HOCKEY HAZING CULTURE

NORTHERN NEWS
NEMESES

ASPERGER’S EPIPHANY

ROUGHRIIDER RECOIL
This fall, the School of Journalism has two reasons to celebrate. The latest issue of The Crow is taking flight beside a brand new degree program, the Master of Journalism. Together, The Crow and the new graduate program reflect what the School is all about: boosting journalism to its highest level.

Inside The Crow, you will experience our School’s signature long-form documentary journalism. The stories delve deep into the human experience, combining factual rigour with engaging storytelling. In this issue, you’ll read about the inner strength of everyday people. The life obstacles they face—from dangerous workplaces to immigration red tape—come wrapped in larger societal issues that deserve our collective attention. It’s the kind of journalism that inspires empathy and social change.

In a fast-paced world, we need deep journalism. It’s always been the focus of our highly-regarded Bachelor’s program. Now, beginning in September 2015, journalists will have the chance to dig even deeper through a graduate degree program. As Master’s students, they will have access to upper level learning in subjects such as economics, political science and sociology, gaining a firmer grasp of an increasingly complex, interrelated global landscape. Further, they’ll have a chance to delve into major journalism projects of their choice, such as documentary films, photojournalism portfolios and in-depth writing. There will also be an option to pursue community-based media projects that help provide a voice to society’s voiceless.

The application deadline for both the Bachelor’s and Master’s programs is January 15. We can hardly wait to meet our new students, including our first ever prospective MJ students. If the stories in The Crow move you to seek out and tell stories of your own, we invite you to contact the School as the first step to building (or re-building) your career in journalism.

Patricia W. Elliott
Editor
If you want to see The Crow continue to publish in-depth journalism that matters to Canadians, please consider making a donation to the School of Journalism. Your support is crucial to The Crow magazine and other free public outreach services, such as the School’s annual Minifie Lecture. Together we can make journalism the best it can be!
CONTRIBUTORS

BRADEN DUPUIS
Dupuis went west after graduating to work as a reporter and photographer at Pique Newsmagazine in Whistler, B.C. While at the School of Journalism he completed two internships, one at CTV Saskatoon and the other at the Leader-Post in Regina. His story, Swagger, begins on page 31. Follow him @BradenDupuis

CHELAN SKULSKI
After graduating from the University of Regina's School of Journalism, Skulski was hired as a reporter/producer by her internship employer, CTV2's Alberta Primetime in Edmonton. While completing her degree Skulski also interned at the Edmonton Journal as a city and crime reporter. Her story, TranSituation, begins on page 38. Follow her @ChelanSki

IRYN TUTHABE
After graduating, Tushabe was hired by her internship employer, CBC Saskatchewan. Tushabe also interned at Regina's Leader-Post while completing her degree. Her story, Navigating Normalcy, begins on page 8. Follow her @wordsweaver

DIETRICH NEU
After graduating, Neu set out as a freelancer with plans to return to Thailand, where he worked as a School of Journalism intern at the Bangkok Post. While completing his studies Neu also interned at Global Edmonton. His cover story, Rite of Passage, begins on page 20. Follow him @DietrichNeu

LAUREN GOLOSKY
While at the School of Journalism Golosky interned at CTV Regina and CBC Saskatchewan, where she was hired upon graduation. Her story, On the Line, begins on page 26. Follow her @laurengolosky

PENNY SMOKE
While at the School of Journalism Smoke interned at News Talk Regina and CTV Regina. Her story, Scarred, begins on page 53. Follow her @PennySmoke

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JULIA DIMA
Dima returned to her internship placement at the Moosomin World-Spectator to work fulltime after graduating. She also interned at CBC Saskatchewan and is the recipient of the School of Journalism’s 2014 Kay Robhins Assignment Abroad Award, which she is using to report from Arviat, Nunavut. Her story, The Canadian Dream, begins on page 44. Follow her @juliaVDima

ARIELLE ZERR
Upon graduating Zerr was hired at CBC Saskatchewan following internships at Global Calgary and the StarPhoenix in Saskatoon. She shot the photos for Chelan Skulski’s piece, TranSituation. Follow her @arielle_zerr

ERIC BELL
Bell completed two internships while at the School of Journalism, one at CBC Saskatchewan and the other at the Prince Albert Daily Herald. After graduating he was hired as a communications person with Saskatchewan Museums. His story, Two Paper Town, begins on page 14. Follow him @eric_bellSK

AMANDA SYMYNUK
is scheduled to graduate in Spring 2015. She interned at CTV Prince Albert and shot the photos for Iryn Tushabe’s piece, Navigating Normalcy. Follow her at @amanda001

BURRY KNIGHT
is scheduled to graduate in Spring 2015. Knight interned at News Talk Regina and CTV Saskatoon. He shot the photos for Penny Smoke’s piece, Scarred, and Dietrich Neu’s cover story, Rite of Passage. Follow him @BradyKnight1

MEGAN NARSING
While at the School of Journalism Narsing interned at CTV2’s Alberta Primetime. Her story, Good Times, Bad Times, begins on page 48. Follow her @theniwokeupblog

KRISTEN McEWEN
Upon graduating McEwen was hired at the Prince Albert Daily Herald. She interned at the Western Producer, the Moosomin World-Spectator and shot the photos for Megan Narsing’s story, Good Times, Bad Times. Follow her @KristenMcEwen

ANDREW ROBINS
is scheduled to graduate in Spring 2015. Robins interned at Global Edmonton and CTV Edmonton. He shot the photos for Skin Wound, Right of Passage, and Lea Mangan’s cover story, The Canadian Dream. Follow him @AndrewRobins

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Paul Ostlund, a physics and math major at the University of Regina, works out a problem on campus.

Paul Ostlund was always different. It took 16 years to figure out why.

by IRYN TUSHABE
Photos by AMANDA SYMYNUK
Sandra Ostlund knew early on there was something different about her son. At seven months, when most babies start to crawl, Paul Ostlund was already walking quite comfortably. He was speaking by his first birthday and by his second, he was quite the eloquent little boy. He was different. There was no question about it. Paul didn’t play with toys the way a typical toddler might. He didn’t take a toy car, for example, and go ‘vroom’ across the floor. He’d instead find all the other toy cars in the vicinity and put them into different patterns. If there wasn’t enough variety, he might just line them up and count them, proclaiming at the end, “I’ve got 50.” Sandra never worried. As long as her son was having fun, that’s all that mattered.

But it wasn’t always all fun and games. If there were too many kids at a birthday party, Paul was miserable. He’d find a quiet corner and play invisible. Starting a conversation with other children or inviting them to play with him was a foreign concept. For this reason, Sandra decided to quit her career as an auditor for the federal government to spend more time with Paul.

As a stay-at-home mom, Sandra could walk Paul to school in the morning and pick him up when school was out. She also had ample time to volunteer at Paul’s school and chat with teachers about how he was doing in class. It was through one such conversation with Paul’s Grade 3 teacher that Sandra learned her son had gone an entire year without saying a word in class. This came as a shock to her, considering Paul’s Grade 2 teacher had a hard time getting Paul to stop talking in class. When some people are diagnosed with a type of Autism Spectrum Disorder, they hate it. They hate the idea of being labeled. Others are neutral—it is what it is. But Paul was obsessed with science. Classifying things and labeling them had always been a delight for him. So the fact that he could have the list of things that were different about him effectively summed into a single word, a point on the spectrum, was great. He just had a disability. A disability which was, in more ways than one, a super-ability. Paul couldn’t remember his grades ever being lower than 90 per cent even though he never studied for exams. The official diagnosis changed his perspective. It made him realize that there wasn’t anything wrong with him as much as there was something different about him. Sitting there in his psychologist’s office, Paul felt his self-esteem get a much-needed boost.

Up to that point, life had been a battlefield. He learned at a very early age that he was unlike the ‘normal’ people. When you think in a markedly different way than others, you notice it very quickly. You notice the vast difference between your behaviours and the behaviours of others.

To volunteer at Paul’s school and chat with teachers about how he was doing in class. It was through one such conversation with Paul’s Grade 3 teacher that Sandra learned her son had gone an entire year without saying a word in class. This came as a shock to her, considering Paul’s Grade 2 teacher had a hard time getting Paul to stop talking in class. When some people are diagnosed with a type of Autism Spectrum Disorder, they hate it. They hate the idea of being labeled. Others are neutral—it is what it is. But Paul was obsessed with science. Classifying things and labeling them had always been a delight for him. So the fact that he could have the list of things that were different about him effectively summed into a single word, a point on the spectrum, was great. He just had a disability. A disability which was, in more ways than one, a super-ability. Paul couldn’t remember his grades ever being lower than 90 per cent even though he never studied for exams. The official diagnosis changed his perspective. It made him realize that there wasn’t anything wrong with him as much as there was something different about him. Sitting there in his psychologist’s office, Paul felt his self-esteem get a much-needed boost.

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When Paul, at the age of 36, was finally told his diagnosis, he sat there in his chair, expressionless. He didn’t know what to say. The truth was he had known he had Asperger’s disorder since he was 15. He was now almost 17. It had been a good year-and-a-half of rigorous tests before Dr. Jenny Keller was confident about the diagnosis. And now that she was, she wanted to discuss with Paul what kinds of supports and interventions were available to him. But Paul didn’t want to think of that—not just yet. He wanted to take a moment to savour the relief that was washing over him, lifting a heavy burden off his teenage shoulders. So he sat there, motionless. And the doctor let him.

Asperger’s, he knew, was included in a spectrum of disorders known collectively as autism. Because symptoms vary from one individual to the different way than others, you notice it very quickly. You notice the vast difference between your behaviours and the behaviours of others. When he was younger, if anyone greeted him, Paul wouldn’t respond. He thought that was their way of acknowledging his presence. And he welcomed this kind gesture, silently. He didn’t understand why they couldn’t acknowledge him silently, the way he did it.

Society punishes difference, sometimes rather too harshly. People, Paul surmises, are like dogs. When a dog is acting in a way that’s not conducive to the rest of the pack, the other dogs will bark at it. That is supposed to tell the odd dog to please stop being odd—to get with the program. With people, however, the barking is much more profound, Paul learned. And if the person society is punishing happens to be autistic, the punishment doesn’t yield the anticipated results. Some autistic people, especially the high-functioning ones like Paul, would love to behave typically. They simply don’t know how. Consequently, when society shuns them, or points fingers at them, some may shut down any related behaviour they can think of and, in Paul’s case, delve into a deep, dark clinical depression.

Paul’s adolescent years were the most difficult. He had just started high school when it became apparent to him that being socially skilled was what high school is all about. He lay awake at night wondering what was
Ostlund takes a break in the Research and Innovation Centre (RIC) at the U of R. Previous page: Ostlund’s schoolwork.

wrong with him. That’s when the clinical depression set in. Sometimes, as he navigated the Winston Knoll Collegiate hallways, Paul liked to pretend he was an android, built by aliens, and placed here on earth to study these most human and fascinating species. He wanted to belong, to be one with the species. But that seemed like a tall order at the time. As the depression got worse, Paul started wearing only black tee shirts. If this was a signal, a silent cry for help, no one got it. At 15, he took to the Internet and came across a page about Asperger’s. “I was like, ‘Oh, my God, this is the story of all my life,’” he recalls. Confident in his self-diagnosis, Paul approached his parents and declared he had Asperger’s disorder. His mother made some calls and found a counsellor who referred the family to psychologist Dr. Jenny Keller.

And now here he sat, hearing his self-diagnosis confirmed by a specialist. “The Regina Autism Resource Centre would be a good start,” Dr. Keller was saying. Right. The diagnosis. The intense frown on his face melted into a smile. Paul had spent his entire life trapped on a desert island. It was all he’d ever known. And though he loved the island a little, he was glad to finally start building a boat.

Ostlund takes a break in the Research and Innovation Centre. It was all he’d ever known. And though he loved the island a little, he was glad to finally start building a boat.

The typical human brain and that of someone with Asperger’s processes information in vastly different ways. The Asperger’s brain has no time for semantics. It just goes and gets a job done. Unexpected diversions and meaningless phrases—and this may include greetings like, “How’s it going?”—trip the Asperger brain. It doesn’t recognize what “it’s been inquired after.” Paul says this would be very funny if it weren’t so tragic.

Named after Hans Asperger, an Austrian psychiatrist and pediatri-
cian, Asperger’s is characterized by social ineptness. People who have the condition are often called Aspergers for shorthand. Most Aspergers have something Dr. Keller refers to as a splinter skill—something they are ex-
traordinarily good at. Although he has excelled in every class he has ever taken, Paul’s aptitude for science is outstanding. He’s currently double ma-
joring in physics and mathematics at the University of Regina, as he works toward a career as a theoretical physicist.

Science isn’t quite as perfect as it looks on journal pages. And no one knows, more than a scientist, that to “zero” is not to “be.” So opinions are always changing. Studies about autism reflect this fluidity. Aspergers were, until last year, autistic individuals on the high functioning end of the autism spectrum. Until last year, it seemed like a good idea to make that differentiation between Aspergers and other autistic individuals. For one reason, Aspergers don’t require as much intervention and support.

In the new Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)—the psychiatric Bible, if you will—all four Autism Spectrum Disorders, including Autistic disorder, Asperger’s disorder, Childhood Disintegation Disorder, and Pervasive Development Disorders—Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) have been combined into one umbrella diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The new guidelines came into effect in May 2013 with the publication of the DSM-5; the fifth edition of the DSM. Under these new guidelines, Asperger’s disorder is no longer a valid diagnosis a doctor can give a patient. Researchers have deemed it a thing of the past.

Dr. Keller says submitting Asperger’s disorder into the overall Autism Spectrum Disorder umbrella is one of the most controversial changes in the DSM-5. “There are a number of individuals with that diagnosis and of course the question is, ‘Well, what now?’” According to the new guidelines, high functioning autistic people like Paul might not meet the criteria for receiving the ASD diagnosis. Consequently, Dr. Keller worries, they would not qualify for the interventions and resources available to autistic people.

In Saskatchewan, the number of children being diagnosed with ASD is on the rise. As of May 2013, 1,408 children and youth under the age of 19 were the recipients of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services. Ginny Lant, cognitive disabilities consultant with the Ministry of Health, says the ministry has been tracking these numbers over a period of three years. Dr. Keller says numbers are rising because health care professionals have gotten better at assessing the symptoms in a timely manner. And this is part of the criticism of the DSM-5 that Dr. Keller has been hearing.

“Will we, with the new way of framing the diagnosis, still be as efficient in recognizing and making that early diagnosis?” she asks. The answer will be in the next DSM. Until then, Asperger’s, like Hans Asperger, is history.

Last year, as he took the podium to address Members of the Legisla-
tive Assembly, Paul felt beads of sweat forming on his brow. He had prepared well for this moment. He had a written speech in his hands. He had every reason, then, to be confident about his presentation. And so, feeling like his chest might burst from hyperventilation, but looking confident anyway, he began to speak. “I am often asked what it’s like to have autism. Unfortunately, I can’t say what it’s like, as I have never not had autism.”

Paul went on to tell the MLAs about how the Regina Autism Re-
source Centre had changed his life. One of the programs he especially benefited from was the cooking program. The goal of the program is to increase independence among adults with ASD. Participants learn to shop for groceries, follow recipes, measure ingredients, and make whole meals. As the end of the session, participants and staff sit and enjoy the meals they had just made together, providing an opportunity to practice social skills with peers in a safe and supportive environment.

Paul did so well in the cooking program that he was hired to coach it last semester. It was for that same reason that Theresa Savaria, executive director of ARC, had asked Paul to deliver this speech on behalf of the organization.

“Five years, I’ve always feared getting a job,” he told the MLAs, “but having had the opportunity to work in an environment with people who understand and appreciate my differences, and help me overcome my dis-
advantages, my fears of joining the workforce are over.”

In a brief flurry of human activity after the speech, the MLAs con-
gratulated him. They told him how much they’d learned from his speech. Paul beamed with pride, happy to give back to the organization that helped him in difficult times. Had the diagnostic changes come earlier, he might not have been included in this moment. Since childhood, Paul had thrived on the act of careful classification. His initial diagnosis cannot be taken

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Two Paper Town

For 112 years, the Prince Albert Daily Herald had no competition. Those days are over.

Story and photos by
ERIC BELL
Perry Bergson’s life is about to evolve. There’s a new job waiting for him in Saskatoon. But for now, he remains a man who follows a strict routine. Every day he wakes up at 7:05, rubs what little sleep he got out of his eyes, cleans up, and dresses in the small Prince Albert, Saskatchewan bungalow he shares with his wife, Maria. Before, when his German Shepherd, Luke, was still alive, he would take him for an hour-long walk each morning. He misses those walks, but now at least he can take his time getting ready in the morning. His greatest challenge each day is what suit and tie combo he will wear to the office. Bergson has a fantastic collection of ties and shirts, and each day his wife picks out the combination that she thinks is best. Sometimes he disagrees with her, but she always wins, even when some of her choices seem strange to him. Today it’s a dark red shirt and a tie with a brightly coloured paint splatter pattern. Over this, he has a navy blue suit jacket.

Suits are something Bergson never used to wear. A desker at the Brandon Sun (once called “the Cadillac of small town dailies” by Maclean’s magazine) for 22 years, he never had to dress fancy for his line of work. There’s no need to be wearing a suit when you are sitting at your desk at one in the morning trying to put together the jigsaw puzzle that will be tomorrow’s paper. It wasn’t until he got the job as managing editor of the Prince Albert Daily Herald in 2012 that he started wearing suits. When Bergson took the position he was told by his new publisher that part of the gig was that he would have to wear a suit to work each day. Panicked, he went out and bought a new wardrobe. After showing up to his new job wearing a suit for several days in a row, his boss finally confronted him. He had been joking about the whole suit thing. Employees at the Daily Herald rarely wore suits. But since Bergson had already bought them, he decided he would get used to it. And he has worn a suit to work every day since.

After he gets dressed he fills a few of his five extra large coffee thermoses (he calls them the quintuplets), and says goodbye to his wife. He will see her in a few short hours—he always comes home for lunch at 11:50 to chat and unwind from the craziness of the work day. Bergson steps out into the frigid Prince Albert morning and drives the few minutes from his house to the Daily Herald’s downtown office. He parks in his dedicated space in front of a placard that reads “Managing Editor.” He walks the steps up to the newsroom on the second floor and into his corner office, which is always either too hot or too cold due to a poorly functioning boiler and the fact that his office contains two very large and very old windows. It is now 9 a.m. and he has an hour to catch up on emails before the reporters come in.

After what seems like five minutes of answering every sort of email inquiry a newspaper editor can imagine—from moderating rude comments on the website to elderly people complaining about the paper’s lack of curling coverage—suddenly it’s 10 in the morning and his small group of reporters, all recent college grads under the age of 30, walk into the newsroom. The day has finally begun and is going on schedule, much like any other day at the paper and just the way he likes it.

It was the challenge that brought Bergson to Prince Albert. He knew when he took the job that the once-booming newspaper had fallen on hard times. With declining readership and a revolving door of staff (the newsroom saw over 20 reporters come through the doors in less than two years), the paper had lost touch with the community and was desperate to have someone come in and get the Herald back on its feet. Bergson arrived at the paper for his first day of work on Feb. 27, 2012, where he found a messy newsroom and a lack of direction. He spent the coming weeks throwing out desks, file cabinets and boxes of papers. He created a photo
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faith in the future of newspapers and is convinced that it will be the job of the newspaper to bring truth and sanity to an online world where everybody has the freedom to post anything. Circulation has been declining as well. Between 2008 and 2011 the paper’s circulation shrunk by 2,000 readers. Over 7,400 people would pick up the Saturday paper in 2008. Three years later that number was down to 4,000. Even the company that owns the Daily Herald is burning away from the physical newspaper. TC Transcontinental, a Montreal-based printing company that owns several hundred papers across Canada, bought the Daily Herald in 2002. Calling itself a digital-first company, TC is pushing all its papers, including the Herald, to think of the website before thinking of the paper.

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For newswriters, and take jobs at the Herald while doing so. For months, a series of radio ads could be heard in town on a daily basis. Some ads called the Herald a “print dinosaur.” Some said that if Darwin were alive today, he would choose to read his news online, because that’s the evolution of the media. Another ad began telling listeners they shouldn’t have to pay for the Daily Herald—all of the news was on their website for free. “I’ve got some real advantages,” Johnston says about his online-only news format. “I’m free. I publish almost continuously. Why wouldn’t I scream that? I’ve got some real advantages,” Johnston says about his online-only news format. 

A newspaper man to the core, Bergson says that, like the newspaper industry, he himself has had trouble adapting to new technology. Recently the paper further enhanced its digital presence, launching a mobile version of the website. It has also introduced a pay wall. Users get to read six articles for free, and then have to ante up if they want more. paidNews wrote a scathing editorial about it. Meanwhile, Bergson is testing out his skills as a broadcaster in a weekly video that features the paper’s top five stories of the week. He says he still has faith in the future of newspapers and is convinced that it will be the job of the newspaper to bring truth and sanity to an online world where everybody has the freedom to post anything. 

There’s one other thing that Bergson always does when he gets to the office in the morning—he picks up the day’s paper and, cladding it in his ink-stained hands, goes over the front page stories. For him, there’s no better feeling.
Every group has initiations.
Some cross the line.

Rite of Passage
by DIETRICH NEU

Photo illustrations by BRADY KNIGHT
Nixon watched the first few rounds, trying to see what worked and what didn’t. It paid off. He won the first round and moved on to the next competition, called Bucket-o-Pucks. Once again, skate lace around the penis, but this time the lace was strung over a pipe running just below the ceiling and tied to the bucket Nixon spotted earlier. The lace wasn’t long enough for the rookie to make it through Hell Night, the sat in the locker room at 10 o’clock. None of the coaching staff or

"We didn't know what was going to happen," Nixon says. "We knew we were in for it." The eight rookies were told to meet Manson earned the nickname Charlie for his almost psychotic level of aggression on the ice. He was suspended numerous times for shoveling laces, extra pucks, a bucket and a stack of hockey tape rolls.

"It was different. You can't get away with that stuff now," Nixon says. "John doesn't agree. "In the big scheme of things, we haven't really seen all that much degradation, but there are certainly instances of violence that are commonplace." Nixon was a solid 172 pounds, 6-foot-2 and fast, but he didn't score NHL days, Manson earned the nickname Charlie for his almost psychotic level of aggression on the ice. He was suspended numerous times for shoveling laces, extra pucks, a bucket and a stack of hockey tape rolls.

Every organization needs new members to survive, and those new members need a sense of belonging if the group is going to have any strength. Baptisms purify the soul, bar mitzvahs and virility quests turn boys into men, graduations turn fresh-faced students into future leaders, black belt ceremonies turn children into warriors, and workplace orientations turn nervous interns into productive labour.

The ritual itself is important," says Jeff Johnson, an associate professor of kinesiology and recreation management at the University of Manitoba. "Johnson doesn't agree. "In the big scheme of things, we haven't really seen all that much degradation, but there are certainly instances of violence that are commonplace." Nixon was a solid 172 pounds, 6-foot-2 and fast, but he didn't score NHL days, Manson earned the nickname Charlie for his almost psychotic level of aggression on the ice. He was suspended numerous times for shoveling laces, extra pucks, a bucket and a stack of hockey tape rolls.

The eight rookies were told to meet the veterans in the locker room at 10 o’clock. None of the coaching staff or trainers were there. When Nixon walked in, he saw the floors were sheeted with plastic. Across the room, he spotted razors, scissors, skate laces, extra pucks, a bucket and a stack of hockey tape rolls.

"We didn't know what was going to happen," Nixon says. "We knew we were in for it." The eight rookies were told to meet the veterans in the locker room at 10 o’clock. None of the coaching staff or trainers were there. When Nixon walked in, he saw the floors were sheeted with plastic. Across the room, he spotted razors, scissors, skate laces, extra pucks, a bucket and a stack of hockey tape rolls.
The rookies stood naked and grimaced in pain as the veterans filled the bucket with pucks. The rookie who stood there the longest won. It was a gruesome night.

dictably, the conversation drifted towards Canada’s favourite game. One of the particularly overbearing parents boasted that his six-year-old son hit the ice five days per week. Nestor thought that was a bad idea, but kept his comments to himself. Later that afternoon, he saw the same parent rushing his son out the door to a hockey camp. The child pleaded with his father to take him home. The hockey camp was too expensive, the father said, nudging his son out the door.

“(We talk about) the pressure put on these kids, who are really just kids, to perform as adults,” says Nestor.

Hockey is ingrained in the culture of Canada, but the love affair goes a step further in Saskatchewan. Hockey is religion in Saskatchewan, especially in the province’s sparsely populated towns. Junior hockey players are treated like gold almost everywhere they go. Those who make it to the highest level are immortalized in their home towns.

Hockey greatness is a golden apple dangled in front of small-town kids with nothing else around them. Fail from a junior team like the PA Raiders means the end of that dream and a crushing fall to reality. The pressure was enough to push 20-year-old Ontario Hockey League player Terry Trafford over the edge, eventually taking his own life in March 2014 after being cut by the Saginaw Spirit. It is certainly enough to convince most young players to grit their teeth through one night of brutal hazing.

Nixon sucked it up in ’84. He lasted through Hell Night unscathed, but didn’t last with the team. He had a “cup of coffee” with the Raiders—hockey jargon to describe a player who doesn’t see the ice often, and doesn’t stick around very long. Eleven members of the ’84-85 team moved on to the game’s most elite professional level; Nixon wasn’t one of them.

After a month in Prince Albert he moved down to the SJHL to play with the Weyburn Red Wings. The Raiders went on to win the Memorial Cup that same year.

On a Saturday afternoon decades later, Nixon sips coffee in a mall food court, taking a quick break from the whirlwind of a typical weekend—driving his daughter to soccer practice, his son to hockey practice. He’s also active in the Ehrlo Outdoor Hockey League, created for kids who can’t afford indoor ice fees and expensive gear. Looking back, he says he holds no regrets for the years spent dedicated to hockey, even though he has watched the ‘nerdy kids’ he knew in school move on to more lucrative careers. He doesn’t hold resentment for the hazing against him in ’84, but he didn’t take part in it during his veteran years in Weyburn, and took pride in giving rookies a break when they needed it.

He says hazing didn’t scar him like it has scarred so many others. But the more he talks about it out loud, the more he finds himself pausing to contemplate how bizarre the stories sound.

“It is kind of warped,” he says. “Now that I am older, and I have been a social worker for the last 20 years, you think psychoanalytically about it, it does kind of mess with your mind a little bit.”

A part of him is still that brash teen who played with the Raiders and the Red Wings. Nixon still bumps into his old teammates and coaches now and then. It doesn’t take long for them to jump back into their 17-year-old selves, cracking immature jokes and reminiscing about old experiences, including Hell Night. His wife stands by and rolls her eyes as her husband turns into a kid again, if only for a brief moment. But those WHL days have also made him jaded. He looks at violence and sports differently now, and makes sure to teach his two kids how to pick out the bullies in a crowd. He’s not worried what happened in 1984 will happen to them; he gives them the tools to spot trouble. It’s a wise precaution. Every time hazing makes the headlines, we can rest assured it’s no longer socially tolerable—but it also means there are still too many locker rooms where Hell Night preparations are underway.
Arguably the oldest industry in Canada, trapping existed long before first contact with European settlers, with First Nations trading amongst each other. But as colonization began, so did the historical fur trade, revolutionizing a traditional indigenous economy into the dominant commercial enterprise romanticized in Canada’s settler history.

The fur trade had a modest beginning on the Atlantic Coast at the turn of the 16th century—in frequent trading between some First Nations and European fishermen and whalers. It was miniscule to start, consisting of sporadic bartering of fur pelts for European goods.

By the 17th century, the fur trade had progressed up the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes area, becoming the focus of European explorers, instead of a side venture to supplement the fisheries. Back in Europe, the appetite for fur was thriving. It was more than just fashionable; fur was a symbol of status, power, and wealth. The most sought-after item was the beaver fur—soft, durable, and opulent.

French voyageurs Pierre Espirit Radisson and Médard Chouart des Groseilliers were the first to venture north of Lake Superior in the 1650s, further than any company had ever gone. Their success also influenced the English to explore the northwest, leading to the founding of the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1670, which monopolized trapping in the vast territory that flows into the bay.

Competition and rivalry between the English and the French was a catalyst for expansion of the fur trade. Initially, the Hudson’s Bay Company was content to simply reside around the bay, with First Nations people making the journey to bring their furs to them. But as rival traders from Montreal’s North West Company moved westward, Hudson’s Bay Company was forced to as well. The company’s first inland training post was Cumberland House, in the northeast region of Saskatchewan near the Manitoba border. Today, it is the oldest occupied site in the province, constructed in 1774.

First Nations people were vital to the development and the survival of the fur trade. The men hunted and trapped fur-bearing animals, the wom...
The room is a dated gymnasium, the floor a scuffed blue with lines run-
generations.

knowledge that isn’t in a book, but passed down orally from elders and
from the trapline excluded Rose from learning the ways of her people—
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dard punishment, invoking fear and shame in aboriginal children about
prohibited as Christianity was indoctrinated. Breaking the rules resulted in

300 years, the fur trade would continue through cooperation
between European settlers and First Nations people. But in the late 1850s,
the illusion of fashion and power in Europe, was replaced by silk. The fur trade tapered out, not abolished completely but marginally sustained by tradition and a smaller market interested in fur.

That tradition was threatened when Canada instituted the Residen-
tial School System. In 1920 Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy superinten-
dent of Indian Affairs, made residential schools mandatory for aboriginal
children. From the 1870s to the late 1990s, about 150,000 aboriginal chil-
dren were taken to residential schools across Canada, separated from their
homes and families to assimilate them into the new modern society. This
had widespread consequences still felt today.

Indigenous languages were forbidden and spiritual traditions were
prohibited as Christianity was indoctrinated. Breaking the rules resulted in
harsh punishment, invoking fear and shame in aboriginal children about
their culture.

Rose Roberts was one of those children. She attended the Prince Al-
ber Residential School for five years in the 1970s. With her broth-
ers and sisters housed in different dormitories, she slept by herself for the
first time in her life. She cried herself to sleep every night.

While her brothers were allowed to miss school and live on the tra-
pline in the fall, Rose’s mother made the girls stay at school, believing it
was crucial for them to complete their education. But being segregated
from the trapline excluded Rose from learning the ways of her people—
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A

Looking around the room at the trapline’s convention, youthful faces are
few. Ray believes the interest is out there, judging from the young

By 2007, there were only 1,500 licensed trappers in Sas-
atchewan, the lowest number ever recorded and a mere
sliver of the 20,000 that trapped the land 30 years earlier.

A

the Senator Allen Bird Memorial Centre on the Prince Ballantyne
First Nation in Prince Albert, some 200 trappers are gathered for
the Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association Convention.
The room is a dated gymnasium, the floor a scuffed blue with lines run-
tng across it in simple patterns. It smells smoky, like the tanned moose
hide moccasins for sale along the wall, adorned with beautiful beadwork.

Some trappers have made the trip here from the many communi-
ties that sparsely populate northern Saskatchewan. Others have emerged
straight from the bush where their traplines reside. Expected to see each
other, they eagerly shake hands, exchanging greetings in Cree or Dene.

Clifford Ray, the president of the Northern Saskatchewan Trappers
Association, assesses the crowd from behind the wooden lectern, taking
inventory of who has made the journey to the city. He looks at the rows of faces sitting behind the long gray banquet tables. Most are aged and weathered, battered by the snow and wind from long winters on the tra-
pline. Not many young faces, he notes.

“We’ve come a long way in the last 10 years,” Ray begins, his voice
booming through speakers situated throughout the room. “We listened to
our elders when they said, ‘Save the trap line.’”

In the 1980s and 1990s, animal rights organizations such as PETA
and Greenpeace set their sights on trapping and launched fierce anti-fur campaigns. They had concerns for animal welfare, taking issue with the
steel leg-hold trap. As a result of the campaigns, fur fell out of favour and the demand for pelts slipped. In 1991, the European Union (EU), still the
key market for furs in the 20th century, buying more than 70 per cent of
Canada’s furs, moved to ban the import of furs of 13 animals. EU Regula-

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A
people who often approach him throughout his travels across the province. But there are obstacles on the path to a traditional lifestyle of trapping.

When Chief Perry Bellegarde of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations takes the podium, he, too, scans the crowd.

“I don’t see a lot of young people here,” he says. “We have to start teaching our young people what we know.”

The sentiment is echoed time and time again throughout the two-day convention by other leaders and trappers, fearful of their culture and traditional lifestyle disappearing. Many blame provincial rules and regulations, red tape that can make trapping inaccessible. Besides obtaining the mandatory fur license, anyone born after 1971 is required to obtain a Firearms Safety and Hunter Education certificate from the province. But in the remote areas of northern Saskatchewan, these compulsory certificates are not easily obtained by potential young trappers. Nor are they in keeping with First Nations tradition of oral history and knowledge being passed on by elders. In the past, nothing was written down. Youth learned from their fathers, grandfathers and other family members simply by listening. It was a system that worked and was honoured. But when children like Rose Roberts left home for residential schools, she shared language with elders was often lost and broken down.

In the bush plane en route to Hickson Lake, Rose could smell the alcohol fumes percolating out of her niece, Jackie, an older cousin to Mikaela, as she sobered up. “Jackie, we go through this every fucking time,” Rose said to her, shaking her head.

The first time Rose brought Jackie to the trapline was with her mother and Mikaela in 2008. They had to go find her, passed out somewhere, before they left. Jackie was 18 at the time, already battling addictions to drugs and alcohol. But the trapline was a safe haven for her, free from her vices. She dreaded leaving the forest, knowing her weaknesses and temptations were waiting for her, demons she felt powerless against.

The trip north was a healing time for her Auntie Rose, too. For Rose, the journey began in residential school, where she was instilled with Christianity and shame of her culture. A university education undid some of the damage. She was exposed to aspects of traditional spirituality—sweat lodges and talking circles—for the first time in her life, causing her to withdraw from her Anglican upbringing.

In 2008, Rose received her Common Experience Payment from the federal government for her time spent in residential school. By then, after years of failed therapy, traditional spirituality helped her feel almost whole again.

“What can I do with this money that is going to have the most impact?” Rose asked herself, staring at the cheque in her hand. “What did I miss out on?”

She thought back to her childhood and realized it was learning to trap. She never had the opportunity to spend a fall on the trapline, so she asked her mother to join her there for six months. While niece Jackie didn’t have a choice, younger niece Mikaela wanted to go. At 14, she had always been independent, so her parents let her spend two- and-a-half months on the trapline, sending her off with enough schoolwork to keep her on track.

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Swagger

Has Rider Pride gone too far?

Story and photos by BRADEN DUPUIS

I t was my second week as an intern reporter at Regina's Leader-Post, and I had just walked into the newsroom to a mild uproar. Two members of the Saskatchewan Roughriders, Dwight Anderson and Taj Smith, had been charged with aggravated assault in a nightclub dust-up. In a Regina newsroom, this was the headline equivalent of the premier getting caught in a crack den. The city went collectively insane for a good 24 hours. Every media outlet in the province seized the benefit of another Rider controversy, sure to drive up page views and newsstand sales. I myself spent the better part of the day camped outside the provincial courthouse, along with no fewer than two other Leader-Post employees, to make sure we didn't miss the coveted shot of drunken football stars exiting the courtroom. We got the picture, and the next day both players were plastered across the front page. But this really should have come as no surprise. When the Riders signed Dwight Anderson ahead of the 2013 season, there were tales of the player spitting on fans, trash-talking opponents and gouging opponents’ eyes (this, in particular, should stand out to Rider fans, as it happened to star Rider receiver Weston Dressler). But he had spectacular football ability. The Rider faithful shat out of this of the Saskatchewan Roughriders, or Rider Nation, as they've come to be called, have long held the reputation of being the best fans in the CFL. But in the grand scheme of things, Rider Pride is a relatively recent branding, coined to fill the stands for a match against the B.C. Lions on October 28, 1979. "That was the year they were 2 and 14. They were horrible," Vanstone told me. The stadium had been expanded to hold 27,600 fans, but the faithful were in short supply. It wasn't until a local media personality hyped Rider Pride Day that the seats were actually filled for the first time, with an over-capacity crowd of 28,012. The photo was trucked. Still, the team continued to flounder through the next three decades. Just 17,000 attended the 1993 home opener. Telethons were held in 1987 and 1997 to keep the team afloat. On several occasions, it almost folded completely. But, improbably, Rider Pride grew. The team developed a cult following, as the league’s lovable underdogs. "They were forever everybody’s second-favourite team," recalls Stephen Brunt, veteran sports journalist. "The Riders were the little engine that could, struggling against long odds in a humble, have-not province. Then something changed." A seemingly out-of-nowhere Grey Cup victory in 2007—the franchise’s third in 97 years—brought about a new era in Rider Nation. Mer- chantise and ticket sales skyrocketed. News coverage exploded. Talk of the Riders leaving town dissipated. But it wasn’t just the Riders that were blowing up. Saskatchewan, too, was witnessing a renaissance, fueled by a resource boom. The have-not province suddenly had it all: well-paying jobs, low unemployment and a population on the rise. As the team, like its province, kept winning, something else changed, too. No longer were the Riders and their fans lovable losers. "Old Rider Pride is one thing," Brunt told me, hearkening back to the days of dilapidated fans bartering wheat for season tickets and sticking by the team through one heartbreakless loss after another. The new Rider Pride was about winning. It was about success, profit and a healthy, sus-
tainable future. "It has a swagger to it in this new incarnation that wasn’t really there in the past," Brunt said. "A real swagger." Fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders, or Rider Nation, as they’ve come to be called, have long held the reputation of being the best fans in the CFL. But in the grand scheme of things, Rider Pride is a relatively recent branding, coined to fill the stands for a match against the B.C. Lions on October 28, 1979. "That was the year they were 2 and 14. They were horrible," Vanstone told me. The stadium had been expanded to hold 27,600 fans, but the faithful were in short supply. It wasn’t until a local media personality hyped Rider Pride Day that the seats were actually filled for the first time, with an over-capacity crowd of 28,012. The photo was trucked. Still, the team continued to flounder through the next three decades. Just 17,000 attended the 1993 home opener. Telethons were held in 1987 and 1997 to keep the team afloat. On several occasions, it almost folded completely. But, improbably, Rider Pride grew. The team developed a cult following, as the league’s lovable underdogs. "They were forever everybody’s second-favourite team," recalls Stephen Brunt, veteran sports journalist. "The Riders were the little engine that could, struggling against long odds in a humble, have-not province. Then something changed." A seemingly out-of-nowhere Grey Cup victory in 2007—the franchise’s third in 97 years—brought about a new era in Rider Nation. Merchandise and ticket sales skyrocketed. News coverage exploded. Talk of the Riders leaving town dissipated. But it wasn’t just the Riders that were blowing up. Saskatchewan, too, was witnessing a renaissance, fueled by a resource boom. The have-not province suddenly had it all: well-paying jobs, low unemployment and a population on the rise. As the team, like its province, kept winning, something else changed, too. No longer were the Riders and their fans lovable losers. "Old Rider Pride is one thing," Brunt told me, hearkening back to the days of dilapidated fans bartering wheat for season tickets and sticking by the team through one heartbreakless loss after another. The new Rider Pride was about winning. It was about success, profit and a healthy, sus-
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Mosaic Stadium, home of the Saskatchewan Roughriders, is located in the inner city neighbourhood of North Central Regina.
THE CROW Fall 2014

When you need your toilet fixed, the plumber’s going to cost more. You know this. Fraser pointed out. “In a hot economy …

Okay, so far so good. According to a recent study, the province spends about $3.8 billion a year on the costs of poverty. Billion. More than the annual GDP of your average developing country. Rather than take aim at the source, we throw money at the problem and then otherwise ignore it. It’s almost as if we’re consistently distracted by other, simpler, causes—

In a way, our public policy serves as a reflection of our collective values—or rather, the collective values of a vocal, privileged sector. In Saskatchewan, there’s no bigger voting bloc than Rider Nation.

Here in Saskatchewan, the Roughriders are more than a football team. They’re an institution. It’s really no surprise that someone driving down a Regina street would see a group of people and think it appropriate to throw out a “Go Riders.” He might have even thought it was expected.

The people who run the Riders should know this well. Looking at the team’s 11-member board of directors list, I see the presidents and CEOs of Regina’s biggest development companies, including Harvard Developments, the company responsible for the majority of Regina’s skyline, and Drumlanrig Developments, “one of the largest builders and developers in Saskatchewan,” according to its website.

The cost of the stadium is staggering. Why is City Council so eager to bite the bullet? I can’t know for sure, but I have an idea. It involves plumbers, electricians and friends in high places.

I was Nov. 9, two weeks before the Riders would claim their fourth Grey Cup. I remember, because the date had been circled on the calendar on my desk for some time. It was my first weekend shift at the Leader-Post, and it was a tough one. After spending my morning interviewing a grieving family about their dead son, I headed to North Central to attend a justice walk for a murdered woman.

I shivered as I stood outside of the Shekinah Eagles Centre Church in a crowd of about 50 people. Various speakers rotated in front of the microphone at the top of the concrete church steps as we huddled below to watch. At the front of our crowd I spotted Maxine Goforth. Maxine’s daughter Kelly was found in an east-end dumpster in the early evening of Sept. 25. It was the city’s seventh homicide of 2013. Two more would be recorded before the end of the year.

I didn’t know Kelly, but before that day’s program I spoke with Maxine inside the church. She was a frail-looking woman with short, curly hair and glasses. On that day at least, she appeared much older than she probably was. She cried as she talked about the senseless act of violence that had taken her daughter's life, and the lives of countless other aboriginal women in Regina and across Canada. I wore the straight face of the interviewer and thanked her for sharing her thoughts when she was finished. I held her hand and told her I was sorry for her loss.

I remember the deep-seated sadness that flooded me as I stood there in the cold. A woman at the top of the steps sang a slow, sombre song.

Then I heard it. A low rumble, distant at first, but coming ever closer to the spot where I now stood so hopeless and lost in my thoughts. Turning my head, I saw an impossibly large, white four door pickup truck with a modified exhaust kit was bowling its way down the street towards us.

I closed my eyes.

As the truck passed behind our grieving congregation, here seeking justice for yet another murdered Regina woman, there emitted a new sound: the battle cry of Saskatchewan’s winners.

“Go Riders!”

Here in Saskatchewan, the Roughriders are more than a football team. They’re an institution. It’s really no surprise that someone driving down a Regina street would see a group of people and think it appropriate to throw out a “Go Riders.” He might have even thought it was expected.

But standing there at that moment, eyes closed, among the family and friends of a dead woman, football suddenly didn’t seem so important to me. 
TranSituation
He found the girl of his dreams. Then he had to tell her who he really was.

The card says Myk, short for Michelle. He prefers his friends and family call him Jayson.

by CHELAN SKULSKI
Photos by ARIELLE ZERR
Jayson waited anxiously in the dimly lit third floor waiting room of the Regina Qu’Appelle Mental Health Clinic, head down to avoid the stares from people coming in and out of the large office, eyes glued to the blue carpet. It was his first meeting with his psychologist. He had spent the entire morning thinking, ‘How might it go? How do you feel about your body? Do you hate your appearance? Are you a happy person?’ He imagined an hour of uncomfortable questions from a complete stranger.

Uncomfortable was a feeling Jayson was used to. He had come to expect the side-glances from strangers at the grocery store, and had gotten better at ignoring comments from family members. He had become used to the blank feeling he got every day when he was forced to face the reflection he had come to despise.

Weighing over 270 pounds and standing five-foot-six, his stature was becoming intimidating, even if he didn’t feel that way. He wore his weight like a cloak, covering the parts of his body he loathed waking up with every morning.

Jayson was content with it now only because he knew change was coming. If everything went according to plan, soon he could smile back at the face he saw in the mirror every day.

Jayson can’t remember a time he didn’t feel uncomfortable in his own skin. As a young child he always wanted to be Ken over Barbie, and despised the idea of wearing dresses. It was when he was 10 that his older sister first called him out. “You’re sooo gay,” he remembers his sister saying as she looked at the Britney Spears posters covering his bedroom walls. Although he knew there was truth in the words, it didn’t make the conversation any easier to start.

Jayson tried to appease his family by acting and dressing like a girl, but if he was a girl, he knew he was a girl who liked girls. He felt painfully awkward when his mother forced him to wear a knee-length blue dress and matching purse for his Grade 8 graduation. He longed to appear in his grad pictures wearing jeans and a plain T-shirt instead.

In an attempt to be the daughter his mother wanted him to be, Jayson tried to act more feminine in high school despite being teased and harassed daily. He was one of the only openly lesbian students at his high school. There were jokes and jabs daily; once he narrowly escaped being beaten up in front of a crowd of about 40 students simply because he liked girls.

Years of questioning and self-doubt accumulated. As an adult he found it easier to reject the image his family always had for him. Dressing in men’s clothing, he became well known in Regina’s gay community as a ‘drag king.’ Although he believed he was beginning to find himself, it wasn’t until he met Ashley Purves that he had the confidence to express who he truly was.

Jayson met Ashley in 2011. They were both working at fast food restaurants in the Cornwall Centre in downtown Regina. Jayson spent every moment trying to catch her attention. Eventually Ashley noticed and they began dating. Their relationship was serious early on, given that Ashley was over four months pregnant when they met. As they became closer, Jayson quickly realized that this was the first relationship he felt he could act like himself in. It was a year-and-a-half later that Jayson decided to open up to Ashley about who he really was.

“I am pretty sure it was as simple as, ‘I think I am a dude,’” he recalls.

Jayson’s relationship was serious early on, given that Ashley was over four months pregnant when they met. As they became closer, Jayson quickly realized that this was the first relationship he felt he could be himself in. It was a year-and-a-half later that Jayson decided to open up to Ashley about who he really was.

Jayson has been living as a man for over a year. He’s found freedom in no longer shaving his legs and armpits.
specific data on trans* populations in Canada can be difficult to find, but what the research does suggest is that being a trans* person is not always easy. It is estimated over 70 per cent of trans* individuals have contemplated suicide in their lives, and between 17 to 20 per cent have attempted suicide at least once. In addition to self-inflicted violence, approximately 60 per cent of trans* people experience some form of violence because of their gender expression.

For some, changing their sex through gender reassignment surgery is the answer. Psychologists are the “gatekeepers” for trans* people because they determine if a person is ready to move on to the next step in their transition. Bridget Klest, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Regina, says this aspect of the transition is controversial and, some may argue, flawed.

For a trans* person to be “approved” by a psychologist and move on to the next step of their transition they must first be diagnosed with a gender disorder known as gender dysphoria. The World Psychologists Association on Transgender Health created the criteria for gender dysphoria to determine who should receive gender reassignment surgery. Klest argues that forcing trans* people to accept gender dysphoria can put a negative stigma on trans* people. Further, one of the criteria for gender dysphoria is that an individual’s feelings about their gender “must be associated with clinically treated distress or impairment in social, occupational or other areas.” Klest argues that not all people who seek surgery are clinically distressed or socially impaired—but their need for change can still be very real.

Lastly, the criteria created for gender dysphoria defines gender as a binary and forces a person to identify as either male or female. Gender binaries are problematic because many people identify with their gender, gender identity or gender expression on a spectrum instead of within the categories of male or female, says Klest.

But psychologists and counselors aren’t always a barrier. They can also be important supports. Maintaining mental health is important for anyone going through a major life transition, and the same remains true for trans* people. It can be especially hard when family and friends turn away.

After a lifetime of trying to fit into his family, Jayson wasn’t sure how he would react to his decision to become a man. “You feel like you’re dying of cancer. You’re fine,” his sister Brandy replied when he first told her. Afterwards, Brandy made it clear she wasn’t interested in hearing any more about his transition. Encouragement has come from other family members, but it’s his mother who still refuses to acknowledge his decision.

It was just last Christmas when Jayson, running late, decided to attend his mother’s holiday dinner in the same suit he had worn to work that day. Instead of a warm festive welcome he was greeted by disapproving looks from family members. After all, his mother had specifically asked him not to bring anything up about his "transgender-ness" over the holidays. Chilling stares from his family made him uncomfortable. It didn’t help when his mother handed him a stocking that read "Myk", for Michelle.

Michelle, his birth name, was everything Jayson had come to hate about himself. Michelle was the young girl standing gracefully in a dress in his Grade 8 graduation pictures. She was the awkward teenage girl who tried to go on dates with boys back in high school. She was the insecure identity he had lived in for 24 years. For Jayson, being called Michelle confirmed his belief that his mother will never be able to accept him for who he really is. As he waits to start his hormone treatments and surgeries, he wonders if his mother will ever be able to let go of Michelle and accept him as Jayson.

The next step for Jayson is to find an endocrinologist to begin prescribing him with testosterone, or “T,” hormone treatments. His voice will deepen, body and facial hair will grow and thicken, and the bones within his face will develop to make him appear more masculine. But “T” will only be the beginning of many changes in Jayson’s transition. Jayson also awaits his first consultation with a plastic surgeon, hoping to be placed on a waiting list for surgery. Wait times for hysterectomy and chest reconstruction surgeries are usually 38 and 23 months respectively, Jayson hopes he may get in sooner.

Long wait times are not the only deterrent for trans* people seeking gender surgeries in Canada. Cost can also play a factor. Several provinces in Canada, including Saskatchewan, only partially cover surgeries that might be considered a gender reassignment surgery. For example, certain circumstances allow hysterectomies and chest reconstruction to be partially covered by the province, however, more complex gender reassignment surgeries are not covered. To have more complex surgeries covered, trans* people must be referred by the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health in Ontario. Once referred, a person must apply to be on the waiting list for the one doctor in Canada, Dr. Pierre Brassard, who performs genital gender surgeries. In 2012, CAMH referred 124 trans* people for reassignment surgeries, up from 90 in 2011, and 59 in 2010. The cost of gender reassignment surgery varies significantly depending on the surgeries done; however, a recent study by the government of Nova Scotia estimated that the average cost per patient in the province is close to $33,000, not including specific genital surgeries.

Fortunately for him, both Jayson’s hysterectomy and chest reconstruction surgery are covered. Now it’s just a matter of watching the clock.

Organizing the physical aspects of gender reassignment is one thing. Sorting out personal relationships is another. Jayson’s partner Ashley was devastated when he told her the news. “That’s the end of us,” she thought, crying. “I am a lesbian, I am not into men.” When she talked to her friends, many said they couldn’t understand how she could ever love a man after considering herself a lesbian. But in her heart she knew Jayson would still be the same person she fell in love with and the same father to her now two-year-old son, Alex. Although it might not make sense to others, in the end, it made sense to her.

Taking on the role of Alex’s father has helped Jayson during his transition. Though only a toddler, little Alex was always able to see Jayson for who he really was. The side-glances at the store stares when Alex yells out “Daddy” and jumps up to grab his hand. When Jayson is feeling low, it takes a few giggles from Alex to pick him up again.

Jayson knows he will hear that laughter just the same when all the surgeries are done. Hundreds of small rewards await, like being able to take Alex swimming without wearing a bind and T-shirt. Most importantly, he will finally be able to put Michelle behind him and become the man he knew he was always meant to be.
weary mine workers and farmers to The Uptown Bar, housed in a building are illuminated by the passing headlights of a few pick-up trucks, carrying it does in most Saskatchewan towns on a Friday night. Empty sidewalks markers of Moosomin's 132-year history.

A water tower emblazoned with the town's name in black block letters, it into a have-town. Beyond the bright signs stand a tall grain elevator and Increased mine expansion, oil activity, and prosperous farms have turned Saskatchewan's boom. Last year, Moosomin hit a population of 3,000.

Dream The Canadian Away from the hustle of the highway, Main Street looks the same as in the United Arab Emirates. Although it wasn't Canada, it was a chance more than a few years. May, 2012. As a little girl growing up with five siblings and her mother, came to Moosomin from her home in General Santos City, Philippines in jokes with the customers in a heavily accented voice. Celestina Hingco and almond-shaped eyes that crinkle at the corners when she laughs as she

Always the adventurer in her family, at 27 Celestina applied for a job as workers hurtle from Kassi's Jewelry to Kari's Kloset. Outside Glasser's boom times come to light with the rising sun. Saturday is shopping day in Moosomin. The street is packed with cars

Finally free to follow her original dream, she boarded a plane to Re-

to Canada in 2010. When she arrived, her employer took her passport, how abusive the conditions were for the 125,000 Filipinos who worked in the UAE in 2010. When she arrived, her employer took her passport, preventing her from leaving the country without permission. She found that not only did she have to fight to gain a certificate —about $400 Canadian dollars—to leave. Having gone to earn money

It was always the adventurer in her family, at 27 Celestina applied for a job in the United Arab Emirates. Although it wasn't Canada, it was a chance to earn enough to support her aging mother. But Celestina soon learned how abusive the conditions were for the 125,000 Filipinos who worked in the UAE in 2010. When she arrived, her employer took her passport, preventing her from leaving the country without permission. She found she was doing the work of two or three employees, and she heard stories of Filipinos being grabbed in the streets if they traveled alone, making her nervous about taking a taxi or walking anywhere alone. Without Arabic language skills, Celestina struggled. The chances of becoming a resident were non-existent, unless you married a citizen. Celestina had friends who did get married for the chance to work longer, but that wasn't for her.

After nearly three years, Celestina left months before her contract expired. She found that not only did she have to fight to gain a certificate of employment, she also had to pay the company 16,000 Philippine pesos —about $400 Canadian dollars—to leave. Having gone to earn money

for her family, Celestina found herself asking for family help to pay back a company she feels exploited her.

Finally free to follow her original dream, she boarded a plane to Re-
gina, Saskatchewan. There she met a shy, quiet girl from the province of Laguna, Philippines named Karen Bergantinos. Karen was an only child and single. She knew she wanted to be a traveler. After working at a car dealership in the Philippines for a few years, she decided it was time to live her dreams and help support her mom and dad.

The two women learned that they had both been hired by Glasser's Electronics in Moosomin as retail clerks, along with a third Filipino worker, Michael Catacutan. Their new boss, Wayne Glasser's son, John, was there to pick them up. Heading down the highway, they were enthusiastic but nervous. The experience in the UAE had toughened Celestina, and made her aware of what her rights would be when she came to Canada.

“I have rights, and I have papers and documents outlining my rights. You have to be equipped before you go to battle,” she says. A few hours later, they walked into an apartment already rented for them, with freshly made beds, a furnished living room, pots and pans, and a fridge full of Canadian food.

Celestina and Karen quickly learned that they weren't the only Filipinos and Filipinos calling the small prairie town home. “Every Filipino gets counted,” Celestina recalls. “Me and Karen were 35 and 36.” But as more Filipinos arrived, people lost count. The 2011 census discovered just five people who spoke Tagalog, the main language of the Philippines. Three years later, it's estimated there are about 100 Filipinos. Some are Canadian citizens, some are permanent residents, but almost everyone came to town as temporary foreign workers, with the same dream as Karen and Celestina.

For Karen and Celestina, the stories about Canada's good opportunities had begun to feel real. With a home and jobs, both women felt that they were finally living the dream they'd had as girls. They couldn't have known that in just under two years the lives they'd built would be reduced to paperwork and regulations.

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program evolved from the Agricul-
tural Worker Program, which gave farmers the opportunity to hire migrant workers through the summer months. Fifty years ago, only 264 workers came into Canada under that program. Today, Canada is experiencing labour shortages, and the Agricultural Worker Program has evolved to include hiring of migrant workers in other job sectors. There are an estimated 300,000 migrant workers in Canada under the federal program, jointly operated by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. According to Citizenship and Immigration, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program is designed to allow employers to hire foreign workers as a last resort to meet short-term labour needs when a Canadian worker cannot be hired. And while the workers are temporary, the labour shortages are not, meaning there is a need for more foreign labour each year.

In Saskatchewan, the program is heavily utilized, as is permanent immigration. The provincial government successfully increased the cap on immigrant nominations in 2013, bringing it up by 27 per cent, and Premier Brad Wall continues to lobby to have that cap increased further to allow for more long-term skilled workers to meet labour shortages. The shortages are not only in skilled work, but in unskilled labour forces like the services and hospitality industry—the hotels and restaurants that

The Canadian Dream

Story and photos by JULIA DIMA

A boomtown’s newest workers find a warm welcome. But will they be allowed to stay?
Michael Catacutan stands outside Glasser’s, where he was hired as a satellite TV installer. The cashier job description is eligible for the services industry Occupation Classification (OCC) Matrix. To be eligible to apply through SINP, one must meet the requirements of $275 to process an LMO, setting prevailing wage standards to prevent foreign workers from being paid less than Canadians in the same job, and setting standards for how long an employer has to advertise the job to Canadians.

More recently, in 2013, McDonald’s restaurants in British Columbia prompted the government to put the program on hold after abuses of the program came to light. In Saskatchewan, a Weyburn restaurant, Brothers Classic Grill, received public backlash after two employees said they had been fired and replaced with temporary foreign workers. Shortly after, the federal government placed a temporary moratorium on the program for the restaurant industry.

The controversy has raised questions about whether the program is fair to Canadian workers—and fair to newcomers who want to make Canada their home. “Everywhere in Western Canada, people always need workers,” says Wayne Glasser, who hired Celestina, Karen, and Michael. “I don’t think there should be anything temporary about it. I don’t think of my workers as temporary, never did.” In the Filipino community in Moose Jaw, it’s clear the program is not the same. Workers come in on contracts that typically last two to four years. After two years, they can apply to become permanent residents through the provincial nominee program. And most do apply for permanent residency.

Taking the TFWP route costs money, time, and the emotional pain of leaving behind families to earn a Canadian wage. For Michael Catacutan, enduring separation from his wife and children without the reward of gaining a Canadian foothold for his family made sense. He was not going to pack his bags and leave. Going to pack his bags and leave. gaining a Canadian foothold for his family didn’t make sense. He was not of leaving behind families to earn a Canadian wage. For Michael Catacutan, the program is temporary in name only. Workers come in on contracts that typically last two to four years. After two years, they can apply to become permanent residents through the provincial nominee program. And most do apply for permanent residency.

That’s where the process hit a snag that wouldn’t be revealed until the time came to seek more permanent status under the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program. The consultant’s suggestion had been to apply the job description in as a ‘cashier’ on the LMO form. That wasn’t actually right; they should have come in as ‘retail clerks.’ The way they were brought in with that job description, we were told to navigate the paperwork. “If you want to apply for a permit, it costs you $150. For a restoration, if you miss your permit expiry, it’s $200. The government is earning from this program. They need to change this system.”

Wayne and Carol are friends. They’ve been educated through this, but I still feel like we wouldn’t have done it through this. I still felt like we wouldn’t have known what to do next time. There needs to be a smoother process, and better information,” says Carol.

Wayne is still struggling to understand why the process was so difficult. His employees were good. They wanted to stay and work in Canada, and he wanted them to stay for as long as they wanted. If he could go back, Wayne is certain he would not take the temporary foreign worker route. It seemed like a better solution at the time. But the problems have left him, like Michael, skeptical of how the program works.

He thinks the system should recognize that people want to settle down in Canada, and the government should help them do so, rather than expel them. It’s what his clients的梦想 dar 60 are doing for dreams for a few years before sending them home. If it’s possible to fast-track people under the temporary foreign worker program, then it should be possible to fast-track immigration, he argues. “The folks we have want to live in Canada, and want to be citizens,” he says. “I think the government checks them out and makes sure they are good individuals to begin with, before they enter the country. Wayne wonders what the issue is.

“Why can’t they stay?”
Lanigan, Saskatchewan has learned to roll with the punches.

Good Times
Bad Times

by MEGAN NARSING
Photos by KRISTEN McEWEN

The early hours of December 3, 2013 started out just like any other in Lanigan, Saskatchewan. Parents were busy trying to wake up their kids for school, while those who had early morning jobs at one of the plants just outside town gulped down cups of coffee before heading out the door. It wasn’t all that cold for a December day and slowly, as the sun rose, the life of Lanigan began to rise with it.

The shrill ring of a phone woke the town’s mayor Andrew Cebryk. Glancing over at the clock, he saw 6 a.m. in bold red digits. He picked up the receiver in a tired daze. A phone call in the early hours is either very good news that can’t wait or very bad news that you wish would.

Rob Bubnick, manager of the Lanigan division of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, was on the other end. Bubnick and PotashCorp had been very good to the town, funding community events and sponsoring high school scholarships. This morning, though, the news wasn’t what the mayor wanted to hear. Putting down the receiver, his grogginess faded and reality sank in. He got out of bed and pulled the curtains. He knew that across town, workers were filing into the PotashCorp mining facility. For a moment it felt like the town stood absolutely still.

“Once it hits you, you need to process it,” Cebryk recalls. “(What) struck me the greatest was that it happened to the youngest ones and they just moved in. And they thought this was a life for them here.”

Over at the mine, workers gathered in a room at 6:30 a.m. The face of William J. Doyle, president and CEO, lit up a video screen. “The changes Glancing over at the clock, he saw 6 a.m. in bold red digits. He picked up the receiver in a tired daze. A phone call in the early hours is either very good news that can’t wait or very bad news that you wish would. Rob Bubnick, manager of the Lanigan division of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, was on the other end. Bubnick and PotashCorp had been very good to the town, funding community events and sponsoring high school scholarships. This morning, though, the news wasn’t what the mayor wanted to hear. Putting down the receiver, his grogginess faded and reality sank in. He got out of bed and pulled the curtains. He knew that across town, workers were filing into the PotashCorp mining facility. For a moment it felt like the town stood absolutely still. “Once it hits you, you need to process it,” Cebryk recalls. “(What) struck me the greatest was that it happened to the youngest ones and they just moved in. And they thought this was a life for them here.”

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we must make today, while difficult, help ensure the company continues to be well-positioned for the future,” he said. With those words, 212 people in Lanigan lost their jobs.

Lanigan is no stranger to economic change. The area isn’t just rich in potash. It is also home to Canada’s first combined feedlot and ethanol plant, Pound-Maker Agventures, and to several intensive pork farms, including one of the province’s leading producers, Stomp Pork Farms. But what really got the town off the ground was its large farming community.

Lanigan was incorporated as a village in 1906 and then as a town in 1908. Doug Wachs, one of the older residents, recalls that back in the early days there was an abundance of work. Born in 1928, Wachs was never short of a job. He liked to keep busy; it made life interesting and fresh. As a teenager he farmed, worked in a hardware store, and even held a government position. He was already a seasoned worker when he left town at 18 “to see some different country.”

Wachs headed to Ontario, seeking factory work. Just two days after landing in St. Catharines, his brother-in-law suggested they try General Motors, which was hiring that day.

“We got into a line about two blocks long and finally got in. And the girl who was taking the applications...we heard her saying, ‘Thank you for your application; we will let you know when something comes up.’ And when we got there she said, ‘Could you report for your medical tomorrow?’ She told them the company knew prairie people could be counted on. ‘We know you’ve come a long way to get a job, so you’re not like the local people that would go from one place to another,’” she said.

“I hope I didn’t disappoint them. I was with them for 36 years,” Wachs laughs.

Meanwhile back in Lanigan, the town rode a roller-coaster of ups and downs. In the summer of 1969, a young Andrew Cebryk, fresh out of university, arrived to visit his brother and earn some cash. Eleven kilometres outside Lanigan, a new potash mine was sitting on one of the world’s richest deposits of the pink rock, used to make fertilizer. The company, Alwinal Corporation, was hiring as many workers as it could find.

At first, many employees were farmers who worked at the mine during the off season. With the arrival of a union in the early ’70s, the casual jobs ended and many farmers chose to quit rather than devote themselves full time to a life underground. Word spread of new job openings and by the mid-’70s, the town more than quadrupled its population, from 450 to 1,875.

Cebryk stayed with the mine for three years before moving on to become the CEO of Lanigan’s hospital and seniors’ lodge.

“(My brother) retired and moved. But I retired and stayed. Lanigan has become my community... my home,” he says.

In November 1977, PotashCorp, then a provincial Crown corporation, purchased the mine and the company’s life in Lanigan and surrounding area began. A few years later, the first economic bust hit. Between 1982 and 1985, potash prices plummeted. Crops were poor and farmland value was falling, impacting farmers and miners alike as demand for fertilizers fell off. Every few months, mine workers lost jobs and picketers set up tents to protest the actions. In 1989, PotashCorp was privatized.

“There were some people who moved away and some people stayed. But it was a little harder then,” Cebryk remembers.

Then the potash market rebounded. People went back to work, finding steady employment over the next two decades. But in 2012, produc-
I had never been to Lanigan before, and growing up in Edmonton I rarely ventured out of the city. I always imagined rural towns to be old and worn. Driving into town I was surprised to be greeted by a gleaming new ESSO gas station and streets of modern homes.

Sitting at a conference table in the town hall, Mayor Cebryk reflects on the town’s past. He tells me Lanigan has been through tough times before. This is just another stumbling block, nothing Lanigan can’t handle.

On the day I visited, a lot of people were still out of work but the town hall seemed cheerful. I got the sense they weren’t people who caved easily from a bit of pressure.

“You have to be resilient and think positively. And there is a plus. There always is. We’ve bounced back before so we can bounce back again,” explains Cebryk. “You have to take a positive aspect and take the whole thing positively because out of something bad something else arises that is good.” Indeed, by June 2014 things were already starting to look up a little again, with an announcement that 47 positions would be reinstated.

During the layoffs, town officials were caught off guard. They’d been told in advance about layoff notices, but no one was prepared for the announcement of new layoffs. “They were very negative,” Cebryk recalls of the media outlets that called the town office looking for stories. “We did the whole thing on the day (it happened) and the next. (They are) trying to make up stories. (They need to just) leave us alone and let us continue.”

Even before I arrived, I had the sense people are fed up. On the phone, one man hung up on me before I could get out my first question. I can see how other journalists might assume the town has crumpled under the blow. I, too, had come with a hard-luck story in mind. But I found something different. The staff members at the town hall seemed cheerful. I got the sense they weren’t people whoaved easily from a bit of pressure.

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On the day I visited, a lot of people were still out of work but the mine remained open. Driving out of town at 5 p.m., a trail of cars passed the town’s friendly openness faded.

“People are trying to put her life back together.”

Photo by PENNY SMOKE

by PENNY SMOKE

Photo by BRADY KNIGHT

The day began like any other. Kim Janvier and Aaron Baynes woke up at 5 a.m. and started getting ready for work. Outside, it was unusually warm for an October morning in Saskatchewan. The sky was lit with a bright orange glow as the sun sat on the horizon. On their way to work, the pair stopped at the Co-op gas station to pick up their morning coffee. It was the spot where they usually met up with co-workers before heading to their designated parking area. From the parking lot, a big yellow school bus picked up the workers and carried them inside the Co-op Refinery Complex, a mass of structures and pipes sparkling in the sunlight.

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Just before 7 a.m., Kim swiped her pass card at the entrance and the door opened. She sprinted to the bathroom for a quick change. Kim had no idea what sort of day today might hold. She was just about to say hi.

“Welcome to work day of October 6, 2011 began. Kim and Aaron worked for SkyHigh Synthetic Crude.

As the bus pulled into the parking lot, Kim ran her fingers through her hair and checked her reflection in the window. Her hair was a little disheveled, but she was still smiling. She was ready for another day at SkyHigh Synthetic Crude.

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Kim Janvier and Aaron Baynes were young. New apartment complexes rise up among the character homes that line the cozy streets. Massive homes and new buildings sit isolated in a newly developed area. A few ‘for sale’ signs poke up from the ground.

When news of the layoffs first hit, the town office’s phone lit up with media calls. At the time, people weren’t overly concerned about journalists poking around— they had bigger worries on their minds. But as the months passed, the town’s friendly openness faded.

“They were very negative,” Cebryk recalls of the media outlets that called the town office looking for stories. “We did the whole thing on the day (it happened) and the next. (They are) trying to make up stories. (They need to just) leave us alone and let us continue.”

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Just before 7 a.m., Kim swiped her pass card at the entrance and the work day of October 6, 2011 began. Kim and Aaron worked for SkyHigh Synthetic Crude.

Canada, a scaffolding company based in Alberta. They arrived in Regina in June, and had spent the past four months preparing scaffolding for a major expansion at the refinery. A scaffolder for years, Kim had the routine down pat. She fastened her tool belt and climbed the ladder.

Around 2 p.m. she decided to climb back down to get some grating planks. It was an easy enough task, something any scaffolder routinely did many times a day. At the bottom of the ladder, she saw another crew working about 12 metres away. Her forarm Shawn spotted her and started walking toward her. She was just about to say hi.

Suddenly, BOOM!

Her body shook violently. She saw Shawn cringe in pain. Then she looked up and saw a huge bloom of fire only feet away from the very spot where she was standing. The moment between the blast and the heat were mere seconds. Too late, she turned to run. She fell, got up, then fell again.

Doug Wachs inspects a piece of an old shotgun in the town’s museum.

tion was suspended twice, this time because of trouble in the international markets. After months of sitting at home, miners were back on the job in 2013 amid hope the mine would get through the worst of times. In the past, shut-downs were announced in advance. Everyone knew layoff notices might come again. But no one arriving for work that December morning expected they’d be told to go home immediately.

“The worst part about the whole thing is that we lost a lot of young people,” Cebryk says. “In a small community, these people are friends. You know most everyone. (It makes it) a lot more personal.”

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She had har tumbled to the ground. She looked at her hands in disbelief. The skin around her wrist was peeling. It looked like she was wearing plastic bracelets. Shock hit her as hard as the blast.

The skin around her wrist was peeling. It looked like she was wearing plastic bracelets. Shock hit her as hard as the blast.

She suffered third degree burns to her hands and ears, and second degree burns to most of her face, neck and lungs. In total, between 10 and 20 per cent of her body was burned. She sustained nerve damage in her left foot.

Sirens blared and lights flashed. Kim looked at Aaron. They couldn't believe what had just happened.

It was quickly contained by staff, but the coker had to be shut down and the refinery's author—involved building a new section as well as updating several of the plant's older facilities. Kim and Aaron spent their days erecting scaffolding in one of the older units.

Scaffolding was a trade that moved Kim and Aaron around a lot. They made a good living and liked the work. Their home was in Edmonton, where they were raising four teenagers. As a family, they lived a life of work and play, often travelling and enjoying the outdoors with the kids when they weren't away on a job.

Kim is a petite woman compared to Aaron, who towers over her by at least a foot. They first met in an Edmonton Tim Horton's coffee shop.

They became friends over the daily morning coffee rush, slowly discovering they had much in common. Their love of the outdoors, especially hockey, led to a blossoming relationship, a bond made stronger on that October day.

The explosion shook windows across a large portion of the city. People felt the earth tremble, but no one was hurt.

Meanwhile, Kim embarked on a difficult path toward recovery. In intensive care, she spent several days in an induced coma due to the severity of her inhalation burns. Aaron sat by her side every minute. After therapy failed her, she and Aaron would park and sit in their car near gas stations, gradually moving closer until she was able to control her panic. But her fears of large-scale blasts remained unshakable, to the point where she could no longer live in Edmonton, a city bordered by huge refineries. The family moved to Kamloops, B.C., where there are no refineries on the horizon, only mountains and trees. They enjoy the natural beauty, but can't afford to do the things they used to do as a family. Kim has returned to work on only a limited basis. Her left leg is weakened and her skin is overly sensitive to heat and cold because of the scarring. As well, her post-traumatic stress keeps her away from major industrial construction projects. She estimates her employment opportunities have been reduced by 75 to 80 per cent.

The investigators labelled the incident an accident; however the Crown laid five charges against the refinery under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, for failing to adequately monitor pipe corrosion and to protect the health and safety of employees. The case has gone through three adjournments, which Kim feels is yet another painful factor in "this long waiting game" that has become part of her life.

In October 2013, a statement of claim was filed with the Regina Court of Queen's Bench on behalf of Kim and three other workers. The suit seeks $500,000 in compensation for each worker, as well as $50,000 for the suffering of each of their family members. Named are Federated Co-operatives Co-operative, its parent company Skyway Canada, an Australian company WorleyParsons, and its Canadian subsidiary, which was subcontracted to oversee much of the construction. Also named are SkyHigh Canada and its parent company Skyway Canada. Kim says she joined the suit not only because she wants the companies involved to "stand up and own" what happened, but also because she wants to see improved safety precautions so that no other worker need endure the grueling pain she experienced.

She is also seeking redress for emotional damage to her children, who had failed her, she and Aaron would park and sit in their car near gas stations, and flashbacks and thoughts of recurring harm. The Canadian Mental Health Association advises may also include nightmares, panic, a common symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder, which the
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