



APRIL – JUNE 2024 • VOLUME 48, EDITION 2

SPARKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN DEVELOPMENT MUSEUM



Every Moment Matters

Celebrating volunteers

WDM at 75

How it all began

It Still Feels Like Home

One supporter's story

MOOSE JAW

NORTH BATTLEFORD

SASKATOON

YORKTON



WDM.CA

Here is What is Happening at the WDM

All Locations

April 2	WDM Turns 75! Join us for 75 cent admission and cake!
June 8	BMO Day at the WDM – Free admission

WDM Moose Jaw

April 1 – 30	Diamond & 75th Anniversary Seek and Finds
May 11	Moose Jaw Amateur Radio Club Pop-Up Event
May 13 – July 14	2SLGBTQ+ Seniors: <i>Storytelling on the Prairies</i> Travelling Exhibit

WDM North Battleford

April 1 – 30	Diamond Seek and Find
April 13	Spring Tea
June 13 – September 20	<i>Behind Racism: Challenging the Way We Think</i> Travelling Exhibit
June 19	National Indigenous Peoples Day Traditional Pow Wow

WDM Saskatoon

April – June	Monthly Seek and Finds
April 16, May 20 & June 11	Pop in and Play with the WDM
April 20	Pioneer Threshermen's Club Flea Market
Throughout June	Heritage Skills Demonstrations, Thursdays from 5:00–7:00 pm
June 18	Spark Your Pride

WDM Yorkton

April 1 – 30	Diamond Seek and Find
May 5	Mommy & Me Cookies and Tea
May 19	Discovery Box Family Programming
June 1 & 15	Movies at the Museum
June 9	Daddy & I Coffee and Pie



Every Moment Matters

April 14 – 20 is National Volunteer Week in Canada and the theme this year is “Every Moment Matters.” Individually, volunteers across our communities give of their time and talents to make a difference locally. The impact of so many individual contributions collectively build to improve the quality of life for all of us.

Every Moment Matters because it is through these individual contributions that real change is possible. A gift of even an hour of a person’s time to a cause that they are passionate about will, over time, become a gift with real impact.

Improving by 1% isn’t particularly notable, sometimes it isn’t even noticeable, but it can be far more meaningful – especially in the long run. If you can get 1% better each day for one year, you’ll end up 37 times better by the time you’re done.

- James Clear (*Atomic Habits*)

Every moment given by a volunteer is meaningful. Every moment, collectively, can change the world.

WDM volunteers are an important part of the WDM community. Without the support and contributions of our many volunteers, much of what brings the WDM to life would not be possible. We are grateful to the many people who have chosen to be a part of making every moment matter at the WDM. Not only has the WDM benefited from the contributions of our volunteers, so have all who have visited the Museum and experienced our shared history.

I am truly grateful for the contributions made by each and every one of our volunteers. To all our volunteers, thank you for sharing your passion for Saskatchewan’s history with us. Thank you for your work, your dedication and for being such an important part of the Western Development Museum.

Sincerely,

Joan Kanigan, CEO

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: Long-time volunteers Bryan and Arlene Ryan in the Boomtown Blacksmith Shop, WDM Saskatoon

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Calgary's Chellan Hoffman shares her family's connection to the WDM and why the WDM is so special to her.



WDM Board of Directors

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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
Through May 26
Weekdays 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Weekends 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm

May 27–September 29
Daily 9:00 am – 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 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Thank You Saskatchewan!

Let's Celebrate!



April 2, 2024, marks the 75th anniversary of the formal creation of the WDM through an act of the Saskatchewan legislature. To celebrate, we're excited to offer our visitors 75 cent admission to all WDM exhibit locations on Tuesday, April 2, 2024.

Not only will you have access to our fantastic exhibits, you can try our 75th anniversary-themed seek and find activity or sit back and watch our WDM history slideshow. Join us at 2:00 pm for cupcakes, while supplies last.

At the WDM Yorkton, volunteers from the Yorkton Threshermen's Club will be making rope and we'll have a photo display featuring WDM events and familiar faces from the past.

At the WDM Saskatoon, you'll find heritage skills demonstrations and short anniversary tours. The Boomtown Café will offer 75 cent coffee and a cookie. You can also try out Boomtown Pursuit, our exciting digital scavenger hunt adventure (Cost: \$5/entry code).

Flashback to the 1950s – 60s at the WDM North Battleford with our WDM Reminiscence Kit.

Also in April, the WDM North Battleford will host a Spring Tea featuring a presentation about the history of the WDM. The Tea takes place on Saturday, April 13. Contact the WDM North Battleford for more information.

On Thursday, April 18, join Alexis Jones, WDM Moose Jaw Programs & Volunteer Coordinator, for the Virtual Coffee Club. Alexis will lead a presentation about the WDM's history.

Visit wdm.ca/coffeeclub to register. Watch for more 75th anniversary activities at WDM events throughout the year.

#MemoryMondays

On the first Monday of each month, our Facebook page features historic Saskatchewan memories. Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/wdm.museum

On April 2, 1949, the Saskatchewan Legislature passed the Western Development Museum Act, formally establishing the WDM as an institution to collect, preserve and exhibit objects of historical value and importance connected with the economic and cultural development of western Canada. Today, the WDM has four exhibit locations across Saskatchewan and a Corporate Office. In celebration of our 75th anniversary #MemoryMondays will show the early days of each current WDM location.



This photo shows the early stages of hangar reassembly in North Battleford

WDM PHOTO

WDM North Battleford – Open 1963

The present-day WDM North Battleford location opened on May 25, 1963. It was a surplus Royal Canadian Air Force hangar from the Second World War and was transported piece by piece from Mossbank to North Battleford, where it was then pieced back together.



Guests touring the Provincial Service Centre at the opening, 1984

WDM PHOTO



Corporate Office – Open 1984

In 1982, the Government of Saskatchewan provided funding for, among other things, a new collections storage facility in Saskatoon. An old grocery warehouse was purchased and renovated. Initially this building was called the Provincial Service Centre before being renamed to the Curatorial Centre in 1993 and then renamed once more to Corporate Office in 2018. Approximately 50% of the WDM's artifact collection is currently stored in this building as well as a library, conservation lab and administrative offices.

WDM Saskatoon – Open 1972

The WDM Saskatoon opened in its current location on Lorne Avenue on July 11, 1972. The opening ceremony included speeches from dignitaries such as Saskatoon Mayor H.S. Sears, Senator Sid Buckwold and Premier Allan Blakeney.



WDM Saskatoon under construction, 1971

WDM PHOTO

WDM Yorkton – Open 1972

After a sod turning on September 8, 1971, the WDM Yorkton opened its doors at its present location on August 15, 1972. An opening ceremony was held on September 13, 1972. The building was constructed for a cost of \$115,000.



Opening celebrations held outside the WDM Yorkton, 1972

WDM PHOTO

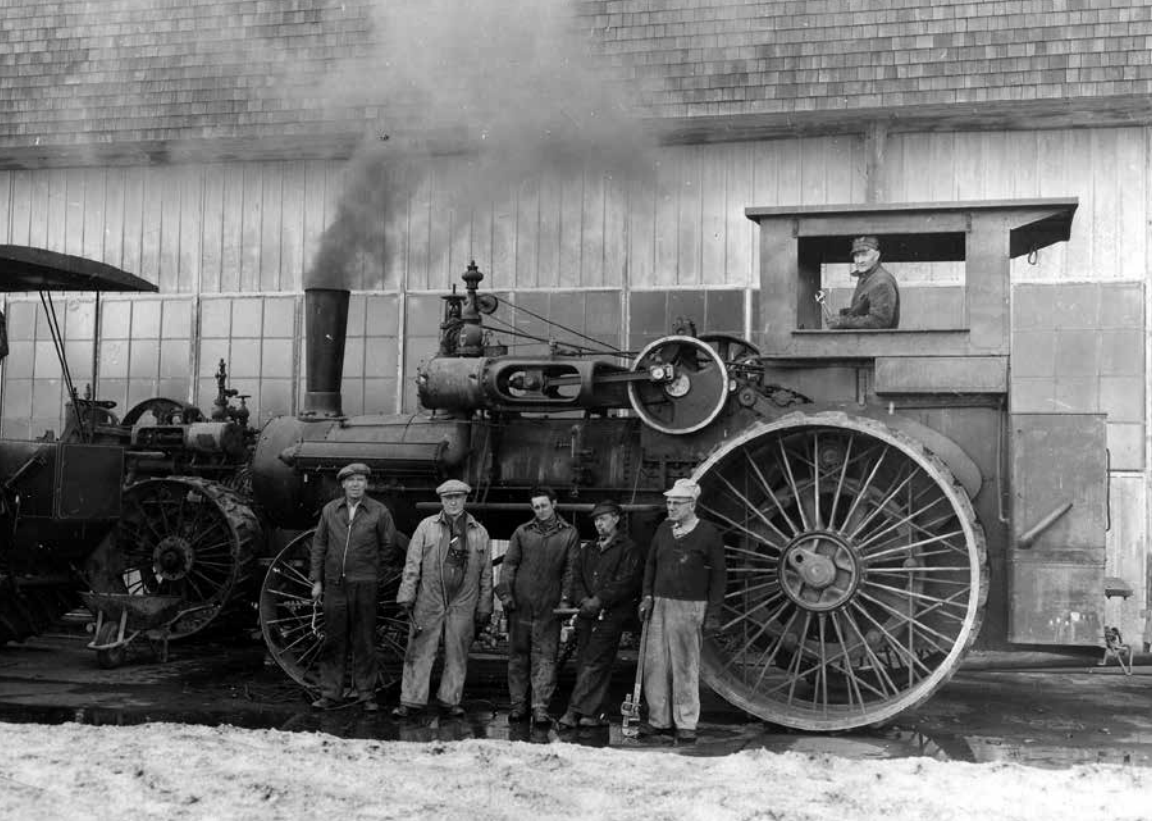
WDM Moose Jaw – Open 1976

Construction of the WDM Moose Jaw began in 1974 at the intersection of Highways 1 and 2. When completed, the building was 10,405 square metres. It was opened on June 26, 1976, with Premier Allan Blakeney officiating the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



WDM Moose Jaw construction site, 1974 or 75

WDM PHOTO



Staff and volunteers with the 32-110 Case (WDM-1973-NB-62), WDM North Battleford, c. 1950
WDM PHOTO

The WDM Through The Years

Early 1940s – 1974

In 2024, the WDM marks 75 years as Saskatchewan's human history museum. There have been a lot of changes since 1949. Join us as we travel back in time in this first in a three-part series sharing the history of the WDM. In this issue, let's see where it all began.

There have been differing stories about whose idea it was to create a museum. Whether it was one or many, what is certain is that many people supported the idea and worked hard to create the Museum we have today.

During the early 1940s, there was demand for metal for the Second World War effort. Abandoned farm equipment that had been used in the early 20th century was being taken in for scrap metal. The disappearance

of these old machines did not go unnoticed. In 1942 - 43, members of the Battlefords Historical Society began to discuss the need to preserve these machines.

Joe Phelps, Saskatchewan's Minister of Natural Resources and Industrial Development was able to secure a provincial government grant of \$10,000 to start an agricultural museum.

A committee led by Phelps, W.C. Wells, a farmer and contractor and Evan Hardy, Dean of Agriculture and Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan, put out a call for old farm machinery. The group arranged to use a stable at Fort Battleford as its first collection depot. As the word spread, more

storage space was needed so the Museum made use of Second World War airport hangars in North Battleford, Saskatoon, Yorkton, Weyburn, Swift Current and Moose Jaw.

With so much equipment coming in, it was time to keep a record of it. On December 11, 1947, the Museum recorded its first entry in its accession register which is where artifact donations are tracked. The first record was for a 15 horsepower, International Harvester gasoline engine (WDM-1973-NB-505).

While artifacts were being collected, the wheels were in motion to create a museum through provincial legislation. The Western Development Museum Act was passed in the Saskatchewan Legislature on April 2, 1949. On April 28, a provincial annual grant was received in the amount of \$15,000. Today, the WDM continues to receive funding from the provincial government to help with operations.

In 1949, WDM hangars in North Battleford and Saskatoon were opened to the public. On June 15, an admission fee of 25 cents per person was introduced at the WDM North Battleford, with a maximum of \$1 per family. Children under 12 were free as were artifact donors. On August 1, the WDM Saskatoon started charging the same fee. In that first year, WDM attendance was 7,109 visitors.

A hangar at the Yorkton airport became the WDM's third location when it opened to the public on June 17, 1951. That same year, a Second World War hangar from Swift Current was dismantled and moved to Saskatoon where it was reconstructed on 11th Street West. The WDM Saskatoon moved to this building in 1952.

In August 1953, the WDM hired George Shepherd as its first Curator. Shepherd was a retired rancher with a passion for Western

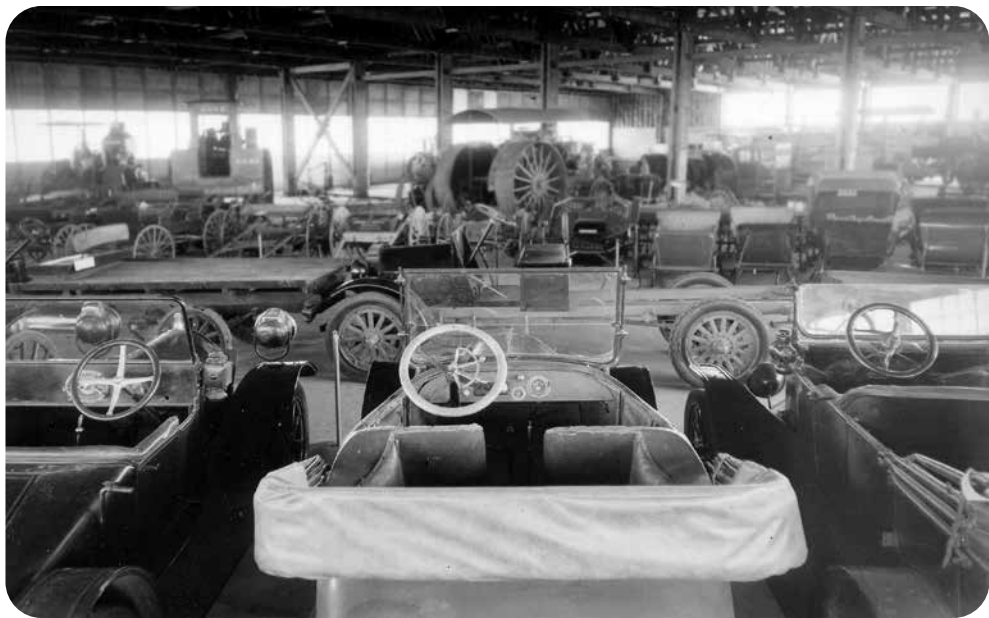


Eva and Joe Phelps at a WDM event, c. 1955
WDM PHOTO

Canadian history. He enjoyed the job so much that he stayed on as Curator until October 1977 when he retired at the age of 87. In recognition of his years of service to the province, Shepherd was presented with an Honorary Doctor of Laws in 1976 by the University of Saskatchewan. The research library located in the WDM's Corporate Office is called the Dr. George Shepherd Library.

1955 was a big year in Saskatchewan. People around the province celebrated the Golden Jubilee which marked 50 years since the province's creation. WDM staff met with Golden Jubilee committees in Saskatoon and Yorkton to plan how the WDM could be involved.

After doing a three-day test run in October 1954, the WDM Saskatoon launched Pioneer Era from July 4 - 9, 1955. The six-day show



WDM Saskatoon at 11th Street West, c. 1952

WDM PHOTO

included farm demonstrations, blacksmithing, entertainment and new exhibits. This was the first time that Whitecap Dakota Nation took part in Pion-Era. They would continue to set up camp and do demonstrations at Pion-Era until 1969. Despite having rain on two of the six days, overall Pion-Era attendance was more than 25,000 people.

On August 17, 1955, the Yorkton Threshermen's Club staged their first threshing show at the WDM Yorkton. The show was called Pion-Era Day and Old-Time Threshermen's Reunion. Besides harvest demonstrations, the day featured Ukrainian and Doukhobor displays and a street dance. The show, now known as the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival, still takes place annually. The WDM North Battleford held their first show, the Threshermen's Reunion, over three days in October 1956.

It was in 1955 that the WDM's first volunteer clubs organized. That year, both the Yorkton Threshermen's Club and the Pioneer Threshermen's Club at the WDM Saskatoon formed. In 1957, the Women's Auxilliary to the Western Development Museum began in Saskatoon. These three volunteer clubs still exist today. Since those early days, the WDM has benefited from the talents of many volunteer groups and individuals who have given their time and talent to the Museum.

Recognizing the need for training on steam engines, the WDM offered its first formal Steam Traction Engine Operation Course in 1959. Fred Leigh of the WDM and members of the Pioneer Threshermen's Club led the course. Over the years, this course has been updated to ensure that it meets provincial safety standards. It is still being offered today.



WDM Yorkton, c. 1973

WDM PHOTO

By the late 1950s, the WDMs were so successful that talks began with local city councils about expansion. In 1956, staff dreamed of expanding the WDM Saskatoon with new interior exhibits, a First Nations encampment and outdoor village. In 1957, Yorkton City Council was approached about allocating land for a new Museum closer to the city. A committee in North Battleford was tasked with finding a desirable new location for the WDM.

In 1960, 60 acres of land was acquired in North Battleford for the WDM. In 1961, a Second World War hangar was moved from Mossbank and reassembled on the site as the new Museum building. Construction began on an outdoor Heritage Village. The opening of the new location was planned to coincide with the City of North Battleford's 50th anniversary celebrations in 1963.

With so much going on, in 1964 staff were hired to handle financial and administrative duties. Although based out of the WDM Saskatoon the new staff assisted with operations at all three Museums.

To celebrate Canada's Centennial in 1967, the WDM mounted a travelling exhibit of steam engines, antique vehicles and small artifacts that visited 30 communities across Saskatchewan. Entry to the exhibit was free of charge. In 1967, attendance hit 158,708 visitors.

Throughout the 1960s, discussions continued about new locations and expansion for the WDMs Saskatoon and Yorkton. By 1971, new locations were found for both. In Saskatoon, although the WDM sought an area in Diefenbaker Park, the City of Saskatoon offered land beside the Exhibition grounds.



WDM Moose Jaw sod turning. WDM Board Chair George Dyck, Moose Jaw Mayor Herb Taylor, MLA Dr. Don MacDonald & Saskatchewan Minister of Labour Gordon Snyder on the plow. Ed Tchorzewski, Minister of Culture and Youth is on the steam engine, 1974

WDM PHOTO

Instead of constructing an outdoor village as originally hoped, an indoor village street called Boomtown would be created to represent what a small town in Saskatchewan might have looked like in 1910. Featured are replica buildings plus one artifact building - St. Peter's Anglican Church (WDM-1973-S-100) from Young. The WDM Saskatoon opened at its Lorne Avenue location on July 11, 1972.

In Yorkton, a spot along Highway 14, which is today known as Highway 16A, was selected for the WDM. Construction got underway on a fully heated 30 x 30 metre building at a cost of \$115,000. Immigration to Saskatchewan was featured in showcase rooms using artifacts from Britain, Germany, Sweden, Ukraine and others. A grand opening was held on September 13, 1972.

In 1973, the WDM joined the computer age as one of the first museums in Canada to join the National Inventory Program which later became known as the Canadian Heritage Information Network or CHIN. The goal of CHIN was to create computerized records of museum artifacts across the country.

Also in 1973, the WDM secured a \$1 million government grant for the construction of a new WDM in Moose Jaw. The theme of this Museum would be transportation. A ceremonial sod turning took place on May 9, 1974 using a steam engine and plow. Construction got underway using the same design as was used for the WDM Saskatoon.

Stay tuned for the next issue of *Sparks* when we start out in 1975 taking a look at the WDM Moose Jaw and head into the 1980s.

Volunteer Week: Every Moment Matters

Celebrating WDM Volunteers

For the past 75 years, volunteers have played a very important role in the WDM and in what we offer to our community. No matter what the task or how much time is given, every volunteer

contribution is valuable. Whether you see the volunteers working with the public or helping behind the scenes, each volunteer contributes to the Museum's success.



Canada's National Volunteer Week takes place from April 14 – 20, 2024. It is a time to celebrate and thank Canada's 24 million volunteers. The theme of National Volunteer Week 2024 is "Every Moment Matters." The theme reflects on how all volunteer contributions improve the quality of our lives and to the health of our communities.

We hope that you'll celebrate the volunteers in your life and that you'll help us celebrate our WDM volunteers. Keep reading to learn about a few of the hundreds of volunteers who share their talents with us to make memories and moments at the WDM.

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. Registrations closes at 11:59 pm on the day before the Virtual Coffee Club.

Visit wdm.ca/coffeeclub to register.

**WDM 75th History with Alexis Jones
of the WDM**

Thursday, April 18

Saskatchewan ABCs with Ruth Bitner

Thursday, May 23

**General Motors in Regina with
Dale Johnson**

Thursday, June 27

Every Moment Matters

Greig Pearce



Greig working on the flour mill at the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival, August 2023

WDM PHOTO

"Sure, I'll do it!" is a common phrase uttered by WDM volunteers. On this occasion, it was Greig Pearce who agreed to take on the role of Santa Claus for a WDM public event. A long-time volunteer, Greig was willing to step in where needed. A school program that Greig happily helps with is Celebrate Christmas Past where he has filled the role of Santa's helper and assisted with tractor and wagon rides. Greig told us that he has had children and parents come up to him in stores and elsewhere to thank him for the wonderful Museum experience. Greig loves making children smile so helping with the Celebrate Christmas Past program is the perfect fit.

Greig started volunteering with the Yorkton Threshermen's Club when he was 14 or 15 years old. At the time, the Museum was still located at the Yorkton airport. He volunteered with his family who operated the flour mill at the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival. He has volunteered on the flour mill ever since – learning from his parents how to use the mill and then teaching his own children and grandchildren to operate it. For Greig and wife Maureen, "It's a family thing. We have a good time. That's what it's for, to have fun!"

Thanks to Greig and the whole Pearce family for their years of commitment to the WDM.

Every Moment Matters

Bill Raynor



Bill Raynor, February 2024

WDM PHOTO



Bill working in the shop with fellow volunteer Stan Mills, February 2024

WDM PHOTO

It was around 2015 that WDM volunteer Stan Mills, invited Bill Raynor to check out the WDM North Battleford. As Bill put it, "I came along with him to see what he was working on and decided to keep coming."

Bill works with a group of volunteers at the WDM North Battleford who help out in the shop. These volunteers work on a variety of engines from the WDM's operating equipment collection, which are the machines used in demonstrations. When asked what his favourite thing to do at the WDM is, Bill was clear, "Definitely working on and getting to drive the old Rumely tractor." The 1915 Rumely Gas Pull tractor (WDM-1973-NB-48) was donated to the WDM in 1953.

Besides getting to tinker on old machines, Bill loves the camaraderie of working with the other volunteers... and the dessert treats they occasionally get from the Museum caterer.

You can look for Bill and the Rumely Gas Pull tractor at the History in Motion show at the WDM North Battleford on August 17 and 18, 2024.

Thanks for keeping the engines running, Bill!

Every Moment Matters

Mark & Evelyn Michener



Evelyn and Mark help out at Heritage Day, February 2024

WDM PHOTO

When Evelyn and Mark Michener moved to Moose Jaw from a small town in Ontario, they were looking for a way to contribute to their new community. They found the WDM's website and reached out to learn more about volunteering. What interested them about the WDM Moose Jaw was that, "It gave us an opportunity to couple our appreciation for history and our ability to be more involved especially in our retirement years."

Since starting to volunteer a couple of years ago, the Micheners have enjoyed helping with the A Christmas Long Ago school program, 2nd Annual Every Child Matters Traditional Pow Wow and Gathering, Halloween and Heritage Day. Mark also has a lifelong interest in Canadian railways and steam engines so the WDM Moose Jaw is a great fit. In 2023, Mark enrolled in the Steam Traction Engine Operation Course held at the WDM Moose Jaw. This was his first step towards becoming part of the crew that runs the K+S Potash Canada Short Line 101.

Evelyn and Mark told us that "It is a good feeling to be involved in an important aspect of sharing this country's past and being in contact with the people who come to experience history."

Thanks to Evelyn and Mark for choosing to volunteer and support the WDM!

Every Moment Matters

Ray Fribance, Dennis Stanley & Dave Buck

Dennis Stanley became a volunteer at the WDM Corporate Office in 2015. Like many folks, he was looking for volunteer opportunities in retirement. When his children were growing up, the family loved to visit the WDM so the Museum seemed like a logical choice.

When Dennis started at the WDM, he met Ray Fribance. Ray had been volunteering at the WDM since 2013 on projects ranging from building shelves to helping staff restore a 1930s homemade camper trailer. In 2016, they were joined by Dave Buck. Dave thought the WDM was a good fit for him because of his past work experience and interest in history. Ernie Christensen, a volunteer at the WDM Saskatoon, also joined them at Corporate Office.



Dave (inside the car), Dennis, Ernie and Ray with the 1953 Chevrolet Bel Air, 2018

WDM PHOTO



Ray, Dave and Dennis in the WDM Corporate Office shop, 2017

WDM PHOTO

No task is too big or small for these volunteers – from sorting small parts to building wooden canopies for steam engines. Their projects have included restoration of the 1914 Road Roller and work on Model Ts for exhibit. They worked on the 1953 Chevrolet Bel Air which is fully operational and in use at the WDM North Battleford. For Dave, “Each project has provided the opportunity to learn... I have especially enjoyed researching the various artifacts and seeing projects come to life.”

Currently, Dave, Ray and Dennis are assisting Operating Collections Manager and Chief Engineer Larry Postnikoff with work on a Ford Model A. Combined, these three volunteers have contributed an incredible 4,000 hours to the WDM.

When asked about what they enjoy about volunteering, Dave and Dennis agreed that it's the people. As Dennis put it, “In the end the part of volunteering I enjoy the most is the people. I have learned so much from the other volunteers and the staff of the WDM and look forward to my Thursdays [volunteer day].”

Thanks to Dennis, Dave, Ray, Ernie and all of the volunteers who share their skills with us!



Arlene and Bryan Ryan, February 2024

WDM PHOTO

Every Moment Matters

WDM Saskatoon Blacksmiths

Blacksmithing was always something that interested Bryan Ryan. When the WDM offered its first Introduction to Blacksmithing Course in 1988, Bryan was one of the first to sign up. He has spent thousands of hours honing his skills in the Boomtown Blacksmith Shop and in his own shop. When new 'smiths complete the training course, they need time to sharpen their skills. Bryan is one of the 'smiths who volunteers to work with the new 'smiths in the Boomtown Shop, sharing his years of experience.

Bryan started volunteering before the WDM Saskatoon moved from its 11th Street West location to Lorne Avenue in 1972. He had taken the WDM's steam traction engine operation course and joined the Pioneer Threshermen's Club volunteers to help operate steam engines. Since taking the blacksmithing course, Bryan and his wife Arlene have been regulars in the Blacksmith Shop on Sunday afternoons and during special events.

Arlene is a valuable part of the blacksmith team. While she doesn't blacksmith, she greets visitors and shares stories and information. They both love to visit with folks from all over the world.



Zach Hauser, Brent Northey and Jon Carey, November 2023

PHOTO COURTESY OF BOB AND CATHY ANDERSON



Ashlie Custer, February 2024

WDM PHOTO



Rob Cates, February 2024

WDM PHOTO

Arlene says, "I am glad visitors can ask questions to blacksmiths. It's nice explaining things about the Museum and the Blacksmith Shop."

Experienced blacksmiths Zach Hauser and Brent Northey also help to mentor the new 'smiths. Zach started volunteering in 1982. Like Bryan, he was initially interested in steam engines but became intrigued by blacksmithing. He enjoys the company of the other 'smiths and supports the work of the WDM, "I like the mission of the Museum. I have always been a fan of what it [WDM] does and what it supports. To volunteer and help that along, it is just a bonus." Brent was volunteering with horses at the WDM when he got interested in blacksmithing. After taking the course in 2015, he began working with Bryan and Zach to gain experience. Brent enjoys sharing what he's learned with new 'smiths and Museum visitors while improving his own skills.

Thanks to volunteers like Bryan, Arlene, Zach and Brent, new 'smiths are being mentored. Rob Cates took the course a little over one year ago. He decided he was going to do all the things that he wanted to do as a child which included blacksmithing. Rob enjoys showing visitors what he has learned.

Ashlie Custer and Jon Carey both completed the course recently. They are enjoying the WDM experience. Ashlie loves to bring the Blacksmith Shop to life, "I like talking to all the people. They are so excited [to talk] about blacksmithing." For Jon, it's about learning heritage skills and preserving the past, "Any art or trade that is hands-on has a steep learning curve. Without past generations, we can't learn. You must keep passing it [knowledge] on or else it will be forgotten."

There are blacksmith shops at all WDM locations. Thanks to the amazing crew of volunteer 'smiths who share their skills and bring the WDM to life!

BRAINBUSTERS

WDM History Quiz

We hope you have enjoyed reading about the WDM in *Sparks*. Let's see how closely you were paying attention with this WDM history quiz.

1. The first WDM collection depot was at:
 - a. Fort Walsh
 - b. Fort Battleford
 - c. Fort à la Corne
2. The Yorkton Threshermen's Club was formed in:
 - a. 1949
 - b. 1955
 - c. 1957
3. The first Curator of the WDM was:
 - a. George Shepherd
 - b. Evan Hardy
 - c. Joe Phelps
4. The WDM North Battleford opened at the intersection of Highways 5 (now 16) and 40 in:
 - a. 1959
 - b. 1961
 - c. 1963
5. Pion-Era at the WDM Saskatoon was launched in:
 - a. July 1955
 - b. August 1953
 - c. October 1956

IT'S A
SASK FACT!

Did you know...

In April 2015, the WDM welcomed its **10,000,000th** visitor since officially opening its doors to the public in 1949!

This number includes general visitors, school children and people attending special events.

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?

WDM at 75 Word Search

Have some fun looking for words with a connection to the WDM in our anniversary edition word search. Words can be found in any direction (including diagonals) and can overlap each other. Use the word bank below.

P U M D N W O T M O O B F R H
R R E E T N U L O V E I T O T
O R A X D B O X G F K R N M E
T F H I S T O R Y K A R A S I
C O G J H O M E M I P R W N S
A K E X B M I D N Q R K E O I
R I X F O D L S X T O E H W V
T B H F X X S H T O G J C B I
K P I F Y Y Y M A Y R S T I L
F C B W O H S W E A A R A R L
O R I T M I D H E G M E K D A
I I T S K R A P S D S B S S G
E Q S O P T Q X U W X M A J E
S E I R O T S G D T B E S B O
Y B Y M E C H P Z J D M N Z T

Word Bank

BOOMTOWN
EXHIBITS
HISTORY
HOME

MEMBERS
PROGRAMS
SASKATCHEWAN
SNOWBIRDS

SPARKS
STORIES
TOYS
TRACTOR

TRAINS
VILLAGE
VOLUNTEER

Answers on page 25.

My WDM Story with Chellan Hoffman, Calgary, Alberta

“It Still Feels Like Home”



The Hoffman family participates in the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival, 1971

PHOTO CREDIT: CHELLAN HOFFMAN

As we reflect on 75 years of the WDM, we think about the ways the Museum connects with you – our supporters. We are pleased to share a few of your stories in *Sparks*. In this issue you'll meet Chellan (Shelann) Hoffman. Chellan has lived in Calgary for 30 years but still has a deep connection to the WDM Yorkton's Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival. Here is her story.

The Yorkton Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival has been a part of my life for over 50 years now. The proof of my beginnings is in an old photo from 1971. I am 3 ½ years old, wearing a long pink dress and bonnet, and posing with my Mom and Dad, Doreen and Ernie

Hoffman, in front of a Twin City tractor and an IH W-4. In those days, the WDM was located in an old hangar so the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival took place in the open spaces at the Yorkton Airport. It was during that time that Dad became the steward of WDM's

Fairbanks Morse gas tractor, and I was always thrilled to ride along in the parades.

When the WDM moved to its new building in 1972, here began my summer tradition of hanging out at the Flour Mill with the Threshermen Kids: my best friend Brenda Helm, her brother Brian, my cousins Colleen Guse and Harley Hoffman, and Troy and Charlie Pearce.

In my 20s, I moved to Alberta. I tried to attend the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival whenever I was back in Saskatchewan. I'd watch my parents in action – stooking, flailing grain, pitching hay in threshing demos or grinding grain for flour. I remember one summer, my mom volunteered me to play the famous calliope. I did play organ and piano, so it wasn't an unreasonable request but I was not convinced this was my calling. I gathered the necessary music and took my position. I followed the lead of the calliope players before me and wore ear protection. I found out quickly that it was incredibly difficult to press

the keys down against the steam pressure. Almost every time I pressed a key down, it would create a space beside the neighbouring key that was big enough to trap my finger! And there were a few pounds of pressure you had to push against so when a finger got pinned, it hurt! You had to keep your hands 'poised.' The next day, my mom wrapped my fingers with cotton balls and tape for protection.

When my dad passed away in 1999, the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival became even more special to me. I came back to hear the rhythm of the tractors, the smell of grain dust and connect with the spirit of my dad. It was then that I really appreciated the vision of

the WDM to keep alive the history of farming on the prairies. I watched my dad's brother, Clarence, and my cousin Harley operate their beloved George White steamer and imagined my dad still pitching the sheaves for them, enjoying the reward of working hard and entertaining the crowds.

In my early 40s, I brought my two young sons to the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival. My kids never met their Grandpa Ernie, so this was and is the best way I can connect them. They spent the day with their Granny Doreen – taking a horse-drawn wagon ride, jumping in big piles of straw and eating fresh bread from the clay oven.

In my mid-40s, my Mom moved to Calgary. Our trips back to Saskatchewan became less frequent, but we managed one or two visits to the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival. We'd make a beeline for the Flour Mill to see the Pearce family. For so many years, the ongoing theme between Greig Pearce and my mom was "silly" – silly hats and outfits, silly jokes, silly antics.

In my late 40s, I made a trip out to Yorkton with my husband to visit the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival and to try my hand at stooking. But the landscape was changing – I recognized fewer faces. My Uncle Clarence passed away in 2014, and his son Harley wasn't operating the George



Chellan Hoffman, Brenda Helm (sitting at flour sale table); Greig Pearce, Doreen Hoffman working at the Flour Mill, 1976

PHOTO CREDIT: CHELLAN HOFFMAN



Chellan brings her son Jay to the WDM, 2002

PHOTO CREDIT: CHELLAN HOFFMAN

White steamer. My Auntie Ivis was still helping at the Clay Oven and the Pearce family was still at the Flour Mill. But it was different.

In 2020, my mom passed away. I was in my early 50s. My parents were hard-working farmers, and still they seemed to have endless energy and ideas to share with the Threshermen's Club. I can honestly say that this place brought them pure joy. It was a place they could participate as a couple, and also work together with family, friends and their community to create something pretty special over the years.

I am now in my mid-50s. I was back at the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival in 2023, and brought my 22 year-old son with me. The crowds are smaller now, post-pandemic, but the volunteers were still making it happen – educating and entertaining the visitors. And yes, the Pearce family was still grinding flour, enjoying the energy and keeping it silly. Even though most of us kids drifted away from the Flour Mill after graduation, Troy and Charlie have been the long-time loyal 'grinders' with their parents Greig and Maureen for the last 50 years! No wonder it still feels like home."



Chellan and fellow Thresher-Kid, Harley Hoffman, 2017

PHOTO CREDIT: CHELLAN HOFFMAN



Maureen Pearce, Greig Pearce, Chellan Hoffman & Troy Pearce at the Flour Mill, 2023

PHOTO CREDIT: CHELLAN HOFFMAN

Thank you to Chellan for sharing her memories of the WDM Yorkton and the amazing volunteers. Stay tuned for the next issue of *Sparks* when Chellan shares her adventures in stooking.

What's your WDM story? Share your #WDM memories for a chance to win an exclusive branded WDM prize pack! Terms and conditions apply.

Scan the code to the right or visit wdm.ca/wdmmemories to share your story!



WDM Launches Reminiscence Kits

Reminiscence Kits are filled with artifacts from the 1950s to the 1970s, a time when today's seniors were children and young adults. Explore popular food and drinks, famous movies and music, common household items,

clothing and accessory trends and fads, and significant historic events, both from Saskatchewan and around the world.

The Reminiscence Kit program helps the participants to

reconnect with the diverse social roles they have played throughout their lives. Each Kit also offers conversation prompts for users to discover how their personal stories and experiences connect with the larger history of Saskatchewan.



Reminiscence Kits can be booked for up to a two-week period for a \$75 rental fee. Learn more or reserve a kit by calling your local WDM or visit our website:
wdm.ca/reminiscence.

Brainbuster Answers

WDM History Quiz

1. **B** - The first collection depot was in a stable at Fort Battleford.
2. **B** - The Yorkton Threshermen's Club formed in 1955 and hosted their first Threshermen's Show in August.
3. **A** - George Shepherd became the WDM's first Curator in August 1953.
4. **C** - The WDM North Battleford opened at its new location on May 25, 1963.
5. **A** - In July 1955, the WDM Saskatoon hosted its first Pion-Era. A three-day test run event was held in October 1954 but it was not called Pion-Era.

Search for the Saskatchewan Symbol



The Western Red Lily is on page 6.

WDM at 75 Word Search

A 15x15 grid of letters. A blue diagonal line runs from the top-left corner to the bottom-right corner. The letters along this diagonal, from top-left to bottom-right, are: T, H, E, H, I, S, T, O, R, Y, O, F, T, H, E, W, O, R, L, D. The other letters in the grid are arranged in a pattern that, when read row by row, spells out 'THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD'.

WDM MOOSE JAW

Iron Lung

WDM-1973-S-3018

This Emerson iron lung was used at Saskatoon's St. Paul's Hospital. From 1943 - 60, St. Paul's Hospital was the headquarters for Saskatchewan's polio treatment program. Polio is a virus that appears as flu-like aches and quickly progresses to paralysis of limbs and sometimes the chest. The majority of victims were children. Polio was highly contagious and feared until a vaccine was developed in 1955.

The iron lung was needed to treat respiratory polio when victims were unable to breathe. At the height of the polio epidemic in 1953, St. Paul's Hospital had as many as nine iron lungs operating at the same time. Thanks to the positive effects of the vaccine, the St. Paul's Hospital polio clinic closed in 1960.



WDM NORTH BATTLEFORD

Holy Trinity Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church

WDM-1973-NB-13900

In 1909, a group of recent immigrants from Ukraine formed a committee to build an Orthodox church in the Hafford area. Wasyl Pysklyvets donated four acres of land for a church and cemetery. That year, the group travelled north to Little Shell Lake to gather logs for the foundation. By fall of 1910, All Saints Greek Orthodox Church (later known as Holy Trinity Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church) was finished and the first holy mass celebrated. Although the exterior was finished, the interior would not be completed until 1917.

This church was donated to the WDM in 1968 and is part of the Heritage Farm and Village.



WDM SASKATOON

1936 Pierce-Arrow Limousine

WDM-1973-S-156

From 1901 - 38, the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company of Buffalo, New York produced high quality vehicles like this 1936 Pierce-Arrow Limousine. The company was well known for supplying cars to United States presidents and European royalty. In 1928, Pierce-Arrow was taken over by the Studebaker Company and production of some Pierce-Arrows was moved to their Ontario plant.

The history of the Pierce-Arrow at the WDM Saskatoon is unclear as the serial number plate is missing and the engine number appears to have been intentionally removed. The car was purchased by the WDM from Century Motors in Swift Current but the rest of its history is a mystery.



WDM YORKTON

Root Beer Keg


WDM-1977-Y-43.2.A.B

This root beer keg was used at Stag Billiards in Yorkton. "The Stag" as it was known, opened in August 1919 and, as the name suggests, it was a men's only establishment. Not only a billiards hall, the Stag housed two bowling alleys, a barbershop, cigar stand and a soda fountain. Root beer could be purchased in a tall glass for five cents. As reported in SaskToday on May 12, 2010, "There was such a homey atmosphere that some regular customers brought along a favourite chair to sit in while watching an interesting game."


Stag Billiards was located on the corner of 3rd Avenue South and Broadway Street East until it closed in 1976.



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WDM wheat & wheel logo, 1979