



OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2023 • VOLUME 47, EDITION 4

SPARKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN DEVELOPMENT MUSEUM



Back to School

Check out in-Museum & virtual school programs

A Holiday Tradition

Eaton's Once Upon A Christmas display

Connecting Virtually

Virtual Coffee Club is back for the fall

Here is What is Happening at the WDM

WDM Moose Jaw

September 29–October 1	2nd Annual Every Child Matters Traditional Pow Wow and Gathering
October 28	Halloween Event
December 9 & 16	A Christmas Long Ago

WDM North Battleford

October 14	Fall Tea
October 28	Great Pumpkin Masquerade
December 1 – January 7	Light Up the Village

For a list of
Virtual Coffee Club
dates, see page 19.

WDM Saskatoon

Through December 31	Monthly Seek and Find activities
October 17	Pop in and Play with the WDM
October 21	Pioneer Threshermen's Club Flea Market
October 28–31	Spooky Stroll
October 30	Boo Town Ball
November 1–mid-December	Toy Tree in support of Care & Share Saskatoon
November 2–January 7	<i>Eaton's Once Upon a Christmas</i>
November 21	Pop in and Play with the WDM
November 24–December 2	Festival of Trees presented by Saskatoon City Hospital
December 19	Pop in and Play with the WDM

WDM Yorkton

Through November 30	Autumn Harvest Seek and Find
October 28–31	Halloween Seek and Find activities

Events and dates listed here are subject to change. For details visit wdm.ca



Greetings from the WDM's Fundraising Specialist

My name is Ajibike Ogele and I am the Western Development Museum's new Fundraising Specialist.

Over a year ago, Canada became home for my family and me. My first visit to the Western Development Museum was filled with enthusiasm and appreciation for the beautiful work done in preserving and showcasing the rich history of Saskatchewan. I felt intense gratitude knowing a place exists where migrants and people, in general, can become knowledgeable about and familiar with the lived experiences and culture of the province.

As I navigate my role, I want to extend gratitude to you, our members, for your generosity financially and timewise to the Museum. It is because of your generosity that I, and many others, can relive, relate and enjoy the history and stories of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

In the coming months, I would like to speak with you to share updates on what the Museum has been doing, hear your recommendations and keep you informed about the positive change your support can bring. Please expect my call, email or letter.

Once again, thank you for being an integral part of the Western Development Museum. Your support truly makes a difference. If you have any questions or suggestions or if there is anything specific you would like to learn about, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at aogele@wdm.ca.

I look forward to working with you in advancing the vision and mission of the WDM.

Sincerely,

Ajibike Ogele, Fundraising Specialist

Sparks is published four times a year and delivered to WDM members. It's a great way to keep up to date on everything happening at all WDM locations.

Editor: Corinne Daelick

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On The Cover: WDM Members Isabel and Olivia exploring the *Eaton's Once Upon A Christmas* display at the WDM Saskatoon. Courtesy of Michelle Berg.

In This Edition . . .

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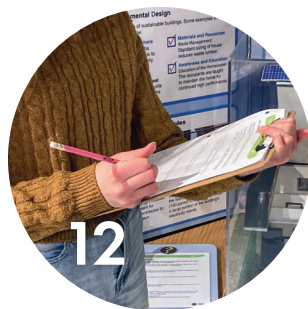
We need your help to identify the maker of a c.1900 beaded pad saddle and horse blanket.

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Learn about the display that's been a holiday tradition at the WDM Saskatoon since 1987.

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In-Museum and virtual school programs are back at the WDM for another school year.



WDM Board of Directors

Orlanda Drebit
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Vice Chair, Saskatoon

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Secretary, Saskatoon

Gwen Beitel
Spring Valley

Anita Fuller
Saskatoon

Kelsie Stettner
Regina

Hours of Operation

WDM Moose Jaw
Daily 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

WDM North Battleford
Daily 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

WDM Yorkton
Mon – Fri 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Sat – Sun 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm

WDM Saskatoon
Mon – Wed 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Thurs 9:00 am – 8:00 pm
Fri – Sun 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Boomtown Café (Saskatoon)
Daily 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

All locations closed Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day, Boxing Day & New Year's Day.

Closed at 3:00 pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

#MemoryMondays

On the first Monday of each month, our Facebook page features historic Saskatchewan memories. Share our post or comment with your own memory.

Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/wdm.museum

October is agriculture month in Saskatchewan so it seems fitting to share photos of children helping feed animals around the farm. Making sure the animals are fed is an important task and one that younger children can often help with. It's also a task that can make for great photos.



Helping with chores by feeding chickens, date unknown.

WDM BARTON COLLECTION 07042



A young child helps feed Biff the dog, 1946.

WDM BARTON COLLECTION 09014



Feeding a calf in a field, July 1927.

WDM BARTON COLLECTION 04041



Feeding barn cats, date unknown.

WDM BARTON COLLECTION 07098

Métis Pad Saddle and Horse Blanket

Can you help solve a mystery?

Horses have always been important to the Métis. The highly decorative pad saddles, horse blankets and other riding equipment made by Métis women, reflected this and were highly valued. These pieces were also often sold to nineteenth century fur companies, explorers and missionaries. As a result, many have ended up in private or museum collections with their stories forgotten.

We are seeking to rediscover the story of this pad saddle and horse blanket (c.1900), which are artifacts in the WDM Collection. Meant to be used together, these pieces were likely made in the Crescent Lake/Yorkton area.

The style of beadwork suggests a Métis beadworker made them. Before 1920, the maker either traded them for goods or gave them as a gift to a man named Bert Smith, who gave them to Tom Stewart, a local horseman. Tom Stewart gave them to local farmer Jim Harris around 1930. The Harris family cared for the saddle and blanket until they came to the WDM in 1986. The saddle is on display at the WDM Yorkton. 120 years later, we are still searching for their maker.



Beaded Saddle
WDM-1986-Y-6.2.A.B.



Horse Blanket
WDM-1986-Y-6.2.A.B.

2023 Years of Service Recipients

The WDM recognizes and wishes to thank the following individuals for their years of service to the Museum.



Tara Chapple, WDM Saskatoon
Kathryn DeMarsh, WDM Yorkton
Raijun Fullerton, WDM Yorkton
Kaiti Hannah, WDM Corporate Office
Meredith Hebb, WDM Saskatoon
Cory Schewaga, WDM Corporate Office
Jordan Stevenson, WDM Saskatoon
Elwood Theaker, WDM Saskatoon
Courtney Tuck-Goetz, WDM Saskatoon
Duncan Wilson, WDM Saskatoon
Rachelle Zapisocki, WDM Saskatoon



Blair Bieber, WDM Yorkton
Jordan Bruce, WDM Saskatoon
Roxanne Enns, WDM Corporate Office
Diana Savage, WDM Corporate Office



Heather Englebert, WDM Corporate Office
Kristine Flynn, WDM Corporate Office
Denise Hanley, WDM Moose Jaw
Melissa Stus, WDM Corporate Office



Della Harder, WDM Saskatoon



Carla Madsen, WDM Yorkton

Former Board Member Honoured

Congratulations to former WDM Board Member **Susan Lamb** on the official dedication of **Lamb Park** in Saskatoon's Aspen Ridge neighbourhood.

Susan served on the WDM Board of Directors from 2013 - 2021. Not only did she serve the WDM, Susan has been involved with many organizations including time spent as CEO of Saskatoon's Meewasin Valley Authority. Congratulations to Susan on this well-deserved recognition of her community leadership and volunteerism.



A WDM Saskatoon Holiday Tradition Eaton's Once Upon A Christmas



Where It All Started

Children's noses pressed against cold windows, watching in wonder as sparkling characters danced and animals nodded. During the years following the Second World War, Canadians who shopped at Eaton's department stores in cities like Winnipeg and Toronto were treated to windows full of Christmas scenes and figures. It is these window displays that make up the Western Development Museum's *Eaton's Once Upon A Christmas* display.

Built in 1946 for Eaton's Portage Avenue store in Winnipeg, the displays complemented the annual Santa Claus parade. Ex-aircraft technicians were commissioned to design and create the displays. They used surplus air force navigational motors to power around 3,000 moving parts that make up the display. The figures, built from plaster of Paris, danced and swayed under the power of these motors.

After many years, the scenes were put into storage until 1976 when they were divided and sold to Eaton's stores in Saskatoon, Regina and Thunder Bay. In 1977, the Eaton's store in Saskatoon purchased the units that had gone to Regina and Thunder Bay and displayed them in their Midtown Plaza store where they appeared annually until 1984. In 1985 and 1986, the display was put up in Midtown Plaza.



In 1987, Eaton's offered the display to the WDM Saskatoon.

Volunteers – The Magic Ingredient

When the WDM acquired the display, we knew that we did not have enough staff to take on the mammoth task of refurbishing and maintaining it. However, the WDM had a group of talented volunteers willing to help. Many of the motors had stopped working, wiring needed to be replaced and figures were broken. In the first year, staff and volunteers racked up nearly 3,000 hours cleaning and repairing.

Since 1987, many volunteers and staff have added their special touches to keep the display up and running. In 1995, the WDM refurbished all the paper surfaces and lettering. In 1998, a mechanical and electrical overhaul was completed. In a three-year period, volunteers Del Huyghebaert and Nelson Remenda put in 6,000 volunteer hours on this overhaul as well as helping staff Gene Barlow and George Seabrook prepare the exhibit.

In 2005, the Women's Auxiliary to the WDM sewed new cloaks, dresses and



coats for the figures. Each costume was measured, cut and sewn directly onto each figure. Hats and scarves were knit for miniature bodies. A few years later, the Angels Sewing Circle received a touch up thanks to volunteer Cheryl Hill-Hampson who carefully brightened the angel's painted faces. Visitors in 2022 likely noticed refreshed paint work throughout the display thanks to the talent of WDM staffer Jane Reväe McWhirter. New in 2023 are new curtains for each book in the display, skillfully sewn by Women's Auxiliary volunteers.

For over 20 years, volunteer Jim McRae has put in thousands of hours assisting staff and looking after the display. In 2019, Jim was joined by Randall Simpson to help staff with set up and to do daily checks on the thousands of moving parts. For Jim, "Just to go out and make sure it's running, it can give you a good feeling."

Thanks to Randall, Jim and all of the volunteers and staff over the years who keep the magic alive.

Making Memories

One of the most popular displays at the WDM Saskatoon is *Eaton's Once Upon A Christmas*. Every year, we hear from visitors of all ages who make the WDM Saskatoon part of their holiday plans. In a time of high tech gadgets and special effects, what is it about the animatronic display that is so engaging? Is it nostalgia? Fascination with the past? These are part of it but what we hear most from folks is that it's the memories. Memories of visits with grandparents or grandchildren, with the whole family or with friends during a school field trip.

WDM members Michelle Berg and Meredith Newman kindly shared their memories with us. They have visited the display since they were children and now continue the tradition with their own children.

"I really just love the nostalgia of the whole display. The smell of the WDM and watching the joy in my children's faces as they take it all in. The *Once Upon a Christmas* display is what officially puts me in the Christmas spirit."

WDM Member Michelle Berg



Michelle Berg and sister Chantelle, 1989

COURTESY OF MICHELLE BERG

Michelle Berg was six months old when she made her first visit to *Eaton's Once Upon A Christmas* in 1987, the first year it was on display at the WDM. She has visited every year since. When she was very young, Michelle's grandparents would bring her and her older sister Chantelle to see the magical figures, like the Winterkins which are Michelle's favourite part of the display. She remembers, "standing in front of it for a long time taking in all the details." When Michelle got a little older, her parents would bring the family and they would also visit the Festival of Trees as her Mom would decorate a tree for the festival. As a young adult the roles reversed as Michelle would bring her grandparents to take in the holiday display.

Michelle and Chantelle still carry on the family tradition by bringing their own children each year, along with their parents. Michelle's favourite memory is when her daughter Isabel was 1 ½ years old because it brought her memories full circle, "The wonder of Christmas in her young, bright eyes was so exciting to see. She would point and exclaim and just love every aspect of it."



Engagement ring hidden in the Angel's Sewing Circle display.

COURTESY OF MEREDITH NEWMAN



Justin, Evelyn and Meredith, November 13, 2021.

COURTESY OF MEREDITH NEWMAN

"For me it never felt like Christmas until I went to see *Eaton's Once Upon A Christmas*. Over the years, I have continued to go see the exhibit as it's always held a special place for me."

WDM Member Meredith Newman

Visiting the *Eaton's Once Upon A Christmas* display is an annual tradition for Meredith Newman since she was a young girl. She always felt a strong connection to the WDM as both her parents had worked at the WDM at one-time and her grandfather was a long-time volunteer. In November 2020 the WDM, and the *Eaton's Once Upon A Christmas* display, became an even more meaningful place for Meredith. Meredith and her partner, Justin Fetter, planned to take their daughter Evelyn to see the display and carry on the tradition. Unbeknownst to Meredith, Justin had conspired with WDM Saskatoon staff to hide an engagement ring in the Angel's Sewing Circle display. When they got to the display, Justin pointed to the angels quilting and asked if Meredith saw the box. Meredith admitted, "At this time I was completely clueless, it wasn't until Justin was on one knee with that same box that sat in the exhibit, that I realized we has proposing."

On November 13, 2021, almost one year to the day that they were engaged, Meredith and Justin were married at the WDM. In 2022, Meredith visited the *Eaton's Once Upon A Christmas* display with Justin, Evelyn and their twins, Jamieson and Sullivan, who were born in spring 2022. The family tradition continues.

WDM Education Programs

Do you remember your first trip to the WDM? For many children their first visit is as part of a school field trip. It's exciting for us to share Saskatchewan history with these young visitors. Besides our in-Museum programs, the WDM offers virtual programs providing more opportunities to learn about Saskatchewan, even when classes can't make it to the Museum. Read on to learn about a few of our programs.



Soils in Saskatchewan

HARVEST IN SASKATCHEWAN - PART 1

The work of growing grain starts even before putting seeds into the ground – in fact, it starts with the ground itself. Soils are different throughout the province.

Planting a crop in Saskatchewan begins by preparing the soil. Before the seeding process, it's important to know the kind of soil you have in your field. This will help you determine what to plant, what nutrients the soil may need and how you can grow a healthy crop.

Virtual Harvest in Saskatchewan

Our updated Virtual Harvest in Saskatchewan program, designed for the Grade 4 curriculum, brings the experience of harvest to the classroom. Through video and new interactive engagement, students learn about early harvest techniques and how the grain we harvest becomes the food we eat.

In the virtual exhibit, *Our Collective Threads*, we think about how the clothes we wear offers clues to who we are and where we come from. In the accompanying virtual program for Grades 5, 6 and 7, students examine a variety of textiles that reflect the diversity of Saskatchewan's people and then think about how their own clothing choices reflect aspects of their identity.

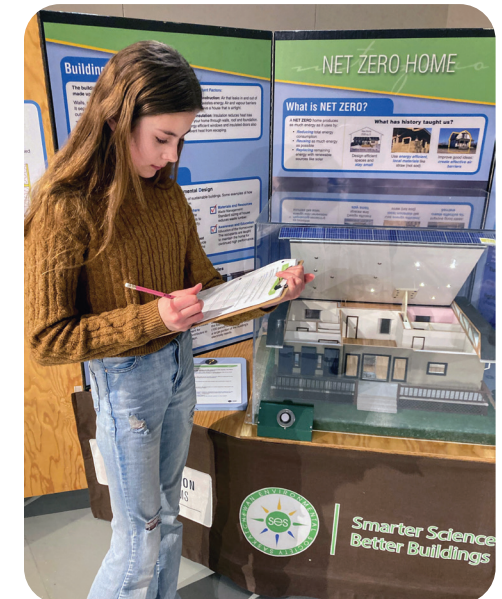
One Room Many Lessons asks Grade 1 and 2 students to identify characteristics of their classroom and then compare them with a rural one room schoolhouse attended by settler children in 1910. Students explore how the roles of teachers and students have stayed the same and how they have changed over the last 100+ years. This program is offered at the WDM Saskatoon with a virtual version available if you can't get to Saskatoon.



One Room Many Lessons

Created in partnership with the Saskatchewan Environmental Society, Smarter Science Better Buildings connects to the Grade 7 Science curriculum. Students learn about what they can do to be more energy efficient while exploring past and current examples of building efficiency. Not only is this program available at all WDM locations but we've partnered with the Prince Albert Science Centre to offer the program there.

Visit wdm.ca to learn more about these and other WDM school programs.



Smarter Science Better Buildings

BRAINBUSTERS

IT'S A SASK FACT!

Did you know...

On May 1, 1947, Saskatchewan was the first province to enact a Bill of Rights, guaranteeing certain freedoms and rights, and making it illegal to discriminate against "any person or class of person." This Bill predated the Canadian Bill of Rights which was enacted in 1960.

True or False

Can you tell which Sask Facts are true and which aren't?

1. In 1947, the Yorkton Board of Trade gave Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip a train carload of flour as a wedding gift.
2. Reindeer Lake is the largest lake in Saskatchewan.
3. Construction of the Saskatchewan Legislative Building took place from 1905–09.
4. Yorkton was officially incorporated as a town in 1900, before Melfort, North Battleford and Saskatoon.
5. In 2009, a world record rainbow trout was caught in Lake Diefenbaker.
6. The Western Development Museum will turn 75 years old in 2024.



Search for the Saskatchewan Symbol

Hidden somewhere in this issue of *Sparks* is a Western Red Lily like this one. This lily is Saskatchewan's official flower. Can you find it?

Spot The Differences

Since 1987, Eaton's *Once Upon A Christmas* has been a fixture of the WDM Saskatoon during the holiday season. The crafting angels of the Angels Sewing Circle are a popular part of the festive display.

Look closely to spot 6 differences between these photos!



WDM MOOSE JAW

1955 Crown Victoria

WDM-1977-S-606

The 1950s in Canada was a time of prosperity and optimism following the hard times of the previous two decades. Vehicle styles reflected these times with manufacturers creating cars that were longer, lower and wider. The 1955 Ford Crown Victoria was one of this new design of car. The chrome details gave the car a regal touch with the Ford Motor Company declaring the car had a "crown of chrome."

In 1958, Florence Henderson of Dodsland purchased this Crown Victoria from the local dealership. She would own it for 17 years. It was donated to the WDM in 1977.



WDM SASKATOON

Trivial Pursuit Board Game

WDM-2006-S-50.6.a-f

You'd be hard pressed to find a Saskatchewan family in the 1980s that didn't own a Trivial Pursuit game. Developed by Montrealers Scott Abbott and Chris Haney, the board game was introduced in 1981 and took the world by storm. By 1984, sales of the game totalled almost \$800 million. The original game consisted of 6,000 trivia questions in six themed categories.

For a true fan, the September 15, 1984 Saskatoon StarPhoenix reported that fans could take an eight-day Trivial Pursuit luxury cruise. For \$1,445 each, fans could meet the creators and try out new versions of the game while cruising the Caribbean Sea.



WDM NORTH BATTLEFORD

Pump Jack

WDM-2004-NB-1

This pump jack was purchased in the late 1940s by the Fargo Oil and Gas Company for use in the Marsden area. This unit produced 4.5 to 5.5 barrels of profitable oil per day with a value, at the time, of approximately \$1.88 per barrel. Small oil companies found it difficult to succeed. Factors such as labour costs, maintenance, transporting oil to a terminal plus royalties paid to the government cut into company profits. The pump jack is on display in the 100 Years of Saskatchewan History exhibit.



WDM YORKTON

Firefighter Helmet

WDM-1973-Y-9

According to the Manitoba Morning Free Press newspaper of April 14, 1906, "Yorkton is reckoned and well-known as one of the safest and most substantial towns in all the west." No doubt community services like the Yorkton Fire Department contributed to this glowing review. It was on October 9, 1900, that a meeting was held to establish the Yorkton volunteer fire brigade. For the safety of these volunteers, on September 12, 1901, a request was made for a grant of \$100 to provide better equipment for the brigade. This included the purchase of 12 helmets, costing no more than \$18 per dozen. One of these leather firefighter's helmets is on display at the WDM Yorkton.



Exhibit Wins Provincial Award

On June 10, 2023, the WDM and Whitecap Dakota First Nation (WDFN) were honoured to receive the Museums Association of Saskatchewan (MAS) Award of Merit for our co-curated exhibit, *Wapaha Ska Oyate: Living Our Culture, Sharing Our Community at Pion-Era, 1955-69*. This award is given to an institution that promotes Saskatchewan museums through a recent significant project and through sustained contributions to their community.

Since 2018, the WDM and WDFN have been renewing our relationship that began over 70 years ago. This exhibit at the WDM Saskatoon was designed and built by the WDM Exhibits Department in full partnership with WDFN. It shares the story of the Whitecap community's years attending Pion-Era, highlighting their unique contributions to the show and their unbroken connection to Saskatoon.

The WDM gratefully acknowledges the Whitecap Dakota First Nation Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Chief Darcy Bear, Councillor Frank Royal, Councillor Dwayne Eagle and co-Curator Stephanie Danyluk who have informed the project and exhibit at every stage, including this award.



Co-Curator Stephanie Danyluk and Councillor Frank Royal of WDFN and MAS President Helanna Gessner



WDM Saskatoon Operations Manager Julia Wagner and MAS President Helanna Gessner

Virtual Coffee Club

Grab a cup of coffee and join us for our Virtual Coffee Club. Sessions take place via Zoom from 10:00 - 11:00 am. There is no cost but pre-registration is required. Registration closes at 11:59 pm on the day before the Virtual Coffee Club.

Visit wdm.ca/coffeeclub to register.

Changing Perspectives One Page at a Time

Thursday, October 26

Karin Steuber of the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society discusses their new book about Saskatchewan projectile points, aka arrowheads. The presentation highlights the complex knowledge systems involved in making stone tools and how this book came to be.

Behind the Scenes at the WDM: The Collections Department

Thursday, November 23

Collections Manager Julie Jackson gives an overview of collection development including current acquisitions and deaccessioning guidelines plus a peek into collections storage spaces.

Behind the Scenes at the WDM: The Exhibits Department

Thursday, December 21

Join Director of Exhibits Diana Savage for a behind-the-scenes look at the WDM Exhibits Department. Learn about the process of exhibit development, see recent projects and get a sneak peek of what is in the works.



Spot the Differences



The Western Red Lily is on page 7.

Search for the Saskatchewan Symbol

1. True. Due to post-Second World War food shortages in Great Britain, the Board thought flour would be a very useful gift.
2. False. Reindeer Lake is the 2nd largest lake. Lake Athabasca is the largest.
3. False. Construction of the Legislative Building started in 1908 and was finished in 1912 at a cost of close to \$3,000,000.
4. True. Saskatoon did not gain town status until 1903, North Battleford in 1906 and Melfort in 1907.
5. True. The biggest rainbow trout ever caught weighed 22 kg (48 lbs) and was 107 cm (42 inches) long.
6. True. On April 2, 1949, the Saskatchewan Legislature gave royal assent to a bill to create the Western Development Museum.

True or False

Brainbuster Answers

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WDM Corporate Office

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Toll Free: 1-800-363-6345
Email: info@wdm.ca

WDM Corporate Office Business Hours

8:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday – Friday
Closed statutory holidays



Handkerchief from First World War, c. 1914
WDM-1975-2-202



[WDM.CA](http://wdm.ca)



#SaskInspired