

Barker bursts onto bodybuilder scene

BY CHRIS ISTACE One may think Holly Barker (Poncelet) has had a meteoric rise in competitive bodybuilding in Saskatchewan.

bodybuilding in Saskatchewan. After all, in only her first season of competition, the 28-year-old former Whitewood-area resident qualified for the Canadian Bodybuilding Federation (CBBF) National Championships in the Bikini event—a division that judges competitors based on a 'softer' appearance than a conventional bodybuilding contest. Barker placed ninth at nationals in the

Barker placed ninth at nationals in the five-foot-four-inch to five-foot-six-inch Bikini competition in Saskatoon last July. She qualified to compete there by hitting the podium at two previous meets. First, she earned silver at the Saskatchewan Amateur Bodybuilding Association (SABBA) Novice Figure and Bikini Championships in Saskatoon two months earlier. This earned her a spot at SABBA's provincial championships in Lloydminster last May, where she placed third and qualified for Canadians.

But Barker's rookie success isn't built on beginner's luck or a quick and painless adaptation to the intense commitment required of a competitive bodybuilder. Barker's path to the top of Saskatchewan's bodybuilding community began more than a decade ago.

As a teenager, Barker would run along the Pipestone Valley near her family's farm south of Whitewood. She'd also work out with her mother, Heather Poncelet, at Uncle Terry Poncelet's gymnasium in town or lift weights on a universal gym in her basement.

"I was always active and loved participating in team sports throughout high school," said Barker, who now lives in Regina with her husband, Brett. The pair married on April 17, less than two weeks before the SABBA Novice competition.

Regina with her husband, Brett. The pair married on April 17, less than two weeks before the SABBA Novice competition. "But it was never available for me to go to an actual gym and train with proper equipment and weights. The moment I got my first membership at California Fitness in Saskatoon, I knew that was where I belonged. I have been hooked ever since." In fact her interest in physical fitness ui-

In fact, her interest in physical fitness ultimately pulled her away from her original career choice. Following her graduation from Whitewood High School, Barker attended the University of Saskatchewan with intentions on becoming a physiotherapist.

However, an aversion to science classes—and a preference for maths—motivated her to change faculties. She graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 2006 with a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Finance.

Brett is also a business graduate with a passion for health and fitness, leading the couple to open an Anytime Fitness franchise in East Regina in 2010. They are currently building their second outlet in the



Holly Barker (Poncelet) has quickly climbed the ranks of competitive bodybuilding in Saskatchewan. The 28-year-old former Whitewood-area resident participates in the Bikini division.

northern part of the city, which they expect to open before the January, 2012.

After starting the business, several things combined to push Barker towards competitive bodybuilding; she had a bent for physical fitness, unlimited resources to develop that passion and a supportive boyfriend-turned-husband backing her up.

friend-turned-husband backing her up. Her path toward the sport seemed clear and straight. There was little else to do but

make a decision and begin. "For as long as I can remember, I have been an avid reader of Robert Kennedy's Oxygen magazine and Muscle and Fitness Hers. I would admire the girls in the back of the magazine in the articles highlighting the most recent competitions and studying the competitors and their physiques," she said.

"Being surrounded by fitness and healthy living, I decided there were no excuses to why I couldn't compete."

Her entry into bodybuilding has paid off so far, but Barker said she really had no ex-

pectations about what kind of success she would or could have. In fact, just getting in front of judges and spectators was a thrill she looked forward to and appreciated when it finally happened. "Nothing will beat the feeling of step-

"Nothing will beat the feeling of stepping on stage for the first time to show off all of your hard work," she said. "But it was all new to me, so I had no idea what to expect."

By the time she entered the national competition, she was a little overwhelmed by how far she had gone so quickly.

by how far she had gone so quickly. "The caliber of competition from the provincial level to the national level was crazy." Barker said. "I was in the presence of and sharing the stage with the very girls that I had admired for so long in the magazines."

She was also now being featured in print herself. An issue of Inside Fitness Magazine released in early July included a photo of Barker, who qualified for the Canadian magazine's 2011 "Hot and Fit 100" issue, which is scheduled for release in January, 2012.

The benefits of her hard work began to flow outside the sport as well.

••

Athletes in Bikini bodybuilding are not as "ripped" as those in the fitness or figure divisions.

Barker says Bikini judges look for muscular definition in a competitor's body while maintaining their "womanly curves."

"You are judged on your overall look and overall stage presence," she said. Nevertheless, competitors require just as

Nevertheless, competitors require just as much commitment, perseverance, mental strength and absolute conviction to diet and workout regimens as those in the other events.

Barker is thorough in her explanation of her training schedule. She is currently trying to build size in her lower body, which has adjusted her routine from training plans that work other areas of focus.

Her schedule includes training sessions between 45 and 90 minutes long, six days per week. Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays include her total-body workouts. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are reserved for HIIT cardio (High Intensity Interval Training), alongside exercises for her abdominal, gluteus and hamstring muscles.

HIIT, or power cardio, is a form of cardiovascular exercise that has an athlete working at a lower capacity for a short period followed by a period of sprinting. This process is repeated—back and forth from comfortable walk, for example, to allout run—throughout a workout. HIIT is used to burn a maximum amount of fat in a short amount of time. Barker works her HIIT on a treadmill.

Continued on Page 918







Snowboarders have taken advantage of the mild winter at Asessippi this year.



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Perfect weather for the slopes

Asessippi ski hill sees increased attendance

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

The warm weather this winter has meant larger crowds for the ski hill at Asessippi

"For us that has a Assessippi "For us it has been awesome," said Roz Pulo of Ases-sippi. "The weather is just perfect for skiing, and we've had great crowds out." "New Year's Eve was almost double from last year—we

"New Year's Eve was anitost coubie from fast year—we had about 2,300 or so for New Year's Eve. "Just based on the temperatures we had a great eve-ning—it was great weather for skiing." The warm weather hasn't had an adverse impact on the

ski runs because the snow-making machines were brought out early in the season to ensure that there is lots of snow on the hills. "We've been upgrading our snowmaking equipment,

and we were able to make enough snow before the season started, "Pulo said. "We were able to cover the entire resort in less time than ever. The upgrades that we did just made it so we could easily make all the snow we needed."

As long as the temperature is minus 10 or lower, Ases-sippi is able to make snow.

"There was enough time in Novemeber and early De-cember that we were able to get a really good base," said said

"We had four crews of six or eight people going 24-7 to get the base down. There were 43 guns running simultane-ously making snow.

"On average we have a two foot base-that's a lot of snow.

"And that's packed snow. That base is nice and thick, so if we get a few warmer days, we're not really going to lose anything." She said the season has been going well so far.

"Overall this season has been good, but we started out with lower numbers because people didn't expect there to be any snow," she said.

She said the extreme cold temperatures last winter didn't cut down on the number of skiers by as much as some people would expect.

"There are some safety issues when it gets really cold for the chairlift, we can't run it below a certain temperature, the chairlift, we can't run it below a certain temperature, but we still have people who show up at the resort. It's amazing. There are always some people who want to get out on the runs. With clothing today you can layer it up and you can dress really well, so the weather doesn't re-ally stop a lot of people when it's extremely cold. "The wind makes a big difference, but being in the val-ley you can be very sheltered. At the top of the runs and the bottom you don't feel the cold as much because it's so sheltered."

sheltered.

So what's the perfect weather for skiing? "Honestly, everyone has their own opinion," says Pulo. "A little bit below zero is probably the best. Ideal conditions is about minus 10.

minuts 10. She said staff as Asessippi keep a close eye on the weath-er and are hoping for more of the mild temperatures they have seen so far this year. "With the weather we've been having, people have been having a lot of fun, and we love to see that," she said.



Left: Lauren Queree from New Zealand, is bundled up tightly as a snow machine is hard at work behind her. Asessippi ski hill has upgraded its snow machine in recent years and it came in handy this year with the mild weather.

Below: Snowmaking on a night in November





Fundraiser being held for Becketts

A Moosomin family will be getting some help to buy a lift for their dis-abled daughter on Jan. 28, after a number of community members decided to get together and have a fundraiser for them.

"They do so much," says Kim Johnson-Hilts, with the Moosomin Le-gion, who is organizing the fundraiser. "If you could see how much they do.

Brian and Susan Beckett have cared for their disabled daughter, Jenny, since birth. Jenny suf-fers from Charge Vater, a condition that includes many physical problems She is wheelchair bound She is wheelchair bound and cannot walk. Now fully grown at age 20, the couple are facing chal-lenges lifting Jenny, and are looking to purchase an overhead tracking sys-tem with a lift for their home so that they can home, so that they can

move Jenny around the house and lift her with more ease.

Johnson-Hilts says the Becketts' oldest daughter, Shannon, approached the Legion about doing some

fundraising for the lift. "I've known the Beck-etts for a long time," says Johnson-Hilts. "I used to work with Susan at the Dollar Store. They take care of Jenny by themselves, and Susan was going to join Curves to tone

up so that she can lift Jenny. They don't want to just put Jenny in a home."

Johnson-Hilts says she decided to hold a roast beef supper at the Legion on Saturday, Jan. 28, along with a silent auction, and live music afterwards. Cocktails will start at 6 p.m., followed by supper at 7 p.m. with music by a local band to follow.

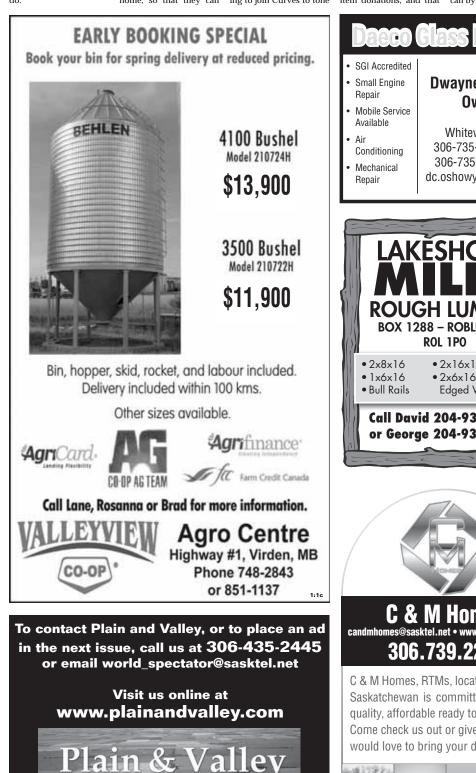
She says that she will be looking for silent auction she expects the fundraiser to be fairly large. "I expect it will be big,

as the Becketts belong to the Legion, and Brian works at Miller Farm Equipment, and most of their relatives live and work here," she says. "I'm expecting between 150 to 200 people." Johnson-Hilts says tick-

ets for the supper and silent auction are already on sale at the Legion, and can by purchased for \$10.







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10th Lotto 365 is now under way ber Ryan Thorn. "This is

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK The Moosomin Kins-men Club has started sell-ing tickets in its 10th an-nual Lotto 365. The annual lottery-with a main prize of \$1,000 a week for a year,

with the slogal "Live Free For a Year"—has become the main annual fundraiser for the Kinsmen Club, and proceeds are invested right back into the community. Proceeds are split among a number of groups. "For this year we will have \$10,000 going to the golf club for clubhouse up-dates, and \$10,000 to the curling club for a compressor.' said Kinsmen mem-

2009 fe.

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final major component." Both the curling club and golf club have received some support from Lotto 365 for each of the last five years

the final stage of the ice plant. The curling club has replaced two of the major

components, and this is the

"The support helps the golf club and the curling club a lot," Thorn said. "It's nice when you see the improvements that both those organizations have been able to do. I don't think their facilities would be in such nice shape if it wasn't for Lotto 365."

Other organizations will benefit from this year's Lotto 365 as well. "There will also be \$2,000

going to the Food Bank for upgrades to their building and \$2,000 to the soccer as sociation for a shed to store equipment," Thorn said. Proceeds will also help

with improvements to a second ball diamond at Bradley Park. There is

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000 earmarked for men Field. "Eventu-it will have lights, \$10,000 Kinsmen ally new backstops, new dugouts, shale, an announcer's booth—it will twin Guin-ness Field, but we will do it in red and white, the Kins-men colors," said Thorn.

"Ultimately, minor ball will be able to host more tournaments." Kinsmen members

will be spending the next month selling the tickets, a process Thorn says has become better organized over the last decade. "In 10 years of doing it we've gotten pretty good it," he said. "What we really need now

"The support we get lo-cally is really phenomenal, and it helps us to put that money back into the com-munity. Being able to do-nate back to the community is our ultimate goal. We draw one big winner, but the town of Moosomin and surrounding communities are the real winners."

Over the last nine years the lottery has put about \$360,000 back into the community, benefiting groups from the Food Bank to the Southeast Integrated Care Centre.

The best part of the whole

"It's a phenomenal expe-rience," he said. "I've done it several times, and Jonathon Nosterud got to do it last year. You feel almost as excited phoning them as they are getting the call. It really changes people's lives. Some of the winners have gone out and started a business. One couple bought a hotel, other peo-ple say it's improved their lives because they've been able to invest it or go on a

trip." The lottery has sold out every year but two. Tick-ets can be purchased from Kinsmen members, participating businesses over toll free number or by fill-ing out the form below.

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Barker trains hard to compete

Section Continued from front

Barker even sets herself at a timed pace

during her weightlifting workouts. "I superset all exercises every training day, so there is little rest time between sets," she said. "When training for compesets, she said. When training for compe-tition, I will increase cardio time depend-ing on how much I need to cut down and will narrow in on specific body parts. The first year of competing is a crazy learning process, so I'm still learning how my body responds and what works best for me."

Among her workout necessities are a printed agenda of her exercises, "so my workout flows without having to think of what to do next," she said. Her kit also includes an iPod, chewing

gum and a pre-workout, supplement drink called SuperPump.

Like most people, Barker has days when her motivation has waned. At times like these, she just gets herself to the gym, where the atmosphere seems to give her energy.

"It seems I end up completing my workout and pushing myself even harder on these days. I love our gym and the peo-ple you are surrounded by when you are there," she said. "It's become a family and a second home for us." Barker said the food that goes into her

body is actually as important—if not more - than what she is doing in the gym. She has obviously become physically stronger since starting her involvement in competitive bodybuilding, but she would not have seen the changes she required without an

appropriate diet. "That's 80 per cent of the changes you see in the gym," she said. "When the prop-er diet is paired with a physically challenging workout, it is scary what you can accomplish.

Now that she is competing, there is little room for error in both what she is eating and in maintaining her workout schedule. It takes keen mental strength to continually monitor which little voice any athlete will heed; the angel on one shoulder telling them to strictly adhere to their diet and

schedule, or the jester on the other shoulder telling them to let loose and cheat a little. "The sport has challenged me mentally more than I could have ever imagined,"

Barker said. 'It takes a lot of motivation and drive to follow through with a goal that you set out for yourself. You have to be confident in your decision to compete. It is not for everyone and most people do not under-

stand it. "And food is associated with everything we do, from the holidays and celebrations, to social gatherings. You have to be men-tally prepared to deal with these situations

Although her first season of competitive bodybuilding has been a learning experi-ence, Barker hasn't been afraid to share it all with those who have an interest in her,

or the sport in general. She started a blog—anytimefitness-hollys-contest-prep.blogspot.com—to allow others to follow her bodybuilding adven-ture and keep herself accountable to her fitness goals. "I didn't want to let anyone down, so

(the blog) pushed me forward," she said. And there's literally no hesitancy in

what she would tell others about entering

"No matter what you have going on in your life, you can do it," she said.

"I know it sounds click, but if it is some-thing that interests you, do it and don't wait. It challenges you and teaches you lessons that you can carry into all aspects of your life." of your life.

It's basically what she told herself when she decided to take her passion for physi-cal fitness to another level.

"I became my own project and went for it," she said, adding that she would ulti-mately like to attain "Pro Card" status in the Canadian Bodybuilding Federation.

"I'd also like to continue to motivate and inspire others as well as myself. There are many avenues to continue this lifestyle at a non-competitive level, but I'm keeping my mind open to whatever happens.



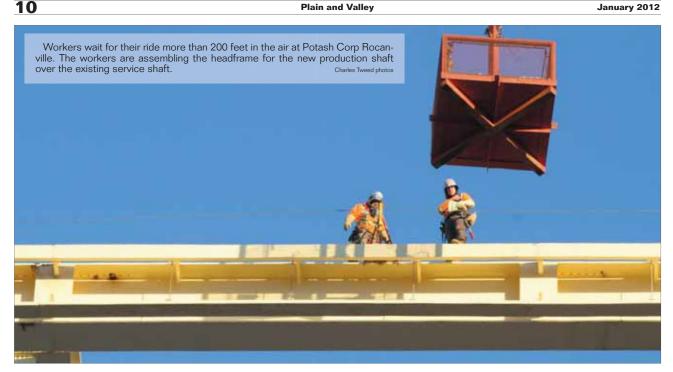
Holly Barker is judged during a bikini bodybuilding competition.





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PotashCorp Rocanville expansion on track

BY CHARLES TWEED It's business as usual at PotashCorp Rocanville for 2012. PotashCorp Rocanville,

which is currently under-going a \$2.8 billion expansion, is on target to meet all of their goals for the up-

all of their goals to the up-coming year. "Right now they are at the half-way point," said General Manager Steve Fortney regarding the new service shaft being sunk at Sciencer Creak Scissors Creek.

Crews are working to blast through the Blairmore formation. The Blairmore is the most challenging formation for the shaft sinking crews due to its saturation

of sand and water. "We're in the Blairmore right now," said Fortney. "It's always a challenge but the freezing has taken care of it and we're managing to blast through it quite effectively.

Crews blast a pattern of holes to create the hole for the shaft sinking, once in place the shaft is cemented into place to ensure there is no space between the shaft walls and the outer forma-

tion. "There are no voids with our shaft and the forma-tions we are in," said Fort-ney. "We'll fill around it

ney. "We'll fill around it with concrete." "We expect the new shaft to be fully operational in July of 2013," said Fortney. After the new service shaft at Scissors Creek is completed, work will con-tinue on transforming the tinue on transforming the current service shaft into a second production shaft. At the moment crews are working to construct the new 350 foot tall produc-tion shaft over the existing service shaft. "The entire head frame

"The entire head frame on the existing shaft has to demolished," explained Fortney. "The hoist motor and everything is removed and the foundation has to be redone." "We are essentially build-

ing a headframe overtop of the existing headframe," said Fortney. "We will have

built the physical head-frame itself over top of it and have the new hoist motor and everything ready to operate above it." The new production shaft will have the capacity to

bring 40 percent more pot-ash to the surface than the older production shaft and will help bring production from three million tonnes of ore per year to 5.7 million tonnes

"It will be hauling 50

tonne loads where the other shaft hauls 35 tonne loads," explained Fortney. "They will construct the top part and put the hoist motor in and once they are done as the Scissors Creek shaft then they'll start to demol-ish the (existing shaft) and do the concrete work at the bottom as well as put a new tower structure underneath.

PotashCorp is the largest producer of potash, pro-

ducing almost 20 per cent of the world supply. The new production shaft will help the company deal with growing global demand for potash and Fortney took a moment to explain the process, once the potash gets to the surface.

"We bring it up and it's about two thirds salt and one third potash and about one percent clays and other impurities," said Fortney. "We crush it down to lib-

the potash floats to the top while the salt drops to the Work has started on the headframe for the new production shaft that will replace the current service shaft at Pot-

eration size, then we add a chemical and the first chemical we add will stick to the potash but it won't stick to the salt. The second chemical only sticks to the first chemical, then it goes into floatation cells where we introduce lots of air bubbles. The tiny, tiny air bubbles will attract to the second chemical . . . they act as little life jackets and

bottom and we scoop the

bottom and we scoop the potash off the top." Below ground crews have been busy assembling new mining machines in prepa-ration for the increased production.

"Before we started the expansion we had five mining machines and as part of the expansion we have purchased six more," said Fortney.

"We've already got four of the machines in place and we've been able to train the people as we go slowly," said Fortney. The increase in potash

Ine increase in potasin means an increase in man-power, as PotashCorp Rocanville will hire more personnel to handle the in-creased production. "We're increasing our budget right now and we

have a bunch of new peo-ple starting (in January), said Fortney. "We're hiring an additional 84 permanent positions and that doesn't take into consideration if people leave or decide to retire, we'll be filling those retire, we'll be filling those positions as well. So I ex-pect we'll be hiring about 100 people this year." "Man-power is a problem as well as having the hous-ing for them in the area." Part of the expansion process has also been the hiring of contract workers, but Fortnew doesn't expect

but Fortney doesn't expect any of the workers to stay on once the expansion is complete.

"We peaked at about 1,600 contractor workers in October, but we're down to around 1,300 now," said Fortney

"Not many apply to stay with us," said Fortney. "There will be some cleanup work for us in 2014, but after that is done there won't be any contractors left.'

With so many faces at the mine, Fortney said safety is paramount.

"Safety on the project has been really good," said Fortney. "That's always a concern . . . and making sure everyone is safe is a big concern of ours."







Congratulations to Deenie Goulden of Roceanville

Deenie shopped locally this Christmas season and won a 2011 Chevy Aveo! Kevin Weedmark of The World-Spectator presented Deenie Goulden the keys to her new 2011 Chevy Aveo. Deenie entered at Rocanville Super Thrifty.



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January 2012

Sledders wait on Mother Nature

BY CHARLES TWEED It's been a tough year for snowmobilers in the area.

A promising dump of snow early in November had snowmobilers fine tuning their sleds eager to hit the trails for the winter, since then, Mother Nature has given them nothing in the way of substantial snow. But a few inches of snowfall two weeks ago had sled-ding enthusiasts twitching

for their throttle trigger. "I think they will be able to get out on the trails and start packing the snow," said Stan Langley, a direc-tor with the Tri Valley Trails Snowmobile Club. "They'll leave it a couple of days and then we might be able to get out and do some of the grooming." "It was a happy day to

It was a happy day to finally see the snow come down," said Langley, who said the phone had been ringing off the hook at Uni-varee Satellite Sales

"Everybody has been pretty anxious and a lot of guys had gone out to B.C. to ride in the mountains." said Langley.

The snowfall brightened the spirits of a lot of sledders, but there is no question it's been a late start to the season, especially since unusually warm tempera-tures last week did much to reduce the snow that has accumulated this season.

"This year is has been difficult because there hasn't been a lot of snow and most of the land wasn't seeded so most of it is worked and there is nothing to hold the snow, which makes it dif-ficult to make a trail," said

ficult to make a trail," said director Gary Williamson. "It's been a disappoint-ing year so far," explained Williamson. "Last year at this time everything was open and being used to the fullest extent, but you can't control the weather." "The club which bas been

The club which has been together for more than a decade, brings together snow-mobiling enthusiasts in the area and maintains the Tri-Valley Trails during the winter season.

"The reason the trail sys-tem is called Tri-Valley is because it includes three valleys—the Pipestone, the Qu'Appelle and the Assiniboia," said Williamson.

"We have about 330 km of beautiful trail," explained Williamson. "We link up with SnoMan, which is the Manitoba snowmobile as-sociation in St. Lazare and that takes you to Roblin, Russell and north. To the west we join up with White-wood and Esterhazy."

Williamson said the trail system has become quite well known through Sas-katchewan and Manitoba and said it's not uncommon to see sledders come from hours away for day trips on the trails.



and far. The groomed trails are a great way to spend the day sledding.

"It's excellent riding," said Williamson. "It's all groomed trail and through the valleys is very pictur-esque. We try to stay to sheltered areas because the snow cover's better but there is the odd spot where we have to go through an open field." The lure of the trails has

major implications on a va-riety of businesses in the area as sledders stop for lunch, need repairs or rent

hotels to stay the night. "It brings a lot of people into the area," said Williamson.

"All trails seem to end in Tantallon," said Williamson. "We have three warm-up shelters—one at Moosomin shelters—one at Moosomin Lake, one by Welwyn and another halfway between Rocanville and Tantallon— last year in February, at the shelter called the Hilton between Rocanville and Tantallon there had been 1,100 people that signed the book and we don't know exactly how many people had been there. So it's huge and busy.

Getting started on the trails is a simple process. "As long as you have a license on your sled you are good to go," said William-

son However, snowmobile operators born after Jan. 1, 1989 are required to complete a Snowmobile Safety Training Course. A course

9,375 sq. ft.

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the club is happy to put on every year to ensure every sledder has the knowledge to help them be safe out on the trails.

"We run a clinic for kids that need a snowmobile safety certificate for the younger club members and that allows them to ride on the trail with an adult," said Williamson. The club relies on volun-

teers to keep the trails in such outstanding condition. Hundreds of hours are ac-cumulated setting up signs to ensure the trails are safe

to ensure the trails are safe and grooming the trail. "The last three years we've spent \$10,000 to \$15,000 in signage," ex-plained Williamson. "We hence but of size

"We have a lot of signs and they're all reflective so it's very well marked," said Williamson. "We painted 4,000 more stakes this fall and there is conspicuous tape on both sides so that in the dark your headlight picks it up. You can usually see three or four stakes in front of you so you know where the trail is going to

go." Williamson said the trail system wouldn't be possible without the support of land-owners who allow the trails

to cross their property. "The land owners are very important and without them we wouldn't have a trail system," said William-son. "The beauty of a snow-

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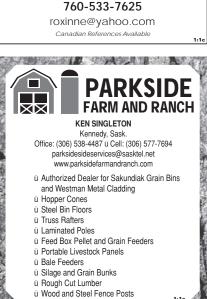
mobile is when the snow goes away so do the tracks and there are no tracks left behind

Williamson said the landowners have been very gra-cious allowing the trails for sledders during the winter, but he also pointed out that the trails aren't meant for riding ATVs in the spring and summer months.

"We get land permission from the land owners for the snowmobile trails, but it has nothing to do with the quaders," said William-son. "It is hoped that quaders respect the landowners rights and we're running into some trouble because we've had permission to go across land with the snowmobiles and groom the trail, but then in the spring the quaders go in the same spot. Some land owners have stopped us from going across their fields because of that

If it begins to snow, Wil-liamson expects the trails to be busy.

"People come for the scenery more than any-thing," said Williamson. "When you're in those val-leys it is very picturesque."



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A redneck Christmas

It occurred to me on Dec. 29, as I was reporting the details of our Christmas holidays to friends, that I might have had a redneck Christmas.

I don't know what the exact definition of a redneck Christmas might be, but according to the expert on the subject, comedian Jeff Foxworthy, it includes: six packs of spam, five flannel shirts, four big mud tires, three shotgun shells, two huntin' dogs and some parts to a Mustane CT

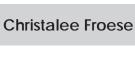
Mustang GT. Our Christmas involved some variations on those themes, but as I drove to the mail on Dec. 28 with a buffet of cabbage rolls, turkey and perogies still stored in the back of our SUV, I knew indeed that I was not far off from a full-blown redneck celebration. And when I con-sidered the activities of the weekend, I could no longer deny the obvious.

deny the obvious. On Dec. 23 the family began converging at our home at which time I promptly went out and bought six pounds of pork tenderloin, five dozen pork breakfast sausages and four pounds of bacon. Then I proceeded to keep them cool in our "secondary fridge," better known as the hatch back of our Honda CRV. You might be a redneck if you have 13 or more pounds of pork in your fridge at any one time, and you are *defi*-

of pork in your fridge at any one time, and you are *defi-nitely* a redneck if you store that pork in the back of your VE-hic-le.

VE-inc-ie. Dec. 24 brought a whole new meaning to family time as the redneck spirit kicked in with full force. Most fam-ilies might be gathering for a nice Christmas Eve meal. When my grandmother was alive, we always had a beautiful meatless supper with perogies, cabbage rolls,





fresh pickerel and wheat soaked in honey. And then we'd all gleefully stay up until midnight, attend mass and sing Joy to the World with open hearts. But not this year! This year my outdoorsman broth-

er and my hunting brother-in-law thought it might be more fitting to spend the day shooting at God's crea-tures. So off they went to hunt coyotes on Christmas Eve. With the sun going down, and us women having slow cooked pork for eight hours, the hunters returned with a coyote in the back of their truck and appetites fit to consume several pounds of pork. You might be a redneck if you spend Christmas Eve

coyote huntin' and your women spend it makin' you a big ol' crock pot of pulled pork to eat when you run out of shotgun shells and have to go home. On Dec. 25, I refused to have our Christmas hijacked

by guns, male chauvinists and back bacon. So it was that I declared it a "no-hunting" day and a day where the family would join together to prepare a pork-free meal. My brother was placed in charge of "reheating" cab-bage rolls, tourtiére and perogies. He did a fine job, us-ing a whole pound of bacon to cover the cabbage rolls,

forgetting to put the frozen tourtiére in the oven until 20 minutes before meal time and casting off perogy-cook-

As for the turkey, my brother-in-law and his son did a fine job as well. It was tender, moist, succulent, juicy a mie job as wei, it was tender, moist, succentri, judy .
 oh, and did I mention it was wrapped in a pound of bacon. No kidding, The whole bird was draped in strips of fat-infused pork.
 You might be a redneck if your Christmas meal is

covered with bacon and your turkey is basted in bacon grease

And the final pièce de résistance of any redneck Christmas is flannel. This year, flannel came in the form of plaid "grandpa-style" pajama pants for all the hunt-ers, perogy cookers and bacon connaisseurs in our fam-

You might be a redneck if all you get from your Ma and Pa for Christmas is a pair of flannel pajamas and those pajamas are exactly the same as the flannel pajamas they gave to your Grand-pa, your uncles and every one of your cousins.

It's not really the theme I had planned for this festive season. But without even trying, I managed to pull off a redneck Christmas that came complete with boxing day shopping with a coyote in the back of the my brother's truck and two of the 13 pounds of pork still in our SUV. Hope your Christmas was one to remember. Mine sure was!

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



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Ketchesons have New Year's **Baby**—twice

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lightning shouldn't strike in the same place twice, the same person shouldn't win two lotteries and people re-ally shouldn't have back-to-back New Year's babies.

But even the longest odds can be defied and on Sunday at 12:46 a.m., Grace Olivia Ketcheson was the first baby for 2012 at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, arriving 365 days and four minutes after her older brother, Jack, was the first baby in Regina in 2011. Grace is Bobbi Jo and Kurtis Ketchesons' fourth child,

Grace IS BODD 10 and Nutus recursors routed and, all of whom are younger than four. "My dad was with me (Saturday)," Bobbi Jo Ketcheson said. "I had just changed the laundry over and hadn't even been sitting on the couch for five minutes. I gagged once, ran to the kitchen sink and threw up and looked at dad, 'Oh no, call 9-1-1, I have to push.

my dad, 'Oh no, call 9-1-1, I have to pusn. Bobbi Jo suffers from hyperemesis gravidarum, which

Bobbi Jo suffers from hyperemesis gravidarum, which causes extreme, persistent vomiting during pregnancy. "I don't really have labor," she explained. "I vomit, then I get this terrible headache, which lasts about a minute. Then once I can talk again, I have to push." Ketcheson's abnormally short labors leave her with just minutes to get to a hospital. The couple had a bed set up in their heated garage this time around in case she couldn't make it to the hospital in time. They one usent as far as to make dry runs to the hospi-

They even went as far as to make dry runs to the hospi-tal to determine the fastest route.

Both Grace and Jack were premature babies and weren't due until February.

On New Year's Eve, Kurtis Ketcheson was returning to Medicine Hat after being away for work when he got a phone call that his wife was about to give birth. "Her dad called me to tell me the ambulance had just

left the house," Ketcheson said, noting he was just at the edge of the city.

"I was heading down the highway (toward the hospi-tal) and I could see the lights coming behind me. I knew it was them.

He made it to the hospital in time for the birth, which took longer than usual due to the baby's chin getting stuck on her mother's pubic bone.

Bobbi Jo Ketcheson said she was asked to sign a consent form for an emergency C-section, but the baby ended up being born naturally.

"I just said screw it, I don't have time for a C-section," Ketcheson said. "Somebody lift up the blanket and catch. She was born right there on the operating table."

Ketcheson said all four of her pregnancies came in spite of some form of birth control, and noted she was only hours away from signing a consent form to have her tubes tied when she found out she was pregnant with Grace. We're like the two most fertile people in Canada," she

laughed. The couple says this is definitely going to be their last baby.



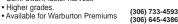
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Kurtis and Bobbi Jo Ketcheson hold their fourth child, Grace, at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital. Grace was Medicine Hat's New Year's baby, while Grace's older brother Jack was the New Year's baby one year ago in Regina. The grandparents are Richard and Karen Ketcheson of Wawota.



