

MORE

READER'S DIGEST

of

Our Canada

Spot the Loonie
You Could

**WIN
CASH!**

Our Country, More Stories

A Superb Route

Lake Superior to Manitoba by canoe,
it's scenic splendour
at every stroke

CANADA DAY SALUTE!

Your fellow Canadians
display their love
of country

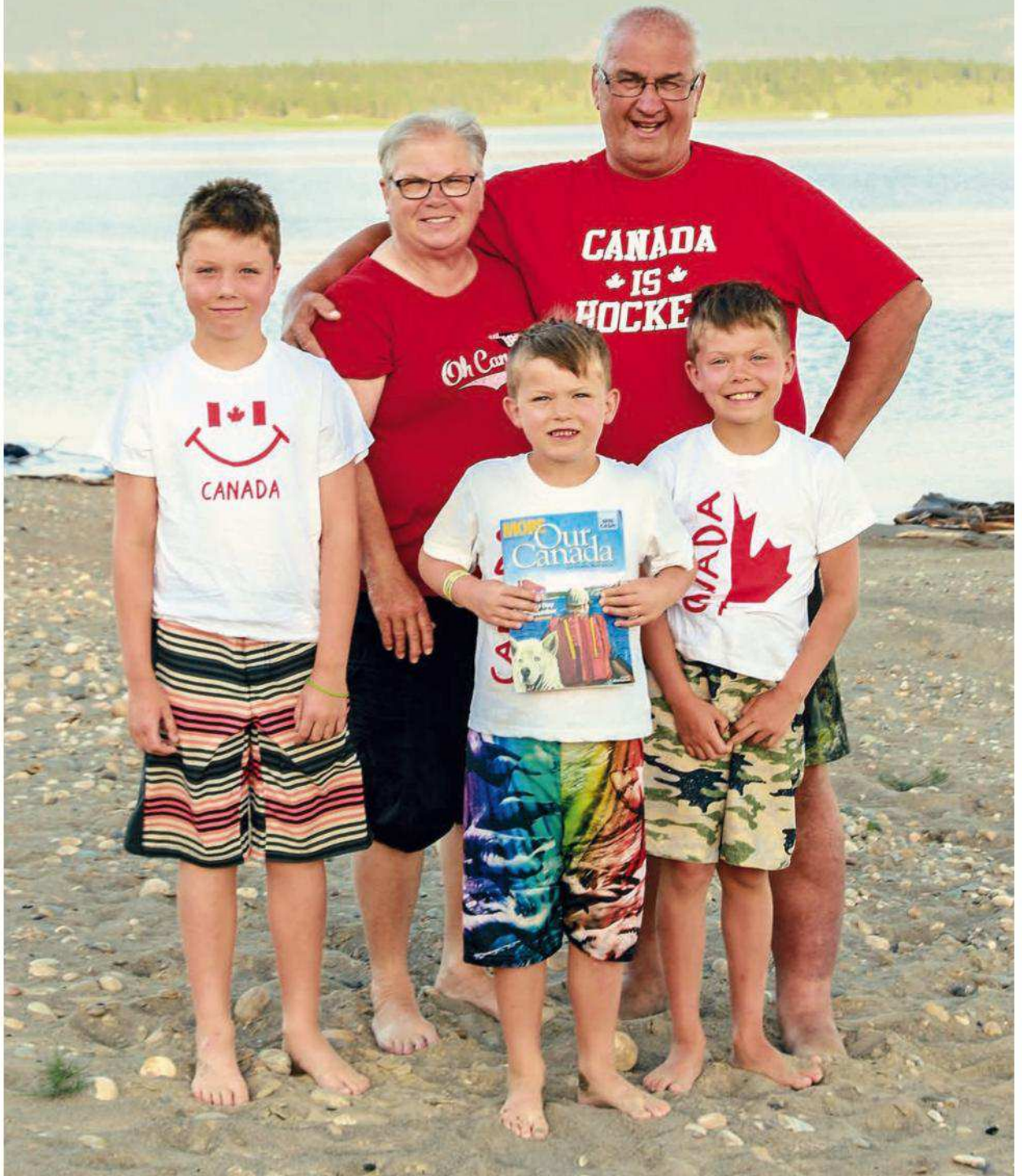
BIRDS AND BLOOMS

'Garden Angels'
with hearts of gold

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Summer shortcakes!

CANADIAN PRIDE Bev Burtleoff of Blaine Lake, Sask., shares this awesome photo, writing, "My husband Bob and I celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary on July 1, 2017, and our family took us on a houseboat vacation to Lake Koochanusa, B.C., to celebrate! This is Bob and me with our grandsons (from left) Bently, Berkly and Bohdan showing off our Canadian pride." Turn to page 44 for more patriotic pics.



MORE of Our Canada

JULY 2018

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About Our Cover: This is just one of the classic shots that Hap Wilson of Rousseau, Ont., captured on his journey to map a route from Lake Superior to Manitoba by canoe. Check out his fascinating photo essay on page 8.



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IN YOUR WORDS

Cut From the Same Cloth

In the Crafty Canadians story, "She's Got You Covered" (January 2018), there are three quilts by Jean Kuglin of Owen Sound, Ont. I would like to know the name of the pattern of the one on the top left of the page. It is a very old pattern and I have two cushions made the same way, with material cut into circles and then each circle sewn into smaller circles. Depending on how big you wish your item to be, the more circles will be made and sewn together. You can have any size quilt or pillow you desire. I am enclosing a picture of one of my cushions with that pattern!

Ruth Zelinski, *Viking, Alta.*



Ruth's cushion featuring the circular pattern she describes.

Pass It Around

I am excited to appear in the Birds and Blooms section of this issue and receive my own one-year free subscription! I usually read my sister's issues, which she brings from Ottawa. She places them in the lounge in our mom's nursing home here in Trenton. All the resi-

dents really enjoy them, even those who no longer have the ability to read still enjoy looking at the photos and hearing the stories read to them. It is one of the most-popular magazines available to them. Both *Our Canada* and *More of Our Canada* are excellent publications.

Jane Clement, *Trenton, Ont.*



Wyman's Mom & Dad, Syd and Charlotte.

Remembering Mom

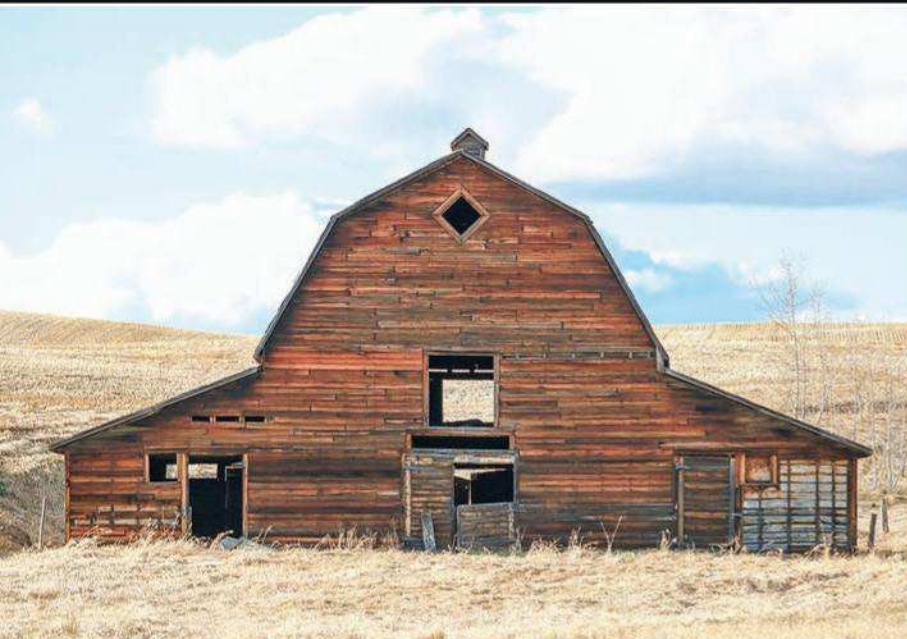
Having received my latest issue of *More of Our Canada*, I wanted to let you know that I was absolutely flabbergasted at the wonderful job you did with the story about my mother, "Remarkable Charlotte" (March 2018). I am at a loss for words. The way in which you married the dialogue and melded the pictures perfectly is just remarkable. Thank you for honouring her in print. It's something the family can read and perhaps shed a tear of joy over.

Wyman Atkinson, *Cottam, Ont.*

Budding Photographer

I just wanted to say how thrilled I was to see my daughter Katie Vaillancourt's photo on the back cover of *Our Canada* (February-

FACEBOOK THEME PIC OF THE MONTH



Rebecca Bromberger of Barrhead, Alta., submitted this great moody shot of an old barn in rural St. Paul County, Alta., to our "Barns" Theme Pics Challenge. To see more great Theme Pic photos and learn what the next "theme" is, head to our Facebook page!

March 2018). Katie is an amazing photographer and this pic was only a drop in the bucket compared to some of the fabulous shots she has taken. Hopefully her gift will be recognized somewhere down the line. Although she loved living in Calgary, we love that she is now back living here in Quebec. Thank you for thinking her shot was good enough to grace the pages of your wonderful magazine.

Kathy Vaillancourt, Pincourt, Que.

Long Lost Memories

Reading the My Hometown story, "Going Home to 'Lost Villages'" (February-March 2018), brought back many memories. Although I was not a resident of the Lost Villages (which were destroyed in the building of the Saint Lawrence Seaway), as a sales rep, I used to travel through the area while making sales calls to stores in the villages of Cardinal and Iroquois. One time, I snapped a photo of my car beside the huge vehicle that was used to move the old homes to new town sites. My car looked like a toy next to it! I wish I still had that photo. Little did I know at the time that the area I was travelling through would take on such a huge historical significance.

Henry Vandentop, Brampton, Ont.

HAVE YOUR SAY. *Is there a story or feature you'd like to comment on? Anything you'd like to see more or less of in each issue? Your opinion is important to us, so drop us a line at ourcanada.ca or see page 64 for our address.*

MEETING PLACE



HAP WILSON

Hap has paddled more than 60,000 kilometres across Canada and his explorations have been published in more than a dozen books. **Heart of a Continent** (page 8) tells how he mapped out a route from Lake Superior to Manitoba, by canoe. His achievements include being a recipient of the Bill Mason Award for lifetime achievement in river conservation, and co-founder of the environmental group Earthroots. He also taught Pierce Brosnan to paddle a canoe and throw a knife for the movie *Grey Owl*. When not paddling or mountain biking, he and his wife Andrea operate the Cabin Falls Ecolodge in Temagami, Ont.



PETER PORTLOCK

Peter began his journey as a church musician as a choir-boy growing up in Edmonton. He graduated from advanced piano study to the organ bench at age 12. Since then, he has served as choir director and organist for Protestant and Catholic congregations across Canada while serving in the RCAF, and subsequently in Edmonton and Lethbridge, Alta. Now retired, Peter enjoys filling in for Sunday services and the occasional wedding—read about one memorable occasion in his story **My Wedding Epiphany** on page 16. He and his wife of 40 years, Linda, have three sons and eight grandchildren.



TEAGAN LITTLECHIEF

Teagan is from the White Bear First Nations north of Carlyle, Sask. She's been singing since the age of four, and has had the support of family, friends and mentors ever since. Her music hit the airwaves after the 2009 release of her album "Rising Above." In 2011, she gave birth to her son, Gabriel, and has thrived in both roles—mom and recording artist. Also a talented songwriter, she co-wrote the songs on her recent release "Hell Bent & Heaven Bound" with fellow songwriter, Terry Fernihough. See **Showcase** on page 38 for Teagan's story in her own words, and find out more at www.teaganlittlechief.com.



CATHY STEWART

After working for 32 years as a chemical engineer, Cathy is now retired. While she enjoyed the challenging work and life up north in Thompson, Man., she and her husband Wayne now enjoy full-time cottage life in Bird River, which includes spotting wildlife, boating, fishing and even occasionally crossing the lake to go golfing. Cathy can often be found either teaching or playing duplicate bridge. Retirement has also afforded her the time to travel the world and indulge her passion for photography—check out her great owl pics in this issue's **Critters** feature on page 56.



IN OUR WORDS

A Special Place

During my time at *Our Canada* and *More of Our Canada*, I've come to appreciate the manner in which many, dare I say most, of my fellow Canadians express our shared love for the land we all call home. I see ours as a quietly inclusive form of patriotism—especially around Canada Day. While there's plenty of flag-waving and hoopla to be had, the focus is on individuals, families and entire communities coming together to do what we do best—have fun and celebrate in an atmosphere where everyone is welcome and encouraged to take part. With that in mind, why not make it a point to get out there and enjoy your local festivities this summer—and, of course, send us your best photos afterwards! Speaking of which—check out our Canada Day tribute, beginning on page 44.

One of the greatest things Canada has going for it is its regional diversity, which creates travel opportunities that you'd be hard-pressed to find elsewhere. Turn to this issue's Our Travels selection on page 20—"Aurora Hunting in Yellowknife" by John A. Barrett—and you'll see what I mean.

Then, there's a shared love and respect for the great outdoors, and an innate sense of adventure, which many Canadians harbour. In his photo essay, "Heart of the Continent," Hap Wilson adds a decided appreciation for history and geography to the mix, as he maps out a canoe route that takes him from Lake Superior into Manitoba (page 8).

As Dorothy Creighton points out in her It's Tradition story of page 28, the real strength of our nation begins with family and always has. From the pioneering days through to modern times, our country has in many ways become a family—and that's worth celebrating! **Gary George**, gary_george@rd.com

ISABELLE CLÉMENT

MORE of Our Canada

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An ongoing tribute to honour Canada's war veterans



Hubert Landry, RCAF

Hubert Arthur Joseph Landry was born in 1922 in Lamoureux, Alta. He joined the RCAF on September 16, 1941 at age 19. He wanted to be a pilot but his eyesight was not sharp enough. "We'll make you an airframe mechanic," he was told. A morale-boosting duty in that role was stencilling insignia on aircraft upon their return from a mission:

"Below the pilot's window, you painted a little bomb, then another one and another one (after every sortie). One crew left on their 26th trip; we never saw them again. Seven young men. That was one of my really bad memories...You felt like crying."

To see video interviews with Canadian war veterans, including Hubert, visit **Veterans Voices of Canada** at vetvoicecan.org.



**Our
Canada**

Share your veteran profiles at ourcanada.ca.



Heart of the Continent

Author and canoeist Hap Wilson of Rousseau, Ont., maps a route from Lake Superior to Manitoba—by canoe

I draw maps; been drawing them since I was a teenager. It's an obsession with me—a way to indulge in a passion to preserve what I explore. Maps and drawings find their collective way into journals I've kept describing various adventures and explorations, and, later, into the several guidebooks I've produced. I stopped calculating the distance I've travelled across Canada, but my journals, and my aching joints, tell me that my explorations have gone well beyond the 60,000-kilometre mark, spanning almost half of our great country.

My wilderness explorations by canoe, however, are not founded on distance or personal achievements—the notoriety is accepted politely—nor do my

guidebooks focus solely on making life easier for the adventuring paddler. My work is born out of a love for the primal beauty of this country, which is often taken for granted and can lead to neglect, industrial intrusion and even more recently—wilderness affected by climate change. All of this presents an element of urgency for me. Canada boasts a healthy portion of wilderness, and still sports the world's largest intact Aboriginal trail systems—canoe routes. As a worldwide commodity, wilderness is infinitely more valuable as it becomes scarce. This is why my guidebooks embrace the important contributions made by our First Peoples, as well as magnify the significance of a sustainable environment.



A morning kayak on Lake of the Woods. Path of the Paddle was designed for all paddlers, including those who use canoes, stand-up paddleboards and kayaks.

When the Trans Canada Trail folks approached me to map out a canoe trail from Thunder Bay to Manitoba, my first thought was, another guidebook? No way, too much work!

I knew that any guidebook would take at least four years to complete and that meant living on meagre funds, weeks alone on the trail, isolation, hardship, months of studio cartography—but I caved. I gave in to the “calling” as I always do, the challenge, intrigue and time spent in the canoe became an overriding

resolution. It was a region of the country I had not travelled, it was rife with history, pre-history, intrigue and even ghosts, demons and spirits of every variety.

We can't build a land trail, they said, as it would be too expensive, too hard to maintain. The decision to include the quintessential Canadian canoe route as part of the “Great Trail” was an accidentally brilliant acceptance of the importance of Canada's first trails. Time constraints and the complexity of constructing a land-based trail

aside, in my opinion, a water trail was a necessary and critical component of the Canadian identity. Canoe trails date back thousands of years and still form an essential component of First Nations cosmological beliefs in a connective sense. Canoe trails lead to vision-quest highpoints, incredible pictograph teaching rocks, ancient village settlements and tooling sites. They formed a travel network for trade and access to traditional hunting territories.

With this in mind, I accepted



Migizi Trail ~ Map # 2

Rushing River, Eagle-Dogtooth & Winnange Provincial Parks



Above: In an age when map-makers rely on digital cartography, Hap's maps, like the one shown, adhere to historically field-truthed, hand-drawn maps. Left: The campfire is a gathering place for story and revitalization.

the challenge of mapping out what would amount to five percent of the total Great Trail—1,250 kilometres.

It took seven years to complete, half of which was spent in the studio drawing maps and illustrations. The journey, from the first day I put my canoe in the water to the day when I put the final touches of my pen to the more than 75 hand-drawn maps I created, was nothing shy of extraordinary.

The land across which I trav-

elled—Le Petit Nord—as it was known to the historic interlopers, later named Path of the Paddle in honour of Bill Mason, one of the country's iconic paddlers, could easily be described as Canada's heartland. It's where forest meets Prairie, and lakes and rivers flow in opposing directions. To Indigenous Peoples, it is "where land was formed on the back of the great turtle."

For me, exploration is not merely an investigation of terrestrial discovery, but an examination of the people who live and have lived there. Path of the Paddle is not defined simply by its beauty or tracts of unprecedented wilderness, but by those who have chosen to make Le Petit Nord their home. People whose passion remains embla-

zoned in story, tale and historical chronicle. My own adventure in mapping this route pales in comparison to the narrative of events that have taken place here. What Canada was to become would play out here: resolution of border disputes, rivalry between fur-trade companies, exploration and exploitation of resources, all between the plains of Manitoba and the Great Inland Sea.

Before the European invasion, the summer water trails, known as *onigum*, and the winter trails or *bon-ka-naw*, were the life arteries of travel and trade for



Canada's First Peoples.

I met regional archaeologist Dennis Smyk from Ignace, Ont., at the Driftwood Diner, very early on in my travels. Dennis had documented over 600 habitation and pictograph sites within the Path of the Paddle corridor. Of visitors to rock painting sites, Dennis remarks that "most are unable or unwilling to interpret or acknowledge beliefs associated with the paintings." Perhaps a common enough faux pas for those who relate the simplistic style in which rock paintings are presented to mere graffiti, when in fact, the artist-shaman or "teacher of the upright life" pre-



sented them as a message, a historical account or teaching. Dennis says the "spiritual teaching sites were carefully chosen for their geographical location, associated environment and rock type, but also for their spiritual pith or energy." Leaving medicine bundles or offerings were and still are a mandatory show of respect.

Path of the Paddle, land of the Anishinaabe, or Ojibwe People, or "beings made out of nothing," according to Ojibwe linguist and author Basil Johnston, held dominion over the lands surrounding Lake Superior, west to the Prairies. Their traditional territo-

ries sport the heaviest concentration of pictographs and spiritual sites in all of Canada.

My book is not just about mapping one contiguous linear path, but a collection of connected canoe trails. Although a paddler could embrace the notion of making a go of it in one multi-faceted journey, in either direction, my selection for the book includes seven very different water trails. Each segment for the guidebook was scrutinized for Indigenous correlation, landscape anomalies and the nature of connective water configurations. Not an easy task when attempting to stick to a



Clockwise from far left: Blindfold Bay pictographs—it's still a scientific mystery as to how these ancient teaching sites have defied the elements; this shot of a canoe, dog and moose personifies the Canadian adventure; White Otter Castle, home to Jimmy McOuat, a self-made frontiersman with vision and determination whose ghost is now a part of the Great Trail story.

development. The reality of the Canadian identity is one of many faces. The veracity of exploration is also obliged to meld humanity with the environment in which said humanity lives.

The Canadian landscape is changing, and wilderness is dwindling as the country evolves and the demand for resources becomes greater. *Lake Superior to Manitoba by Canoe: Mapping the Route into the Heart of the Continent* does impress upon the reader the need to preserve and protect, but also to respect the connection our First Peoples have with the land we call Canada. ■

particularly tight set of guidelines and criterion.

Because this is not a book that simply depicts unique Canadian landscapes, it was also principled to include the communities along the way—like connecting the dots on a very large map. The Great Trail was initiated to connect people to the Canadian landscape; with that in mind, to configure a workable water trail, it was necessary to find a suitable route within the reach of several towns, First Nations villages and convenient points of access. Not an easy task when trying to blend wilderness with settlement, or areas of industrial



Welcome to Canada!

Kathy Bellemare of Dauphin, Man., writes, "Through our local church, we helped bring this family to Canada from a refugee camp in Jordan. I captured this pic (right) of baby Yousef waving his Canadian flag as he celebrated his first Canada Day last year in Wasagaming, Man., located in Riding Mountain National Park. Yousef's parents Asya and Louai, his grandma Shaha and his two siblings arrived in nearby Dauphin, Man., as Syrian refugees in February 2016. On this day, Yousef and his family watched 89 people become Canadian citizens during the outdoor citizenship ceremony. While Yousef is the first Canadian citizen in his family (as he was born here), the rest of them are eagerly learning English and dreaming of the day when they, too, can become Canadian citizens. Hopefully, they will be participating in a citizenship ceremony on July 1st in Wasagaming very soon!"



Back in the Day

Linda Sweeney of Miramichi, N.B., says, "On a beautiful summer day back in 1953, when times were simple and the Internet was unheard of, five young friends spent their days outdoors, playing and enjoying their time together. In this photo (below), my husband Ray (blonde, front row, middle) sits proudly surrounded by family and friends.



A photographer from the United States just happened to be passing through the tiny village of Nelson in Miramichi, where the boys lived. Having come across the young lads and their licensed wagons, he asked if he could snap their photo. The boys obliged and after obtaining all their names and addresses, he went on his way, but not before promising to send each boy a copy of the photo—which he did. A cherished keepsake, it's proudly displayed in our living room and will be treasured by our children in the years to come."

Found in Cyberspace

*"Let us be French,
let us be English,
but most importantly
let us be Canadian!"*

John A. Macdonald



HAVE YOU HEARD THE ONE ABOUT :)

A woman and her husband interrupted their vacation to go to the dentist.

"I want a tooth pulled, and I don't want novocaine because I'm in a big hurry," the woman said. "Just extract the tooth as quickly as possible, and we'll be on our way."

The dentist was quite impressed. "You're certainly a courageous woman," he said. "Which tooth is it?"

The woman turned to her husband and said, "Show him your tooth, dear."

SUBMIT

Anything for Bulletin Board? Submit online at ourcanada.ca or turn to page 64.

CANADA'S CLAIMS TO FAME

Our great country is home to lots of interesting people and places, some famous, others well-kept secrets.

Grosbeak Lake

Thinking of heading to the beach this summer? One of the most unique beaches in the country is located about 25 kilometres from Fort Smith, N.W.T., and is part of Wood Buffalo National Park's extensive band of salt plains. The salt plains were created by saline groundwater left behind by ancient seas that was then forced to the surface. Often compared to a "moonscape," this unique salt flat is strewn with salt-corroded boulders of all shapes and sizes. The water in the red-clay ringed lake contains ten times more salt than the ocean, meaning you can float without effort—so cool!

www.fortsmith.ca/attraction/grosbeak-lake-wood-buffalo-national-park



Lamblet & Hamlet

Marla Hope-Rapp of Coalhurst, Alta., writes, "We live on an acreage in the County of Lethbridge and have many animals. Last summer, these babies were born a day apart and both became orphans, so we had to bottle feed them. They have become best friends and love to spend all their time together, including curling up in front of the door!"

CAPTION CORNER



"MOM! Can I go in yet?"

Thanks to Guylaine McGuire of Dartmouth, N.S., for sharing this hilarious photo. Can you come up with a better caption for it than we did? Join the fun on our Facebook page and share your witty one-liners there. Remember to send your Caption Corner pics to us at ourcanada.ca!

My Wedding Epiphany

This wild wedding was striking a sour note—until something unexpected and wonderful happened **by Peter Portlock, Edmonton**

For most of my life—or at least since I was about 12 years old, which is rather a long way back—I’ve been a church organist. It’s work that I have always enjoyed. Particularly weddings. I’ve seen just about everything, and of course, one thing about playing the organ, you’ve got the best seat in the house. But I have to confess that after countless weddings, I was beginning to get just a little bit jaded, sort of “Ho hum, not another one. Well, there goes my Saturday.”

Although I had long since stopped counting, as I drove to the church on a bright, cloudless Alberta Saturday, I roughly calculated that this afternoon’s wedding would be my 800th, give or take a few.

Weddings and music are inseparable, and over many years, I had participated in ceremonies ranging from the ultra-formal to biker gear, from “Desiderata” to “love, honour and obey,” even from Mozart to Metallica.

But while I had once actually enjoyed weddings and eagerly anticipated my small role in making someone’s “big day” that much more special, cynicism had overtaken my enthusiasm lately. Marrying couples, drawn to our suburban parish largely because of its size, accessibility and charm, were more often strangers to our, or indeed any, church community.

Today’s first wedding was certainly going to be different. The happy couple wanted plenty of tunes by Garth Brooks and Tim McGraw, which meant a rare trip to the music store, and some actual practice beforehand.

But I could tell before I got out of the car and got wind of the sounds coming from the open windows along the south side of the church, that this would be no ordinary wedding. It sounded like the party had already begun.

It was obviously not your traditional wedding, having a Western theme complete with cowboy attire, relaxed behaviour and the bridal party arriving in a buckboard to whistles and cat-

calls. The processional was more like a line dance as the high-spirited congregation tried to get in on the act, shouting ribald encouragement to the happy couple as they made their way to the front of the church. All we needed were peanut shells on the floor and a bucking bronco in the foyer.

The only member of the bridal party with any sense of occasion was the lead bridesmaid, a poised and perfect young lady of about nine who led the procession forward as sedately and seriously as the general chaos permitted.

The service began and things seemed to settle down a bit. The ceremony was interrupted only by sniggering from the front pews and frequent camera flashes—despite the minister’s clear insistence that there be no photography during the actual ceremony. The crowd seemed to be on another planet and I won-





Peter has been a church organist since the tender age of 12!

dered as the service moved towards the big climax—with snippets of Brooks and McGraw interspersed by me as per script—what was likely to happen when the minister finally got to, “You may now kiss the bride.”

Given all that had transpired, I wasn’t disappointed. The groom literally swept the bride off her feet, bending her backwards nearly to the floor and planting one of those stage kisses that seems to go on forever, to the lascivious accompaniment of whistles, foot stamping and cries of “All ri-i-i-ght” from the gallery.

The circus was nearly over, but for a final blessing and the signing of the register. Not for the first time did I wonder why this crew had bothered with a church in the first place when a neighborhood pub would have served their needs equally well, if not better.

But then something happened, clearly off-script, at least as far as everyone but the groom was concerned. Just prior to the final blessing, the groom stepped out of position, got down on one knee next to the nine-year-old bridesmaid, pulled something out of his pocket, looked straight into her eyes and—as far as I was concerned—instantly redeemed himself and the carryings-on of friends and family in the congregation.

He opened the box in his hand, removed a small ring and, placing it on her young finger, looked her straight in the eye and said in a clear, serious and assured voice:

“I want you to know that I will always love and protect you and your mom; you will never have to be afraid again, and as long as I live, no person will ever hurt you. You and your mom are the joy of my life and I will love you both forever.”

Well. Everyone was stunned, then the tears started, mine included, and then the applause, followed by a standing ovation.

Then more cheers, whistles and foot stomping, from me, too.

The lesson here? Judge not. I had looked at the crowd, the setting and the principal players, and dismissed them all as a bunch of hooligans, unworthy of being in church, unworthy to be embarking on such a sacred journey. Was I wrong? You bet, in just about every way one human being can be wrong about another.

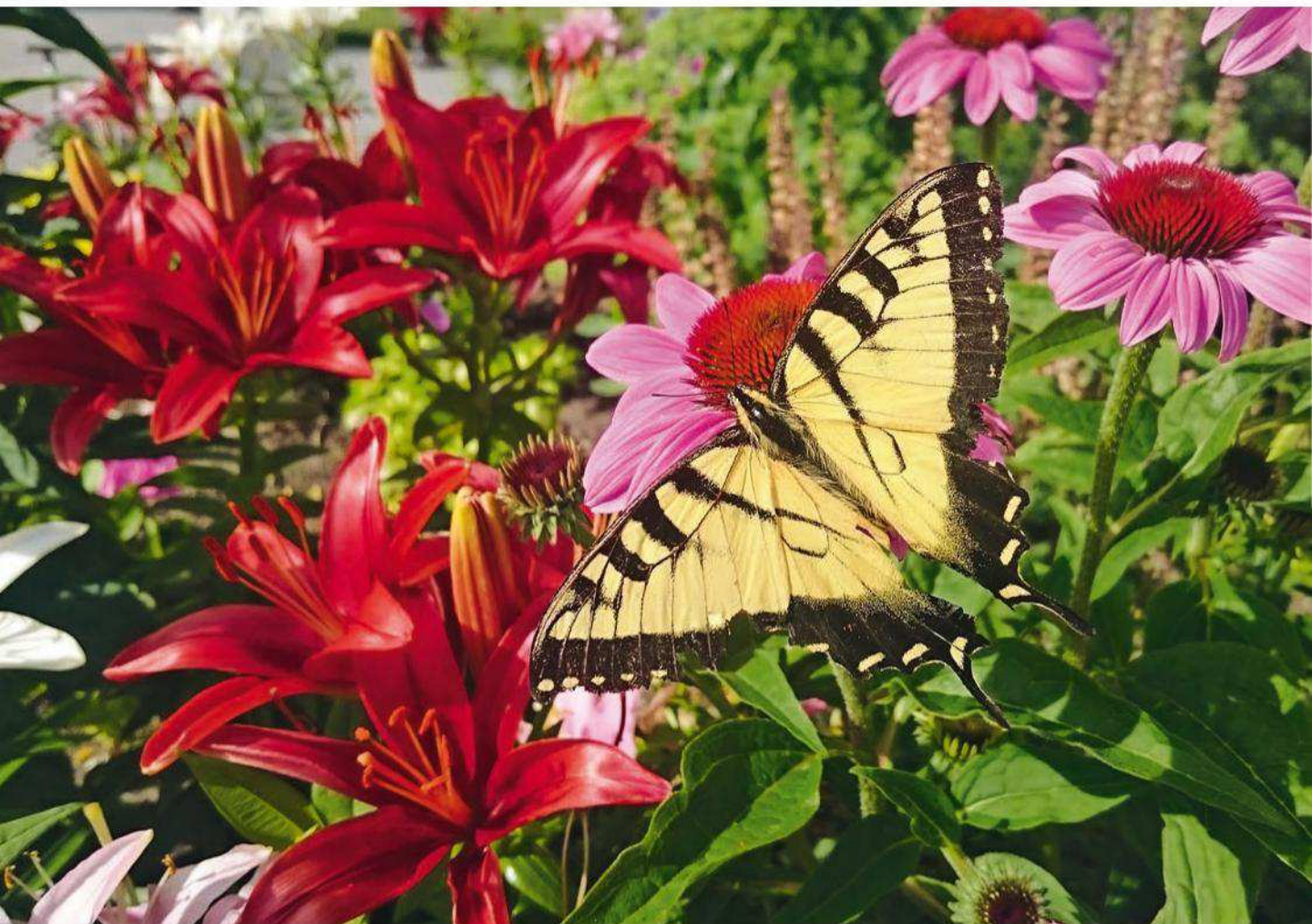
I had a quick and effective refresher course in a basic life skill: I repeat, judge not. Instead, now while on the organ bench—and just about everywhere else—I tell myself to keep an open mind. Be charitable first. Trust in the greatness of the human spirit and be warmed by the unique and humbling ways that spirit makes itself known. ■

Garden Angels

Volunteers help beautify the grounds—and lives—of these residents **by Jane Clement, Trenton, Ont.**

My mother lives in a local long-term care facility here in Trenton. At the centre of the residence is a courtyard, which is beautiful, thanks to the dedication of two women, Kathy and Pat, whose husbands are also residents. Both women dedicate many hours to making these grounds attractive for the people residing at the facility. Kathy plans out the gardens annually, while she and Pat tend to them daily, planting, watering and weeding. Kathy has installed bird feeders and the

residents love to sit out and watch the birds flutter around the courtyard and sit in the bird bath, washing their feathers. The different varieties of flowers have attracted butterflies, such as the one seen in this photo (below). Through these gardens, these two women add colour to the lives of the nursing home residents, and make it a beautiful place for family and friends to visit. They are an inspiration and wonderful example of volunteers in Canada, who give of themselves daily to improve the lives of others. ■





PROUD AND FREE

Barbara Elisabeth Tiedke of Vancouver writes, "I love this photo (left), as I believe it is such a powerful image that symbolizes a feeling of being wild and free. For me, the eagle represents the vastness of Canada's wilderness really well. I also like the cultural connection between the eagle and the First Nations People of Canada: 'The eagle has the ability to live in the realm of the spirit, and yet remain connected and balanced within the realm of Earth.' I snapped this picture at Spanish Banks, a series of beaches here in Vancouver."



SIPPING ON SWEET NECTAR

Sheldon Hoffman of Yorkton, Sask., says, "This ruby-throated hummingbird (left) hovered in mid-air while refuelling on the sweet nectar of a tiger lily. One of the joys of summer in Saskatchewan is a garden full of beautiful flowers that attract many wonderful birds and bees."

AURORA HUNTING IN YELLOWKNIFE

Witnessing nature's most
spectacular lightshow

by **John A. Barrett**, Nanaimo, B.C.



Our group heads out with Joe Buffalo Child, tonight's North Star Adventures tour guide. He offers affable greetings in English as well as other languages for all on board the tour van.

"Spot five stars and I'll find an aurora," Joe declares, with the confidence of a seasoned hunter. "Better yet, find the Big Dipper and you'll see aurora borealis as if you're inside a cosmic shower."

Depending on cloud cover, Yellowknife's

northern lights can be visible for an hour or so on either side of midnight, for about two-thirds of the year—omitting the summer months, when you'll have to settle for the midnight sun.

Yet, it's aurora viewing that lures adventurers from all over the world to this diverse and extraordinary city located on the north shore of Great Slave Lake in Canada's Northwest Territories.

Summer here offers warm temperatures,

boating, fishing and sightseeing. Winters can reach -40°C , but if you're clad in survival layers, you can enjoy snowmobiling, sledging, ice-fishing, and usually clear skies to add flavour to any aurora experience.

Our van heads west along the highway, among forested wilderness that will eventually meet Alberta, some 760 kilometres away.

"Anyone take the town tour?" Joe asks. "My cousin Dene is this week's host."

Among others, I admit participation in the insightful tour of Yellowknife's unique offerings. The Old Town section boasts a charismatic flair, including the famous "Ragged Ass Road," and the old miners neighbourhood features plywood shanties reminiscent of a bygone age. Pilots Monument, which sits atop a massive formation called "The Rock" offers incredible views of Great Slave Lake, Back Bay and beyond.

From the van, we



glimpse the entrance point to the ice road at the soon-to-be frozen Great Slave Lake.

"When hunting aurora under this cloud cover, it's best to keep moving," says Joe, the van purring along with us ten hardy souls secure in its heated comfort. The mid-September night's temperature is flirting with the freezing mark.

Joe twiddles the radio knob to a nostalgic golden-oldies channel. "Anybody know this?" He sings along to

Top left: Aurora "curtains" dance in the night sky.

Top right: a float plane heading into the terminal in Yellowknife.

"Michelle," his mellow guests joining the rhythm, albeit with comical flair. Joe picks another song, before we eventually make our first stop. We spill out of the van, using Joe's safe-exit footstool.

"Don't wander off," says Joe. "Stay close and make noise; it'll keep the bears and foxes away."

"What about hunting animals?" An unlikely inquiry from Jasmine, a Singaporean.

"Sometimes moose, but mostly reindeer and buffalo." Joe smiles, using his namesake.

"A lot of meat for one family," she replied.

"No, the bounty is always shared. Elders first, then the needy, and then everybody else," he says, proudly. "We share and use everything from animals, nothing is wasted." Searching the cloudy sky, he shines the spot-

light further west. "Let's keep going."

After another no-show stop, we meander on. Joe steals skyward glances, while seeking more from his worldly audience. How to make gluten-free Yorkshire pudding? What's the weather like in Buenos Aires? Which bar made the Singapore Sling famous? He engages each of us, engaging our responses.

By the third stop, about 65 kilometres out, Joe studies a small break in the clouds. It's



A view of stunning aurora “twins.”

past midnight; cameras are ready on tripods, waiting. Anxiety heightens, feet stamp, hopes dwindle, the cloud cover breaks up but is still substantial.

Joe’s distribution of hot chocolate in paper cups works its magic, renewing faith in our mission of spotting the aurora borealis, but as he collects the cups, the warm van beckons once again.

“Hang on!” Joe cries out, his spotlight traces an elongated cloud as it traverses quickly across the clearing sky.

He aims his pre-set camera and reveals a green image. “It’s about

a two.” That’s two out of ten—he grades the intensity of the auroras. The naked eye cannot see much colour at this intensity, but the camera can. We need at least a grade four, as the slight green fringes disappear beyond the treed foreground.

He informs us that although intensity and shapes of aurora may be similar, they do have unique characteristics that excite him.

“They’re coming!” Joe announces, as auroras stream overhead in long, parallel ribbons of a green-yellow mix of colour, complemented by reddish tinges; the shapes separate into multiple waved ribbons, before ex-

panding into vertical curtain formations.

Joe explains that oxygen molecules about 100 kilometres above the Earth determine the predominant green and yellow colours. The oxygen molecules at higher altitudes produce a red fringe. The absence of rarer blue and purplish hues, caused by nitrogen molecules, leave something to look forward to another day.

The aurora dances magically across the sky, as if splashed by a painter’s brush. It’s as though I’ve peeked into another realm of ancient secrets and glimpsed the wonders of space—a feeling I describe as stepping inside a rainbow. ■

MORE INFO

■ Yellowknife is one of, if not the best location in the world for viewing the aurora borealis.

■ The aurora results from forms of electromagnetic energy that are drawn to the Earth’s poles, literally charging the atmosphere and causing it to glow.

■ That charge and glow is what creates a spectacular light-show in the sky.

For more, head to www.konline.ca/where-and-how-to-view-the-aurora-borealis.

Standing Up for What's Right

Feeling pride in a young girl's award-winning message

by **Madeleine Pelletier**, *Beausejour, Man.*

In November 2017, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission invited students in Grade 1 to 6 to submit a photo, paragraph or poem explaining why they feel human rights are important. My ten-year-old granddaughter, Phoenix, won the contest and was invited to light the candle that opened the awards ceremony in Winnipeg on December 7, as well as read her paragraph.

Phoenix is in Grade 5 and attends Whitemouth School in Whitemouth, Man.



HUMAN RIGHTS

*Only we can free our minds, control our feelings,
control our emotions.*

Only we can control if we want to be happy or sad.

Only we can control our bodies, nobody can tell us what to do.

We are not remote-controlled.

We have the right to play, relax, learn and travel.

We write our own story; we have the right to live.

*We deserve privacy; no one can come into our home and
invade our space or take our stuff. We all have a gift to give.*

We don't have to be friends but we have to be friendly.

Stand up against bullies, stand up for yourself and for others.

We all have a loving heart, so show yours.

*We may look different, we may not have a lot in common,
but we are all the same on the inside.*

Everybody has a gift.

Phoenix Van Nieuw Amerongen



I wanted to share her words with *Our Canada* readers, as I believe that if a young girl can show such wisdom, there is hope for the future in our great country. I am very proud of her and hope her words touch your hearts as they have mine. ■

CEREMONY PHOTO BY RANDALL HYRA,
COURTESY OF CLIPPER WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

KANATA

A gathering place in honour of Canada's Indigenous Peoples

CULTURE QUEST

A move from East to West inspires this Mi'gmaq artist to study and embrace Native cultures from across North America

by **Jonathan Labillois**, *Victoria*

I stood there staring at "Bukwila," a totem-pole figure situated on the Lansdowne campus of Camosun College in Victoria. I was currently between jobs and in that limbo of what to do next. I stared at the larger-than-life totem for a while, and, being an artist, I began to deconstruct the piece, thinking about the material used and how much time it took to create it, going back to the point of what the image portrayed and what it meant to the artist. I do this with almost every piece of art I see, but for totems and Native art in general, there is always an added element that really gets to me—a sense of spiritualism.

Being a Mi'gmaq now living on the West Coast, I was far removed from my tribe and ancient Indigenous grounds. The Mi'gmaq are native to the Maritimes of Canada and

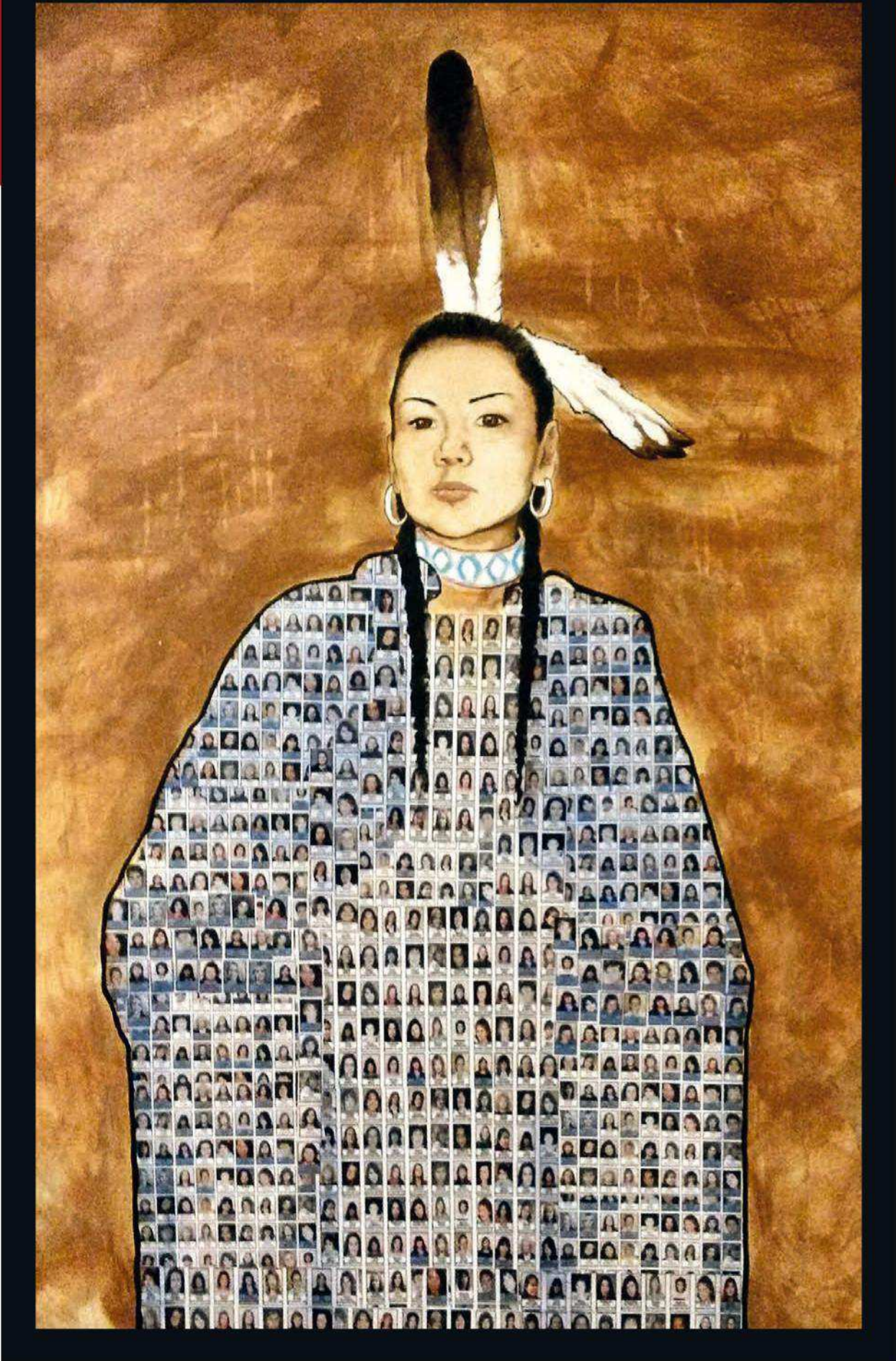


parts of the northeastern state of Maine. Here on Canada's West Coast, I was a Native in a strange native land, surrounded by art unlike the petroglyphs used by the Mi'gmaq,

Above: "Mi'gmaq in a Haida Blanket," a portrait of Jonathan's 12-year-old son, 2017; Right: "Still Dancing," donated to the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, 2014.

or the woodland depictions of the Algonquin that are familiar to me. Rather, I was faced with the stylized black-and-red lines of the many Peoples who call the Pacific their ocean.

I was born and grew up on the Mi'gmaq First Nations reserve of Listuguj on the Gaspé coast of Quebec. The reserve was small and I grew up during the era that all people over the age of 35 pine over—a time when there was no Internet, only two television channels and freedom to explore till the sun went down. I found myself drawing on anything I could; paper grocery bags were a hot commodity for me. As I grew, I became known as the one who could draw, "the artist." I was accepted into the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, for which, now that I look back upon it, I was too immature. Never completing my degree in paint-





ABOUT THE ARTIST JONATHAN LABILLOIS

Born in 1971 in Listuguj, Que., Jonathan studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Montreal, earning a Certificate of Design. He also completed a pre-Fine Arts program at Dawson College in Montreal and attended the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design in Halifax, pursuing a BFA major in painting and printmaking. Jonathan's art has been on display throughout Eastern Canada and is on permanent display at the Gallery of Fine Art in Halifax. One of his most-memorable commissioned works is the Mi'gmaq Quill Pattern mural he created in 1996 for the Listuguj Art Gallery in his hometown. The Restigouche Gallery in Campbellton, N.B., with the participation of the Canada Council of the Arts, purchased several pieces of Jon's artwork for permanent exhibition. Below is a selection of his most notable exhibits:

- Native Friendship Center of Montreal Annual Festival: Sept. 1990; Oct. 1991, 1992
- Amherst Gallery of Art, Amherst, N.S.: 1993–94
- Listuguj Mi'gmaq Heritage Gallery, Listuguj, Que.: June to Aug., 1992; May to Aug., 1993
- Nova Scotia Mi'gmaq Heritage Gallery, Halifax: 1994
- Restigouche Gallery, Campbellton, N.B.: July 1993, 1998 and 2000
- "H2O Ma Terre," Symposium international de creation in situ, Carleton, Que., 2002
- "Journey," Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, 2002
- Contemporary Canadian Artists: The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Collection - Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, 2005
- First Nations Gallery, HRM Millenium Committee, ExxonMobil Canada Gallery, Sept. 2001 – ongoing
- Restigouche Gallery, Campbellton, N.B., Group Show and "Stereotypes" solo show, 2011
- Eagle Feather Gallery, Victoria, ongoing display

To discover more about Jonathan and his artwork, visit www.JonLabillois.com.



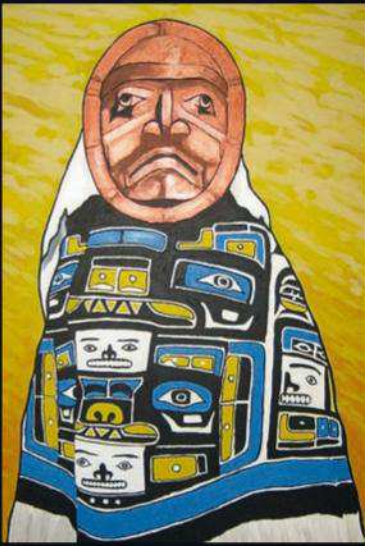
ing and printmaking, I found myself in a totally unrelated field of computer science, becoming a computer analyst. Creating art was now a way to clear my thoughts and express some ideas, something completely separate and more personal.

Being a young Mi'gmaq artist out west, it was hard for me to find my way, as I had very few mentors whom I could emulate. But I was fascinated by my culture—referring to Native American Aboriginals as a whole. Painting chiefs and headdresses and spirit eagles was a starting point for me, but is that what Native art is? I questioned myself and

struggled with the identity of my art and what meaning or joy it brought to others.

With the advent of social media, I found many artists, even Mi'gmaq ones, who I could now turn to. The styles and interpretations of Native art opened up an inspirational "candy store" of colour and concepts that I could only dream of when I was younger.

For me, art is like an idea that won't go away, an earworm of the mind. Images that are fully painted and complete show in my mind's gallery, some presenting themselves so often that I have to exorcise them by physically painting them in



Clockwise from left: "Handsome" or as it is referred to by its Mi'gmaq name, *We-liankamkusit*; according to Jonathan, "Copper Mask" represents his best use of copper paint to date; in "Raven Under a Mi'gmaq Sky," one of his largest canvasses, he ponders what the West Coast Haida Raven would do on the East Coast; "Red Shawl" is an emotion-filled portrait of his friend, Karen White.

the real world so they would stop haunting me. I don't view myself as an advocate or a warrior for change, but I do see things that are not right, or that do not sit well with me, and these themes come out in my art. My art often points out problems that exist or have existed, sometimes subtly, other times blatantly.

One particular painting I envisioned was a portrait of my 12-year old son, standing there draped in a Haida blanket. The contrast

of a young Mi'gmaq wrapped in another Native culture's regalia struck close to home. Both of my sons are far removed from their origins and family on the East Coast. It bothered me that my children did not have access to our original culture and oral histories as I did as a youngster. I hung the painting on the living room wall, proud of the depiction and its presentation, if only briefly, as my five-year old son became quite upset that he was not displayed on canvas, too. Being the ever-pleasing parent, I painted a portrait of him and offered it for his approval. "That'll do," was his response, not caring about the portrayal or likeness, only the fact that he now had a painting like his big brother. It was only fair. ■



What Makes Canada Strong?

The strength of our nation begins with family

by **Dorothy (Russell) Creighton**, Miramichi, N.B.

To me, there is no doubt that one of the things that makes Canada strong is the bond that keeps many families together. Solid family relationships have helped build our country by setting an example to the world that each one of us is a valued member of society and has the opportunity and the obligation to help share in whatever way we are able.

I happen to be one of seven girls who grew up learning what it is to share; do without; wait

your turn; respect one another; accept responsibility; suffer the consequences for a wrong-doing; apologize for a misdeed; and obey your parents.

We were no angels, but I feel now at the age of 90 that the boundaries which were set for us have resulted in building a very wholesome, well-adjusted family that continues to ingrain in our children a desire to pass along many of the values of our upbringing.

Our father was a young Canadian First World War veteran, the only child of a Scottish family from the small community of Loggieville, N.B. He married our mother, who was a British war bride from a larger family in East London.

My sisters and I were born between 1919 and 1932—times were not easy and employment was often uncertain during the Great Depression. This also explains why the

values that held the family together were so necessary.

As the years passed, we girls all became well-educated, employed and married. The family unit continued to be strengthened. As the families grew, frequent visits were made to our parents' homestead in Miramichi, but it was not until 1988, after both Mom and Dad had passed away, that the idea of a family reunion came to be.



These family gatherings, which we hold every five years or so, bring the offspring of all seven sisters to Miramichi for a time of celebration and further bonding.

In July 2017, we chose to have reunion number five. Over the previous eight years, four of my sisters, who had all been blessed with relatively good health until well into their 80s and beyond, had passed on. Many of the descendants of two of the remaining three of us had settled in Newfoundland. My youngest sister and another brother-in-law, along with many of their children, were

excited to have us visit the Rock as a family.

This also gave many of our family in the West a great opportunity to explore another part of Canada for the first time. In fact, of a total of 50 who attended the reunion, there were 13 from the Winnipeg area alone. What drew them to this reunion? Our family bond.

There were also family representatives from as far away as Germany, Campbell River, B.C., Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Only one of the three remaining sisters, now a resident in a special care home,

was unable to attend.

The reunion was planned for the most part by a committee composed of one member of each family, using e-mail updates and monthly conference calls. Over the course of a year, questionnaires were used to encourage input about interests, even noting special dietary needs.

A weekend was planned that featured: a meet-and-greet barbecue, a family breakfast, a picnic at a rented park site, family games, a catered evening banquet and a bus tour to several high points in the area.

The basic meals were all organized

and delivered by committee members who were assisted in preparation and cleanup by family members

On Sunday, a group of more than 40 attended church, after which they converged at the home of our youngest sister for brunch. Newfoundland hospitality at its best!

Memories were made and stories shared. Several cousins even got to see one another for the first time since early childhood.

Throughout the span of most of the 20th century, myself and my six sisters had remained in close touch with our parents and one another.

This reunion was the first one outside of Miramichi, but it gave the family members who were there a wonderful opportunity to visit with relatives and enjoy the beauty and culture of Newfoundland. Some attendees became official Newfoundlanders by being screeched in! (This involves drinking a shot of screech, reciting a short poem and kissing a cod.)

You've probably guessed that I am proud of the family in which I was raised and I believe that the strength of our nation starts with family. ■



The family poses in a church hall for a group shot in July 2017.



Bound for Bluer Skies

Despite some initial reservations, immigrating to Canada has been well worth it *by Tayyabah Ahmed, Toronto*



Before I left the United

Kingdom, I had apprehensions about coming to Canada. Things were going well for me in London and giving up the stability of all that I had known and worked hard for made me feel queasy. From a very early age, however, I'd always had this nagging feeling that I wanted to try something different or, more

specifically, live someplace different. I've always enjoyed traveling and, coupled with the fact that I was in a long-distance relationship, my partner Ricky and I knew that we needed a new adventure outside of the British Isles. People often ask us, "Why Canada?" and I cannot give them a specific answer. Thinking about it now, I suppose that I would never have to

deal with the issue of removing a huntsman spider from the bathtub like I would if I had moved to, say, Australia. Although one could argue that I might encounter a bear rummaging through my dustbins one night here in Canada. In all seriousness, I posted this same question to a lady at an immigration fair that I attended in London, and she replied, "The sky is always



Last July, Tayyabah enjoyed checking out the giant rubber duck on Toronto's waterfront as she celebrated her very first Canada Day.



bluer in Canada.”

I didn't believe her until I stepped out of Toronto Pearson International Airport on January 4, 2017. That afternoon it was -13°C, with a “feels-like” temperature of -19°C, yet observing the brilliant blue sky alone would never have indicated that. I arrived on my own that day, having to leave the U.K. before Ricky, as I had accepted a position of employment that required me to enter the country earlier than I had anticipated. I'm not going to lie to you, the flight over here was a particularly solemn

affair for me. I had managed to hold myself together for the weeks leading up to that day, but kissing my seven-month-old nephew on the head while he slept before I left for the airport set me off. It dawned on me that the next time I would see him, he might not know me. I cried for the first two hours of the journey, contemplating whether or not I had made the right decision. What if I lived to regret this? I reminded myself at times during the flight that my circumstances were more comfortable than most, in that I spoke

MAKING A SPLASH

Elton Law of Scarborough shares this awesome pic, writing: “Despite some crying foul about the cost of bringing ‘the world’s largest floating duck’ to Toronto for the Canada Day long weekend last year, it seems the six-storey attraction was a giant hit!”

one of the national languages of the country, and that I was not leaving behind bloodshed and war, like some peoples' recent passage to Canada. I mean, my own mother's family had fled Uganda for Great Britain in 1972, and they had to start over again from absolutely nothing.

My first full day in Canada was both intriguing and educational. Even though there are lots of cultural similarities between Canada and the U.K., there are some small nuances that I picked up. I recall, for example, walking for a long time trying to find a bus stop. Finally, a lovely lady showed me that what I had presumed to be a lamp post with a piece of cardboard attached was in fact what I had been looking for all along. I also got funny looks for requesting to use the “toilet” and not the “washroom.” In hindsight, I suppose that asking to use a toilet is quite crude to a non-Brit! I also gasped in horror when my

bank offered me a chequebook and then having to explain to the gentleman opening my accounts that cheques were virtually obsolete in every European country.

We settled in Toronto, and I couldn't be prouder to call this city my home. I love the melting pot of languages and cultures, the warmth of the people, and how I can discover some breathtaking scenery only a short drive away—this, of course, after I plucked up the courage to drive on the other side of the road!

There are lots of things I miss though, such as drinking a decent cup of tea, watching my favourite TV shows and, most of all, my family, but my Canadian adventure has indeed been worth it so far. This summer we'll be exploring more of this vast country by heading west to the Prairies and then onwards to Vancouver. I can't believe that canoeing in the crystal waters of Lake Louise will now become a reality! ■

Short & Sweet

Serve these simply
delicious shortcakes
all summer long!



RECIPES COURTESY OF

**Taste
of Home**



SUPER STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

“Wow!” is what people say when I set this dessert on the table. It’s fun to serve since it’s attractive, not overly sweet and bursting with the wondrous flavour of field-fresh strawberries.”

Renee Bisch, Wellesley, Ont.



SHORTCAKE SUPREME

“The mother of my shortcake recipe was necessity. I needed a quick way to use a bounty of wild berries that we picked on a family camping trip one summer.”

*Kenna Robinson,
Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.*

SUPER STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

INGREDIENTS

4 cups fresh strawberries, sliced

2 tbsp sugar

SHORTCAKE:

1¾ cups all-purpose flour

2 tbsp sugar

1 tsp baking powder

½ tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

¼ cup cold butter, cubed

1 large egg, lightly beaten

¾ cup sour cream

WHIPPED CREAM:

1 cup heavy whipping cream

2 tbsp sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Bake Time: 15 minutes + cooling

Yields: 8 servings

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Toss strawberries with sugar and let stand, allowing juices from berries to release.
2. For shortcake, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt, then cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In another bowl, whisk together egg and sour cream. Add to flour mixture, stir just until moistened.
3. On a lightly floured surface, gently knead dough 8-10 times. Transfer to a lightly greased baking sheet, then roll or pat to a 7½-in. circle. Bake until golden brown, 13-17 minutes. Remove to a wire rack and cool completely.
4. In a bowl, beat cream until it begins to thicken. Add sugar and vanilla, then beat until stiff peaks form.

5. Using a long serrated knife, cut shortcake horizontally in half. Spoon half of the strawberries (including juices) over top. Spread with half of the whipped cream. Add top of shortcake and layer with the remaining whipped cream and berries.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Amount Per Serving (1 slice):

368 calories, 22 g fat, 78 mg cholesterol, 358 mg sodium, 38 g carbohydrate, 15 g sugars, 2 g fibre, 6 g protein.

SHORTCAKE SUPREME

INGREDIENTS

2¼ cups fresh or frozen blueberries and/or raspberries, thawed

2 to 3 tbsp sugar

1 envelope whipped topping mix

12 thin slices angel food cake

Prep/Total Time: 10 minutes

Yields: 6 servings

1. In a large bowl, combine berries and sugar, and set aside. Prepare the whipped topping mix according to package directions. Top cake slices with berries and whipped topping.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Amount Per Serving (1 each):

230 calories, 2 g fat, 0 cholesterol, 425 mg sodium, 50 g carbohydrate, 40 g sugars, 2 g fibre, 4 g protein.

SO FRESH!

We checked around the Web and found some tips for keeping your berries fresh:

- Place in a bowl and wash in a vinegar-water bath (1 cup of white vinegar + 8 cups of water.)
- Drain and rinse berries.
- Thicker skinned fruit (strawberries or blueberries) can be dried in a salad spinner.
- Delicate berries (raspberries and blackberries) should be patted dry with paper towels.
- Store fruit in a sealed container, lined with paper towels. Leave lid slightly open to avoid moisture build-up.



CITRUS SHORTCAKE

"When it comes to dessert, it doesn't get much simpler than this. I like to mix the whipped topping with the lemon yogurt early in the day, then store it in the refrigerator until we're ready for dessert. I sometimes use scones instead of the shortcakes, and raspberries instead of strawberries."

Eileen Warren, Windsor

BLUEBERRY SHORTCAKE SUNDAES

"These blueberry shortcake sundaes offer a summery conclusion to any meal. I make this recipe quite often. If you need to save even more time in the kitchen, just buy blueberry pie filling and thin it out with a little orange juice."

Agnes Ward, Stratford, Ont.



CITRUS SHORTCAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (8 oz.) lemon yogurt
- 1 cup whipped topping
- 4 individual round sponge cakes
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 2⅓ cups sliced fresh strawberries

Prep/Total Time: 10 minutes

Yields: 4 servings

1. In a small bowl, combine the yogurt and whipped topping. Place sponge cakes on dessert plates and drizzle with orange juice. Spread with half of the yogurt mixture. Top with strawberries and remaining yogurt mixture.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Amount Per Serving (1 each):
238 calories, 6 g fat, 31 mg cholesterol,
214 mg sodium, 40 g carbohydrate,
29 g sugars, 2g fibre, 5 g protein.

PICK OF THE CROP

A few Internet tips for picking citrus fruit:

- The skin should not look shrivelled, blackened or moldy.
- Look for plump, bright skin with minimal blemishes.
- A few shallow scratches or other blemishes here and there are normal—the juicy flesh underneath will still be fine.
- Remember to squeeze before buying!

BLUEBERRY SHORTCAKE SUNDAES

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup sugar
- 1½ tsp cornstarch
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 3 tbsp water
- 1½ cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 4 slices pound cake
- 4 scoops vanilla ice cream

Prep/Total Time: 20 minutes

Yields: 4 servings

1. In a small saucepan, combine the sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon. Stir in water and blueberries until blended. Bring to a boil, then cook and stir for 2-4 minutes or until thickened.
2. Place cake slices on four dessert plates. Top each with ice cream and blueberry sauce.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Amount Per Serving (1 each):
349 calories, 13 g fat, 95 mg cholesterol,
173 mg sodium, 56 g carbohydrate,
34 g sugars, 2 g fibre, 4 g protein.

WEIGHTS

IMPERIAL	METRIC
1 oz	30 g
6 oz	185 g
1 tsp	5 ml
1 tbsp	15 ml
¼ cup	60 ml
½ cup	125 ml
¾ cup	180 ml
1 cup	250 ml
2 lbs	1 kg

Send Us Your Best Stories & Photos

HERE ARE SOME OF THE FEATURES AND DEPARTMENTS WE'RE HOPING TO REPLENISH FOR UPCOMING ISSUES

OUR KIDS

What are your kids up to? Do you have awesome photos to share of your offspring as they run, jump and play? Send them along with a short paragraph describing the action. Please remember if you're submitting as a proud grandma or doting aunt you must have permission from the little ones' parents!

PASTIMES

Are you a **Collector** of unusual things? Maybe you're particularly **Crafty** or have a talent to **Showcase**? Wherever your interests lie—from scrapbooking to hiking, and all points in between—we hope you'll tell us all about them—and send along plenty of eye-popping photos as well.

WHEELS

Have a passion for vintage cars and motorcycles? Or maybe high-performance vehicles, trucks or jeeps are more your speed. Even oddball junkers are welcome—whatever gets your motor running is of interest to us!



PHOTO ESSAYS

Are you a photography buff? Do you also like to write? Then you just might have what it takes to produce a multi-page photo essay for an upcoming issue! To give it a try, send us a photo selection that explores a specific Canadian theme, aspect of our culture or part of the country, together with an accompanying text of 750 to 1,000 words.

OUR TRAVELS

Where in Canada do your travels take you in winter, spring, summer and fall? Do you have a special "go to" spot or do you prefer to roam, seeking out new adventures in new locales? Wherever your travels take you across this great country, we want to hear about it!

STORYTIME

Whether it's part of their mid-afternoon "quiet time" or their nightly tucking-in ritual, kids just love a good story. Here's an opportunity to share that children's tale you've been meaning to write—and our talented illustrator Bill Suddick will provide the visuals!

FUNNY STUFF

Do you have a hilarious tale to tell? Our funny bone is just waiting to be tickled! Send along your side-splitting misadventures and knee-slapping anecdotes—everybody loves a good laugh, especially *Our Canada* readers!

IT'S TRADITION

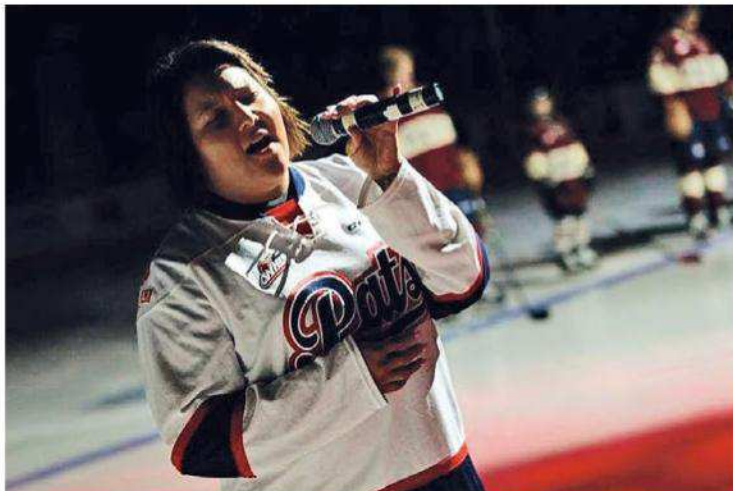
What long-standing family tradition would you like to share—a weekly family movie night, a monthly card game, an annual get-together? All of your traditions are worth sharing!

If you have an idea you don't see here, send it along as well! Submit your stories and photos at ourcanada.ca or see page 64 for our address.

HEAVEN BOUND

'Hell bent' and troubled at times, she found hope and salvation in creating music

by **Teagan Littlechief**, Carlyle, Sask.



Sometimes the path to a dream weaves and winds a bit more than we'd like! Always the journey is a rather large part of the story though, and my winding road is no exception. Growing up an Alberta farm kid, I had the privilege of taking part in everything from daily chores with the cows, Sunday afternoon drives to check the fields, planting and growing a garden (or at least running through the corn stalks and picking potato beetles), and spending a lot of time outdoors. Life wasn't rushed any more than the seasons dictated, and I relished that fact. It felt integral to who I was, and with each passing season, I felt more alive.

Growing up in White Bear First Nations, I have been performing for 20 years around the area and parts of the United States. I've experienced high points, like performing the national anthem for

CFL games in Saskatchewan, and I've experienced low moments as well, like being bullied and taking refuge in addiction. I have gone from living the rock 'n' roll lifestyle to being a single mother to my beautiful son, Gabriel. But, let's back up to the beginning, where music first circulated through my soul.

When I was in kindergarten my teacher, Ms. McDonald heard me singing "Part of Your World" from The Little Mermaid movie and recommended to my mom that I get singing lessons. My teacher gave my mom the name of a music teacher, Shirley Dahlgren, who surprised us with the amazing gift of free music lessons. I went on to compete in the Redvers & District Music Festival at an early age. I was also granted a free trip to the Munster choir camp, where I was taught all levels of vocal training and exercises. I went on to compete in two Saskatchewan radio competitions. After winning, I was able to record my singles, "Bring It On" and "Vulnerable."

In elementary school, I was bullied and teased about my weight to the point where I wanted to give up singing. My mom talked to me about my gift, reminding me that I was blessed with a talent and I should not give up. My weight had caused me to be self-conscious for many years, but with time I have become comfortable in my own skin. My newly found confidence





Clockwise from top: Teagan (right) with fellow singers Terri-Anne Strong-arm (centre) and Yvonne St. Germaine; Teagan and engineer Johnny Gasparic recording in spring 2018; Teagan singing the national anthem at a Regina Pats hockey game.

has helped me own the stage.

Did I mention I love music? It is my passion and all the amazing people I get to meet is incredible. I used to dream of seeing my name in marquee lights and traveling the world. I have come to learn that if you really, truly love to express your talent, then it is not about whether you see your name in lights, but rather it's about the experiences that help you grow and motivate you

to continue fighting hard to keep your dream alive. It was that kind of determination that earned me a great mention in a Canadian country music newsletter for my singles, "I'll Bring the Party" and "Hell Bent & Heaven Bound." As things turned out, that newsletter opened many doors for me.

Among the highlights of my musical career, so far, was being asked to open for American country musician John Anderson and Canadian country band, Emerson Drive. I was also privileged to perform on the main stage of the Craven Country Jamboree (now known as Country Thunder

Saskatchewan) and at Dauphin's Countryfest.

My first album, "Rising Above" was released in 2007—and what an exciting time that was for me! Many writers were involved on that album with me, including Dean Bellegarde, Steve Fox, Sean Hogan and Bart McKay

In 2011, I was blessed with my beautiful son, Gabriel. During my first year as a new mom, I took a break from the music scene to focus on raising my son. Eventually though, I found myself yearning for the music to pulse through my veins once again—to feel that rush of melody flow through my body. I was later invited to sing at the 2012 Aboriginal Music Showcase in Saskatoon. Shortly afterward, though, I fell into a depression and found myself turning to drugs and alcohol. Before long, I was putting my addiction first and found myself spiralling out of control. Thankfully, the importance of seeking treatment for my addiction was not lost on me. My precious son and my music rank No. 1 in my life; my addiction wasn't worth losing either one and so I battled through it.

My mom and step-dad David have been tireless supporters and as my career continues to move forward, my publicist Deborah Wood has worked hard to help me achieve my goals. In the last few years, I have sung the national anthem for the Saskatchewan Roughriders and the Regina Pats. I've released "I'll Bring the Party" written by Terry Fernihough and "Hell Bent & Heaven Bound," which was co-written by Terry Fernihough and myself. I was honoured to perform during Country Music Week in both 2016 and 2017. Also in 2017, I released the single "Scar on My Heart," written by David Joseph. I'm now happy to say that I will be releasing a couple of new singles this summer. I look forward to heading back out on the road soon and hopefully I'll get to perform at a venue near you.

Life can be hectic, but I always find time to sit and write songs, and enjoy precious moments with Gabriel and the rest of our family—not to mention with our dog, Chase, and cat, Mellow. I like to think that although my life has been "hell bent" in many ways, I am now walking a path that has me heaven-bound. ■

Teagan's music can be found on iTunes, Google Play Music, Spotify and other digital venues. Check her out on social media or visit her website for more details: www.teaganlittlechief.com.



A Sound Investment

This retiree discovered a passion for collecting and restoring old phonographs *by Juanita Gaudreault, Plamondon, Alta.*

When my husband Allan reached a certain age and was contemplating retirement, I was worried about how he would keep himself busy, as he is the type who needs to be active. After visiting a friend who is into collecting phonographs, Allan became interested and the rest is history.

He joined the Canadian Antique Phonograph Society (CAPS) in 2011 and his collection of phonographs continues to grow. He loves scouring garage sales, flea markets and auctions—anywhere he might be able to find and salvage a machine that is destined for a landfill due to its sad state of disrepair.

Allan spends a lot of time taking the old machines apart, refinishing the wood on the cabinets and bringing them back to their original state.

One part of the restoration that is particularly

time consuming is repairing the wind-up mechanism. Luckily, he has a good friend from CAPS known as the “gramophone doctor,” who supplies many of the original parts and services the motors.

Over the years, Allan has managed to restore more than 50 phonographs. Just recently, he restored an Edison Diamond Disc phonograph, as well as a tabletop model for a museum in Osoyoos, B.C. Allan has also donated some phonographs to various museums in our area, and given others as prizes for fundraisers.

At the moment, he probably has about 30 machines on display. He also has an extensive collection of vinyl records including 78s, 45s, Diamond Disc records and Edison cylinder records.

Allan finds it very rewarding to bring these phonographs back to life for people to once again enjoy and appreciate. ■

The Old House on 92nd Street

Although much has changed, the memories of this special place will never fade **by June (Kissick) Middlebrough, Fort Saskatchewan, Alta.**

I grew up in the old Norwood district of Edmonton during the 1940s and '50s. Things were different then. Few streets were paved and there were empty lots where kids could play.

Our house was already old when Mom and Dad bought it in 1937. It was long and tall on a lot that measured 33 feet by 150 feet, with an upstairs where my Grandma Minnie lived. Dad kept the house nicely painted—always in the same colours: cream with apple-green trim. Wide wooden stairs leading up to the veranda offered a place to sit in the evening and watch the neighbours go by, while we'd have orange-peeling contests.

The tiny front yard was crowded with lilac trees and a honeysuckle bush. Around the perimeter of the yard was an overgrown caragana hedge held in place by a scalloped wire fence. I remember what a chore it was to keep that darn hedge trimmed with hand clippers! I also remember the metal gate, after

putting my tongue on it one frosty winter day.

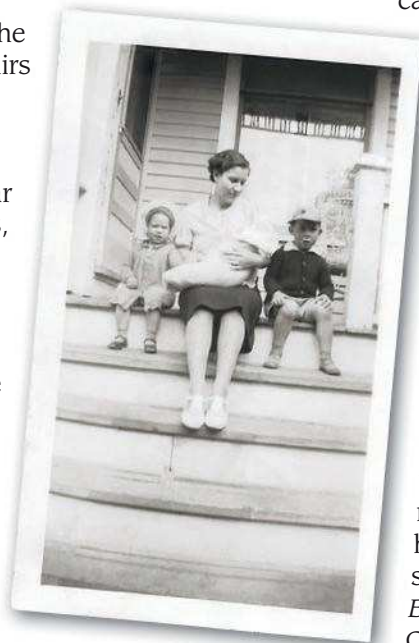
Dad was a great gardener so most of the backyard was devoted to a vegetable garden. There was a small patch of grass with a homemade swing and Mom's flowers along the side fence.

Inside, the rooms were small and had hardwood floors, which aren't so special when you don't have an electric floor polisher! The dining room had dark wood panelling and plate rails. In addition to the round oak table, chairs and sideboard, this was where Mom's upright grand piano lived. During the war years, my two aunts, Abbey and Elsie, brought their dates to our house and when Mom played the piano, the whole house shook to the beat of the jitterbug.

The old-fashioned kitchen was inconvenient with too few cupboards and too many doors. I remember the Beach gas stove with its tall legs and warming oven above the burners.

For many years we had no refrigerator.

My sister Noreen and I shared a tiny, unheated bedroom that barely accommodated a three-quarter bed and a small, hotel-style nightstand. Our room may have been small, but it was the scene of much fun as we juggled oranges, took turns jumping off the nightstand onto the bed and came out boxing from our corners when the imaginary bell rang.



June as a baby in her mother Dorothy's arms, with her sister Noreen and brother Wallace.

I was always the character from *The Red Skelton Show*, Cauliflower McPugg, the punch-drunk boxer. I never could win because I was laughing so hard! It seemed we were always in trouble for causing so much noise and commotion when the adults thought we should be sleeping, but a little thing like a licking never stopped us!

Grandma Minnie was our paternal grandmother. She came to live with my parents when they first got married and lived with them for 35 years. She had two rooms upstairs in our house, a bed-sitting room and a small kitchen with a dormer window. She always seemed old to me, as she was 70 when I was born. She was very deaf, which necessitated having her radio programs, such as *Back to the Bible Hour* with Ernest C. Manning, turned up full blast. Since the whole neighbourhood had to endure these religious broadcasts,

you would have thought they all would have converted en masse—or at least joined a church in self-defence!

As the years went by, the old neighbourhood changed. Children grew up and moved away and the people who worked so hard to pay mortgages and raise their families grew old. By the time Ken and I got married, the old Norwood district was filling up fast with new immigrants and the big, old houses resonated with the sounds of new life.

Now, more than 60 years later, in spite of all the changes that have taken place, I like to go back there once in a while. In my mind, I see all the neighbourhood kids playing “Run Sheep Run,” “Kick the Can” or “Anti-I-Over.” I can still see Dad sitting in the big chair on the porch and Mother chatting with a neighbour. Plain as day, the old streetcar lurches down the tracks on 114th Avenue and my friend, Joan Brunt, comes down the street bouncing a rubber ball. All these shadows of my childhood, so delightful to recall.

Longing for a Life Long-Lost

Pining for the carefree, childhood days of life on the Prairies

by **Fletcher R. Wade**, *Tupperville, N.S.*

I can still, these many years on, recall with relish my summer mornings as a child. Waking up in my second-floor bedroom above the station platform and looking out over the pasture across the railway tracks to see which cars were coming down the highway. The large orange sun in the eastern sky lighting our kitchen as my father made us breakfast. The low sound of grasshoppers and crickets, punctuated by the joyful song of the meadowlark on the fence post that separated our yard from the wheat field next door. The sound of a screen door slamming in the village across the wheat field. The rumblings of a tractor carried on the breeze. The mournful call of the train as it approached, followed by a heightened tension and the maelstrom as it passed, followed by the reced-

ing clatter, then silence. These are all memories of a childhood lived in a small Prairie town. Although I remember the years immediately preceding my brief four-year sojourn in this quiet farming village in southeastern Saskatchewan, and those that followed, they don't possess the richness of the tapestry that was my life there as a young boy. It is these memories that I have buried in the deep recesses of my mind to be harvested when confronted by famines of spirit in my adult life.

My perspective as a child was generally not one of gladness or of appreciation for what surrounded me. Nor would I have ever considered the positive attributes of a life lived on the Prairie. I was the son of a railway station agent, an individual whose decision to remain in the West rather than

return home in Nova Scotia was a source of consternation and frustration, especially in the winter when, for me, the Prairie became a frigid wasteland, with very little to compensate for my feeling of isolation.

In summer, I often had the chance to visit my grandparents in Nova Scotia and it was there, among my cousins, that my heart lay, and it was there that I longed to be.

When the cold days of autumn descended on our small village, and we braced for the inevitable onslaught of the coming Prairie winter, my young mind



SUBMIT

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was almost as bleak as the landscape that stretched for endless miles around us, broken only by the copses of scrub poplar and the ubiquitous windbreaks around the farmyards of our neighbours. But in summer, all that was forgotten and the joy of being outside with my friends and of enjoying the soft, warm touch of the Prairie wind made my world a paradise.

As a child, I could never have articulated my feelings, and it is only in retrospect that I can view my life there with any sense of gladness. What I have come to realize in the ensuing decades is that in those years when I spent my summers on the Prairie, I lived minute-to-minute and hour-to-hour. Time was not wasted. Every

Top left: Fletcher (left) with his father Robert and younger brother Kenny. Top right: Fletcher with his sisters Marilyn (left) and Kathy on the first day of school.

day was an adventure spent outdoors. I lived in the present and, with my friends, experienced many lives of the imagination, where we were pirates, pilots or movie stars. In the course of a summer, we could be anything or anyone that our imaginations could conjure. When we played baseball, we were not Fletcher, or Jimmy, or Jackie, we were Mickey Mantle. In football, we were either Saskatchewan Roughriders' quarterback Ron Lancaster or his rival, Kenny Ploen

of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. Surrounded as we were by open, short-grass Prairie, our sky was large and our vistas sweeping. There was no feeling of being closed in. We looked to the horizon and, perhaps like many Prairie dwellers before us, dreamed of going beyond it, to explore the worlds past the edge of ours.

Perhaps it was the winters, and the attendant feelings of isolation when the cold kept us at bay and the skating rink became the centre of our focus, that motivated the feelings of restlessness in me. Perhaps it was the exposure to other places and landscapes that my journeys east to my grandparents

engendered in me. The lush flora of those places was held in stark contrast to the dearth around me and blinded me to what was there.

Oh, to once more go to the rink on a cold, winter night and appreciate the warmth and joy of the unappreciated winters of my childhood; once more to explore the summer fields of my youth in that quiet, sustaining village, and to know the safety that this place represented. Oh, that this were possible! All that sustained me in those times is no more. My friends and playmates are gone. The doors of the skating rink wear rusty locks. Few children run wild through the now quiet streets. All is closed and gone and what remains are the elderly, dreaming and longing for young lives lived in this quiet place, where the winters were feared and the summers too short.

It is only now, several decades later, with a life long-lived and dreams realized and lost, with a world explored and found wanting, that I sometimes long to return to my village on the Prairie and rediscover the life that I had once been privileged to live there. ■

EXTRAVAGANZA!

Paula Brown of Ottawa writes, "This picture, taken on Parliament Hill, celebrates the symbolic heart of Canada! A beautiful sound-and-light show is projected onto Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings, and a fireworks display in nearby Gatineau can be seen in the distance. We love spending time on Parliament Hill as there is so much to experience. It's certainly my favourite spot!"





True Patriot Love

Happy Canada Day, Folks!



FORWARD MARCH!

Paula Brown of Ottawa shares another great photo writing, "The Governor General's Foot Guards is such a Canadian Institution. They make us so proud! It was a beautiful, summer evening and their red coats just glowed in the sunset."



ALL SMILES

Alexis de Freitas of North Vancouver, B.C., shares this cute pic of her grandson Levi at the Canada day celebrations in Fort Nelson, B.C., last year.



A STUNNING SPECTACLE

It's a spectacle known around the world," shares **Peter Zwart** of Grimsby, Ont. "On a beautiful August evening in 2016, as the sun was setting, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police performed their Musical Ride at the West Niagara Agricultural Centre. Nearly 3,000 people enjoyed this event as the 32 riders and their horses went through their various intricate figures and drills, choreographed to familiar music."



HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Lin Ho of Toronto says, "Canada has some of the most beautiful views in the world. This view of Toronto from the harbour is just amazing."

PEACE AND QUIET

Stacey Harrison of Saddle Lake, Alta., writes, "I snapped this image of a teepee set up for the annual Pow Wow celebration here in Saddle Lake—the backdrop was perfect for the shot. On the first night of the event, this lone teepee was a symbol of peace and quiet before the next couple of days of hustle and bustle."





POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

Glenn Holtzhauer of Cambridge, Ont., shares this brilliant shot of the fireworks display at Ontario Place in Toronto on Canada Day several years ago.

EVA'S POPCORN STAND

A summer stay with Grandma taught this teenager the value of patience, hard work—and having fun

by **Holly Howat**, *Saskatoon*

The little red car careens down the back lane, a cyclone of dust is left in our wake. “Crazy driver, Grandma!” I exclaim, with my hands on the dash and a teenage smirk on my face. We are racing to open the popcorn stand for the evening. It’s a summer-time tradition in this picturesque Prairie town.

Radville is located in the rural municipality of Laurier, nestled in the scenic Missouri Coteau region of southeastern Saskatchewan. Rising like an oasis out of rugged rolling Prairie land, Radville’s abundant tree-lined streets arch over you like a warm Prairie hug. It’s a vibrant community of proud Prairie people, and this is where you will find Eva’s popcorn stand.

I’m 15 years old, just spent an entire day on the bus, shipped down to Grandma’s for two weeks. I was not a willing participant in this decision, leaving my friends and horses behind.

It’s 5 p.m., the heat of the day is stifling; the sound of soda bottles clink as we pull them from the trunk of the car.

Grandma instructs me to open the padlock on the candy-red wooden door. “Prop it open, get some air moving in here.”

First, you load up the Coke cooler with pop, to ensure they are frosty cold for the night. Ice-cold water awaiting, Fanta, Orange Crush, Cherry Soda, Mountain Dew—all popular drinks with the candy crowd. Customers already patiently mill around, with their bikes propped up on the picnic table outside.

Arthritic fingers prime the canister of white gas on the Coleman camp stove. One full scoop of coconut oil goes into the popcorn popper, fashioned out of an old pressure cooker by my grandfather back in 1947. A tin pitcher of a mixture of butter and coconut warms on the opposite burner for the topping. The popcorn is not considered ready until two batches go into the hopper. Next, a flurry of uncovering cardboard candy boxes propped up on display for all the little faces peering through the sliding window. Blue Whales, Red Hots, Cherry Twists, Strawberries, Mojos, jaw breakers, candy necklaces, liquorish cigars and moon rocks are all popular sellers.

Finally, the sliding window is flung open. The nostalgic fragrance of popcorn, white gas and coconut waft down main street, enticing young and old to linger in the residual warmth of the day.

Little feet are perched on the old wooden Coke crate with a fist full of change, peering over the ledge through the sliding window. Excited hands point out the chosen selections, while practicing their math skills. The candies are counted out and put on a dish, waiting to be placed in a little brown paper bag.

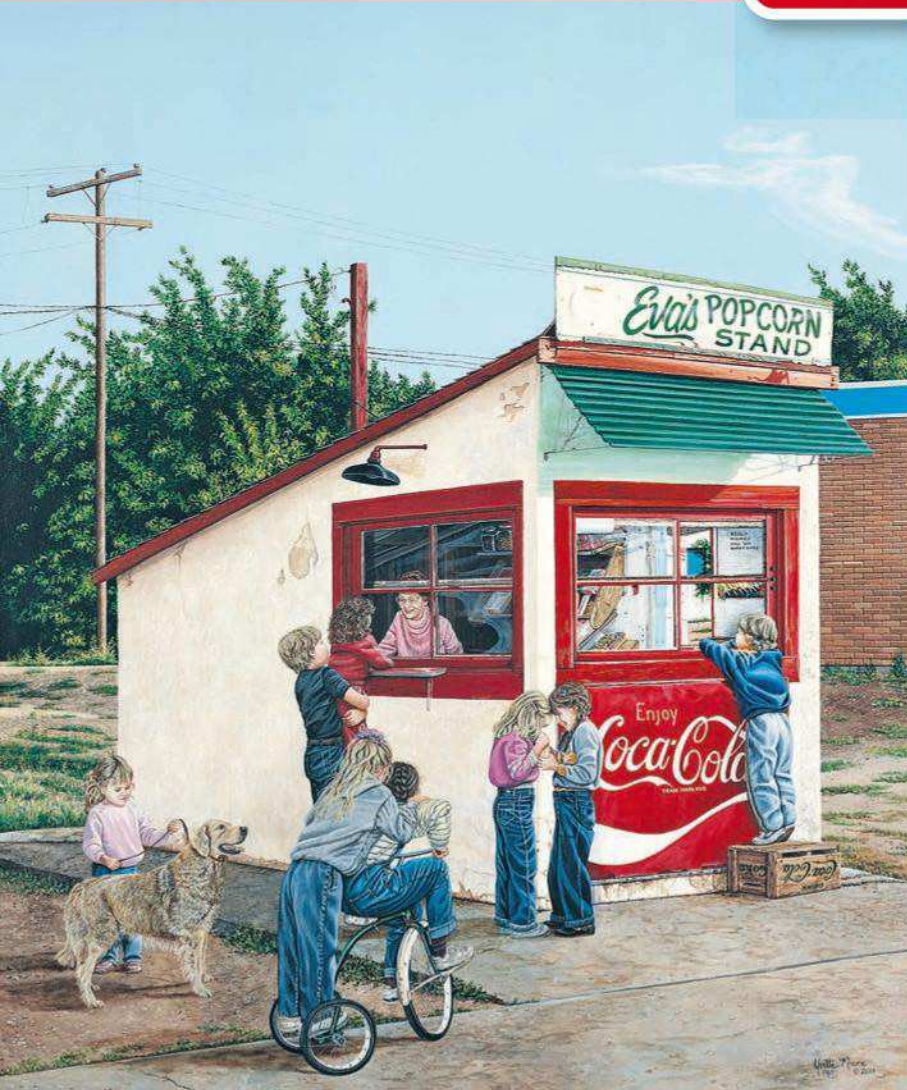


HOLLY HOWAT

Holly currently resides on an acreage near Saskatoon with her partner and her miniature schnauzer, Lucy. When she doesn’t have her face buried in dog behaviour articles, she is training Lucy for competitive obedience or teaching it.

Her other passions include photography, gardening, birding and hiking. Holly wrote this story about her grandmother’s popcorn stand with the intention of surprising one of *Our Canada’s* devoted readers—“Happy 80th birthday, Mom!”

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street in their classic cars. All the hidden gems of generations past park on a diagonal in front of the popcorn stand. With treats in hand, they watch the hustle and bustle of their small town—a gathering place for many.

Early the next morning, Grandma is already loading up the car with pop crates holding empty bottles. “Making a supply run to Western Wholesalers in Weyburn,” she exclaims.

It’s an expansive and dimly lit warehouse. The aisles of candy boxes are five feet tall, all stacked neatly in clear plastic wrap. Grandma walks the aisles with list in hand, filling her order with the warehouse personnel. I run to keep up, thinking that this is not work, this is a candy paradise. We leave the sweet-smelling warehouse, load up the little red car and are off again, speeding back to Radville to meet the Coca-Cola man.

After arriving home, Grandma gives me specific instructions to carry all the candies into the house and down into the cellar cold room, then through the trap door into her pantry. Some go into the freezer—they stay fresh that way. Others go on the shelves in the cold room. Meanwhile, a large semi-trailer truck is maneuvering in the back lane, ready to replenish the carriage-house garage with full soda bottles.

We now have a few hours before it all starts again. I go for a swim at the town pool, where a cute boy asks me if I’m the popcorn-stand lady’s granddaughter.

I will never forget that first summer I spent with Grandma. She taught me the value of hard work, how to deal with the public and how to possess an infinite amount of patience—all while having oodles of fun doing it. ■

A deeply grooved wooden drawer holds the money—coins slide effortlessly along the grooves from years of transactions. All calculations must be performed in your head. Grandma insisted on it, but a pad of paper and a pencil were available if you needed rescuing.

The night is a flurry of popping corn, taking orders and restocking candy boxes. A well-deserved break was granted around 9 p.m. outside on the picnic table, with a soda of your choice and a much anticipated bag of popcorn. It’s the lull experienced after the pool crowd has converged on the stand, bicycles and wet towels slung over the bike seats, picnic tables full of exhilarated children, all refreshed after the heat of the day.

Next, the older generation parades down main



Right On Target

A sport that harkens back to the Wild, Wild West!

Janice Storch, *High River, Alta.*

Cowboy mounted shooting, also known as simply “mounted shooting,” is a competitive equestrian sport that challenges participants to quickly and accurately negotiate an arena with a pre-determined pattern of targets and shoot those targets, all while riding a horse.

I’ve been taking photos of mounted-shooting events for the past two years. As the main photographer for mounted shooting in Alberta, I attend about five events across the province each year. I’ve also travelled to British

Columbia to take photographs for one of their associations.

More than 20 years ago, competitive shooting associations began to spring up south of the border, created in the spirit of the mounted soldiers and Wild West cowboys of a bygone era. Mounted shooting requires skill in both horsemanship and target shooting, and is among the fastest-growing equine sports in North America.

All associations and competitions are heavily regulated by several governing bodies, whereby the safety of horses, riders and spectators is para-

mount. The single-action revolvers used in competition carry five blank cartridges filled with black powder and have a firing range of 20 feet. Having ten targets in the arena for each pattern means the rider must carry two revolvers, and change guns halfway through the course, which adds to the drama, excitement and skill required in this action-packed sport. Most elite riders complete a course in under 17 seconds.

Mounted shooting is quickly becoming one of the most popular equine sports in our country, with at least nine associations from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. Riders of all levels have represented Canada at the World Championships for the past several years and have brought home several titles.

Mounted-shooting competitions usually include a variety of age categories and skill levels. It’s truly a family-oriented sport, with kids, moms and dads all travelling together to competitions. The sport is exhilarating to compete in and always a thrill to watch. ■



Clockwise from top left:
A mounted shooter reaches
for his second gun as he rounds
the turn into the home stretch;
staring down the barrel of the gun
as it fires at the balloon target;
one of the many female mounted
shooters who compete in the
sport, racing to the finish line.

Live Entertainment

Always eager to serve, the town's volunteer fire brigade did manage to get caught in the hot seat from time to time

by **John Fielding**, *Kingston, Ont.*

A fire is serious business, but for this teenager and his friend in the late 1950s, a fire in the town of Paris—the self-proclaimed prettiest town in Ontario—was sometimes also a source of great amusement. When a fire was reported, a siren blared its call to the volunteer fire brigade to rush to the downtown station. Three particularly memorable occasions illustrate why my friend and I made sure we were on the scene whenever the siren went off.

I was busy one day at my usual corner, folding newspapers for delivery, when the alarm sounded. I scurried to get a clear view of the action down the street at the fire hall. Within minutes, cars came racing to a screeching halt as close to the fire station as possible. As usual, there was a scramble among the volunteers to be the one to drive the fire truck. That having been decided, the truck began to pull out, only to be stopped

by an errant car blocking the exit. This produced loud, angry screams and curses aimed at the idiot who would do such a thing. Somebody rushed over to the driver of the fire truck, who, after a few words, jumped from the driver's seat and with a red face walked over to move his own vehicle. In his haste to arrive first and claim the driver's seat, he had left his car in neutral, and it had coasted to a halt in the worst possible spot.

One year, at long last, town council decided to put in a sewage system. The work required digging a ditch down the middle of the town's main street. One day, I was enjoying a malted milkshake with my friend in the Piccadilly restaurant just up the street from the fire hall when the siren called out the volunteers.

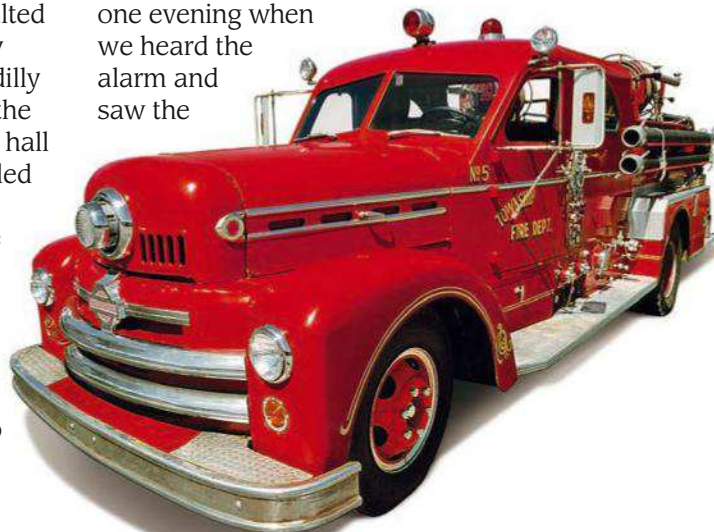
A number of the volunteer firemen worked in stores downtown. One conscientious clerk raced out of the store next to

the Piccadilly about the same time my friend and I sucked back the last of our milkshakes and scooted out to enjoy the proceedings. The clerk approached the gaping ditch that impeded his path to the fire hall and, after a quick calculation, announced to us that he was going to jump across it. Unfortunately he overestimated his jumping skills or underestimated the width of the trench. From the bottom of the ditch, he yelled that his ankle was broken and, for a few minutes, the fire, wherever it was, seemed to be forgotten.

On another occasion, my friend and I were biking home from our donut-making jobs one evening when we heard the alarm and saw the

fire truck come to a halt in front of the Penman's plant. This provided us with a firsthand view of the volunteers in action. Four or five of them grabbed axes and rushed the building. Within minutes they had bashed in most of the lower windows. Then, over the pandemonium, one of them, I believe it was the chief, screamed at them to stop: the door was unlocked. Apparently it turned out to be a false alarm, and the only damage reported was a number of broken windows.

Paris was a great town in which to grow up, and I remember fondly its kind, caring, amusing and lovable citizens. ■



ISTOCKPHOTO

Diamond Girl

Making—and treasuring—dust-covered memories

by **Matt Burlet**, *Calgary*

It's early Thursday morning and I'm driving to work with sleep still in my eyes. I was out late at the baseball diamond, as my daughter Hannah's team played a double-header. The seat next to me is empty, except for the dusty imprint where my daughter rode home last night.

The dust is a ruddy red colour. The dust from the shale that every softball parent knows so well. But as I look at that dust, I don't get upset that my car is dirty. I don't rush to wipe it away. I don't want to. Not yet.

The dust, that shale, reminds me of what an awesome sport softball is and the life lessons it is teaching my daughter and myself. This is a sport where you get dirty, dusty sure, even filthy. The dust can hang in a cloud off your kid at the end of a game—and it is awesome.

The dust is a reminder of their successes and failures. The slide into second where they're safe, or the ball they dove for and missed. It is a game that truly embodies the age-old adage get up, dust yourself off and try again. The dust reminds me of talks in the car before and after games. I let her talk. I try to just listen. I fight the urge to give her a pep talk on the way to the games, or critique her play on the way home. I try to stick to questions such as did you play



hard? Did you have fun? I always say that I love to watch her play.

The dust reminds me of the laughter of a car full of girls on the way to a game or a practice. Sure, there are lots of times when the car is silent because they're all looking at their phones. But then out of nowhere, the laughter erupts, the excitement builds, their love of the game, and each other, filling the vehicle.

The dust reminds me of the parents, coaches and volunteers I have met through this game. It reminds me of the community my family has become a part of. A community of like-minded individuals who want these girls to succeed—not just on the dia-

mond, but in everything they do.

The dust reminds me that these girls will not play this game together forever and that I will not drive my daughter to and from games forever. This time together is precious. It is a gift that has no price tag.

So, tonight as I drive home from work, I will again look at the seat next to me, that seat full of red dust, which only comes from a ball diamond. It will remind me that softball is a game full of highs and lows. It will remind me that life is also full of highs and lows. I'll wipe down the seat and clean up the vehicle. Hannah has softball on Saturday—and I want the car to be ready for the next day's memories. ■

Look Whooo's Here

Excitement reigns when a family of owls moves in for the summer

by **Cathy Stewart**, *Lac du Bonnet, Man.*

One of the reasons I love Canada is the opportunity to live away from the bustling cities and among the sights and sounds of nature. Returning to our home in Bird River, Man., after a visit to our cabin in northern Manitoba, we started to unpack the boat and truck. After emptying the cooler, I unlocked the sunroom door to place the cooler in there, ready to be put in storage the next day. Suddenly, I was startled by a rush of wings as a large owl took flight from the deck. I went out to investigate and was further surprised to see a young owl perched on the deck railing. Back in I went to get my camera! Easing open the screen door, I tried to be quiet and not startle the bird. The owlet hopped off the railing and onto the lawn—trying to look very fierce—wings fluffed up and making aggressive chattering noises. It was obvious that it was not able to fly away. After taking several pictures, I went

back inside to begin what would become an amazing time watching this great horned owl family of two adults and two chicks that had adopted our yard as a nursery.

One chick could fly, but the other was still bound to terra firma. At first we were concerned that the owlet was injured. We phoned a wildlife rehabilitation centre and were advised that chicks could take up to three weeks to learn to fly. The parents would continue to watch and feed the chick; we were to keep our distance.

So watch we did—completely spellbound. One of the adults always remained close by, keeping watch over the non-flying owlet. The baby hopped and moved from rocks to the woodpile railing to the branches of downed trees and back again. We saw one parent bring it a rabbit or a squirrel for dinner and then its sibling arrived to share the meal. After eating, they groomed each other with satisfaction.

I imagine the flying owlet telling its sibling to get with the program—there is a lot to see in the world, flying is fun! It took more than a week for the owlet to learn to fly, but one day it finally happened.

Now we hear them hunting in the nearby woods, especially at night. They roost in the yard occasionally, and when they do, other nesting birds are pretty unhappy. We watched a robin sit on a nearby tree branch and chirp at the owlet and even dive bomb the owl, trying to get it to leave. The juncos were not quite as brave, only making a lot of noise when the owls were in the area. The owlets came back to visit one cold, rainy day—looking wet and grumpy. We were so lucky to share our summer with this owl family. ■

Clockwise from top right: a grumpy, wet owlet; an adult great horned owl; the owlet that couldn't fly, trying to look fierce; the owlet siblings together.







Mission **Accomplished**

A 'Friendship Mission' to Japan, with locals welcoming Canadian visitors into their homes, was a trip to remember

by **Lillian Ross**, Drayton Valley, Alta.

To celebrate our retirement in 1992, my husband Reg and I joined a Friendship Mission group travelling to Japan. It was led by one Laverna Saloum, who had headed the mission to Japan for 28 years, held in April every year to coincide with the cherry-blossom festival season. Part of the group was from our hometown. It was planned that we would be billeted with Japanese hosts but tour as a group to destinations such as Fukuoka, Tokyo, the beautiful baths in the Suginoi Hotel, the town of Yoshino with its narrow streets on a mountain top, Beppu and Kyoto. We were to bring each of our hosts gifts. The "Canada" ball caps that Reg brought were a big hit.

One of our homestay people owned karaoke bars, which were a big hit. I sang with the ukulele I had slung over my shoulder throughout the trip, and the group from our town were fellow entertainers, so we entertained one and all with song and dance: one of the favourite songs being "All Around the World."

Our favourite homestay was with the Gotos in Atsuma, Hokkaido, in the north. Our hometown and theirs were twin-towned many years ago, because so many features of our respective locales are alike. But we were nevertheless amazed when we got off the bus and were met with greetings from the mayor and celebrity treatment from the local media. We were wined and dined, given tours of government buildings and honoured at tea ceremonies, where we all knelt and received our tea from ladies in their formal kimonos. We were also asked to speak before them and entertain, to which we happily obliged.

Our initial hosts—the Gotos—were the only school teachers in their teacherage who spoke English very well; our other hosts often struggled to understand and talk to us. Thankfully, we had the services of Hiromi, an interpreter who was very talented and experienced at providing this vital link between cultures. We grew to become good friends with many of our hosts. We laughed



and joked with them, and, a year or two later, we had the pleasure of having some of them stay as our guests back home in Canada. Very conscientious, Hiromi did not think she was so talented and wished to know more. Her English, she said, was “not good” and she brought out a thick book of English idioms to get our help with them. She wanted to know which were obsolete, out of date or simply not used anymore, such as “Make haste.” After analyzing our language, I realized why the Japanese had such a difficult time with our expressions—particularly jokes, for which my husband, the joker, was known to spring on people unexpectedly. As we relaxed and became friends, Hiromi’s husband, Fuyuki, began to enjoy Reg and his jokes, even though he had to struggle to understand them sometimes. Imagine yourself being Japanese—and very literal—and you hear the following one-liners: “Families are like fudge—mostly sweet with a few nuts.” Or “A closed mouth gathers no feet.” Or “I could have been a snowboarder this winter, but I had stomach trouble—no guts!” Who wouldn’t be confused?

When I started reading Hiromi’s book of idioms, I realized that our speech is filled with idioms—especially our jokes. Here are a few that inevitably lead to

confusion for those whose mother tongue is not English: we were floored, under the gun, take a rain-check, foot the bill, having a change of heart, putting on the dog, and the list goes on. And yet, even though he looked puzzled sometimes, Fuyuki wanted Reg to save his jokes until they got to Canada so he could really enjoy them. They loved Canada and even named their daughter, born the following year, Kanako, which means Canada.

They don’t have much fondness for sweets in Japan: their “dessert” at the end of a meal consisted of a large bowl of rice. When I went shopping, I saw pictured in a café window a fluted glass, which looked like a sundae. I hurried in, pointed it out and my mouth watered until they brought it. I believe it was bean sauce, not chocolate, poured over something completely foreign to my taste, which definitely was not ice cream or whipped cream. I lectured myself about going through “sugar withdrawal” and later heard someone proclaim that “Real Japanese men don’t eat sweets.” No wonder they are so healthy!

Japan was amazingly clean and the people were polite, willing to learn and accepting, helpful, honest and patient. I shall remember forever the people we met, with great fondness. ■

Clockwise from top left: The ladies of Sapporo, Hokkaido, held a formal Japanese tea for Lillian’s group; the Friendship Mission took place in April, during the Japanese cherry-blossom season; Fuyuki, a teacher and the husband of the Friendship Mission’s local interpreter, Hiromi, is shown here with a group of his students.



Our Kids

Splashing into summer!

(Clockwise from left)

PUDDLES OF FUN!

Sarah Baker-Forward of Scotsburn, N.S., writes, "There is nothing better than puddle-jumping in Nova Scotia, or at least that's what my youngest daughter Sophie felt. Since our driveway provided endless puddles, she had endless fun!"

MUD-PUDDLE PRINCESS

Linda Swance of Burlington, Ont., shares this joyful pic, writing, "While attending a wedding last summer, this little cutie named Vera caught my eye. Dressed as a princess from head to, well, almost toe, she found the only mud puddle at the outdoor wedding and danced in it! Leaving me to think, we should all do that sometimes—wear our fancy clothes, find a mud puddle, and just dance like we just don't care!"



RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING ON MY HEAD

Sherri Lane of Shelburne, Ont., snapped this adorable photo of her youngest daughter Brooklyn at their home back in July 2015—Brooklyn was only three at the time.

BEAR WITH ME

When our daughter and her fiancé were planning their wedding, they asked our grandson, Christopher, then six years old, to be the ring bearer at the ceremony. One day when we were discussing wedding plans, his three-year-old younger brother, Randy, piped up, "I want to be a tiger."

Puzzled, we asked him what he meant, to which he replied, "Well, if Chris is going to be a bear, then I want to be a tiger!"

Needless to say, we had to explain that the task was actually *bear-er* and what that involved. We all had a good laugh about it then and many times since.

Myrna Lemay, Clairmont, Alta.

BASSBALL?

An unusual string quartet, composed entirely of four double-bass violins, decided to record their music. They booked a recording session at a studio, but at the appointed time, only three of the quartet's musicians showed up. Rather than waste the appointment, those who were there decided to record anyway. Surprisingly, their CD was a huge success! The music critics were positively astounded, but not being sport fans, they'd never heard of a three bass hit before.

Arthur Stone, Windsor



SENIOR CITIZEN'S POEM

*A row of bottles on my shelf,
causes me to analyze myself.*

*One yellow pill I have to pop,
goes to my heart so it won't stop.*

*A little white one I also take,
goes to my hands so they won't shake.*

*The blue ones that I use a lot,
tell me I'm happy when I'm not.*

*The purple one goes to my brain,
and tells me I have no pain.*

*Teeny-tiny capsules ease my wheeze,
and also relieve my need to sneeze.*

*The red ones, smallest of all,
go to my blood so I won't fall.*

*The orange ones, very big and bright,
prevent my leg cramps at night.*

*Such an array of brilliant pills,
helping to cure all kinds of ills.*

*But what I'd really like to know,
what tells each pill where to go?*

*Most of all, at least what I think,
there should be one for wrinkles,
I get more with every blink.*

Neil E. Black, Saskatoon



WE NEED YOU

Do you have a funny story to share? Send along your side-splitting misadventures and knee-slapping anecdotes to www.ourcanada.ca.

Everybody loves to have a good laugh, especially your fellow Our Canada readers!

Soapbox Racing in Moose Jaw, 1955

Hometown thrills and spills, plus quality time with Dad

by **Ross Hiebert**, *Spruce Grove, Alta.*

One of the last things I remember doing with my dad, before he got so sick, was building a soapbox racer in our hometown of Moose Jaw, Sask., in the summer of 1955. Back then, racers were built out of spare parts. Scrap lumber, old pieces of rope, rusty nails and axles and wheels. Ah yes, wheels. The Holy Grail of racer construction. During soapbox construction season, there was not a baby-carriage wheel, toy-wagon wheel or any other garden piece or home-use wheel that was safe. Many were the back porches that held baby carriages with only the two front wheels or an American Flyer red wagon without any wheels at all. Wheels were everything and the solid red ones with the rubber tires were the most valued.

Racers were built for speed and speed alone. No extraneous frills or doodads were allowed. The object was to be the fastest in the land. Steering mechanisms consisted of lengths of rope fastened to the moveable board at the front that held the axle and guide wheels or very often, nothing at all—the steering was accomplished by simply pushing on the board with your feet. Some even had steering wheels attached by some unexplainable method, but we didn't associate with those kinds of people. Brakes were, at best, an afterthought and usually consisted of a stick that made contact with the ground. Sometimes, it was attached to the body but often was simply laid in the driver's lap.

Races would be held on Saturday in order, it seemed, to cause as much chaos in city traffic patterns as possible. Every year, the chamber of commerce would protest to the city council and every year the councillors would ignore their request.

People would begin lining up along the race route hours before the start. They would bring lawn chairs and boxes of sandwiches, fruit and thermoses of coffee. The race route itself was only five or six blocks long, so prime viewing space was at a premium.

Racers would be lined up eight or ten across the

top of the biggest hill in town, with a pusher behind each one. Upon the signal, the pusher would do just that to his appointed racer with each of them trying to out-do the next for starting speed. The racers would begin careening down the hill. The more poorly engineered and constructed ones would begin to fly apart almost instantly, with wheels, pieces of wood, axles and every other part flying around the track and drivers rolling invariably into the crowd who, while risking dire injury, seemed to enjoy the whole experience. Farther down the track, the collisions would begin as the frail steering systems failed. More flying parts. More rolling drivers. More pandemonium. It was great fun to watch!

After a great many heats, a final winner would appear. It was akin to being the winner of a demolition derby, in that the winner was not necessarily the fastest but simply the survivor.



Looking back on these events today, I don't remember actually taking much of a part in the construction of the racer. That was probably more the work of my older brother. I also don't remember driving the actual racer—that was probably my brother, too. In fact, the only thing I do remember vividly about soapbox racing in Moose Jaw was spending time with my dad. ■



SPOT THE LOONIE

We've hidden a loonie somewhere in this issue. Can you find it? It could be anywhere, but it's not the one above! If you spot the loonie, tell us in which issue and on what page on a postcard, or in a letter, and mail your entry to "Spot the Loonie" Contest, P.O. Box 975, STN Main, Markham, Ont., L3P 0K7. We'll collect all the entries and have a drawing every other month. The first five correct entries we draw will win \$50. Join in the fun online by visiting our website at www.ourcanada.ca and clicking on "Spot the Loonie." Entries will be accepted until July 31, 2018.

For complete rules, write to "Spot the Loonie" Contest, Reader's Digest Contest Administrators Office, 5101 Rue Buchan, Suite 301, Montreal, Que., H4P 1S4. This contest is open to all Canadian residents who, at the time of participation, have reached the age of majority according to the law of the province or territory in which they reside. One entry per person, per day is allowed.



In the May issue, we hid the loonie on page 38 within the Collectors department. We'll publish our latest winning loonie-spotters in an upcoming issue.

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PET CORNER



Gloria Young of Botwood, N.L., sent along this adorable pic of her beloved cat, Rusty. "Rusty was a rescue kitten found on the side of the highway by a kind lady, who brought him home, took care of him until he was about eight-weeks old, then brought him to the SPCA," writes Gloria. "They post pictures of the animals that are ready for adoption and, when I saw his little face, I instantly fell in love with him and decided to adopt him. Rusty turned two this past April. This photo shows him relaxing on my bed with his favourite toy kitten." **Got a great shot of your family's beloved pet? Send it along with a brief caption and it just may appear in this space!**

Full Moon

The full moon covers
sleeping meadows
with a soft, silvery blanket.
Trees cast long shadows,
their branches, like groping arms
reach out with creeping fingers.

Moonlight transforms the lake
into a stream of melting gold.
It is peaceful.
Only the loon's haunting sounds
reverberate.

Veils of mist
emerge from the forest.
Ghost-like entities
move slowly, gracefully over the meadows.
Dancing in harmony and enchantment
to distant music
until a silver lining on the horizon
promises the dawn.

Birds wake in the trees,
chirping to greet the sun.
The full moon's pale image
fades in the sky.
The misty veil lifts gently
towards the lake.
That's where they hide
waiting to dance again
for the rising moon.

Astrid Rutsatz, Collingwood, Ont.

The Stag

And the game is afoot,
let there be no mistake.
The prey has been sighted,
the hunter's senses alert.

The stag stands proudly,
all majestic and glorious.
Outlined in the pre-dawn,
lifts his head, challenge bugled.

The hunter lifts his horn,
to answer that challenge.
There'll be no escaping,
this time the prey will be his.

The stag sends his family
away for their safety.
This is one battle
that is his and his alone.

The hunter continues
on through the dappled woods.
With each clearing they pass,
the signs point to victory.

Then at last he is there,
just beyond decent shot.
He's afraid that he'll bolt,
still a little bit closer.

The stag's mighty rack,
blends in with the branches.
The slightest breeze blowing,
his nostrils flare with concern.

The hunter steadies his aim,
he'll only get this one shot.
The sight lines are perfect,
with a press of his finger...

The camera starts clicking,
the stag turns his head away.
Then walks out of the trees,
the pictures are perfect.

Joe Robinsmith, Burnaby, B.C.

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TILL NEXT TIME

Alicia Strelkov of Olds, Alta., writes, "While visiting our son in White Rock, B.C., he told us of all the large birds he sees as he drives around, and he challenged me to get some cute pics of them for him. This one of a mother sandhill crane snuggling with her baby is one of my favourites."

YOUR TURN: Do you have a parting shot to share? Submit it online at ourcanada.ca or turn to page 64 for our address.