cast my offering out amongst the cruising fish, propped my rod between two rocks and

sat down to wait. Only about five minutes passed before my line went screaming out.

I leaped into action. I played the very large rainbow to the shore in a few minutes. Just as I went to land it the line came flying out of the water and the large fish swam swiftly away. Examination of the line told me that the fish now owned my single hook.

- TOURISM MANITOBA PHOTO

## Rainbows, from page 21

It also told me that the knot that I had tied had slipped. My fault. Oh well, at least I knew marshmallows work. Quickly, I returned to my pack sack for a new hook and marshmallow.

Where is that bag of marshmallows? I know I left it here somewhere. I looked in the packsack and around the packsack, but it was nowhere to be found.

At that point I noticed that Lucky was in the bush about 50 yards away from me and keeping her distance. "Lucky, where are my marshmallows?"

With a guilty look on her face she slunk even further back into the safety of the forest. After about 30 minutes of searching, pleading and threatening I finally accepted the fact that the marshmallows were gone and Lucky was not going to let me get close enough to kill her.

I returned to my pack sack and extracted the small tackle box. I still had many hours left before my wife would return to pick me up. I might as well be fishing.

I worked my way through all of the tackle in the box, only pausing to change lures or curse Lucky. She intelligently maintained her position out of reach but just in sight so she could keep an eye on me.

By now I had worked my way through all of the lures that I believed a rainbow would bite. Now I was using the few Lake Trout,

Northern and Walleye lures that were in the box. Still no bites.

One final look through the tackle box netted me a two ounce Slater lure painted bright red. Having no bait, I kept searching until I found a large, green glow-in-the-dark, rubber body. I hooked the rubber body on to the Slater lure, attached it to my rod and

went back to casting.

The fish moved out of its way whenever it approached them. Not one of them would even turn and follow the lure. I was tired and frustrated and I was ready for a break from a couple of hours of casting and changing hooks.

I threw the ugly combination out into the middle of the schooling fish and let it settle to the bottom. Suddenly the snag gave a hard jerk and I realized I had a fish. After a long battle I landed a rainbow that was far bigger than any I had ever caught before.

Over the next two hours I caught three more rainbow on the ugly combination, still fishing it on the bottom.

Even though the tone of my conversations with Lucky changed, she would not leave the security of the forest. When Shirley returned to pick us up Lucky rushed to greet her and remained close by her side for protection. I guess she believed the words of praise I now heaped on her were just a ploy to get her to let her guard down.

The fish I had caught weighed 16.5 pounds and is still the largest rainbow I have ever caught. ■

**I noticed that Lucky was in the bush about 50 yards away from me and keeping her distance.**

**"Lucky, where are my marshmallows?"**

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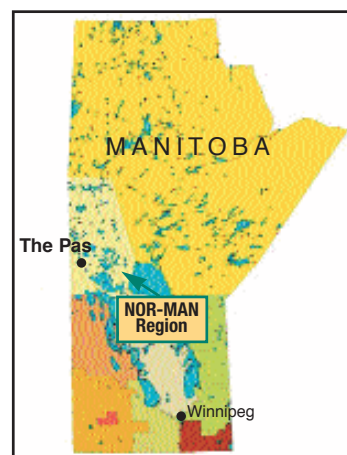
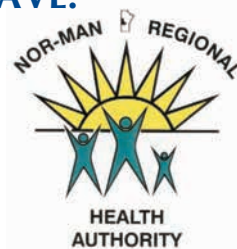
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# A hot bath, candles, wine . . . and the dog?

**Anti-stress bath beads don't always live up to their name**



**Gail Anderson**  
Contributing Writer

Not so long ago I had received a gift of various bath salts and oils. Among them was one in particular called anti-stress bath beads.

Having had a rather crappy day, I decided I would be very nice to myself and indulge in this nice-sounding experience. I proceeded to fill my jacuzzi tub.

I told my hubby, "OK, now don't bother me for a while — I'm taking an anti-stress bath!"

I thought perhaps some scented candles and a glass of wine would set the background for this lovely experience.

Having arranged the candles, one on the side of the tub, one on the higher level of the counter of my

bathroom, and one on the small table stand, I then poured a nice glass of chilled white wine. Everything looked perfect.

I deserved this wonderful treat.

Just as I was about to partake in my special moments, there was a scratching at the bathroom door.

It was my little white american eskimo, Igloo. She loves to sit on the lower shelf of the counter next to the tub while I have my bath.

So, OK Iggy, you come in but sit nice and don't make a peep. This is my hour.

Slowly, I eased my aching, decrepit frame into the inviting, steaming bath water.

With the lights turned out, and the flicker of the candles reflecting upon the bathroom walls, I sensed the aroma.

Ohhhhhhh, that lovely aroma of lavender filling the room.

I sipped at my glass of wine.

I closed my eyes and I laid back in the tub, relaxing, enjoying, becoming lost in a world of my own, my mind at complete ease.

I opened one eye slightly and could see the reflection of the candles dancing on the bathroom wall, and I thought, oh my, this is heaven.

Then I opened my other eye and looked to the left.

There stood my little white ball of fur, smiling at me and wagging her tail, completely unaware that flames were leaping a foot high from her tail.

I reached for her, my heart pounding, my blood pressure rising. I grabbed at her and started smacking out the flames with my wet hand.

She in turn thought she was being scolded and took off running through the house. All I could think of was, oh my God, she will have this house up in flames. I jumped from the tub to run after her.

With the combination of slippery bath salts, and bare feet on the linoleum you may as well know I landed flat on my, ummmmm, yes, that is what I landed on.

Ha, ha.

However, not funny, because at this point I was now more stressed than when I got into the damn tub.

I quickly regained my composure and reached for a towel close by, covering as much of this tiny frame that a hand towel can cover, and off I went through the house to find this flaming dog.

Nowhere to be found on the upper level, I then headed down the stairs to the rumpus room. There she was, and the flames were out.

She was shivering and huddling against the wall. At this point I found it hard to see her anguish as I now had new stress of my own.

Off I went and left her there to pout.

As I opened the bathroom door to continue my so called anti-stress bath, the room was filled with little black floating balls of soot from her fur, as well as the odour of burnt hair. Not my idea of a relaxed atmosphere.

I climbed back in the tub with my heart still pounding and my nerves at their wits end, only to be interrupted by my husband's noise in the doorway.

He said, "How's the anti-stress bath going?"

"Wonderful," I replied. "Just bloody wonderful. You would not believe it!"

As if things were not uncomfortable enough, at this particular moment he had to add, "Smells like someone is barbecuing a dog in here."

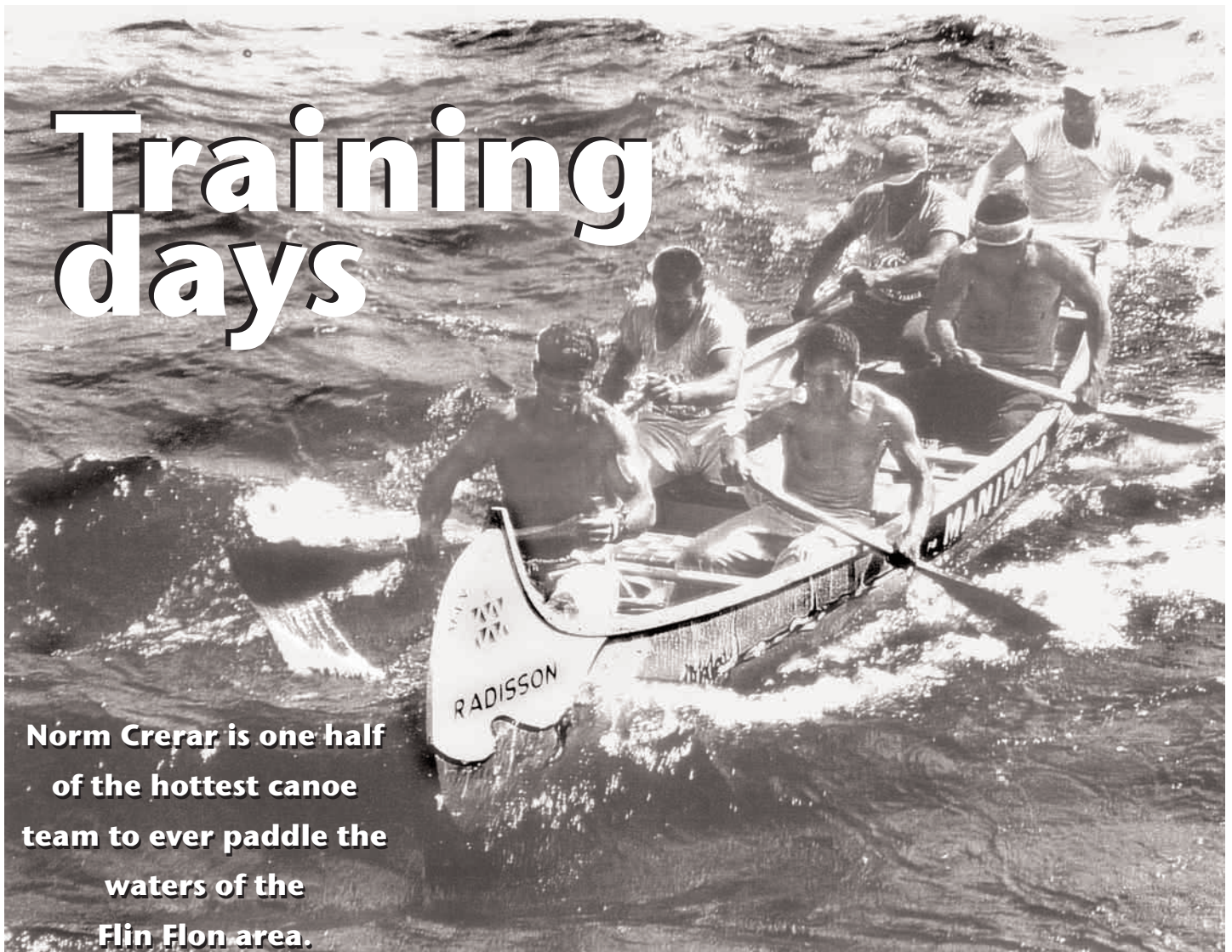
I told him to please close the door and go look at the dog's tail. I said I would explain later.

And that was the last "anti-stress" bath I took. ■

*Gail Anderson lives at Bakers Narrows. She writes regularly for route NORTH roots.*



# Training days



**Norm Crerar is one half of the hottest canoe team to ever paddle the waters of the Flin Flon area.**

**He and partner Gib McEachern went on to win every major race in Canada, and in 1967 led Team Manitoba to victory in the Cross-Canada race from Rocky Mountain house to Montreal. Crerar is now writing the first book on the race by a paddler. What follows is a selected excerpt from the early chapters.**

**Team Manitoba, 1967 - front to back: Gib McEachern, Wayne Soltys, John Norman, Roger Carriere, Joe Michelle, Norm Crerar.**

- SUBMITTED PHOTO

Gib called me and suggested we do some training as soon as the ice went out and that we should go in the annual Trout Festival Golf Rush Canoe Derby.

(We) started the next spring as soon as the ice left the shores of Phantom Lake. We jumped in the old Prospector and poked around the open water and up against the honey-combed ice.

Within a few days, the lake was clear enough for us to make our way down to The Narrows.

The Narrows was actually at the west end of the point of land that was Blueberry Hill. What took Dad and Greta over an hour to get to, Gib and I did in about 30 minutes. A year later,

being stronger and with good paddles and a lighter canoe, we would do it in 10 minutes. The distance from the beach to the narrows was one mile. Once through the narrows, it was a further three miles to the end of the lake.

The beach and cabin colony were about a mile from my home and Gib and I would run out most weekday mornings, jump in the canoe and paddle to the narrows and back. We would then run back to town, have breakfast and go to school.

It was a great life and my high school marks actually went up from this time until I finished grade twelve. There was something special about those early mornings that is hard to forget. Sun just coming up, lake calm,

## BOOK EXCERPT

loon calls echoing, the odd beaver and muskrat just finishing up their nocturnal foraging and not another soul around.

As I sat in the front, other than looking at the water and the land as it went by, I could look at the bow of the canoe! Well, there was an oddity to the front. It looked like some careful patching had been done and when I pointed it out to Gib, I was sworn to secrecy and then the story came out.

When Gib was 14, his brother Gord was 12. They had spent enough time in the canoe that their parents let them take it out alone. On a trip to the West Arm one day, they came upon a moose feeding along the shore. Being practical northern kids, they thought they would just go home, get Dad's gun and come on back and bag that moose. One other player in this saga was the family dog, a Chesapeake Retriever of questionable lineage.

With gun, dog and brother loaded, back down the lake they went. The family owned an old four-h.p. Johnson outboard motor. This machine pushed the canoe about the same speed as a couple of strong paddlers could push it and they were back in moose territory in no time. There was the moose and there they were, motor cut, sneaking up to it. Gib being the older, was in the stern so commanded Gord to change places with him, always an interesting thing to do in the canoe. Gib and Gord made the ballet-like move and things were going fine -- moose still there, canoe still moving toward it. Gib had hold of his Dad's old Lee Enfield and was moving toward the bow for the shot when the dog decided to make a move too. As Gib went to step over the dog, it decided to make a hasty move of it's own. This tight quarter maneuver threw Gib off balance. The dog took a jump out of the canoe, the gun went off, blowing a big hole in the bow, and the recoil sent Gib over the side. The canoe tipped over. They got the canoe to shore; Gib still had hold of the Lee Enfield and the dog was happily swimming around.

Mr. Moose took one look at this, rolled his eyes and headed for the hills.

The canoe got back to the cabin and the bow was pushed far into the woodpile to hide the hole. Ambroid glue, pieces of cedar planking, pieces of canoe canvass and matching paint all went into careful repairs. Gib's dad never did find out.

Anyhow, we spent the early part of the spring doing our two-mile morning practice and tried longer practices on the weekends. Our first great adventure was planned for early June. We decided to paddle down to the end of Phantom, portage a mile and a quarter into the west arm of Schist Lake, paddle six miles to the south end of Schist, turn north and paddle 10 miles back to the old Mandy Mine site. At the old mine site, a short portage would bring us back to the east arm of Phantom and a mile and a half back to the cabin. Sounds easy and straightforward. The 25-mile trip should have taken us about five hours.

We knew nothing about nutrition and hydration. We had

been told by the old-school paddlers and trainers that drinking water was not good for working athletes. I took a lemon for the trip and stuck it in the bow of the canoe, right where the old Lee Enfield had blown a hole.

And away we went.

The four miles to the end of Phantom were easy. We were fresh, the sun was out and it was cool. We also had some motivation. The Flin Flon Canoe Club was going the same way. They were off on a weekend trip and had to go over the portage to Schist Lake. We were not members of the canoe club. We were "Canoe Racers" in training and put ourselves somewhat above this rabble. Of course most of the folks were older and more experienced than we were. This did not stop us from grandstanding a bit and running by them on the portage.

Once past them and out of site we would walk until we came upon another duo struggling along under their canoe and off we would go again. This portage was something else and we would get to know and love it. The first half was high and dry, up on a ridge. Then it dipped

down into floating bog and there was no way for it but to gallop through the wet muskeg and varying depths of water. Mosquitoes you ask? Big enough to stand on their back legs and hump turkeys! Lots of them!



**An early victory in Winnipeg, 1959.**  
- COURTESY OF MA CRERAR

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## BOOK EXCERPT

### Training, from page 25

Blackflies too. No end of fun.

We got to the west arm of Schist and passed all of the Canoe Club canoes.

By now we were getting a bit tired and also dehydrated. We started dipping our cupped hand into the water and drinking it. We also had learned to pull our paddle out of the water quickly and drink the water running off the bottom of the blade. No food of course -- we were too smart for that! Then, we got to the south end of the west arm and turned into the main body of the lake for the trip back north.

The smelter at the HBM&S pumped out a great amount of smoke. We could see the smelter smoke from the end of the lake and it didn't look too far.

After a brief rest and another sip of water, off we went. The sun was getting hotter, we were getting more tired and tended to still drink the water. This was our undoing. You see, the tailings from the mine, mill and smelter ran into Flin Flon Creek, which ran into Ross Lake

which ran via Ross Creek straight into Schist Lake. The tailings contained cyanide as well as other tasty chemicals and this activity over the years had killed off all of the fish in the main part of Schist Lake. Almost killed us.

When we arrived at the old Mandy Mine, a short lift took us over the road and into a small pond across which was the short Mandy Mine portage that would take us back to Phantom Lake. As portages go, this was a relatively short one. However, Phantom Lake is 110 feet higher than Schist Lake with most of the elevation gain taking place right at the start of the trek. Gib

and I were moving pretty slowly by this time and after a wee rest, shouldered the canoe and headed upward.

The going got slower and slower as our little behinds got lower and lower. The trail upward was over the local bedrock which necessitated some rather large steps from outcrop to outcrop.

Near the top, we stalled out on one of these giant steps. Life as we knew it almost ended as did our budding pad-

dling careers. If we had put the canoe down, we might not have gotten it back up on our shoulders again. If we didn't put it down, it might fall down and take us with it.

We held on and very, very slowly began to move again. Finally we were up and over the steep part and the going got easier. We finally got back to Gib's cabin and all but passed out on the floor.

Looking back, there is no doubt we had been affected by the bad water in Schist Lake but most probably suffered from heat exhaustion and severe dehydration.

Of course we didn't know about these things in those days else we would have died!

I found the lemon in the bow the next spring, still untouched and completely dehydrated itself. ■

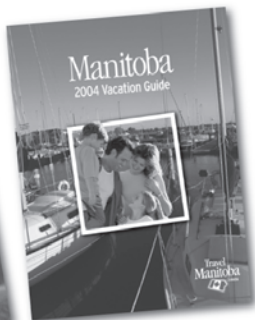
*Norm and Gib are still very active. Norm is a ski instructor at Silver Star Mountain, B.C., and Gib is a water bomber pilot for the Government of Manitoba.*

*They build voyageur canoes and can be found at [www.canadianvoyageur.com](http://www.canadianvoyageur.com) on the internet.*

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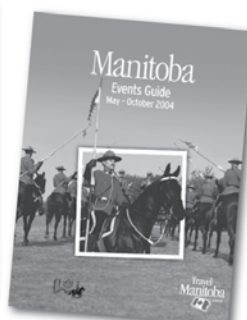
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# Art of the North

## Northern Juried Art show a chance for new talent to shine

**Frank Fieber**  
route NORTH roots

The 28th Annual Juried Art Show was exhibited in The Pas, May 14 to 16. The gym at Keewatin Community College was decked out to showcase the work of more than 80 northern Manitoba artists, from North of 53°.

Pick any artist from the group and you'll find an interesting story of struggle with a new medium or joy in the mastering of a discipline or the process of understanding of self and society. Painters, carvers, potters, crafters, photographers and those who can draw — all trying to point out some aspect of beauty, form or concept that they've recognized and want to pass on to others. They bare their soul for all to see and say take it or leave it.

A large painting by 16-year-old Mia Oliver of The Pas, called The Dirty '30s, shows huge potential in the youth category while a pastel drawing by 93-year-old Gladys Nomeland of Flin Flon demonstrates a

life in the joy of making images. Oliver and Nomeland were first in their categories of painting and drawing. Teresa Burrows of Thompson was the shining star of this year's show, with several outstanding pieces. "Pearls", a watercolor image of two women and a string of pearls showed her mastery of form and colour. A second piece by Burrows, "INRI", was more of an installation, with not-so-subtle references to Christ and the suffering of women, using a photographic montage with rubber gloves and found objects. Michael O'Toole, of The Pas, submitted "Yellow Belly Sapsucker", a painting of a bird set in a lush Boreal forest scene. He was unmentioned but not unnoticed. His painting won the peoples' choice for best in show.

In sculpture, Gary Nabess of Thompson took first and second prize with his driftwood-inspired birds. First was "Intimidating Trio", three eagle heads and the second was "Feathered Family", a group of six ducks flying nose to nose.

Gary Campbell of Moose Lake submitted an untitled assemblage of carved moose horns, arrows and pipes. I expect to see more of this man's work as he refines his vision.

Ron Scott of The Pas took first prize in crafts with his spalted birch

hollow vessels. Fine lines are created by fungus as the birch begins to decompose (spalting).

Mike Camp of Wanless took second in crafts for his entry, a classical guitar — well crafted and detailed, the sign clearly stated "do not touch".

Third in crafts was a magnificent



wooden headboard titled "Sleepwalker".

The image of a polar bear made of many pieces of wood layed together, was hard to miss.

Highly polished and varnished, this piece put Churchill artist

craftsman W.D. McPherson near the top of my list.

We've got a lot of talent north of 53°.

First in painting went to Darrell Baschack, of The Pas, for an impressionist piece entitled reflections.

One young man with obvious talent was Robert Peacock of Flin Flon. His detailed drawings could easily lead to a career in illustration.

Walter McKenzie of The Pas took first prize in photography with his "Three sisters" — a moment and a feeling worth recording.

We need a category for installation pieces like Burrows' "INRI" or Campbell's moose horn sculptures. Some pieces just don't fit neatly into a category, but they are thought-provoking and visually rich.

I can say "good on you," all who dare to present for the rest of us to enjoy and absorb.

This year's jurors Pauline A. Braun, Douglas Glenn and Jan Hall did written critiques of each piece to be returned with the artwork to the individual artists.

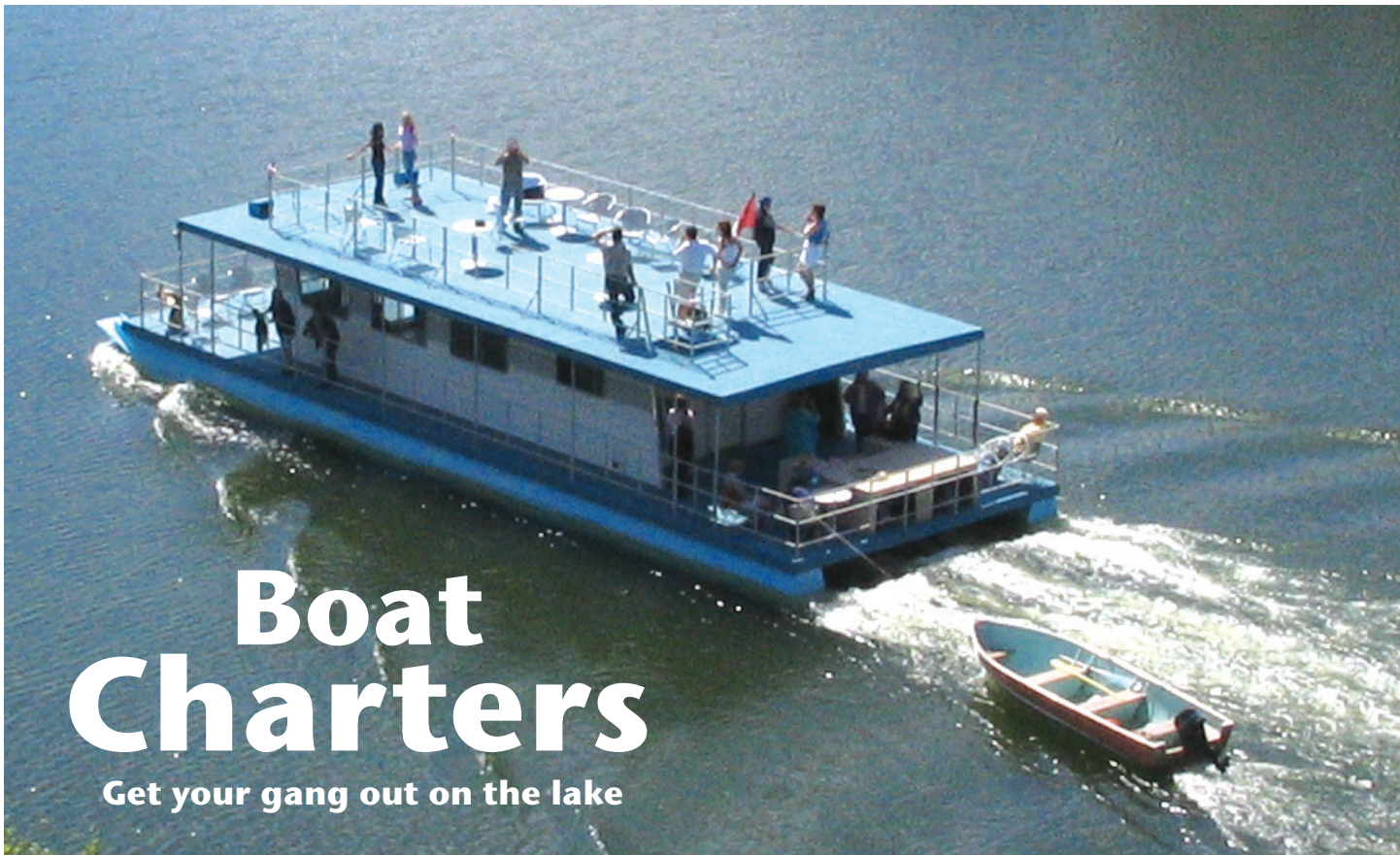
Selected pieces will be shown in July at the Rural and Northern Art Exhibition at the Legislature Buildings in Winnipeg.

Next year, the Northern Juried Art Show will be exhibited in Gillam. ■



**Top: Nabess' Intimidating Trio, left: Pearls by Burrows, above: detail from O'Toole's Sapsucker.**

- PHOTOS BY FRANK FIEBER



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## Staff Writer route NORTH roots

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# Flin Flon Station Museum is laying track

Model trains pulled into the Flin Flon Station. Background painted by Northern Palette Art Club. - PHOTO BY FRANK FIEBER

## Frank Fieber route NORTH roots

A monetary donation by the late publisher Tom Dobson has allowed construction of this exhibit. A working model train inside a painted diorama of the region will delight children and adults.

There's plenty more to see at the Station Museum both on the railway theme and on early Flin Flon domestic and commercial themes. Check it out across from the new Flintoba Shopping Centre on the east side of town.

Right - HBM&S "dinky" electric locomotive. One of the full sized train pieces displayed outdoors at the Station Museum. ■



Exhibit constructors Ron Dodds and Dave Fitzsimmons inside the display, missing Jim Stevens. - PHOTO BY FRANK FIEBER

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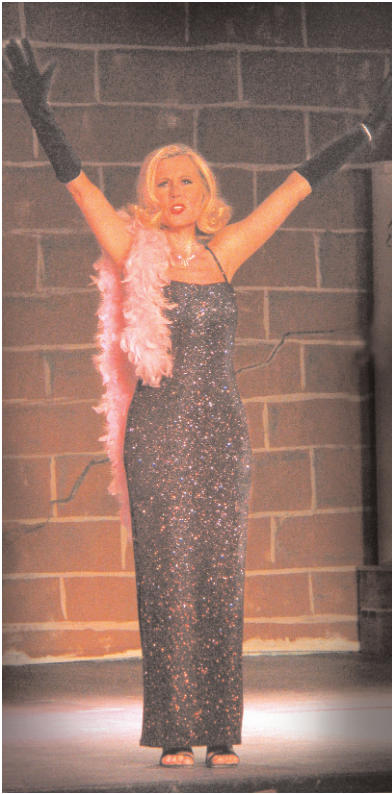
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# The Follies




The Flin Flon Community Choir continues to amaze - their most recent production of *The Follies* was a huge success. Top, the grande finale, above, Tim Spencer with some of the chorus line. For more pictures, see [www.northroots.ca](http://www.northroots.ca). - PHOTOS BY FRANK FIEBER

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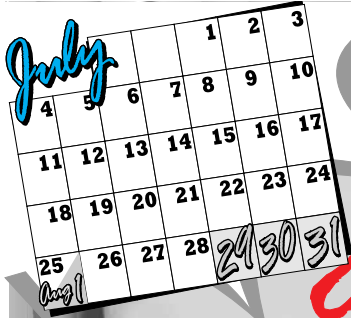
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**Doug Evans**  
Contributing Writer

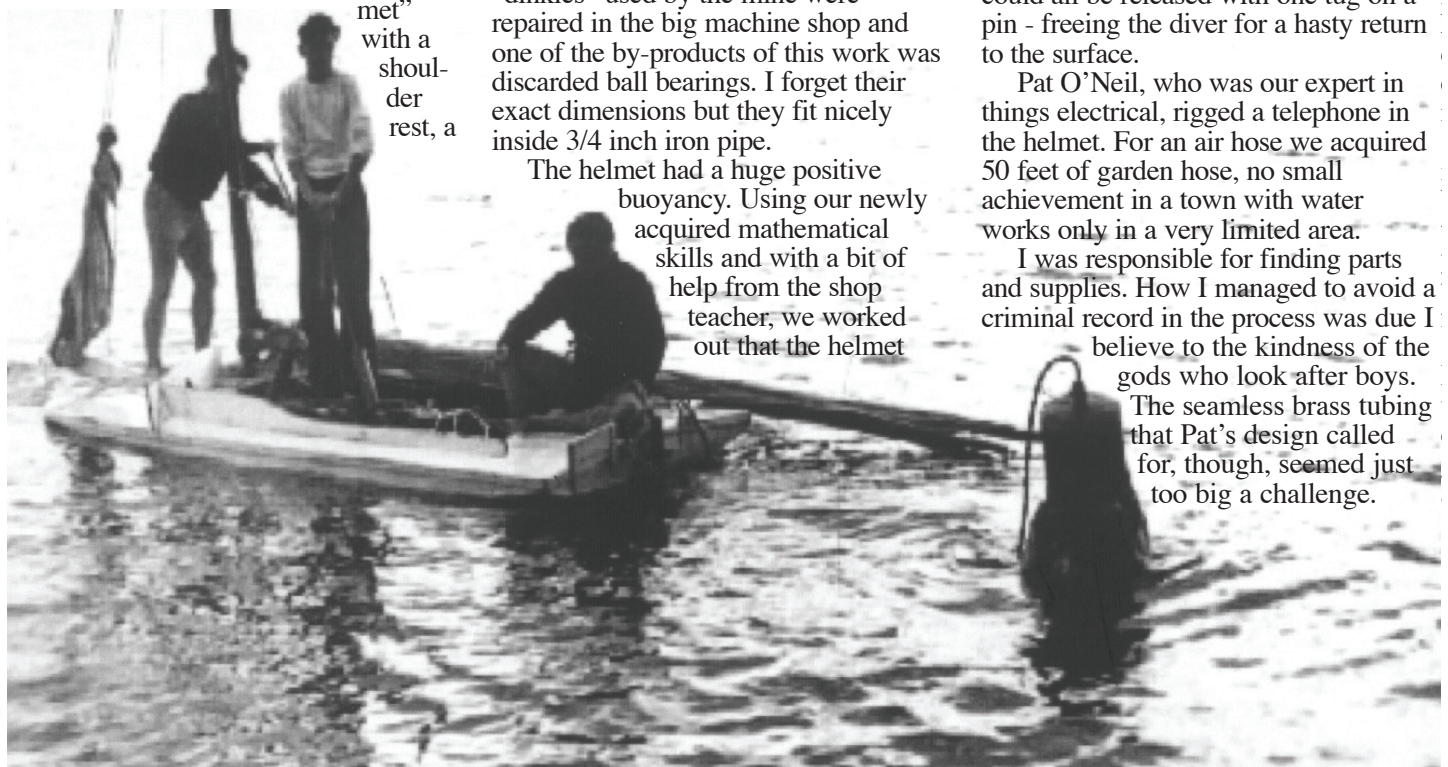
One day, when my friends and I were canvassing the dump for treasures, we came across a discarded water heating tank. It was made of sheet iron, with riveted seams; it didn't take much imagination to see a potential diving helmet.

The great heroes of my day were the undersea divers. In the early '50s, men in bronze helmets battled huge squid and triumphed over the bad guys who tried to cut their air lines and steal their girlfriend. My friends and I talked a lot about diving, about the different types of diving equipment and the merits of each. Like any other collection of boys on this earth our world was part reality, part dream world.

We dragged the tank to the school shop and with much labour and more than a few of the school's hacksaw blades, we managed to cut the tank off about 16 inches from the top.

Many drill holes and many smacks with the cold chisel later we had cut a window about 10 inches square in the side. We proceeded to fit out our "helmet"

with a shoulder rest, a



**The first dive using the helmet. Would it work? What treasures awaited on the bottom of Big Island Lake?**

- SUBMITTED PHOTO

# The diving helmet

**A gang of mechanically inclined boys, a discarded water tank, and a few key materials scavenged from The Company . . .**

watertight window, and several valves. In those days the electric "dinkies" used by the mine were repaired in the big machine shop and one of the by-products of this work was discarded ball bearings. I forget their exact dimensions but they fit nicely inside 3/4 inch iron pipe.

The helmet had a huge positive buoyancy. Using our newly acquired mathematical skills and with a bit of help from the shop teacher, we worked out that the helmet

would end up with about four pounds of positive buoyancy. One of our main concerns was that the diver remain upright since the bottom of the helmet was open. The mine used to issue wooden clogs for the change house showers then; maybe they still do. We got two of them, pounded them into moulding sand in the school shop and cast two very neat lead sandals.

The weight belt consisted of an old Sam Brown-type ammunition belt stuffed with lead blocks. Ralph Adams did most of the casting work and we never asked where the seemingly endless supply of old car batteries came from.

For a number of reasons which seem unclear to me even now, I was to be the diver. All this lead was beginning to keep me awake at night as thoughts of all the sea monsters and other dangers that might lurk under the surface swirled through my dreams. Dreams which always seemed to end up with me firmly anchored to the bottom by the lead shoes. A design change was in order. We rigged the binding of the shoes, the closure of the belt and the under arm straps of the helmet so they could all be released with one tug on a pin - freeing the diver for a hasty return to the surface.

Pat O'Neil, who was our expert in things electrical, rigged a telephone in the helmet. For an air hose we acquired 50 feet of garden hose, no small achievement in a town with water works only in a very limited area.

I was responsible for finding parts and supplies. How I managed to avoid a criminal record in the process was due I believe to the kindness of the gods who look after boys.

The seamless brass tubing that Pat's design called for, though, seemed just too big a challenge.

The mine machine shop of course had tubing like that, but no one was going to give any of it to four school boys for a hair-brained project.

My father had always advised us that when dealing with a big organization we should make our contact as high up the totem pole as possible. I don't think he had in mind that I would write a letter to Parnell Caulfield, one of the most senior people in Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting in Flin Flon at the time, but in a fit of desperation I did just that. When the phone rang and Mr. Caulfield's secretary advised my mother that Mr. Caulfield would see me the next day at three o'clock, my mother managed to hang up the phone without making a major fuss. She was not happy with my actions and neither was my father, but secretly I think they maybe admired my audacity just a bit.

The next day, pressed, ironed, polished and wearing a borrowed tie, I presented myself at the main gate and a guard led me to the main office.

I had brought with me the plans for the pump that we had drawn up following Pat's suggestion. I am sure my knobby knees could be heard knocking clear back to the Staff House as I explained about the valves and the need for smooth bore cylinders.

The ball bearing valves seemed to interest him a lot and I tried hard not to be too specific about the origin of those steel balls but I don't suppose you get to run an operation the size of the mine without being able to figure a few things out for yourself.

He leaned back in his big chair and I was certain that the next thing I would feel would be the guard's hand on my collar but with a sudden grin he grabbed a piece of paper and scribbled a short note on it.

"Take this to the foreman of the machine shop and he will give you the tubing."

"Seamless brass?" I couldn't believe my ears.

"That's what the plan calls for. The guard will show you where to go."

Well, I came out the main gate to meet my astonished friends carrying two pieces of seamless brass tubing. They had even cut the pieces to size in

## **My father had always advised us to make contact as high up the totem pole as possible. I don't think he had in mind that I would write a letter to Parnell Caulfield . . .**

the machine shop.

We were ready.

Pat and Ralph, the huskiest of our group, would be the pump crew. Bruce, who owned the sailboat, would be the captain of the venture and handle the surface end of the telephone.

We made the first dive in front of our cottage on Big Island Lake.

The picture that accompanies this article was taken by my mother. She said later at that moment, watching her eldest son disappear beneath the waves that she had fervently wished that she had been a Catholic so she could cross herself.

The diving helmet and pump worked.

We made several dives but soon learned that there was little treasure to be found on the bottom of Big Island Lake, although we did harvest a number of fish hooks. Our only close call came when I was venturing along the bottom below an underwater cliff. The hose dislodged an old abandoned Christmas tree. With the slime of several years under water on its branches, it slid

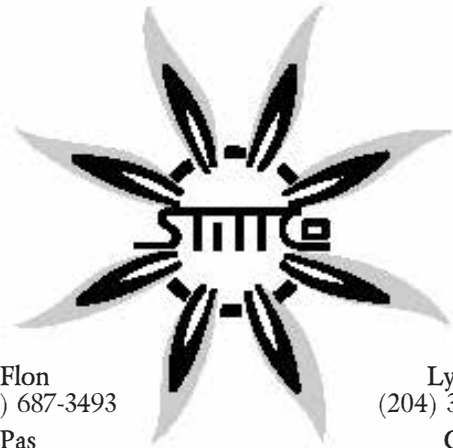
down the hose and wrapped itself around me. Visibility disappeared completely and I was sure I was being attacked by a sea monster. In the boat Pat and Ralph stopped pumping to hear what the yelling was about. With no air coming down, the water level in the helmet started to rise and Bruce could tell them truly that I was yelling "Pump!"

Perhaps our proudest moment came when the mine borrowed our pump and helmet to repair an intake valve on the reservoir.

In 1956 I went to Mexico to attend college. The pump and helmet were still in the back yard and we were worried that someone's child might get into trouble trying it out, so we hauled it out to the old town dump on the Channing road.

If any amateur archaeologist should come up with a puzzling contraption involving some seamless brass tubing and part of an old hot water tank, perhaps this story will solve the mystery. ■

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# Hunting Wildflowers

**Wendy Gregoire**  
Contributing Writer

**M**other's Day is special because it marks the opening of wildflower season for Carol Boscow and I. Each year on this day, we go south of The Pas to Springwater to see the prairie crocus (*Anemone patens*). So far, we haven't been disappointed. Usually, the sun is out and warms our backs; we hear geese and sandhill cranes as they fly overhead; and we just sit and soak up the feeling of contentment.

This year, spring was late. We decided to get up at 5:30 in the morning and be there after 6:30. The sun would be up but not overwhelming. Maybe this would be the year we would get to see them at their best.

It took awhile to find them but there they were. It was early, so early that they were just starting to poke up through the ground. Some were just fuzzy little buttons. Others were in tight buds. Some looked

like they had frostbite. The wind was cold and after awhile we shivered our way back to the car with the intent to return again next week.

All week it was cold and when we arrived on Saturday morning it looked like time had stood still. More buds had popped up and one flower had opened enough for us to see the yellow centre. I was so excited I must have taken six pictures of that single flower, in case I would never see another for the rest of the year.

Sunday, at lunch, I noticed that my garden crocuses had opened since the morning. I called Carol and we decided to go back in the afternoon to see if the wild ones were open as well. They were. I finally had my deeper coloured flowers for my pictures. One even had 12 petal-like sepals instead of six. Wow!

The next weekend Carol and I decided to investigate a spot we had found just off the Root Lake Road near Wanless. It was still too early in the day for them to be fully open, but the lighting from the back made all



**Delicate crocuses immerge at Springwater.**  
- PHOTO BY WENDY GREGOIRE

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the fuzz on the stems glow and even brought up the fuzz on the petals. These crocuses were even darker in colour than the ones from Springwater. Later that afternoon, I brought another friend out to see them. They had opened in the sun and were ready for another photo shoot.

What a year for the prairie crocus, a dream come true.

Spring flowers are so beautiful. The dwarf primroses, the early blue violets and marsh marigolds were in the ditches at the end of May, between Wanless and The Pas. The leaves are finally out and I am looking forward to the orchids (Venus slippers, yellow lady slippers, pink lady slippers, round leaf orchids, dragon's mouth and others). We have carnivorous plants like sundews and pitcher plants in our area as well. Every weekend Carol and I are drawn to the bush; it is our energizer. We never know what new plant we will find or what we will see but it is fun.

When I discuss our sojourns in search of flowers with other people, one of the first things they often ask me is if I am going to pick the flowers or dig up the plants and bring them back for my garden. I respond with a shocked, "Not on your life, I only go out so I can observe plants in nature and take pictures. Do you know that some of these plants are rare, or protected, or so delicate that they would be injured and die if disturbed? Some times they are so sensitive that even touching the flower in the wild can kill them. No, I just go out to admire them as they are and take lots of pictures."



**Prairie crocus.**  
- PHOTO BY WENDY GREGOIRE

This spring I found an interesting and informative website about the prairie crocus and other plants at <http://www.devonian.ualberta.ca/pwatches/plants.htm>.

It seems the prairie crocus is limited to unploughed prairie sod because of a partnership with soil fungi in which nutrients are exchanged. It does well in grazed areas, because grazing reduces competition with grasses. If there are large clumps of prairie crocuses in a field, it may indicate over grazing. However, in ploughed fields it may take up to 40 years for it to return. This may be

due to the association with its fungal partners that occur only in unploughed soils. When first seen by Carol, our Springwater patch was a carpet of purple prairie crocus flowers. Logging to remove some large jack pines disturbed the soil and since then the plants in this area have definitely been sparse. Thankfully, a small area was left natural.

If you are interested in learning about plants in this area there is a book that I find easy to use and very informative called *Plants of the Western Boreal Forest and Aspen Parkland* by Johnson, Kershaw, MacKinnon, and Pojar. It costs about \$25 Canadian and is published by Lone Pine. I don't leave home without it.

For those interested in learning about local flora, The Sam Waller Museum in The Pas is arranging short guided excursions. Call them at 204-623-3805 if you are interested in joining me. ■

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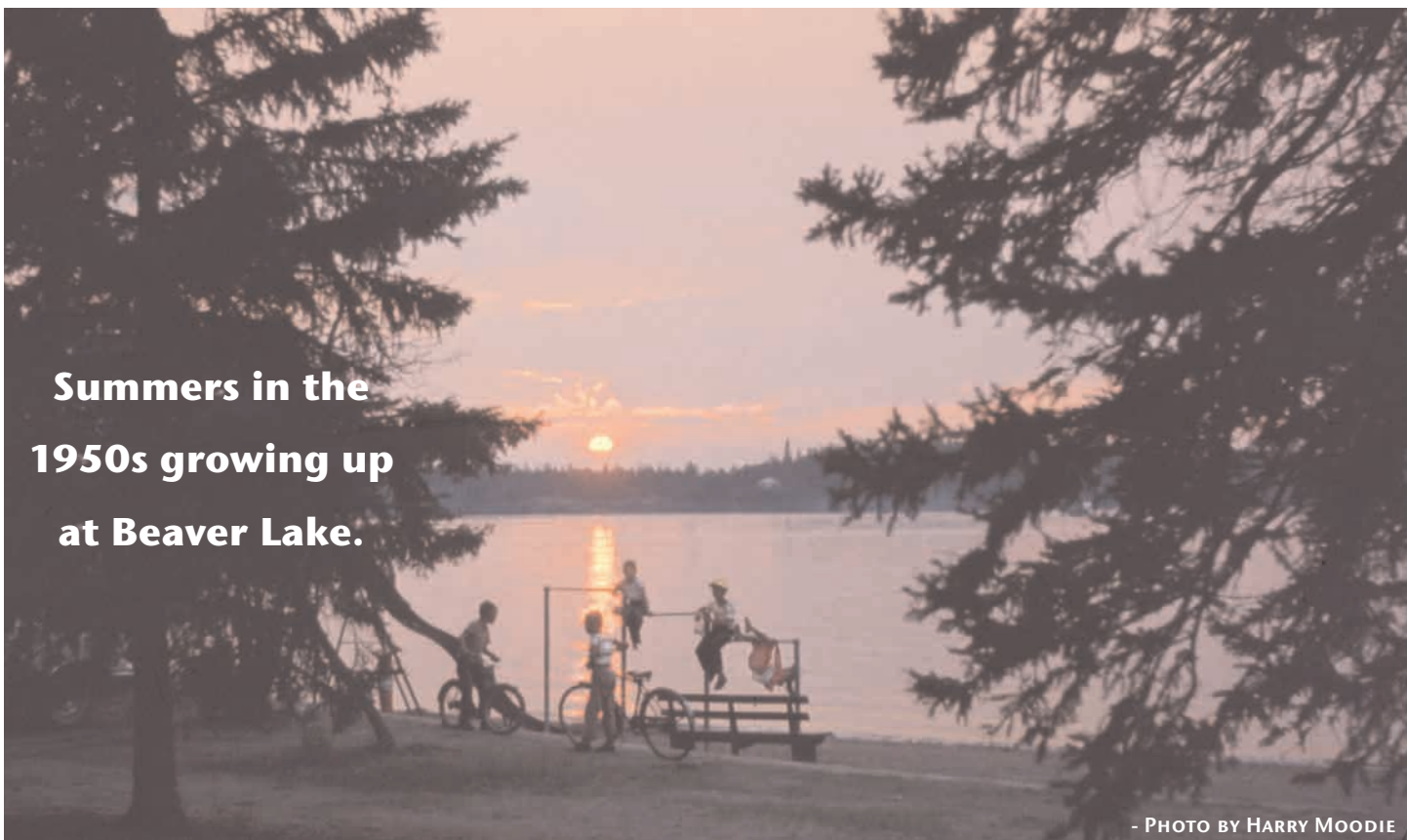
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- PHOTO BY HARRY MOODIE

## Summers in the 1950s growing up at Beaver Lake.

**Sue Lambert, OM**  
Contributing Writer

**A**s a very young girl, my most poignant memories are of the weekends and summers spent with the family at our log cabin at Beaver Lake. We always called it Beaver Lake (not Amisk Lake, or Denare Beach). It was a far cry from the Denare Beach of today, which is a real thriving year-round community. The Beaver Lake of the 50s was all gravel roads, no sidewalks, no power, and the majority of homes were summer cabins and cottages enjoyed by extended families.

Although it was not very far from Flin Flon, it used to take about 45 minutes to get there - the roads were extremely curved and winding. Someone once told me there were over 350 curves, and although many times I tried to count them, I could never get it straight because as we rode along, something would come up in conversation or teasing to which I would have to contribute and I would lose count.

The whole family, Grandpa, Grandma, Mom, Dad, sisters and

## Remember when...

brothers would pile into the car and set off on the adventure, starting at the long weekend in May.

We had this old light green monster of a Chevrolet with a rope across the back of the front seat where a wool tartan blanket hung. When I asked why the blanket was there, it was for emergencies and we were not to use it. There was no radio in our car, and we used to sing and talk all the way to the lake, holding onto that braided rope, using it as a microphone, a stage curtain pull, and a handle. How my Grandparents ever tolerated the noise, I will never know.

My Grandpa, Bill Hughes, rarely drove - he always left the driving to my Grandmother, Ella V., because he could then look out the window into the bushes for birds and game (I finally understood this after I married a dedicated hunter who rarely drives either).

Grandpa was always on the lookout for something to share with us,

and taught us many things about rabbits changing colour, types of flowers and the kind of land they need, shapes of birds in the sky, varieties of ducks in the ditches, and different sorts of trees and bushes. His early teachings have stayed with me to this day. Sometimes my Dad drove, and then we got to the lake faster, but we swayed against one another on the way, and it was lots of fun. At that time there was no road going towards the 'new' end of Denare Beach, just the road that went past Mosher Lake. The hill and curve going up to the outlook at the top was even steeper and sharper than it is today, and everyone needed to slow down. However, you couldn't slow down too much or the vehicles would stall out. That was one scary curve. A little further along was a little hill - just before you could see the school house. Grandpa called it "Tickle Belly Hill", and I always thought he meant tickle Billy. When you went over that hill, it caused a sensation in your tummy as you left the ground, and my brother Bill would laugh and laugh.

When we arrived at the cabin, we all piled out of the old green machine and trooped inside. Dad usually got

busy chopping wood, checking all the coal oil lamps and set the propane for the stove. Grandpa wandered around making sure Dad was working, checked on the rainwater supply, and smoking a big cigar (which was not allowed in the house).

The kids found their own entertainment in those days. My sister Charleen and I both had our own swings, each with a wooden seat and braided cotton rope. We would swing happily for hours, singing and telling stories. Grandpa was an excellent pusher. My brother Bill had a little cart that he rode everywhere.

Once the car was unpacked, the food and clothing put away, we were always given a nickel to go to Moodie's store to buy an ice cream cone. I swore that I would never do to my children what my Mother did to us - push down the ice cream into the cone with her tongue (but I did). You could go to Moodie's with five cents and come back with a whole sack full of penny candy.

In those days penny candy was five for one cent - not like now - one for five cents.

We often had lunch outside, eating a picnic at the side of the woodpile - peanut butter and jam sandwiches and orange freshie. Our family had freshie, not kool-aid.

In the evenings, my Dad would light a fire in the outdoor fireplace and he would pop corn in a wire basket over the fire. As a real treat he would melt butter in an enamel bowl on the top of the fireplace chimney and mix the popcorn in with it, then add a little salt. We would sit around the fire, watching the embers burn, then everyone would go into bed. Dad would light the coal oil lamps, Grandpa would read the paper,

Grandma and Mom would get us bathed, cleaned up and into pyjamas. Then the radio would go on for about one hour.

We used to listen to Watrous, Saskatchewan (I loved the sound of that name and the way the announcer said it), it was short-wave and battery, so we could not listen all the time.

First was the news and then there was music with some country singing. We used to lie in our beds and pound on the headboards (they were made of tin) in time to the music, singing along at the tops of our voices. One of the songs that sticks in my memory is Whispering Pines - perhaps because it was so appropriate for Beaver Lake of the 1950s.

My Grandpa was up early in the mornings with my Dad and they got the fire going. Dad always went to get a fresh pail of water, and Grandpa set the coffee to boil. The smell of coffee, bacon and woodsmoke evokes marvelous thoughts for me even today. We had an old wood burning franklin stove and Grandpa took the front off when it was down to coals and made the most delicious toast. Lots of time there was a bit of charcoal on the toast, and Grandma or Mom would fix it up for us by scraping all the

burnt parts. We referred to it as gramming the toast.

My Mom continued to do it for my children.

We kept all our perishable foods down in our cold cellar which was a concrete room under the cabin with shelves and a gravel floor. The door was in the middle of the kitchen and when it was lifted open, you had to go down the stairs to get the milk, vegetables or preserves. I guess I must have been a little timid, because I found it foreboding to have to go all the way down. Maybe I

thought someone would close the trap door and I would be stuck there.

One of the exciting times we had as a family was going down the Weir road, which was at that time very close to only being a winter road. The potholes were enormous and if it was raining at all, the clay made the road so greasy that the cars slid all over the place, sometimes turning completely around.

## **I swore that I would never do to my children what my Mother did to us - push down the ice cream into the cone with her tongue**

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**Remember, from page 37**

We kids thought it was great, but it must have been tough driving in those conditions. The very best wild fruit grew along the Sturgeon Weir Road - blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, pin cherries. We went out to pick them at different times, and each person had an old can with wire through the top to pick into. Most of my family were excellent berry pickers, but my Grandpa called my brother Bill "The Straw Boss". Bill always checked to see how many berries were in everybody's cans, and ate the ones in his own. I was always the poorest berry picker, finding myself distracted by bird calls, bugs, worms, pretty rocks, and the clouds.

While we were berry picking, I once went for a car ride with my Grandpa driving. I thought he was going to get into big trouble with Grandma because he had his cigar in his mouth (she didn't allow it in the car either), and he said hop in. He started up the car. I thought we were really in for it! He drove the car only about 300 yards and stopped by my Grandma and picked up all the berries and put them in the trunk.

After berry picking, Mom and

Grandma processed most of the berries by canning them or making jelly and jam. (Our big Boxing Day Dinner treat was a dessert made with meringues, vanilla ice-cream and home-canned strawberries.) We got to eat very few of the berries fresh.

My Dad was an old Navy man, and was very particular about being neat and orderly. He liked to keep the yard at the lake really tidy. In those days, there wasn't much grass growing around Beaver Lake as the ground was very sandy and the soil conditions were not right for anything but prairie and crab grass, with the big evergreens making the soil very acid.

Dad kept the little grass that there was very cultivated and trimmed. He made bordered walkways by dipping rocks in plaster and white paint and kept the sandy soil in the walkways raked and neat. He raked the driveway a couple of times a day.

My Dad always said that everything should have its place, and if you use it and then put it back into its place, you will always know where everything is. I don't think that quality rubbed off on me enough.

We were always excited when the Robertsons got to the lake. They were

across the street from us and we spent hours and hours having adventures, reading comics and playing cards together. We would go on field trips to the boat houses (half a block away - but a big deal in those days because of the bush that still existed between the cabins and the lake), go to the beach to swim, make sand castles, catch minnows, explore the boat side of the dock. We often had picnics together and played in one another's yards. Their lives were entwined with ours as we lived close in town and also at the lake.

Once or twice a summer we would pack up a big lunch

and go off on a real trip, walking to the Mink Ranch. Sometimes Inge Norman would be there with his brother, and because he knew all of us from the store, he would persuade Gisli to let us tour through the mink sheds and see the animals. They were so pretty, with dark black eyes, damp black noses, and the most lustrous brown fur, but, boy did they stink!

After our adventure at the Mink Ranch, we would continue and go on to McDermott's where we saw Mrs. McDermott tanning furs, cooking bannock, filleting fish, doing her washing - and doing it all outside.

Mr. McDermott was a Conservation Officer. David and George and Marlene were around our age. They were the most friendly family and always smiled and welcomed us as we came to their yard. After a little visit we would pass through the yard and go to the Mill Stream.

At one time there had been a saw mill at this place, and there was a little rapids with a few timbers from old buildings left. We played on the rocks and boards. The water was always quite cold and the stones were slippery. It was a pretty far walk back if you got wet.

The first time I saw the movie *Stand By Me*, based on the story by Stephen King, I could not help but compare it to some of the adventures we had as children at Beaver Lake. In my heart I knew the spirit of each of those boys intimately because they were just like Bill Munro, Jim Robertson, Emiel Robertson, Drew Keddie, Norm Eyres, Dave Samoleski, Leigh Noton - and I picked out which one would have fainted from getting a blood sucker in his shorts!

Kids today don't have the opportunity to share the times that we did because technology has invaded their lives. We rarely talked on the phone, we listened closely when the radio was on, played neighbourhood games, walked and explored, made up activities, read books and comics, played cards and talked, and talked and talked.

Now kids have everything planned for them - organized sports, TV, cell phones, computers, game boys - and they seem to have little need to undertake free spirited adventures.

Maybe as parents and grandparents, our readers can encourage some of that old-fashioned initiative and help our children to create memories they will have forever.

Remember when . . . ■



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