

Deja-VISITE

Prairie Passions with a Fresh Perspective

Issue 6

July/August 2018



HELLO!

Summer is here, and it is glorious. It also means that suddenly every weekend and spare moment is dedicated to yard work, taking in nature, and making the most of the short time we have before winter comes back.

As such, we at Deja-Visite have taken a step back to enjoy the warm weather. Lots of camping, lots of local events, and lots of enjoyment of nature and sunshine.

In this issue, we join Jocelyn on her final A Walk on the Wild Side for this season. Jessica takes us to see some unique Saskatchewan sights, and looks at the local drag scene at Queen City Pride 2018 and binges RuPaul's Drag Race. Ariadne updates us on the saga of Madilei, finally having heard from the woman herself. Kerri brings us a delicious summer dessert, and Victoria takes us on her adventures with reclaimed barn wood. Love theatre? Crave festivals? Gets some tips and pointers for attending Fringe Theatre festivals with my Fringe Festival Field Guide. New this issue join a clueless local as she begins the process of uncovering a local mystery (mostly against her better judgement, but that's Alice), and catch up with Tuala as she arrives at the picturesque Bublik's Bed & Breakfast.

We hope that you have also taken all the time you possibly can to enjoy the great outdoors during our beautiful summer here in Saskatchewan. Rain or shine. Thunder or wind. It's all beautiful.

If you have any summer stories or local sights you want to share, please feel free to comment and share on our facebook, or tag us on Instagram or Twitter. We would love to see your pictures and hear your stories!

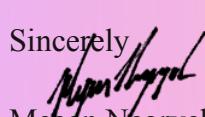
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Sincerely



Megan Negrych,
And the DEJA-VISITE Team





SUMMER BLUEBERRY TRIFLE

BY KERRI DESGAGNÉ

My husband and I hosted a BBQ for our friends because we wanted to enjoy the nice weather. For dessert, I wanted to make something that was light and had flavors that reminded me of summer. So, I decided on a trifle, but one that was made with a lighter cake and cream filling than normal. Our friends absolutely loved the trifle. Here is the recipe for my **Blueberry Angel Food Cake Trifle**.

Angel Food Cake

- 1 c cake and pastry flour*
- 1 c granulated sugar
- 8 egg whites, room temperature (save the yolks for pastry cream)**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cream of tartar
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c icing sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp lemon zest

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
2. Combine flour and icing sugar, sift twice and set aside.
3. Whip egg whites, cream of tartar and salt until frothy. Slowly add the granulated sugar until it forms medium glossy peaks.
4. Add vanilla and lemon zest to the egg mixture.
5. Using a whisk, gently fold half of the flour mixture into the egg mixture. Repeat with second half.
6. Pour batter into an ungreased 10-inch tube pan. Gently level the batter in the pan with a spatula.
7. Bake for 30-35 mins, until the cake springs back when lightly touched.
8. Turn the cake pan upside down and allow the cake to cool. Once cooled, take a butter knife around the edge and tap the pan to release the cake.
9. For the trifle assembly, cut angel food cake into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch pieces.

Note:

* Cake and pastry flour is better for a lighter, fluffier cake which is the result you want from an angel food cake.

** Room temperature eggs whip better and will give more volume than cold eggs.



Vanilla Pastry Cream

- 8 egg yolks
- 1½ c 2% milk
- 2 c heavy cream
- ½ c sugar
- 5 tbsp cornstarch
- 1 tbsp vanilla
- 5 tbsp cold butter, cut into pieces

1. Heat 1 c of cream and milk to a simmer in a heavy-bottom saucepan.

2. In a separate bowl, whisk egg yolks, cornstarch and sugar.

3. Gradually add the hot cream and milk into the bowl with the egg mixture while constantly whisking (this is called tempering) and then pour the egg mixture back into the saucepan.

4. Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly until mixture is thick and glossy.

5. Pour the thickened mixture through a strainer and into a clean bowl. Stir in the vanilla and butter one piece at a time. Wait for the butter to melt thoroughly before adding another piece.

6. Cover with plastic wrap, making sure the wrap touches the top of the pastry cream. Put in the fridge to cool.

7. In a separate bowl, whip up the other cup of heavy cream until stiff peaks for whipped cream.

8. Once cooled, take the whipped cream and fold it into the pastry cream to make a diplomat cream for the trifle.

Blueberry Sauce

- 4 c blueberries (fresh or frozen)
- 1 c sugar
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp cornstarch

1. Heat 3 cups of the blueberries with the sugar, lemon juice and zest in a saucepan.

2. Cook until sugar is dissolved, stirring occasionally.

3. Blend the cooked berry mixture and pour back into the pot.

4. Add the rest of the blueberries and cornstarch and cook until mixture is thick.

Cool in a container.



Whipped Cream

- 2 c heavy cream
- 2 tbsp icing sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla

1. Whip the cream with icing sugar and vanilla, until stiff peaks form.

Assembling a trifle is all about creating layers.. To show off the layers, you want to use a see-through container (like a punch bowl). For my trifle, I purchased little square cups to make individual sized portions. Start by layering half of the cut-up angel food cake, half of the diplomat cream, half of the whipped cream, and half of the blueberry sauce, one on top of the other. Repeat the sequence with the other half. Your trifle is now ready to be served and enjoyed!



Taipei Casserole - Asian Fusion Meets Comfort Food

By Jocelyn Anderson



It has been a few months now since our correspondent, Ariadne Bissett, has had any news from MadiLei Madison. I personally have been following the story quite closely, and recently I could not contain my curiosity. I felt that I needed to look into things myself. Under the guise of going to try out one of their introductory classes, I decided to give the Schulhaus von Katze a visit. Imagine my surprise when I showed up to find a brand new restaurant, Taipei Casserole, instead of a cat guru's shrine. A little disappointed that MadiLei had obviously vacated the location quite a while ago, I decided to cheer myself up by trying out the food at the new spot.

Not exactly sure what to expect, I took a peek at the menu and discovered quite a few things there that I have never heard of. From their titular casseroles and omelet rice, which both had me very curious, to Italian pasta dishes, to Asian style dishes like chow mein and fried rice, it is quite a diverse menu. The restaurant itself has been renovated completely, and the staff was friendly. There was a little bit of a communication breakdown though when trying to understand the staff. I had a bit of trouble understanding the description of what exactly the casserole was, but feeling adventurous, I tried it out anyways. To order the casserole, one must pick an option from three different lists: Toppings, Main Sides and Sauces. I decided on chicken, fried rice and curry as my selections, and when it arrived I was not disappointed. My three selections had been prepared and placed in a dish under a layer of cheese and baked so it all became a warm, gooey, wonderful casserole of yumminess.

To finish off my meal, I decided to get one of their milk teas to go. They offer a very long list of chilled teas to which can be added another list of toppings. I had an Almond Milk Tea with tapioca pearls. For someone who is indecisive, I could see how the variety offered by the menu could cause some problems, but I quite enjoyed the opportunity to experiment with my order.

I was very impressed with the food on my first visit and have since returned to try out the mysterious omelet rice. I was delighted to discover that it is almost exactly what it sounds like. An omelet wrapped around a serving of fried rice with a sauce and topping of your choice. I couldn't resist getting the curry again, and I believe that I may have found another food I will be craving in the future.

With so many restaurant options in Regina, it is hard for a new place to stand out and convince customers that it is different than all the rest. Taipei Casserole did just that for me. After that first visit, I was convinced that I wasn't going to get their food anywhere else in the city and that I had better be going back to get some more of their fabulous curry sauce.



MadiLei Madison: Melancholy and Mysterious Missives



By Ariadne Bissett

My new little squirrel friend had been living with me an entire week before he was brave enough to leave his nest composed of what had formerly been my socks. Washing would not be enough; I vowed to go sock shopping.

Melvin, as I had taken to calling him, seemed to be all that was left of MadiLei's former rodent familiars. Only a week before, these hyper-intelligent squirrels (whose origins, I have theorized, might be traced back to the steady, protein-rich diet of peanuts provided to them by beneficent humans) were seemingly desperate to rescue their former friend and benefactor from the clutches of the malevolent influence of an evil, domineering, yet body-confident feline calling herself "Misspurrfection". Now, sprinkle peanuts about as I might, there were no takers but the birds. Regina was seemingly, for a time, devoid of squirrels. What could I conclude from this? Had Misspurrfection's "glaring" of cats taken to the streets and executed a bloody offensive against Melvin's clan, or had they retreated willingly, leaving MadiLei to her fate? I feared I might never discover the truth. The squirrels were gone, and I had only ever known them to keep scattered, incomprehensible records, often written in peanuts. When paper was used, the note was more often than not repurposed as bedding before too long. Highly evolved though these ones were, squirrels have little concept of permanence.

Melvin and I were on our own. I was almost resigned to leaving MadiLei to her fate. MadiLei had been living at the centre of a cloud of her own self-delusion for years prior to having met her new "muse". The addition of cats to this cocktail of insanity was, I had to admit, not a totally unexpected development in retrospect, despite it going against everything she had professed to believe in her incarnation just previous to this one ("survivalist" MadiLei, as I think of her). The version of MadiLei which I first encountered was a very popular food and drink blogger. This led her to an interest in organic farming and cold-pressed juices. Then she became intrigued with hunting her own wild game as research for an article on making your own trendy elk sausage from scratch. MadiLei has never been one for half-measures; she took down and butchered an elk herself, then served it for Thanksgiving lunch with saskatoon berry coulis, cloth napkins and gold-leaf name cards for each of the guests. It was delicious. However, not satisfied to have brought down a mature elk on her first attempt to shoot live game, she slowly divested herself of the trappings of civilization, until she would go up against any creature with nothing larger than a self-crafted knife. MadiLei, the "naturalist" (which I tried to explain to her, probably did not mean what she thought it meant) was born.

This latest sudden and extreme reversal of persona was perhaps to be expected. The desire to collect cats was not in and of itself an astonishing or original obsession to acquire, and given that she had already developed, out of the blue, a great love of killing the furry things of nature, why should I be astonished that she had a more general sort of violent streak? I was a bit worried for her followers and was considering dropping an anonymous hint to the authorities that the new cat yoga place was not what it seemed. However, I received a further missive from her, and found myself conflicted as to what to do next.

I had been sure that MadiLei would no longer entrust her communications with the world to me after the exposé that was the previous article. Certainly, her online presence was going strong, but no more personal communication with me had been forthcoming. But, just a week ago I was surprised with a new article introduced, again, in a voice that seems to be her impression of my writing style. It was the promised origin-story of her new partnership with Misspurrfection.

I was unsure whether to publish it, despite it being a fascinating artifact. I feared that even with the story of our harrowing escape from the felines accompanying the last instalment of Madison's "teachings", we may have attracted more adherents to her philosophy. Such is the power of soft, pretty, strokable fur . . . I discovered that even I was not immune to their pulchritudinous charms, despite having seen the true nature of these particular cats. You see the danger? I changed my mind when I noticed something odd about this message, odder than usual. Here is the article she sent me:

Here we are, my friends. Everyone: your family, friends and hated enemies will be poring over, searchingly, the tale of Misspurrfection's rise to glory, as told by her devotee, MadiLei Madison. Let no one miss the rousing and heartwarming tale that is to follow, or overlook the

fundamental message interwoven therein, crowning its every sentence with meaning, even as your eye rests on the very first letter. Pour an obscenely large coffee. Make yourself disgustingly comfortable anywhere you please. Enjoy!

This story begins two years ago in the dusty slums of . . . Northwest Regina! Here we find a fabulous, yet under-appreciated kitty living in doldrum dreariness. Existing day-to-day in one small house, looking up naively to one unimaginably boring human, whose online presence is devoted to ferns, of all things. Cats the world over are content to live this way. A simple house-cat life was not to be the fate of the Instagram goddess now known as Misspurrfection. This kitty was too beautiful to be locked away. She acquired her gormless human jailer's Instagram password. His fern photos didn't stand a chance. After her first photo went up, all that his followers wanted was her! Velvety soft fur and sapphire eyes took social media by storm. Everything she needed seemed to be at the tip of her paws, but with one complication: her paws. Cats are superior creatures in all but one sense; they lack the opposable thumbs which would allow them to use human technology and dispense with us entirely. One possibility put forth by cat theorists is that gorillas and monkeys could be trained to open cans and type on keyboards, however that would leave day-to-day cerebral tasks up to the cats themselves, which is really more stress than they are looking to take on in their lives. No way around it, cats need humans as malleable, yet adequately intelligent servants in order to keep up the manufacture of soft cushions, pretty ribbons, and Fancy Feast. To this end, cat worship has been cultivated and propagated worldwide, beginning in ancient Egypt. Roger, the most boring of humans (that being the name and title respectively of Missy's former "owner"), failed to understand the great favour being done to his social media accounts as all his repetitive and indistinguishable fern photos were replaced with portraits (from alluring, to coy, to coquettish) of a burgeoning internet star. On the final evening of Missy's subordination to the human equivalent of dishwater, she had painstakingly typed in Roger's Instagram password with her delicate and sensitive claws, only to receive a shock. Locked out, Missy remained logged out, unable to connect to the only thing making her life tolerable: worship, adoring worship. On the other side of the room, in shadow, was her cruel jailor, Roger. Frozen, he nevertheless addressed her, not in the mewling saccharine babble-speak usually suffered by animals, but finally as an entity in her own right, and in fear!

"True . . . It's true!" he muttered. His accusing hand shook as it pointed at our feline heroine. "Even after reviewing the hidden camera footage, I couldn't bring myself to believe it, Missy."

Misspurrfection braced herself; finally he knew the truth, that she was better than this place, this life. Our flowering beauty had outgrown the dirt from whence she had sprouted, and needed to stretch toward the sun.

"Never would I have guessed that my Fuzzy Little Muffin could be . . . a spy! Evil saboteur!" he cried. "Your machinations on behalf of the succulent succulents blog have been unmasked!"

"Cats!" he shouted. "All my followers want to talk about is cats!"

Now it was Missy's turn to be astounded. No, the bumbling pteridomaniac had not, finally, acknowledged her specialness. Oh no, he would rather believe that a cat he had raised from a kitten worked for the cactus cabal. Through his incoherent and paranoid babbling, Misspurrfection received her ultimate epiphany. Breaking through her rage and sorrow, was resolve anew. Until she was to find a new home for herself, one which would allow cats to receive the recognition due to them by humans as equals (or more accurately, slight superiors . . . or more than slight superiors), she would never be free to actualize her full potential.

Yowling fiercely, she tells me, she tore through Roger's window as if it were paper. As it was heavily plastic-wrapped over due to a previous breakage, this was no mean feat. Roger yelled after her, vowing his revenge at her perceived betrayal, as Missy disappeared into the night.

To say that our heroine's next few weeks were toilsome and heartbreaking would be to call the invasions of the Khans merely vexing. In truth, human vocabulary is far too limited to provide me with the correct description. Sadly, we have been limited by our pale ability to experience, moment by moment, the fullness of each textured and multi-hued glimmering of reality, of which cats are effortlessly aware. As a result, we have developed a series of languages best capable of efficiently meme-ing at one another. Naturally, cats prefer to simply emote through body language. Keenly sensing her path nevertheless, as cats are not limited by self-

doubt, she gathered The Favoured Ones to her.

On that first night of freedom, she was cold and hungry, but determined; she found shelter not by cowering alone against the night, but by overthrowing, through a challenge to single combat, an insignificant dirty-grey mog who had deigned to call herself Queen of Sherwood Estates. Mean though the dumpster dwelling she conquered was, the smell of rancid grease was transmuted to the sweet aroma of victory in her triumph. Begging to be granted death, the fallen queen was denied this, and instead made personal groomer to her new queen, Misspurrfection the Fair.

Under her new leadership, the felines of the Northwest, and in particular her favoured inner circle, did not shy away from ambition any longer. Caterwauling at odd times of the day may have been the only outward sign of their cunning strategy of daytime warfare (when most kitties are sleepy, and should really be napping), which in any way reached the senses of the surrounding unaware humans, but a guerilla campaign of domination was taking place in the dark corners of the night on, around, and under dwellings which they considered solely their own. Hunted, first the Kingdom of Lakewood, and then tiny Lakeridge, were scattered into the night. Almost half of the Lakewood cats, and a large group of Lake-ridgers were compelled to linger behind, not by their conquerors, but by a certain hunger. Felines with sharp minds and the drive toward greatness were magnetically attracted to the newly crowned queen, and were unperturbed by this tumultuous transition.

In a week, Queen Missy had a following of over forty cats, as her tribe swept around Walsh Acres and pincered the large juicy kingdom in one night of terror. No one was turned away after surrender; big or small, it was of no consequence; beautiful or homely, . . . a bit consequential, but yeah, the uggos could join too, if they had loyalty to the Queen and a thirst to prove themselves. Dreaming of the greatest kingdom Regina's catdom had ever witnessed, Missy's next design was to make the East hers. Much to her frustration, however, the cats defeated in the Northwest had not merely scattered to the winds, they had crawled away to supplicate themselves before King Brian the Fancy of Uplands. Enraged to see her enemy's forces bolstered, she was nevertheless unable to cross in force the natural kitty border that is a major roadway, in this case, Albert Street. Inspiration struck her at the apex of her rage; humans created and navigated these rivers of flowing death machines, therefore, they would require a human to ferry them across in large enough numbers to strike. Not a human master, however, a human wise enough to recognize the superior nature of felineness, and to become one of them. This proved a conundrum, even for the minds of Missy and The Favoured; they snuck into the Sherwood Library night after night with the few cats who could read Hooman, painstakingly scanning social media and news stories for candidates. Having low spirits is . . . just not a cat trait, but they were close to considering the idea a bust and resorting to simple kidnapping, when they stumbled upon a small local web-zine called *Deja-visite*. Examining its pretty pictures, Missy was immediately drawn to the images of several physically superior specimens near the back of the February issue of the magazine. Great was her disappointment when she actually read the title of this particular article and discovered that the Saskatchewan athletes on the 2018 Winter Olympic team were, at that time, somewhere in Korea. Rolling the issue back a few pages to admire the adorable illustration of a lynx she'd seen, and over-shooting her mark a bit, Missy stumbled upon an article which would bring her the answer she sought: that initial kooky article by yours truly, as presented by your friend and mine, Ariadne Bissett. Embryonic as my simple philosophies on nature were, Misspurrfection spotted my potential as not just an integral part of the cats' plan for domination, but as a future ambassador to humanity itself. A neglected coal in one of the less hot corners of the blazing fire that was the totality of her ambition burst out of dormancy, back to full heat. The dominance of not only this city, but the world, was now not only possible, but inevitable, if she could only convince her destined partner in this conquest to see the truth of who she was: a born cat. Hurrying, they found and captured as many squirrels as possible in an attempt to discover MadiLei's location from her minions. Over several gruelling nights, they extracted the information from these stupid, yet surprisingly loyal, little creatures.

Long, was their trek to the frozen north, . . . kinda somewhere around Lumsden. Excruciating were the banal people they were forced to hitch a ride with, but eventually they did reach their destination after only a few encouraging prods with the claws when their ride didn't seem inclined to drive down, then off of a dirt road in February.

Only minutes after their arrival, they had discovered my forest abode; such were the

workings of fate at play. Facing me for the first time were her two hypnotic green eyes; little did I know that Missy was preparing to confirm the truth of our entwined destinies. Rarely, if ever, have two such apex predators locked eyes without it resulting in the scales of aggression tipping one way or another and life's blood spilling hot and red on the ground.

Everything in my life changed at that moment, despite my knowing nothing but that a challenge had brought itself to my doorstep; show weakness in this moment, I knew, and lose all. Ghosts don't disappear as quickly as she was able to in that moment. I had thought myself the mistress of this little corner of the woods, but how wrong I was. Now, I knew that I would never master stealth and cunning as intuitively as this lovely and powerful creature; she had appeared so momentarily before me that I was ready to believe in literal, manifest spirits of the forest. A sweat broke out on my brow as I tensed, ready for the sudden attack. But it did not come. Ready for battle, my muscles weakening in exhaustion, I stood for forty hours. In the instant that my eyes half closed, she was on me. Nose, mouth and eyes were covered by silky white oblivion and I couldn't breathe or see, while a number of needly claws pierced the back of my scalp with the strength of at least three or four-ish cats rather than just one, and I fell into darkness.

Great lessons came to me in dream, all contained in the green eyes of the true apex predator I had just met; they were lessons about the nature of a predator, the relativity of concepts such as natural and unnatural, and the necessity to just, chill and not be so tense all the time. A revelation struck me: this was what had caused my defeat at the paws of the cat. Barriers fell down within my head. Reality unfolded, and refolded into paper cranes, and wide-eyed owls, and those little paper fortune-teller things. In the brief time of my unconsciousness, a message had been delivered; everything and nothing are part of nature. Everything, including a latte, a delicious goddamn latte, and I wanted one. All is permitted.

Gorgeous was this creature, this cat sitting serenely before me, who had shown me the way, despite causing my head to ache in every way it is possible to ache. One thing was certain, I needed to learn more from her.

Oh, but sweet kitties, I think that my spiritual journey is a tale for another time and place. Discover the path to a completely effortless and permissive you at our new meditation group, Rapidly Reaching the Unconscious. Only one class is required to achieve perfect enlightenment, unlike other long booring meditation classes. Newly perfected, the process involves relaxing full cranial therapeutic occlusion by one of our skilled cat therapists.

Exciting things are developing at the Schatzen Katzen Hangout Haus¹; you'll be sad if you miss them!

Madi

It was obvious within reading the first few sentences. MadiLei had as good as shouted the message at me. I would find her hiding in the Capital Pointe Hole, cold, starving, and hunted. But should I pursue this story further? What could I gain? I watched Melvin, asleep and dreaming, for now untroubled by all these worries.²

A disclaimer from the Ariadne currently occupying the same level of reality as you, the reader: MadiLei Madison and Misspurrfection's depiction of ferns, and fern-lovers, in no way reflects my, or MadiLei universe Ariadne's views on Polypodiopsida, or frond-bearing greenery in general. In fact, I grow many ferns in my own front flower bed. They are a useful and attractive ground cover for shaded areas, such as my entire front yard. The area of my front flower bed near the eavestrough would be bald and unsightly without them. Shout out to the South Saskatchewan Fern Fancy Society³!

¹ Formerly the "Schulhaus von Katze", formerly "The Schoolhaus Feline", formerly "The School of Feline Patterning", formerly "Der Katzperienze"

² If you're feeling like slapping "Ariadne" right now, turn to the magazine's endnotes on this article. If you wish to discover MadiLei's message yourself, do not.

³ Not a real club. Yet.

Deja Ru: A Look at RuPaul's Drag Race and Local Drag

By Jessica Mitten-Moore



I have been addictively watching *RuPaul's Drag Race*. The first time I ever heard about the show was when a friend excitedly explained to me just how much she adored it. First, let's get one thing straight, I am not usually a fan of reality TV (except my Top Model phase about a decade ago), but *RuPaul's Drag Race* has something that just grabs me. I found myself instantly taken with the big personalities of all the drag queens, but most of all with RuPaul herself. RuPaul is The Queen of all of the drag queens. The drag that RuPaul does is phenomenal, the outfits, wigs and the makeup are impeccable. Not only can she look good, but she has a crazy awesome personality. I do think that RuPaul is sometimes a little evil because of everything she puts the drag queens through on the show, but she is also extremely sympathetic. She cares about each and every one of the queens that walks through her door.

When I tell somebody I'm watching *RuPaul's Drag Race*, almost every single person I talk to knows what it is and at least one person in the room gets giddy about the show. I never thought I would enjoy a reality TV show so much, but to be honest, it's not reality. The editing is obviously done to make a queen seem positive or negative, and things are taken in a different context. Even so, it is a mixture of extreme talent, queen cattiness, fashion and humour that has caught not only myself, but millions of viewers. If you feel like becoming one of these viewers, season eight and nine are now on Netflix. You can start from there but I personally think some of the earlier seasons are the best. You can find all of the seasons except for season one on outtvgo.com.



I have really loved watching *RuPaul's Drag Race*, so much so that when I heard Regina was having a drag show for Pride I simply had to attend. Especially because the famous drag queen Lady Bunny was performing after the show. It is said that she is a good friend of RuPaul since they lived together in New York City. The local drag show was fun and there were some good performers but unfortunately not up to the caliber of *RuPaul's Drag Race*. It made me realize again just how talented and how much time and effort the girls in the show put into their craft. The local show was still quite good, but it was Lady Bunny who made it hilarious and absolutely wonderful. As soon as Lady Bunny came onto the stage, she started to make fun of *RuPaul's Drag Race* and many of the specific queens who have been on the show. The comedy was phenomenal, on point and very relevant. She also did a second comedy set which included a fake and very convincing penis. Lady Bunny is prominently known as a "Comedy Queen," whereas other queens can focus on being a beauty queen, a dancing queen, a pageant queen, etc.

Watching *RuPaul's Drag Race* has inspired me to continue to support the local drag community since it takes a large amount of talent and drive to perform. The TV show has also made me realize the hardship each queen has had to go through to get to where they are today, and how they are each so strong in their own right. They worked hard to be their true selves.

In summary, my suggestion is that you watch *RuPaul's Drag Race*. It has some really heartfelt moments that make you proud to be whomever it is you happen to be. Also, make sure you support your local drag and LGBTQ community! We need to be there for one another. And remember,

"If you can't love yourself, how the hell you gonna love somebody else?"

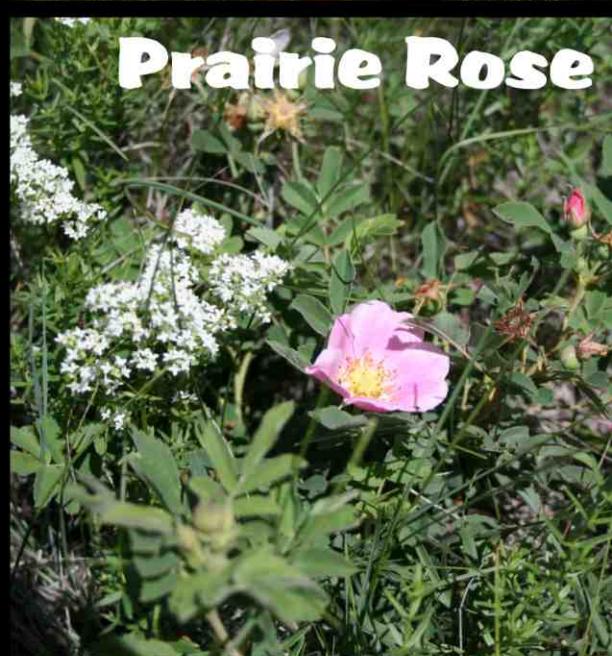
A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE: QU'APPELLE VALLEY

By JOCELYN ANDERSON

Over the Canada Day long weekend, I had the opportunity to visit Echo Valley Provincial Park in the Qu'Appelle Valley. Echo Valley is not very far from Regina and has a lovely little campground if you want to get away from the city for the weekend. This time around, our trip was with friends, including a couple of my fellow Deja-Visite teammates, and we all took the opportunity to go for a little walk along the Qu'Appelle Interpretive Trail.



Prairie Rose



**Saskatoon
Berries**



The trail travels from the valley bottom, up some stairs to the top where you can wander through the grasslands overlooking the valley, and then back down one of the many coulees. We had a warm day for our hike, but lucky for us there was quite a breeze to keep the bugs away, along with a few clouds to help us cool down.



Golden Bean



Prairie Rose



**Purple
Prairie
Clover**



Gaillardia



Many flowers lined the trail as we ascended. There were Saskatoon bushes all along the stairs, and as we got to the top there were Prairie Roses, clover and gaillardia waiting for us. I was excited to see some golden bean pods, a flower I also saw in bloom when I visited Cypress Hills earlier this year. The fields were full of what I believe was alfalfa (or possibly ascending purple milk-vetch), and the bees were busily buzzing away.

Skeletonweed



Alfalfa



Harebell



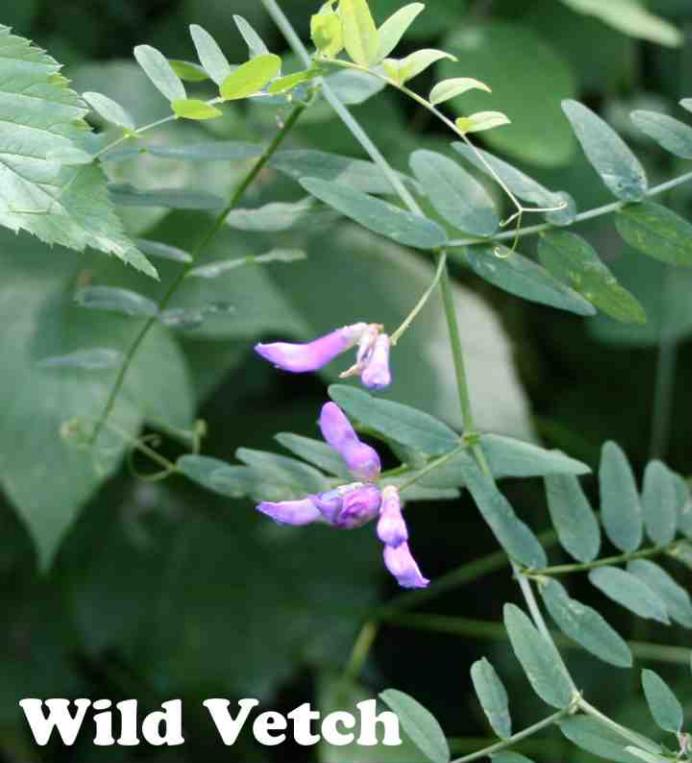
Alfalfa



With such a large group, much of the wildlife stayed hidden, however, we did see lots of butterflies, bees and dragonflies. With so many different bugs, I have come to realize that I really need to get myself a better resource to identify all of them. I did discover that most of the dragonflies we encountered were Cherry-faced Meadowhawks, in bright orange and yellow, along the top of the valley. They proved very hard to photograph, with their wings being mostly transparent. Most of the other bugs weren't quite as obvious so, to avoid mislabeling them, I have kept them all without names, but if you know exactly what varieties they are I would love to know!

On top of the bugs, we did spy a few different birds. I am pretty sure I saw a hawk of some sort fighting against the wind at the top of the valley, as well as a group of what I believe were four white

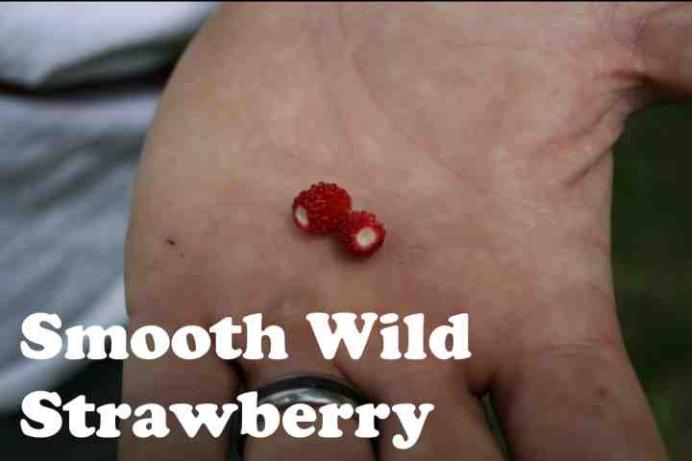




Wild Vetch



**Spreading
Dogbane**



**Smooth Wild
Strawberry**

pelicans. There were birds chirping at us all along our walk back down the coulee, but the only one I spied and managed to grab a picture of was a yellow-bellied sapsucker who was working away at a tree right next to the trail.

The last stretch of the hike was lined with raspberry bushes. Unfortunately for us, it was just a little early for the berries to be ready to pick. However, I was lucky enough to spot a few wild strawberries for us to nibble on just as we were getting back to our vehicle.

I likely won't have the opportunity to do another serious hike this summer. I have really enjoyed working at identifying all the different plants and animals I found on my walks so far though, and plan to keep up the exercise for my future forays.



Alice Investigate: A Noir Absurdity in 5 Acts.



Act One: Missing Tony

By Megan Negrych

Act One, Scene One

Setting: Night time. Wascana Park near the lake. East of the Albert St. bridge.

[A young man stands at the edge of the water, his hair dishevelled as he runs a hand through it, repeatedly. His other hand digs a bent cigarette out of his pocket, brings it to his lips, then puts it back in his pocket. It is dark; he is mostly in shadow]

Tony: That's all I know, I swear. All they wrote, you know. Everything there is to know, I'm telling you.

[There is no answer. There are the sounds of waves lapping against the shore, as if something is steadily moving in the water near to shore. Tony paces away from the waterfront, turning his back to it for a second before coming back. Again, his hand digs the bent cigarette out of his pocket.]

Tony: Lie, why would I lie? What purpose does lying serve? A man is only as good as his work, you know. That's what they say, isn't it?

[Again, there is no response. In the distance there is a goose honk, as if it is disturbed, and the sound of wings beating against water. Over the bridge a car passes, honking its horn, the sounds of joy riding going South to North.]

Tony: You can't do that, you promised! You said that if I got this for you, you'd let me in. I did what you asked so you have to do what you promised! An eye for an eye, don't you know!

[Tony crouches down near the edge of the water, puts the bent cigarette between his lips and points at something in the water. He waits for a short pause and seems to visibly relax.]

Tony: Good . . . good. A deal is a deal. We made a bargain and shook on it. I joined the cause and I want what we agreed on.

[There is the sound of movement, water and waves. Tony drags his fingers through his hair again, and nods to himself. Pulling his hands back he sits down on his butt. With some effort he struggles out of his jacket and folds it before setting it down next to himself. He then removes one shoe and sets it aside, followed by the other. Shortly, his socks are removed, balled up, and shoved in the shoes.]

Tony: No, I won't change my mind. Through thick and thin, we're in this together now. Thick as thieves, one of the fold, you know.

[Tony scoots himself closer to the edge of the water.]

Tony: An artist must sacrifice himself for his art, right? The cause demands a price. I'm committed, I won't back down.

[There is a strange surge in the water. Between one second and the next, Tony goes from sitting on the edge of the shore to slipping underneath the water. There is a splash. Slowly the ripples fade to silence, darkness, stillness. In the distance there is the sound of a passing car of joyriders, going North to South across the bridge.]

Act One, Scene Two

Setting: Inside a room. It is well lit. There is a door to the left and a window to the right. Above, a ceiling fan turns lazily, casting a rotating shadow on the figure below. There are three piles of books/magazines/papers on a desk.

[A woman sits in the chair behind the desk, her legs kicked up and crossed at the ankles, precariously resting on the edge of the desk. Her chair is tilted back, her head hanging over the side. Somewhere in the room, there is a radio playing the news.]

Radio Anchor: [Spoken with a slight accent, sentences ended with the sounds of sips being taken from a mug] No one knows where the feet came from, but forensics experts are convinced that more remains to be found. Police are still looking for other pieces to flesh out the body of evidence.

In local news, Regina's newest mayor, Albert Saint Albert vows to shut down the protests that have been taking place outside of city hall and down at the new wharf. The protests are, of course, the result of the new sweeping city bylaws instituted last month by Albert St. . . I mean, Saint Albert, which allow for the use of city parks, including Wascana, to be opened up to commercial development by the logging and fishing industries. Those who advocated for the development of the land applaud the decision, as it will greatly increase their ability to create change in the city. Protestors, on the other hand, are concerned over what those commercial developments will mean for the major city park, the largest and last such urban park in the whole of Canada.

[The woman, Alice, raises her hands above her head, splaying her fingers out wide. Carefully she tilts back a bit more, raising her crossed ankles up off the desk, balancing. There is a notebook open on her lap, notably devoid of any writing.]

Radio Anchor: In developing news, police are still seeking information about the recent string of disappearances in the city. All are young, twenty something individuals with devil-may-care attitudes and misplaced notions of their place in the world. Names of the missing, along with photographs and a brief biography, can be found on our website. Any leads you have should be jotted down and brought to your local police station or left in Facebook comments on the official investigations event page. The lead investigator, featured earlier today in a news conference, had this to say about the progress in the case:

[There is a marked change in the audio quality, a hubbub of voices murmuring as a man clears his throat.]

Detective Nickles: [He speaks as if he is still chewing on a sandwich, as though his lunch/breakfast was interrupted by this planned conference] People. People! Calm yourselves down. Hold your horses. There's nothing to worry about. I've looked into things. These kids . . . adults really. These adults are probably just fine. Given their background, and the interests listed on their profile pages, they're probably all at a music festival in a field somewhere, comparing the size of their hands and wondering where the next snack is. All this fuss, all this worry is too much. The search parties, the fliers, the helicopter and night time patrols. All too much and unneeded. You watch. Give it another week, and they'll all come wandering back home, dazed and confused, a little sleepy and hungover, but fine. Then you'll see that this was all a waste of time and effort. Time that you could have spent at the new sport-fishing tours on the lake or experiencing what it's like to be a lumberjack at the "Lumberjack Experience Camp", now in scenic Wascana Park. Now, enough of this. All you paper people go back to your paper presses and print something interesting, like the golf scores, or photos of the new stadium sitting there, majestic and wide open, waiting for a big show to book in.

[The hubbub dies down and the radio returns to the previous quality, the feed is obviously now back in the newsroom.]

Radio Anchor: This has been your local news for the hour, stay tuned for international news at the top of the hour. Coming up after the weather, the thrilling finale of "So You Think You're a Survivalist", the hit radio drama that has been sweeping the nation. I for one hope that we get to find out what happened when they ran out of firewood.

[Somewhere, over the din of the radio, there is the sound of breaking glass, an obvious tumble, and a recovery. Alice tries to get up as the sounds of rapid footsteps begin to sound, but given that her legs are crossed, she kind of rolls out of the chair, tangled in her own legs. As the footsteps becomes louder, more rapid, she dives rolls behind her desk, reaching up to grab at something with which to defend herself. First, she grabs a stapler and wields it like a gun, but abandons it and grabs a pen instead, holding it like a dagger.]

Alice: I'm warning you, whoever you are out there, I have a mighty weapon, and I am not afraid to use it!

[The footsteps stop just short of the door; there is a brief pause, and then a series of three precise, loud knocks, followed by a pause. Alice sits up a bit, elbows on the desk, and watches the door. Half a minute later, the three knocks repeat themselves.]

Alice: Come in.

[The door swings open in dramatic fashion, and a man steps in, dressed in jeans and an open flannel shirt, a beanie on his head. Turning, open to the 'audience', he closes the door, before making the same turn in reverse to face Alice.]

Jones: *[Crosses from the right of the room to the desk.]* I hope I'm not catching you at a bad time, but this is absolutely urgent. *[Jones stops and looks down at the ground, he takes half a step back and turns himself to be open to the 'audience', so that he is not shut off to the desk]* It was imperative that we speak immediately, due to urgency. *[He speaks as if reading a script his is unfamiliar with.]*

Alice: Jones? *[She lowers the pen, seeming to relax a little]* You should get that checked out. How did you get in here? Was that you breaking in?

Jones: *[Takes a breath, looks meaningfully back at the door for a moment, and then slowly turns back to audience]* Oh no, I surprised your secretary, he dropped his martini glass. He told me I could find you in your office, said you were in and free to help. That you'd be willing to hear my plea. *[He crosses to the desk, pulls out a chair and sits down. After a second, he gets back up, turns the chair to be 'open' to the desk, and sits down again, crossing his upstage leg over the other.]*

Alice: My Secretary? This . . . this is my house. My private house. And my Office. My private office in my private house! *[In a huff, Alice crosses over to the door and throws it open]* MAX! Not funny! No more late-night drinking games to black and white movies for you, anymore! And get off of that table! *[She throws the door closed again and crosses back over to her desk.]*

Jones: *[Leans onto the desk, waiting for Alice to look at him]* Help me Alice, you're my only hope! I don't know who else I have left to go to for help at this point!

[Alice sighs and rights her chair; before sitting in it opposite the desk from Jones, she is closed off to the desk compared to his open. Jones tries to relay through hand signals for her to open herself up from the desk, but she either ignores the gestures or does not understand them.]

Alice: Well, if you really need some help, some advice if you will, I just might be able to help you. Is it writer's block? It's always writer's block, isn't it, it gets us all. Why, I've been battling with a case myself recently, but I've put it well behind me. I have some very useful exercises we could work through.

[A voice rings out, echo-y, old-timey, like an old noir film a little smoky, and a little bit slurred.]

Max: It was true, I thought to myself. I had been through a dry spell. Drier than the driest gin you could find in a dive in this part of town. But here it was, the case that could set me right back on track. Jones looks at me, pleading in his doe-like eyes, a look that would spell danger for anyone without their head fastened on tight.

[Jones doesn't hear the voice, doesn't acknowledge it, but Alice looks up and around, a bit confused.]

Jones: You need to help me find Tony! He vanished. Poof! Like smoke. He's been taken, I know it, just like all the others. I need you to find him and bring him home, Alice! *[Jones throws himself over the desk, grasping Alice's hands in his, but makes sure he is still in an open position.]*

Alice: Jones! Hold your horses just a minute there!

Jones: I don't have any horses.

Max: *[Still disembodied]* Ah, prettier than a blue jay, but about as sharp as a pillow.

Alice: Not what I meant, Jones. Turn of phrase . . . figure of speech? But you got to slow down, explain it to me.

Jones: *[Lets go of Alice's hands]* Oh . . . oh! Right . . . right, sorry. But Tony, my roommate, you remember? He's gone missing.

Alice: *[gets up from the desk, walks around it, passed Jones]* I really don't think I can help you with that. This is probably something more for the police to deal with, or social media. You know, people with real power.

Jones: *[Stands up and crosses to Alice. He stops. Looks down at his feet, takes half a step back and turns to open]* The police refuse to help! They say that the people, like Tony, that they're not missing, just gone. They won't even file the report, just shuffled the papers around before filing them in the shredder! Help me Alice, I come to you in my hour of need.

Alice: I write young adult fiction, Jones, not detective stories. I don't know the first thing about finding a missing person, Jones! How am I supposed to help?

Jones: *[Walks up to Alice, takes her by the shoulders, gives her a quick shake]* Of course you do, Alice! With nothing but your great mind, you found Olivia Flaversham's missing toymaker father, and uncovered Rattigan's dastardly plot to replace the Queen of England with a wind-up toy robot! Without you, a real rat would be ruling the entire Commonwealth right now!

Max: With my brain and his looks, we could go places . . . not fancy places, but you know, places. Maybe this was what I needed to kick myself out of the shadows, to pick myself up and show off my metal.

Alice: That was just a play, Jones. A play based off a classic children's movie. I only played Basil of Baker Street. There was a script, I didn't solve a thing! No one even came to the show!

Jones: I believe in you; the script was just your clue to solving the whole case. You're the only one who can find Tony. Without you, all our hopes will be lost.

Alice: Well . . . when you put it that way . . .

Max: I never could say no, even when I was in over my head.

Jones: [Shakes Alice again, and lets go of her shoulders, grinning and whooping] I knew I could count on you! The last text message I got from Tony said, "Leave me alone, I'm heading out to the lake." So, I guess he went to Wascana. He never came home after that, and his phone was off. No answer to my 27 calls since this morning. That would be the best place to start, to put your nose on the trail. Call me when you sort this all out! [He turns to go, moving to the door, but as his hands touches the knob, he stops, has a lightbulb moment and turns around] Almost forgot, silly me. Always exit to the right. [He passes Alice, moving to the window on the other side of the desk and opens it, slipping halfway out.]

Alice: Wait! Just one more thing, Jones. Why is it so important to find Tony? I mean, he didn't even come to the play, and you got him a ticket every night. Is it love?

Jones: [He is halfway out the window but ducks his head back in] He still has my Nickelback CD, and the mailbox key. [Jones goes to complete his exit but stops himself. There are the sounds of tumbling, then of a fall onto ground. A moment of silence, before there are some groans and shuffling off.]

Max: [Voice still disembodied, echoing, more slurred] This was my moment, I thought to myself. The case that could put an end to my dry spell.

Alice: Max! Stop narrating!!

Max: If I could solve the caper of Missing Tony, I would be back in the game. No more late-night bar rooms and smoky dives, no more empty pages taunting me from across the room with promises of great nights.

Alice: Are you in the ventilation, Max?!?!?

Max: I grabbed my trench coat and fedora and closed the shades on my glass front door. Private Eye Alice is going to walk the beat and turn up the leads.

Alice: [climbs up on her desk, pulling the grate off the vent system] How many times have I told you not to go into the ventilation?! No more martinis before noon for you, anymore!

[END ACT I]



- THE BARN WOOD CONSPIRACY -

BY VICTORIA KOOPS

There is an old barn out here that, like many across Saskatchewan, is folding in on itself. It casts an iconic silhouette on our horizon and has been there for as long as I can remember. Unfortunately, it is past the point of no return, and we have made the difficult decision to take it down for safety reasons. To prepare for this sad day, I decided that I would rip as much barn wood as possible off the old building to reuse in a variety of projects.

This month I attempt to make like the Pinterest-Loving, Etsy-Shop-Keeping bloggers you see online. You know the ones; they have perfect hair, white carpets, and take some fantastic photos while preparing freezer-bag meals for the next three months. Personally, I don't even know what we're eating tomorrow night; probably whatever kind of meal I can scrape together with tater tots and a half-used jar of queso dip.

This is not going to be one of those blogs. I'm not like those women.

This is going to be messier and probably involve a few swear words. It's arts and crafts time on the Millennial Acreage, and #FarmerVictoria isn't pulling any punches.

Step 1: Immediately open Pinterest and steal someone else's design, because you know I ain't got time to think of something inspirational to put on a piece of wood.
#SorryNotSorry

Step 2: Find the most straightforward design there is. Read instructions and lure yourself into a false sense of security. I can do this, right? I mean, how hard can slapping some paint onto old wood be?

Step 3: Rip off barn wood because the Pinterest blogger had you all excited and committed to the cause (see Step 2) and leave barn wood in a messy pile outside for two weeks when you realize you're supposed to clean and treat the wood before bringing it inside.

Oops.

Step 4: Finally muster up the gumption to clean barn wood, but realize you don't have any borax. Now you are faced with the difficult decision to either drive half an hour into town to pick up borax on a Sunday afternoon, or to clean the wood with plain ol' dish soap.

Step 5: Search "different ways to clean wood". Realize your mistake, clear search history, and turn on SafeSearch.

Step 6: Give up on borax and just get lazy and use the dish soap, taking over your bathtub for the next two days while you wash and dry the old boards.

Step 7: Yay! You're on Step 7. There are 9 more steps to go and you've only just finished the cleaning part. I bet those mythical freezer meals are looking really good now.



Step 8: Measure and cut the barn wood (this is pretty easy, actually).

Step 9: Realize you made a mistake and take back Step 8 because you have to recut the fucking wood. Perfect.

Step 10: Get husband to help while you meticulously oversee him like some sort of plantation foreman. It's not flattering, I know.

Step 11: Finally sit down to paint the sign, only to find that you suck at lettering. Like. Really. Suck.

Step 12: Size and format the perfect font lettering on the computer because you're convinced this will save you time but actually spend hours looking for free font files. Finally, choose one called "Storytime". That shit sounds majestic, AF.

Step 13: Print paper on your sister's printer because your printer is a cheap piece of junk.

Step 14: Realize you don't have a way to transfer the template onto the wood because no one sells carbon paper anymore, and return to your computer to find a "Life Hack". End up hand drawing the letters on anyways, trying to make them look like the "Storytime" font because, as I said earlier, "Storytime" is majestic.

Step 15: You can paint the stupid thing now! Yay, you!

Step 16: Let the paint dry and obsess over every mistake you find. I recommend that you try not to fix all of them because then you just make it look worse. Trust me, I know.

Step 17: Finally, drive to your grandfather's retirement home and give him the sign as a gift for his room. The smile on his face makes it almost worth the entire month of stolen time. Almost.

Afterwards, strongly reconsider that barn wood feature wall you want to do in the basement someday. I mean, it would look nice but is it really worth it? Decide that you're going to play this one safe and scrap the idea until "Barn Wood Wall in One Afternoon" pops up on your Pinterest page a week later. It can't be that difficult, right?



Fringe Festival Field Guide

By Megan Negrych



There are five rules when you prepare yourself to attend a fringe festival. Five rules that you must follow.

- 1) Expect the unexpected.
- 2) Plan your timetable accordingly.
- 3) Talk about the shows with other audience members.
- 4) Take snacks if you plan on doing double, triple, or even quadruple headers.
- 5) Whenever possible, SIT UP FRONT! First row if you can manage it, you won't be sorry.

If you follow these steps, I can assure you that you will be ready to experience The Fringe. This year, The Regina International Fringe Festival occurred between July 11th and July 15th, with 5 venues playing host to 21 different shows (originally 22, but one dropped out last minute). With careful planning, snacks in hand, and a willingness to see whatever it was I was going to see, I set out to cover more than half of the shows that would be presented. As laid out in the festival's title, these plays are from all over; some were from far across the sea in South Africa, and others were from the exotic locales of Winnipeg and Edmonton. All offered a little something different, but came together to create a memorable weekend of theatrical indulgence that I would not have traded for all the sleep in the world. Below, in no particular order, you will find my thoughts on the shows I attended. I do have to note that this year audiences appeared rather small compared to other years, which gave some of the shows an even more intimate feel.

The Wind and The Rain

Who: Josh Travnik and Chiara Tate-Penna

Time: 60 minutes

The last theatre in the world is being torn down, and the only ones left to witness it are a couple of Shakespearean fools. Feste (Josh Travnik) from *Twelfth Night* and Fool (Chiara Tate-Penna) from *King Lear* come together to face the final curtain call, trying to right their place in the great ouvre that is the world of theatre, and come to terms with their impending mortality. The differing nature of the fools, one from a tragic history, the other from a comedy is showcased, as each tries to come to grips with the end, to fulfill their purpose as fixers and foreshadowers of what is to come. In 2015, *The Wind and The Rain* won the Kit Brennan Playwriting Award, and it is easy to see why. The subtlety of the script, its nuances and sense of play are spectacular.

I absolutely loved this performance, it was by far one of the best fringe shows I have ever seen. Travnik and Tate-Penna played marvelously off each other, taking the audience on an emotional journey from start to finish. I am exceedingly glad that I included this in my schedule, but sad that it wasn't until the last day. Why? Because I could have talked it up endlessly, to encourage more people to go. If you get the chance to see this one, I highly recommend it.

The Wind and the Rain



Sex? But I'm Canadian

Who: Nico Dicecco

Time: 60 minutes

Marney and Dale's lives change forever when they bear witness to a night of adventuresome sex. Through the eyes of a compelling and compassionate narrator, join Marney and Dale on their adventure to explore something a little less vanilla. Nicco takes you through 4 episodes, each beginning innocently enough before deteriorating into a scene that will make you both laugh and blush uncontrollably.

Conceived as a bit of a tribute to the late, great Stuart McLean and *The Vinyl Café*, this piece of theatre is an absolute riot, with poignant and heartfelt insight into the never explored fictional lives CBC radio audiences spent years listening to. Nicco's performance is magnificent, and his execution of the jokes and punchlines, as well as the nuanced pauses that made Stuart McLean's narrative style so memorable, are flawless. If you have the chance to see this during any future tours or fringe festivals, I cannot speak highly enough about it. It brought back fond memories. His use of stage space and his pacing are excellent. The buttons on offer after the show are also super neat to get your hands on.



Para Dos

Who: Erin Scott-Kafadar and Alexander Richardson

Time: 45 Minutes

Para Dos is what happens when you mix the passion and precision of ballet with the fiery temptation that is the tango. If you are going for a story line, be prepared to write your own in your head as you watch these two dancers move effortlessly across the stage, igniting a desire for dance deep in your heart.

Developed by the duo of Erin Scott-Kafadar and Alexander Richardson from Montreal, they travelled to and lived in Buenos Aires, Argentina for two years in order to develop this show. Both are extraordinarily skilled in their craft, making even the most complicated moves look as easy as pie. Classical dance elements and impressive pointe execution meets the sinuous roll of the tango. It is a journey into the very heart of dance, and it left me breathless. This was somewhat different from a typical fringe show, as many at this year's festival were. It was definitely one of the best visual experiences, and stayed with me for quite some time after the house lights came back up.



Two Chairs and A Piece of Wood

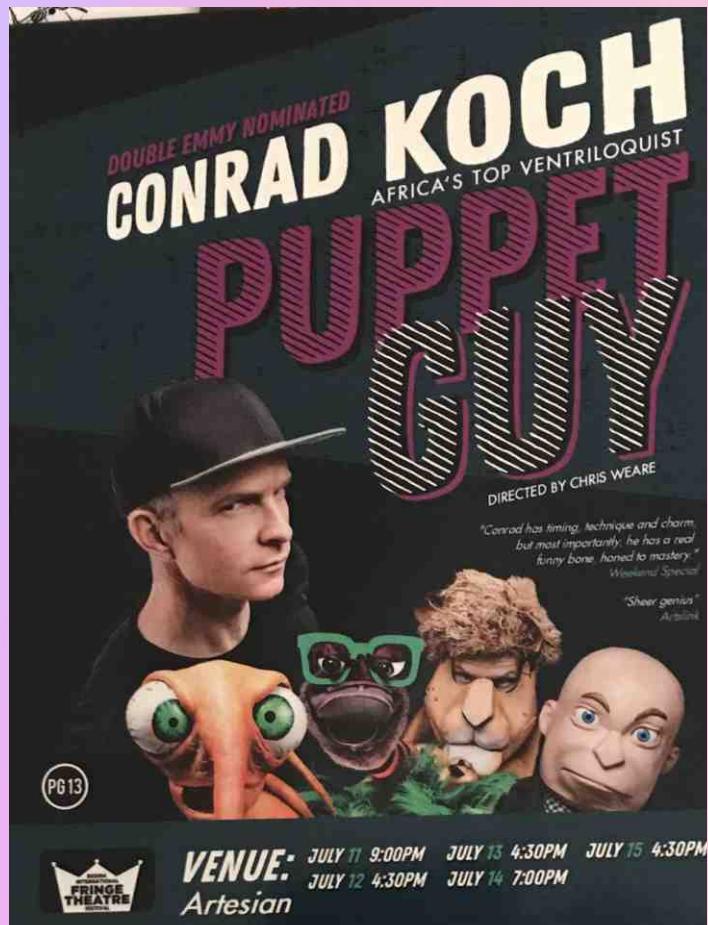
Who: Cole Nicholson and Andrew Parry

Time: 60 Minutes

Two guys. Two chairs. A piece of wood. Using these props and nothing more, Cole Nicholson and Andrew Parry weave a set of inspiring scenes that will have you both laughing and reflecting on their nature. Have you ever been so drunk that you thought you had witnessed someone's death, only to make your very exasperated father perform the early morning roadside burial of a large tree branch? Or maybe you were trying to connect with a lost love, only to find that your respective outlooks on life had changed.

The chemistry between these two is amazing, and their expressions are to die for. While some stories are incredible far fetched, each held at its core a grain of real world truth which made the whole story resonate with the audience. Both performers have a gift for comedic timing and playing off each other's energy, and it is best to describe this particular offering as a rollercoaster of laughter and thought. I really enjoyed this one, and I'm not just saying that because it was the very first show I went to.

Two Chairs & a Piece of Wood



Puppet Guy: Africa's Top Ventriloquist

Who: Conrad Koch (and his many puppets)

Time: 60 Minutes

A stand-up comedy act and a ventriloquist all wrapped up into one, what's not to love? In South Africa, the ventriloquist work of Conrad Koch is award winning, so much so that it is actually his puppet, Chester Missing, who gets all the acclaim. As one of the most well-known and well-reviewed performers to be featured at this year's Fringe Festival, Koch's show was consistently packed.

Koch began by filling in the Canadian audience on the background of his act, and the history from which it springs, as he does deal a fair bit with race in his shows. Part ribbing the audience, part displaying the extent of his skills, and part political jokes, this show was highly enjoyable. Seeing how he makes some of the puppets, and how he gives each its personality, was very enlightening. I especially liked his ostrich, made out of an arm warmer, a slipper, and two feather dusters. His ability to dialogue with himself while creating rich and robust characters was truly astounding.

The Brick: A One-Man Musical

Who: Bill Berry

Time: 90 Minutes

You can tell the measure of a man by what he uses his brick for, because a brick is just a brick. This musical follows Bill, a man on the verge of a major decision, as he decides whether or not he will continue to let his mother's memory live on as he undergoes his next step in life, or whether she has her final death and her memory fades as he decides to never speak of her again. He comes to the seaside and confronts his past, and his memories of his mother's tragic life.

Interspersed with comedic songs and a few jokes, the levity at times belies the deep and troubled past and the weight of the darkness that Bill deals with as he tells his story. There is a lot of depth between the lines as well. Even with the jokes, I would not label this as a comedy, as the jokes serve as a way to deflect the personal pain of the main character. For what it was, and for the experience, *The Brick* offered a lot more to the audience than I was expecting from its description.

THE BRICK
A One Man Musical
Written and Performed by Bill Berry
Directed by Kelly DeSarla

"You'd be crazy to miss it!"
-Broadway World

WINNER PLATINUM MEDAL EVOLUTION AWARD 2017
WINNER ENCORE! PRODUCERS' AWARD 2017

Dandymouth:

word.play.

lyrical
nonsense

for the digital age

Dandymouth: Word. Play.

Who: Dandymouth, Madalena Marques,
Errol Weasel

Time: 60 Minutes

A man. A computer. Words. All about the power of language and fun with words, Dandymouth takes you on an abstract journey through poetry, short stories, and anecdotes. A journey all about words and being playful with their nature.

While there is no overarching structure, *Word. Play.* does have its shining moments. The performer, Dandymouth, a gentleman from the United Kingdom with an appealing accent, takes you through a very loosely structured show using music. It is said that each show has its own improv musician, pulled from the locale of the performance through advertisement, in ours it was a local sax player. He jumps from one anecdote to the next in quick succession, telling stories of rascallion swashbuckling dogs, jokes using synonyms (which I do admit I laughed at, perhaps a little too loud), and finally, a heartfelt tribute to his late father. What it lacked in structure, it made up for in charm and enthusiasm.

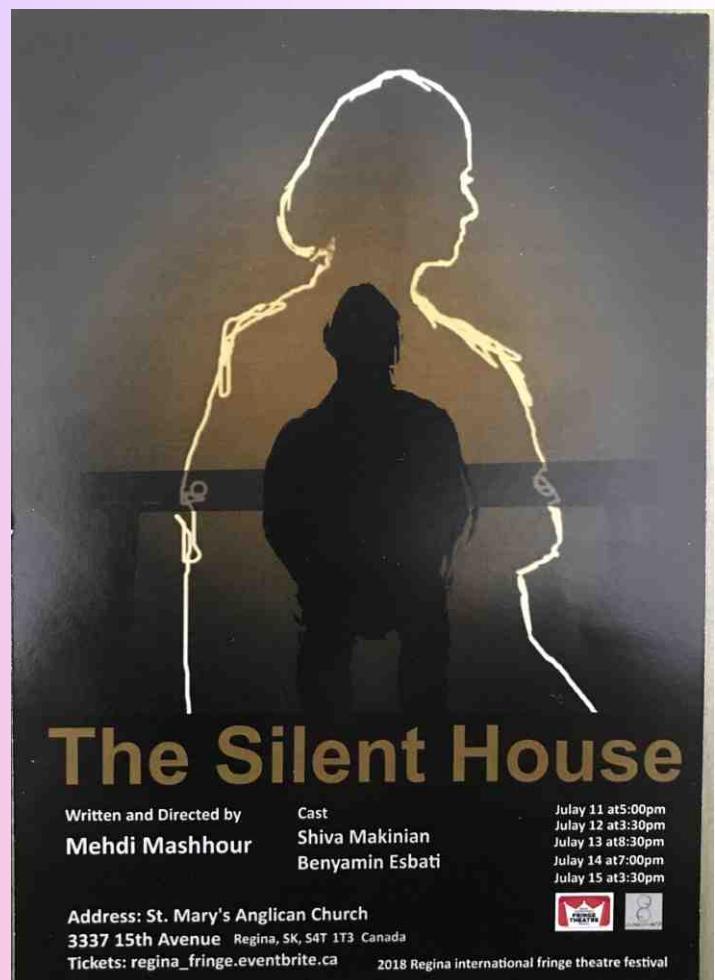
The Silent House

Who: Shiva Makinian, Benyamin Esbati

Time: 75 Minutes

Shiva (Shive Makinian) and Benjamin (Benyamin Esbati) have been waiting for two years in a refugee camp while their immigrations papers are sorted out. Five long years with their trauma and these barriers. Shiva playfully dotes on Benjamin when she is not at work as a language instructor, and Benjamin spends the days blocking out the horrifying sounds of the real world with his music, smoking, and hoping that Shiva will notice the small things that help ease his own troubles. But two years is a long time to deal with trauma, a long time to hold on to hope, and a long time to be unable to fully communicate.

This was, by far, the most perplexing and thought provoking performance at this year's Fringe. Limited dialogue, spoken in multiple languages, and repeated. The same sequence repeated three times, each with minute changes that allude to a shift in their relationship. I left this one thinking very deeply about how trauma and hopelessness affect the human mind. While there was some confusion as to the meaning of the whole play, and inevitably its conclusion, it was a very eye-opening experience, and I would recommend it if you don't mind being left with a plethora of new questions and "what does it all mean" wonderings.



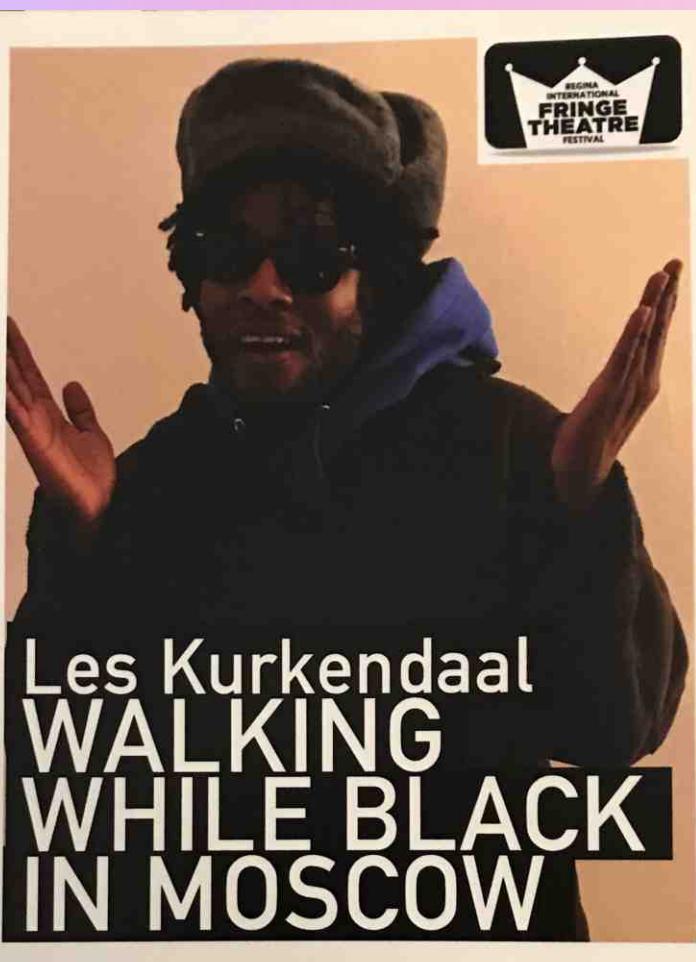
Walking While Black in Moscow

Who: Les Kurkendaal

Time: 60 Minutes

Heading off to Russia can be a bit daunting, especially if you've been told very negative things about the people, some true, some less than true. In this offering, Les takes the audience along with him to revisit his journey to Russia. As a gay man, somewhat dangerous. As a man of colour, a black man, sometimes less dangerous than he was warned.

As a true-to-life experience, this was equal parts educational and entertaining. Kurkendaal took time both to marvel at the way in which he was accepted and welcomed by the various individuals he met, and also how it proved to be a challenge for an openly gay man visiting a foreign country with his boyfriend (now husband). Some stories were hilarious, such as his attempts to navigate the subway system without a knowledge of the Cyrillic alphabet. Others were heartbreaking, such as when he was warned not to take a cab after a night out at a secret gay bar, for fear of being assaulted and robbed, and left with no legal recourse. It was a well examined and well executed narrative, told with heart and exuberance that was infectious.



Carmen and Don Jose

Who: Melanie Gall, Eden Ballantyne

Time: 60 Minutes

Opera meets narrative storytelling in this simplification of Bizet's opera *Carmen*. Our narrator, Don Jose, tells of his tragic downfall from promising soldier to murdering brigand, while Carmen brings the music to life, luring him away from the path of righteousness and leaving him destroyed.

As Carmen, Melanie Gall takes us through all the highs and lows of the opera, in expert form. Her voice is crisp and clear, and filled the entire theatre space with vibrancy. Eden Ballantyne's evocative storytelling and clear narration voice add an extra element of power to the entire affair. Whether you are an avid opera fan (Yay, Saturday Afternoons at the Opera on CBC), or a first-timer, this is a spectacular performance that brings the story to life for a whole new audience.



A photograph of two men standing side-by-side. The man on the left is wearing a black shirt and glasses, holding a small object. The man on the right is wearing a grey t-shirt, a cap, and has a tattoo on his arm. Below the photo, the words "Mind Magic" are written in white, and "Unitarian" is written diagonally in green.

Mind Magic

Who: Louis Pezzani

Time: 75 Minutes

This is less a show, more an extended demonstration of the powers of deduction, persuasion, and mentalism. Louis Pezzani takes the audience through a series of demonstrations, everything from predicting choices, to bending spoons.

This show features heavy audience involvement, and each of his acts requires two or more audience members. In some, he demonstrates a very keen and well developed ability to read audience body language in order to determine if they are lying. As an audience member who participated, even knowing the mechanics behind the showmanship and demonstrations, his ability to be right 100% of the time was very impressive. While not my favourite show of the fringe, it was still quite entertaining.

The F Words: Fab, Funny, Fierce!

Who: Yvette Dudley-Neuman

Time: 75 Minutes

Francine was a plucky, quirky girl just like any other, save that her life was watched over by the three Greek Fates, and she had more than her fair share of troubles. But with her trusty dictionary, and a few smacks of reality to put life into perspective, she managed to come out of the dark and rediscover herself.

Part fiction, part reality (I think), this play may not be for everyone. There is a fair bit of jumping around; we are introduced to Francine, or Funny Frankie, by her grandmother, and get a glimpse at her young life, from childhood to adulthood, before jumping to a downward spiral brought on by her 40th birthday. While it takes a cynical turn, overall it ventures to pull the audience through the darkness and inspire them to believe that their journey isn't over, that their life isn't set in stone just because some unpleasant things occur. While it was not the strongest offering at the fringe, Dudley-Neuman's dedication to the show and bringing the emotional journey to bear, amidst her cynical outlook and the out-of-left-field comedy at times, are worthy of applause.



The F Words: Fab; Funny; Fierce!

SK EXP

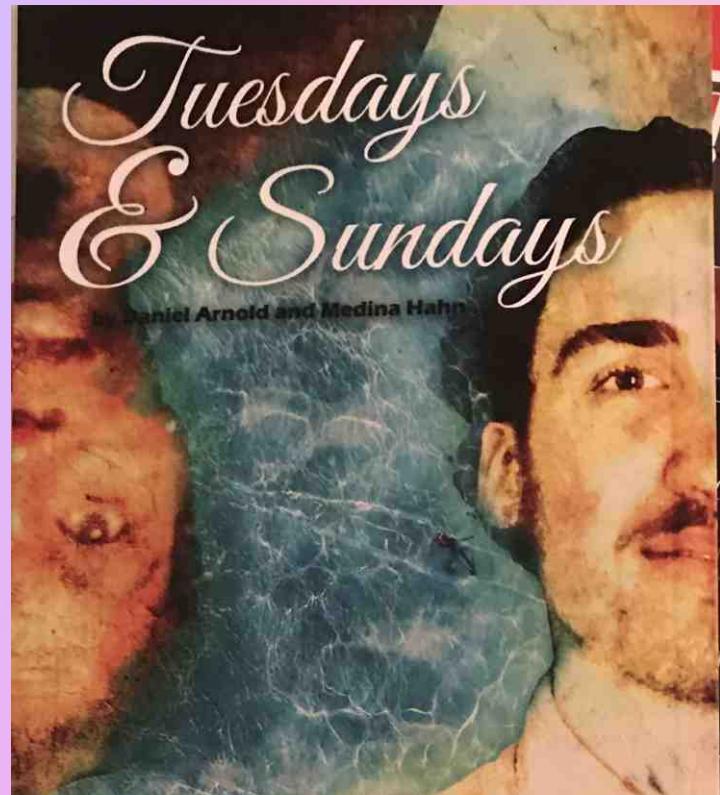
Tuesdays & Sundays

Who: Ivy Charles, Matt Irvine

Time: 60 Minutes

Mary and William are a young couple, just like any other young couple. On a fateful New Year's Eve in 1887, in Nova Scotia, William overcomes his very shy nature and approaches Mary, and they begin to explore their feelings for one another. However, their responsibilities and reputations are challenged when they find themselves in a very difficult situation.

This play was not at all what I expected, given how it was described in the pamphlet. What started off as light and flirty, turned into a deep emotional journey through fear, and ultimately led to some harsh realities. Ivy Charles' Mary was nuanced and easy to connect with, as was Matt Irvine's William, though there still remained some mystery to his actions. Together they brought the characters to life, with limited set pieces. It was very easy to get wrapped up in their journey.



FROM THE PRODUCERS OF STUDENT BODY
2017 FRINGE FESTIVAL

★★★★★

REGINA

ROYAL SASKATCHEWAN MUSEUM

WINNIPEG

FORTH - VENUE 28

JULY 11TH - 9:00 PM JULY 18TH - 6:00 PM JULY 23RD - 9:00 PM

JULY 12TH - 5:30 PM JULY 19TH - 7:15 PM JULY 26TH - 7:15 PM

JULY 13TH - 9:00 PM JULY 20TH - 5:30 PM JULY 27TH - 9:00 PM



EXPLORING A DIFFERENT SIDE OF SASKATCHEWAN

BY JESSICA MITTEN-MOORE

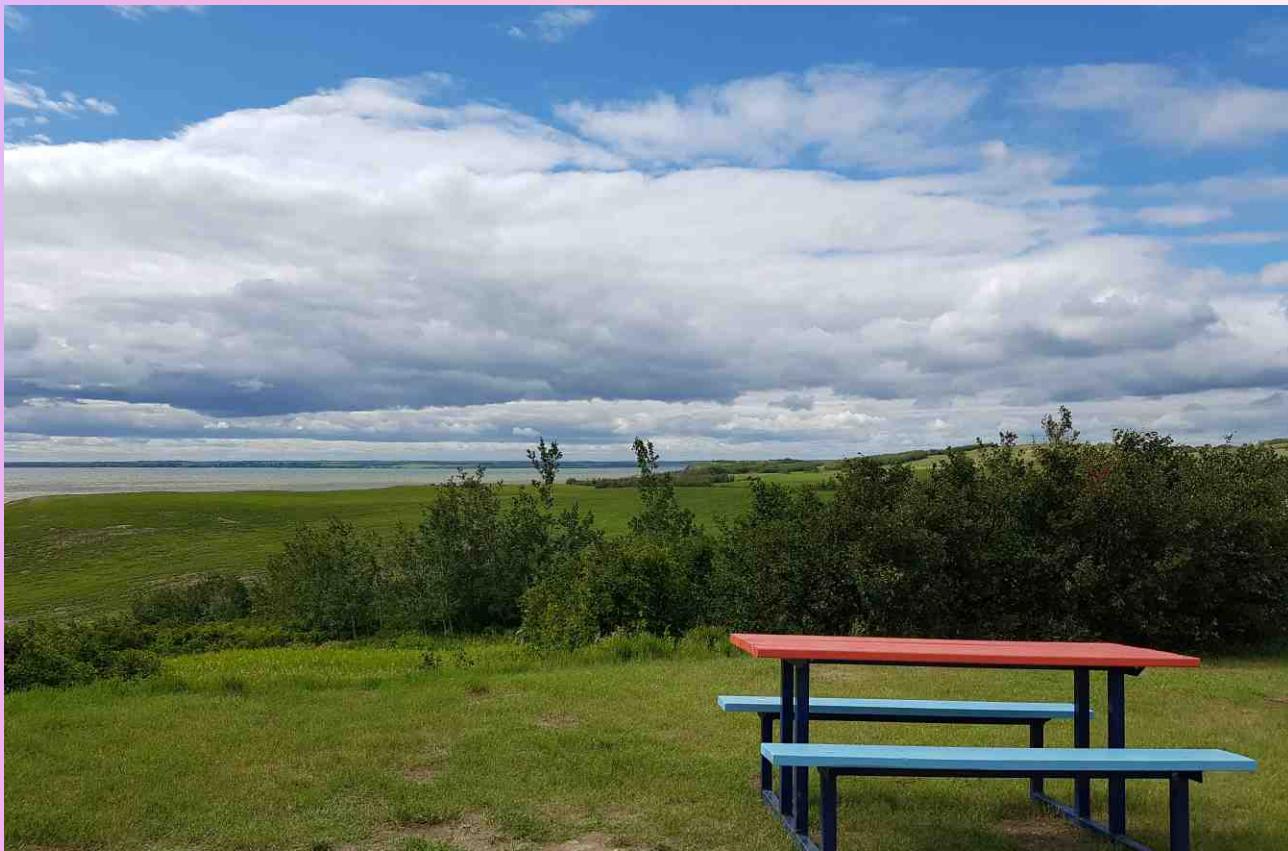
I love to travel, but I always thought that finding unique and interesting places was hard to do in my home province of Saskatchewan. This is in fact a fiction that many people believe. I wanted to do a small road trip in Saskatchewan this summer so I researched some interesting and easy(ish) to reach places in the south and middle of SK.

My first stop was the Crooked Bush, or Crooked Trees depending on who you are talking to. This is a grove of trees near Hafford, SK which is around thirty minutes outside of Saskatoon. We found the trees amid a rolling and picturesque landscape of canola and grain fields. This grove is made up of deformed Aspens which twist and turn in every direction. No one is exactly sure why they grow this way, but it may be due to a mutation in the genetics of the trees. This spot is definitely worth taking the time to visit, especially if you are already in the area. I would love to go back when the colour of the leaves has changed in the fall, or even when all the leaves have fallen from the trees. It would make for a very Halloween-themed visit.



After spending some time at the Crooked Bush, we ventured to the resort town of Cochin. This town is about 20 minutes north of North Battleford. Cochin is a gorgeous little town nestled between two lakes. What makes the town truly unique is that, atop a great hill sits Saskatchewan's only light house.

Originally being from the Maritimes, I simply had to view this spot. As I climbed over 150 steps to the lighthouse, I couldn't get over just how much this area reminded me of the East Coast. If you are a Maritimer and miss the ocean, I would definitely suggest travelling here just to get the slight feeling that you are near the coast. Although, the lake does not have the same salty smell of the ocean, and it is not sparkling blue water as far as the eye can see. I enjoyed this spot so much. I would really like to come back up here with a group of friends to camp, or rent a cabin and spend a weekend in Cochin. It is a beautiful area.



On the next day of my journey, we sought out the Beechy Sandcastles. These are actually about 30 minutes away from the town of Beechy, so you don't need to head there to see these rock formations. We drove down from Saskatoon and made a quick stop in the town of Lucky Lake, which has a beautiful combined gift and fancy coffee shop that is worth a visit if you are missing your latte (iced americano in my case) while driving around small towns in SK. The Sandcastles are a bit off of the main road but worth the exploring down dirt roads. They are on private land that is open to the public, and there are signs up to try to direct you where to go. I would suggest using Google Maps to direct you to them. The Sandcastles were first noticed in the 1990s, since they are hidden by huge valley hills. We hiked down one of these steep valleys to get a closer look at the rock formation. It is vast and quite beautiful. There is no traditional hiking trail, so you have to be very careful if you want to hike down to get a close look, and the hike back up is quite steep. Although, there is a small trail that leads to the top of the Sandcastles. We spent quite a bit of time on a gorgeous day in this area.

To arrive at the Sandcastles, you have to follow the driving trail called the Sunken Hill Trail. This road takes you along the ridge of the valley and even if you don't feel like hiking, it really is worth it to drive the road for the views of the valley with Lake Diefenbaker in the background. If you find yourself seeking out the Beechy Sandcastles, I would also recommend taking a quick stop at Gardiner Dam which is fairly nearby.



These are three spots that are incredible, and in Saskatchewan! They are mostly easy to access, and you can drive to each of them. If you think they are too out of the way for a quick weekend getaway, then I would suggest looking closer to home. On a different weekend, I drove to the Wascana Trails, which is only 15 minutes outside of Regina, SK.

Wascana Trails is a fabulous hiking area, especially as it is so close to the city. The area has 15 kilometres of interconnected trails and is consistently maintained. These trails are not only for hikers but are used by many mountain bikers as well. The trails wind up and down many hills in the Qu'Appelle Valley, which make them a great practice course for an actual mountain. Many different types of people enjoy this beautiful area. There were large families, experienced athletes, people who were preparing themselves for longer hikes in the mountains, and casual hikers, like myself. I was impressed with how well the trails are groomed and with the beautiful river, a tributary from the Qu'Appelle River, which winds beside them. This place is a hidden gem of valleys and cliffs in the middle of a flat prairie landscape. The trails are also very close to Over the Hill Orchard, the orchard of the well-known producer of the Prairie Cherry products. They have a beautiful sitting area both outside and in, and they do delicious wine tastings.

I think everyone would appreciate all of these Saskatchewan treasures, even if just for the views. I was lucky to have been able to visit them all on gorgeous summer days with many dramatic clouds floating in the sky. It truly made me remember why Saskatchewan is named "Land of the Living Skies." I would very much like to visit each area again in a different season, or in the evening to view a sunset sinking into the prairie landscape.





Welcome to Bublik's (Bed & Breakfast)
By Jocelyn Anderson

The Long Road Home Part 2

A Tuala Griggs Story



By Megan Negrych

The settling dust is swept up by the bare breeze that meanders across the open prairie, leaving me to sneeze. The B&B sign swings lazily on its guide chains, creaking over the sudden silence that overtook everything. When the dust settles, I can easily see the gravel path that leads away from the road, up to the field, or rather clearing, where the oddly constructed house is situated.

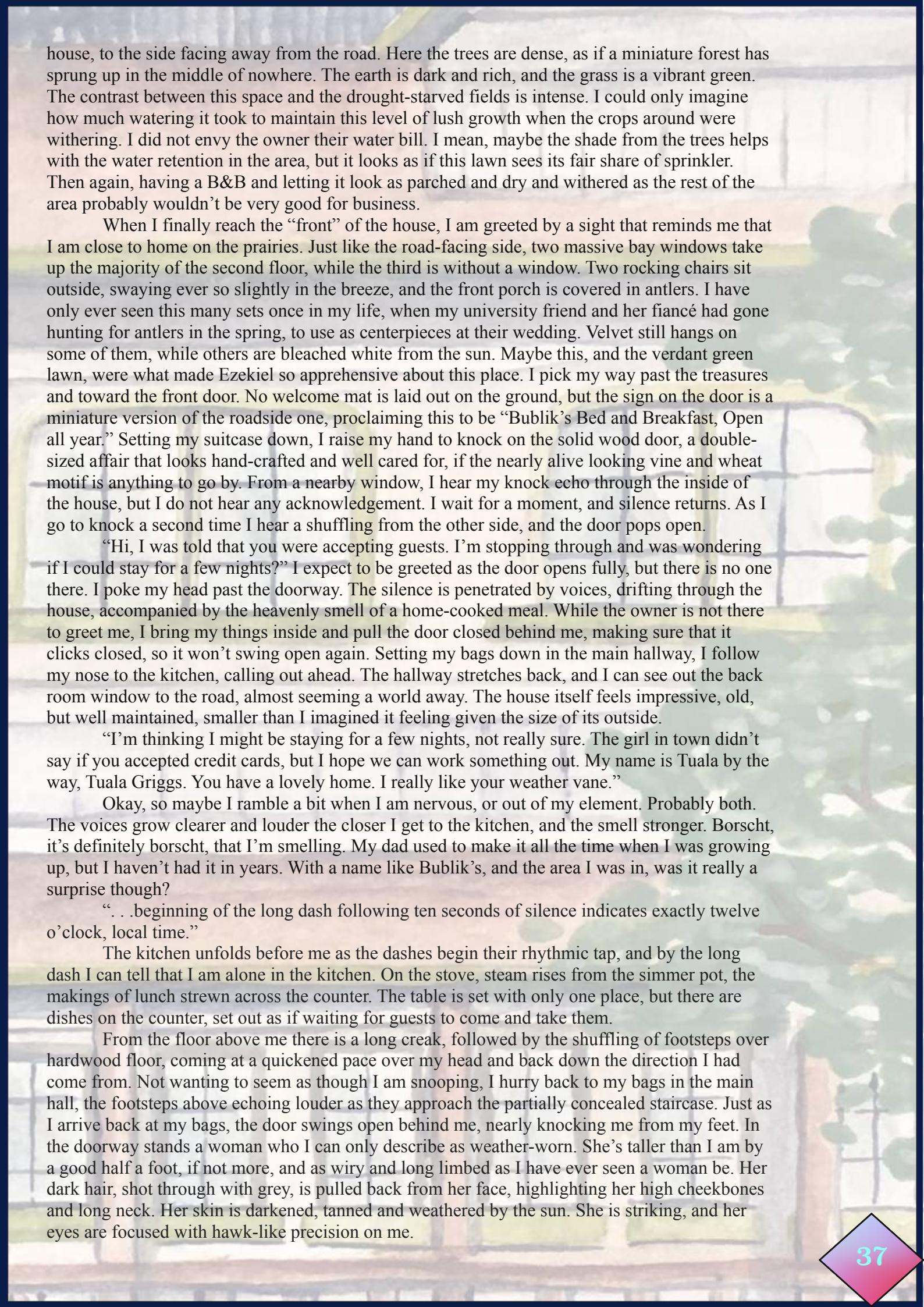
Nestled amongst the gravel are stepping stones, hewn from natural rock and worn flat by the passage of feet, or so I assume. I have a bad habit of ascribing a certain charm to things, a personal internal narrative that colours my world in a little bit more light and levity than it would normally be given. For all I know, the stepping stones are new, and have never been walked on, but that just doesn't seem right when looking at the establishment. There is something poetic, even enchanting about the entire place. As the path winds up to the yard, the yellowed and parched prairie landscape gives way to greener grass sprouting from dark rich soil. Out of nowhere, the bare field shifts from level and bare, the type of place that locals often joke allows you to "see your dog running away for three days", to a dense canopy of green trees, growing thick and obscuring, blocking out the rest of the drought-ravaged world the further you got from the road. It is almost as if the area was taken out of a whole other world just beyond the fence.

Slinging my duffle bag over my shoulder and picking up my suitcase, as there was no way I would be able to pull it along the gravel walkway without a slew of swears and a fight I didn't have the energy for, I started to follow the stepping stones. It takes me a minute to figure out what is making things so awkward, but it dawns on me that the stones, as guides up to the house, are placed just slightly too far away to make for comfortable steps. Were I to want to step from one to the next, I would likely have to give myself a little jump to make it without touching the surrounding earth.

Halfway up the path, the fence starts to take on the job of guiding me toward the house. Though it isn't much of a fence, really, the closer I look at it. Nothing connects one wrought iron post to the next, and there is very little consistency between the spacing. In fact, the only constant about the whole thing is that about every five feet between posts, there is a short hanging lantern, aged, frosted, and misshapen by years in the sun. I can tell they are old, possibly even original and never replaced, due to the way that the heat from the sun has warped the glass itself; I assume they used to all be circular, but now they are oblong and pitted, warped and distorted as old glass has a tendency to do when left for ages without being touched.

Ahead of me, the house rises out of the ground, three storeys of windows and wood, not a piece of vinyl siding or plaster to be seen. The first storey is the largest, sprawling out below. It is surrounded by a deep porch, with a trellised-off crawl space beneath. Windows line the back wall, evenly spaced and partially curtained. One window is open, the curtains swaying back and forth. The second storey is laid atop the first, and both appear to be somewhat taller than normal. Two large bay windows feature there, perfect for letting in the morning light from the east. They are curtained fully, closed off. The third storey is the most peculiar, rising like a hat from the second. Aside from a single window, there is not much to note there. Movement above catches my eyes and I quickly dart them up, only to see a chicken on the roof, swaying back and forth. It takes me longer than I want to admit to realize that it's an old-fashioned weather vane, and not some poor farm bird trapped and panicked far above the ground.

I expect the path to lead me up to the porch, but instead it wraps around the side of the house, taking me under the canopy of the trees as their growth becomes denser, shading out the heavy afternoon sun. They take me all the way around, past the old-style storm-cellar doors. By the time I find stairs to take me up to the house proper, I have walked all the way around the



house, to the side facing away from the road. Here the trees are dense, as if a miniature forest has sprung up in the middle of nowhere. The earth is dark and rich, and the grass is a vibrant green. The contrast between this space and the drought-starved fields is intense. I could only imagine how much watering it took to maintain this level of lush growth when the crops around were withering. I did not envy the owner their water bill. I mean, maybe the shade from the trees helps with the water retention in the area, but it looks as if this lawn sees its fair share of sprinkler. Then again, having a B&B and letting it look as parched and dry and withered as the rest of the area probably wouldn't be very good for business.

When I finally reach the “front” of the house, I am greeted by a sight that reminds me that I am close to home on the prairies. Just like the road-facing side, two massive bay windows take up the majority of the second floor, while the third is without a window. Two rocking chairs sit outside, swaying ever so slightly in the breeze, and the front porch is covered in antlers. I have only ever seen this many sets once in my life, when my university friend and her fiancé had gone hunting for antlers in the spring, to use as centerpieces at their wedding. Velvet still hangs on some of them, while others are bleached white from the sun. Maybe this, and the verdant green lawn, were what made Ezekiel so apprehensive about this place. I pick my way past the treasures and toward the front door. No welcome mat is laid out on the ground, but the sign on the door is a miniature version of the roadside one, proclaiming this to be “Bublik’s Bed and Breakfast, Open all year.” Setting my suitcase down, I raise my hand to knock on the solid wood door, a double-sized affair that looks hand-crafted and well cared for, if the nearly alive looking vine and wheat motif is anything to go by. From a nearby window, I hear my knock echo through the inside of the house, but I do not hear any acknowledgement. I wait for a moment, and silence returns. As I go to knock a second time I hear a shuffling from the other side, and the door pops open.

“Hi, I was told that you were accepting guests. I’m stopping through and was wondering if I could stay for a few nights?” I expect to be greeted as the door opens fully, but there is no one there. I poke my head past the doorway. The silence is penetrated by voices, drifting through the house, accompanied by the heavenly smell of a home-cooked meal. While the owner is not there to greet me, I bring my things inside and pull the door closed behind me, making sure that it clicks closed, so it won’t swing open again. Setting my bags down in the main hallway, I follow my nose to the kitchen, calling out ahead. The hallway stretches back, and I can see out the back room window to the road, almost seeming a world away. The house itself feels impressive, old, but well maintained, smaller than I imagined it feeling given the size of its outside.

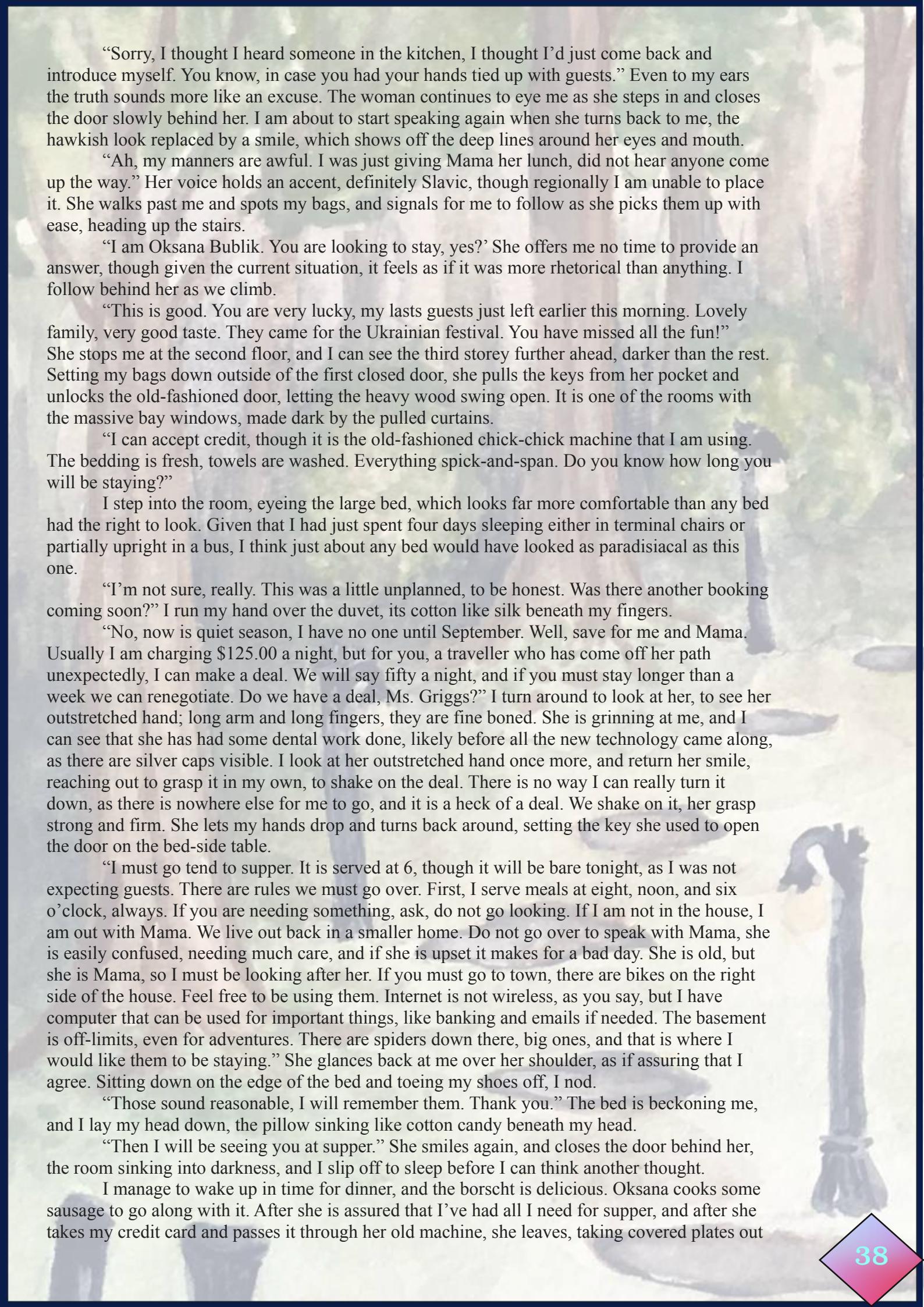
“I’m thinking I might be staying for a few nights, not really sure. The girl in town didn’t say if you accepted credit cards, but I hope we can work something out. My name is Tuala by the way, Tuala Griggs. You have a lovely home. I really like your weather vane.”

Okay, so maybe I ramble a bit when I am nervous, or out of my element. Probably both. The voices grow clearer and louder the closer I get to the kitchen, and the smell stronger. Borscht, it’s definitely borscht, that I’m smelling. My dad used to make it all the time when I was growing up, but I haven’t had it in years. With a name like Bublik’s, and the area I was in, was it really a surprise though?

“...beginning of the long dash following ten seconds of silence indicates exactly twelve o’clock, local time.”

The kitchen unfolds before me as the dashes begin their rhythmic tap, and by the long dash I can tell that I am alone in the kitchen. On the stove, steam rises from the simmer pot, the makings of lunch strewn across the counter. The table is set with only one place, but there are dishes on the counter, set out as if waiting for guests to come and take them.

From the floor above me there is a long creak, followed by the shuffling of footsteps over hardwood floor, coming at a quickened pace over my head and back down the direction I had come from. Not wanting to seem as though I am snooping, I hurry back to my bags in the main hall, the footsteps above echoing louder as they approach the partially concealed staircase. Just as I arrive back at my bags, the door swings open behind me, nearly knocking me from my feet. In the doorway stands a woman who I can only describe as weather-worn. She’s taller than I am by a good half a foot, if not more, and as wiry and long limbed as I have ever seen a woman be. Her dark hair, shot through with grey, is pulled back from her face, highlighting her high cheekbones and long neck. Her skin is darkened, tanned and weathered by the sun. She is striking, and her eyes are focused with hawk-like precision on me.



"Sorry, I thought I heard someone in the kitchen, I thought I'd just come back and introduce myself. You know, in case you had your hands tied up with guests." Even to my ears the truth sounds more like an excuse. The woman continues to eye me as she steps in and closes the door slowly behind her. I am about to start speaking again when she turns back to me, the hawkish look replaced by a smile, which shows off the deep lines around her eyes and mouth.

"Ah, my manners are awful. I was just giving Mama her lunch, did not hear anyone come up the way." Her voice holds an accent, definitely Slavic, though regionally I am unable to place it. She walks past me and spots my bags, and signals for me to follow as she picks them up with ease, heading up the stairs.

"I am Oksana Bublik. You are looking to stay, yes?" She offers me no time to provide an answer, though given the current situation, it feels as if it was more rhetorical than anything. I follow behind her as we climb.

"This is good. You are very lucky, my last guests just left earlier this morning. Lovely family, very good taste. They came for the Ukrainian festival. You have missed all the fun!" She stops me at the second floor, and I can see the third storey further ahead, darker than the rest. Setting my bags down outside of the first closed door, she pulls the keys from her pocket and unlocks the old-fashioned door, letting the heavy wood swing open. It is one of the rooms with the massive bay windows, made dark by the pulled curtains.

"I can accept credit, though it is the old-fashioned chick-chick machine that I am using. The bedding is fresh, towels are washed. Everything spick-and-span. Do you know how long you will be staying?"

I step into the room, eyeing the large bed, which looks far more comfortable than any bed had the right to look. Given that I had just spent four days sleeping either in terminal chairs or partially upright in a bus, I think just about any bed would have looked as paradisiacal as this one.

"I'm not sure, really. This was a little unplanned, to be honest. Was there another booking coming soon?" I run my hand over the duvet, its cotton like silk beneath my fingers.

"No, now is quiet season, I have no one until September. Well, save for me and Mama. Usually I am charging \$125.00 a night, but for you, a traveller who has come off her path unexpectedly, I can make a deal. We will say fifty a night, and if you must stay longer than a week we can renegotiate. Do we have a deal, Ms. Griggs?" I turn around to look at her, to see her outstretched hand; long arm and long fingers, they are fine boned. She is grinning at me, and I can see that she has had some dental work done, likely before all the new technology came along, as there are silver caps visible. I look at her outstretched hand once more, and return her smile, reaching out to grasp it in my own, to shake on the deal. There is no way I can really turn it down, as there is nowhere else for me to go, and it is a heck of a deal. We shake on it, her grasp strong and firm. She lets my hands drop and turns back around, setting the key she used to open the door on the bed-side table.

"I must go tend to supper. It is served at 6, though it will be bare tonight, as I was not expecting guests. There are rules we must go over. First, I serve meals at eight, noon, and six o'clock, always. If you are needing something, ask, do not go looking. If I am not in the house, I am out with Mama. We live out back in a smaller home. Do not go over to speak with Mama, she is easily confused, needing much care, and if she is upset it makes for a bad day. She is old, but she is Mama, so I must be looking after her. If you must go to town, there are bikes on the right side of the house. Feel free to be using them. Internet is not wireless, as you say, but I have computer that can be used for important things, like banking and emails if needed. The basement is off-limits, even for adventures. There are spiders down there, big ones, and that is where I would like them to be staying." She glances back at me over her shoulder, as if assuring that I agree. Sitting down on the edge of the bed and toeing my shoes off, I nod.

"Those sound reasonable, I will remember them. Thank you." The bed is beckoning me, and I lay my head down, the pillow sinking like cotton candy beneath my head.

"Then I will be seeing you at supper." She smiles again, and closes the door behind her, the room sinking into darkness, and I slip off to sleep before I can think another thought.

I manage to wake up in time for dinner, and the borscht is delicious. Oksana cooks some sausage to go along with it. After she is assured that I've had all I need for supper, and after she takes my credit card and passes it through her old machine, she leaves, taking covered plates out

the front door. From the kitchen I watch as she crosses the lawn, and it is then that I first make note of the house deeper in the woods, visible between the many trees, but only barely. If I had not had someone to follow, I don't think I would have noticed it out there. Outside, on the old-fashioned flat wood patio, the silhouette of a very small woman waits. Crouched over and huddled, I can tell without even seeing her that she is frail, and very old. Of course, that would be Mama. As Oksana approaches, the wind whips up around her, bending tree branches and threatening to knock the little old woman over. Undeterred, Oksana continues on, holding the stacked plates in one hand as she uses the other to rest on Mama's small shoulders, turning her around and leading her into the small home in the wood.

After having a refreshing shower, my first one with more than a bathroom sink in almost half a week, I walk across my room, my footfalls slapping slightly against the polished hardwood floor. I had left the curtains closed all afternoon while I had napped. It was almost nine o'clock, but behind the curtain there was the shine of light from a late prairie sunset. One of the things I loved the most about living where I did was the sunsets, especially in summer, when they were long and drawn out. I braid my long hair back as I make my way out of the cozy en-suite, draping my towel over my shoulders, and nudge my way past the long curtains to the bay window seat beyond. The sun is still above the horizon, though below the tree line. From my window, I can see that the trees do not stretch on that deep, and out beyond them is yellowed fields, made golden by the setting sun. The fields appear to be on fire in places, though it is only a trick of the light. They stretch on forever. As I watch, the sun sinking lower, a figure seems to appear in the field between one moment and the next. Squinting my eyes, I can make out a red string of beads around her neck. Her face turns up, looking back at me. The ghost girl from the bus stands in the field, as if she had always been there, just waiting for me to see her. Slowly she turns, looking out at the dusty roads. As she does, my eyes catch on another figure, followed by another, and another. As I watch, more ghostly apparitions appear in the field, standing there, looking back at me.

I guess she was just waiting for me to find her. To find them. There are so many. As the sun continues to sink, I am left to wonder what exactly I have stumbled upon by coming here.

Deja-EXCITÉ!

Here is what the team at DeJa-VISITE is looking forward to:



Jocelyn Anderson

- **Walk off the Earth at Regina Folk Fest** - August 10th - I am very excited to get the opportunity to go see this fabulous Canadian band in concert at the Regina Folk Fest.
- **Labour Day Classic** - September 2 - The First one that ACTUALLY counts.
- **Saskatchewan Entertainment Expo** - September 15-16 - Megan and I always make a trip up to Saskatoon each year to check out the Entertainment Expo in September. We are already preparing our fabulous cosplay costumes and it is always a highlight of my year.



Jessica Mitten-Moore

- **Folk Fest** - August 10-12 - One of my favourite weekends of the year is the Regina Folk Festival. It is a weekend where I put everything off except enjoying music. It is really worth checking out, even if you can only make the free day shows.
- **Market Under the Stars** - August 16 & 30 - Great food and farmers market vendors are joined by musicians in the Regina plaza in the evening.
- **Harry Potter Trivia at Bushwackers** - August 15
- **Lumsden Duck Derby** - September 3 - Spend an afternoon in Lumsden to experience a fair and thousands of plastic ducks racing down a river. If you grab a ticket you might even win something.



Megan Negrych

- **Regina International Film Festival and Awards** - August 14-18 - International films, award winning BAFTA and Oscar journey members, a red carpet event, and an awards show, all rolled into 4 days. Over 100 films to be screened over the festival days at the Cineplex Odeon theatre at the Southland Mall.
- **Battle for Westfalia LARP** - August 26- Located just outside of Pilot Butte, Westfalia Golf and Archery Tag will be hosting a LARPing (Live Action Role Play) in order to crown the King and Queen of Westfalia. Featured in tickets are a feast, a dance, archery tag, jousting, and entrance to the grand melee. Vendors will be on location. Check their Facebook for more details. Tickets are \$40.00.
- **The Meg** - August 10 - Based on the book Meg by Steve Alten. What if the most massive shark ever to roam the oceans was still alive, centuries after its supposed extinction? The Megalodon Carcharodon, or Meg, has managed to return to surface waters, and she is hungry.

The Error Message

Want to win some sweet, sweet DEJA-VISITE swag? Be like the falcon spotting a delicious and vulnerable gopher in the prairie fields and spot our vulnerable and embarrassing errors in this issue before we do. Errors can be either factual, or grammatical, but their validity is always subject to our judgement. Our first run of swag is a collection of buttons designed by our own Jocelyn Anderson. The designs are based on our contributor prairie animals. Swag distribution is random (but if you're a secondtimer winner at some point, let us know what you've already won in your submission email, so you don't get doubles).

Email submissions to: info@dejavisite.ca



Endnotes and Credits FOR DEJA-VISITE Issue 6: July/August 2018

Cover Page is an Original Watercolour by Jocelyn Anderson

Summer Blueberry Trifle

All photographs courtesy of Kerri Desgagné

Taipei Casserole - Asian Fusion Meets Comfort Food

All photographs courtesy of Jocelyn Anderson

MadiLei Madison - Melancholy and Mysterious Missives

Hint: Look for clues in the first paragraph of MadiLei's letter, as well as the beginning of the message itself. The first paragraph contains a simple, complete phrase.

** The answer can be found after all the other credits

Deja Ru: A Look at RuPaul's Drag Race and Local Drag

Images courtesy of LogoTV and Queen City Pride

A Walk on the Wild Side: Qu'Appelle Valley

All photographs courtesy of Jocelyn Anderson

Reference

Vence, Fenton R., James R Jowsey, and James S. Mclean. *Revised and Expanded Wildflowers Across the Prairies*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984.

Kagume, Krista, and Jim McCormac. Saskatchewan and Manitoba Nature Guide. Edmonton: Lone Pine Pub., 2010.

Smith, Alan R. *Saskatchewan Birds*. Edmonton: Lone Pine Pub., 2001.

Alice Investigates - Act One: Missing Tony

Photograph of Wascana Lake and the Parliament building courtesy of Megan Negrych

#FarmerVictoria: The Barn Wood Conspiracy

All photographs courtesy of Victoria Koops

Fringe Festival Field Guide

All images courtesy of the Regina International Fringe Festival, and respective performers and companies

Exploring a Different Side of Saskatchewan

All photographs courtesy of Jessica Mitten-Moore

The Long Road Home Part 2: A Tuala Griggs Story

Welcome to Bublik's (*Bed & Breakfast*) by Jocelyn Anderson

Deja-Excite

All contributor animal images courtesy of Jocelyn Anderson

Answer to MadiLei's Missive

MadiLei's Secret Message (It is an acrostic using the first letter of every sentence.): Help me! The cats have control of the money. Cannot buy artisan Kombucha. Find me in the Great Hole of Regina. Bring a brie. A good one.