

# WISDOM



**Nursing in  
Africa**

*Spanning the  
Peace for Fifty Years:*

**Dunvegan  
Suspension  
Bridge**



# Welcome Home!

**Oct 15-24, 2010**



Mark your Calendar for a GPRC Homecoming Week October 15-24, 2010. We are planning a week of events to reconnect you with GPRC. Let us share our goals and priorities with you. Visit old friends and faculty. Tour the GP Campus and see the changes that have taken place since you were at College.

Watch [gprc.ab.ca](http://gprc.ab.ca) for more information and ***plan to join us.***

Over the past several months, the Peace River valley and the Dunvegan Bridge have been front-of-mind for the people of Grande Prairie Regional College. The process which has re-defined GPRC as a “Comprehensive Community College with Campuses in Fairview and Grande Prairie” has included many months of ironing out the details on both sides of the river, and travel between the two campuses is now a regular component of the job for many GPRC people.

The timing of our merger coincided with the major rehab work being accomplished on Dunvegan Bridge, and trips between campuses have afforded many opportunities to contemplate the river, the river valley, and the bridge. The Peace River has been an icon of our region from the times of the great treaty between the Cree and the Beaver which gave the river its name – and since 1960 the graceful Dunvegan suspension bridge has been synonymous with our region, and with our College. The official crest of Grande Prairie Regional College includes an image of the Dunvegan Bridge, and in years past the symbol was central to the College logo.

Now, at the 50th anniversary of the opening of Dunvegan Bridge, its importance to the strength of our region is highlighted for us during the many opportunities to pause and contemplate while passing through the valley.

This edition of Wisdom features some of the engineering marvel that is the Dunvegan Bridge, and recaptures some of the excitement which surrounded its opening fifty years ago. We hope you will enjoy it. – Editor

*Special thanks to the South Peace Regional Archives, the files of Beth Sheehan, the Isabel Campbell Archive collection at the Grande Prairie Public Library, and especially “The Story of the Peace,” a special supplement published by the Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune and the Peace River Record Gazette to celebrate the opening of Dunvegan Bridge in August, 1960.*

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Well over a thousand people from the region gathered on GPRC Fairview College Campus July 4th, 2009 to celebrate the merger of Grande Prairie

Regional College with the historically rich campus in Fairview, Alberta. Official ceremonies included a message from the Honourable Doug Horner, Alberta Minister of Advanced Education and

Technology who joined platform guests including local political leaders, members of the Northwest Transition Steering committee, and College officials from both campuses.

From the first strains of the ceremonial bagpipes in the morning to the





last happy shrieks of children on the carnival rides late in the afternoon, the GPRC Fairview College Campus was busy with visitors, activities, and above all thanks and congratulations to all of those involved in the Northwest Transition project to facilitate this merger guided by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology.



July 4, 2009  
**Merger Celebration**



**It is fitting that the Dunvegan Bridge** across the Peace River will celebrate its 50th anniversary this year with the completion of new and unique engineering solutions for safety and durability of the structure. Still the only vehicular suspension bridge in Alberta, the graceful and iconic Dunvegan Bridge presents unique challenges for maintenance and upgrades.

“In 1955, Alberta Highways Minister Gordon Taylor announced that the Dunvegan bridge would be built. But before construction could start, major engineering problems had to be solved. It took nearly two years of engineering studies and probing of the swift, temperamental river before the first pieces of heavy construction equipment moved into the valley.” – The Peace River Story, 1960

In 1957, engineers were challenged by the wide, swift river, and the elusive rock bed – the north pier footing, for example, is on rock over 21 meters below the stream bed. Piers for the two suspension towers are more than 17 meters below water level.

Fifty years later, in 2007 engineers pondered the challenges of significant deterioration in the concrete deck of the bridge, as well as a schedule of repairs which would need to be conducted with minimal disruption to the high volume of personal and industrial traffic which now takes the crossing of the Peace for granted.

Structural Engineer Adam Firth, of Associated Engineering, has been involved with the project as site inspector, and for the past couple of years has been on location full-time during the construction phase of the project.

“All bridges in Alberta are inspected on a regular basis – certified people who work for the province look at each structure individually on a cycle determined by the classification of the bridge,” says Firth. “This is major highway, and therefore inspected on a 21-month cycle – a fairly frequent basis. Each of those inspections provides recommendations for upkeep or repairs required. Usually there is a constant downward trend as typical wear and tear occurs. The reason this bridge was scheduled for repair was that the concrete deck was showing quite significant deterioration. The steel in the suspension trusses was still in fairly good shape and didn’t need any work, so it was just slated for rehab instead of completely replacing the bridge.”

Once engineers began to give Dunvegan Bridge a serious look, there were a number of things that needed to be upgraded, Firth explains. The standard of bridge rails needed to be brought up to code standards for crash ratings. There was need at this stage to improve the drainage on the bridge deck and the expansion joints required upgrades. “On top of that,” says Firth, “the bridges that are constructed these days have an additional layer of water-proofing that is put on top of the concrete deck, which prevents any perme-

ation of water down to the steel reinforcing to avoid corrosion . . .” – and the schedule of required upgrades began to grow.

The major task was replacement of the bridge deck, and a decision on the best option from a wide range of possibilities. “What was chosen is a one-of-a-kind unique design: a pre-cast panel,” explains Firth. “The panels are fabricated ahead of time – so all the demolition gets completed on the old bridge, the concrete gets removed, and the top of the girders are cleaned up to prepare for the new panels. Only then are the panels dropped down into place and bolted down to the top of the girders.

“These are a unique design because they are pre-stressed in two ways, and post-tensioned to the adjacent panel. What that means at the end of the day is that the entire deck surface is one large diaphragm which increases the overall stiffness of the bridge. That reduces the oscillations and vibrations in the deck, so it is actually a more comfortable ride over the surface of the bridge, and helps to extend the life of the bridge.



“This is the first time that anything like this has been used as a deck surface,” says Firth. “The panels are unique because of the way that they were pre-stressed, and they also have arched soffits in the middle.”

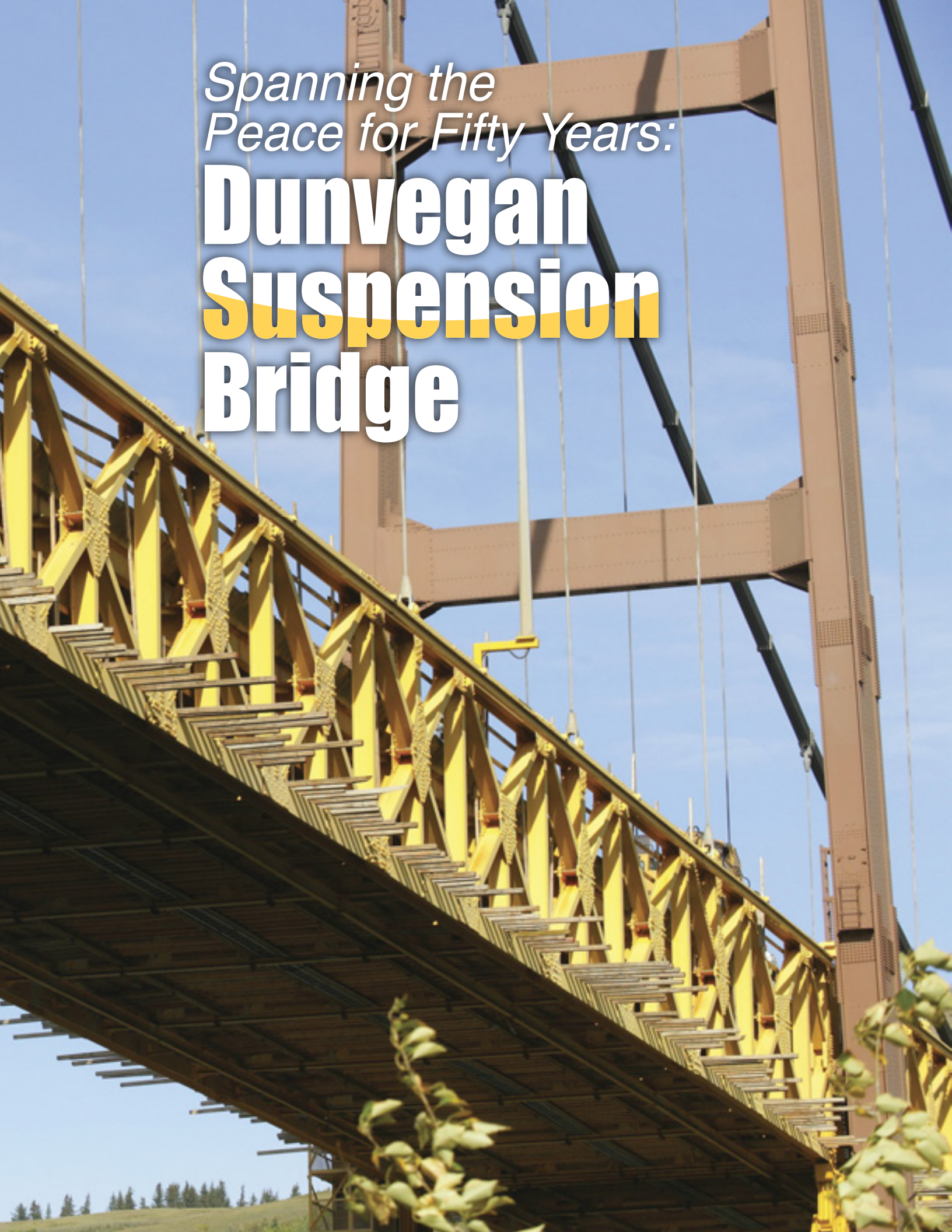
Adam Firth earned his engineering degree at the University of Alberta, beginning in structural engineering right after graduation (with Associated Engineering) and has built his career in Alberta. The Dunvegan Bridge is a special project for any Alberta engineer, since it is the only one of its kind in the province. “I have always wanted to work on bridges and I am definitely glad that I am at the position where I am now,” Firth says. There were up to 65-70 people on the bridge at any given time during the construction phases during the summer. Firth’s role was to ensure that the contract was executed properly and that everything was done as per the plans and specifications. “I basically coordinated with the project manager for the contractor, providing the connection between them and Alberta Transportation.

“It has definitely been an interesting project. Because of the fact that it is the one and only suspension bridge here in Alberta it is unique, and there were some interesting challenges along the way. There were always some issues with the traffic accommodation – that was always a difficulty with some of the wider loads that would come through the site. We had a couple of signs posted at the top of the valley warning people of the width restriction – in Rycroft



*Spanning the  
Peace for Fifty Years:*

# **Dunvegan Suspension Bridge**









and at the intersection just south of Fairview – but we still had a couple of people drive down and ask “Is it really that width? Do you think we’ll get through?”

Despite occasional frustrations for traffic crossing the bridge, Firth says the project has gone smoothly – and that the construction included some exciting new technology. The dynamic message signs which were installed along the sides of the highway at the top of the valley and at the ends of the bridge will remain as a permanent feature. “The intent is to have those signs display warnings alerting drivers to icy road conditions or about any collision in the area.” Firth explains.

There are also some exciting technologies scheduled for the future. The wiring has now all been installed for a remote weather information system. Once the system is put in place, it will provide monitoring of the road conditions so that a centralized location can (for example) determine whether there is ice on the road. The wiring will also allow for future installation of an automatic de-icing system which could at the push of a button distribute a de-icing solution onto the roadway to prevent ice formation on the highway itself. “That whole stretch of road is quite bad in the winter,” says Firth, “especially with the big trucks which utilize it. These systems provide a big potential for improved highway safety in the future.”

Engineering is the type of work that requires continual learning – “every day!”



– and which provides enduring satisfaction. Civil Engineer Ralph McManus, now 87, accepted the Alberta Government contract to build Dunvegan Bridge in 1956 – he still keeps a photo of the bridge above his desk, and considers it to be the highlight of his career. A recent profile of Ralph McManus by Scott Messenger, entitled “The Trophy Bridge” tells yet another part of the amazing story which is the Dunvegan Bridge in the Peace River country. That article appeared in a publication entitled “Alberta Innovators.”

The experiences of McManus and Firth are separated by half a century and phenomenal changes in available technology – but they are united by a profession, a river, a challenge, and an unforgettable bridge. – *Lynne Ness*

### DUNVEGAN BRIDGE 2010

- the first and only vehicular suspension bridge in Alberta
- #34 in notable Canadian suspension bridges (of a total 108 listed by BridgeMeister)
- vehicular use: two-lane, heavy
- main cables: wire
- suspended spans: three
- main span - 274 m
- side spans - 2
- deck width - 8.652 m



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Grande Prairie - Wapiti

## Wayne Drysdale, MLA



As MLA for Grande Prairie - Wapiti, I am committed to working with my colleagues in the Alberta Government to enhance accessibility and affordability of Alberta's post-secondary system for students. Our Province's future success will depend on having knowledgeable, educated and innovative leaders.






# “Span Ushers in Bright New Era”

Excerpts from “The Peace River Story”

“Span ushers in Bright New Era” reads the headline in August, 1960.

“... for all its contributions to the Peace River Country’s progress, this is a river with a split personality. And the other side of the coin is the part the Peace River has taken in thwarting development of the district as a single geographic unit.

“Since the north’s earliest days, this broad ribbon of water, difficult and sometimes impossible to cross, has split the Peace River district into two camps - the north and the south - and often fostered rivalries that worked against overall development.

“Now, on the Alberta side of the border, the river that has so long divided, has suddenly become a rallying-point for the broad spectrum of interests that all Peace River residents share.

“The catalyst in this transformation is a graceful steel suspension bridge - the

1960 - “The Peace River Story” - a special supplement celebrating the opening of Dunvegan Bridge, published jointly by Peace River Record-Gazette and Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune.

“...this year, in the dramatic topper to the network of new roads, rails and bridges that has been laced in and around “the Peace,” the long-dividing Peace River has been spanned with one of Canada’s great bridges.

“In the decade that saw the north’s isolation ended forever, a new vibrancy rippled along the disappearing frontier. Oil and natural gas, the first hints of industry and a flood of newcomers who scented fresh opportunity in the north, catapulted into “the Peace,” and a re-arrangement of the northern landscape was part of the legacy.

“In 1960, it is a new Peace River Country . . . jaunty, perhaps a little uncertain of its lately-donned long pants, and still fired with the spirit that fifty years ago, snatched a fledgling empire from the bush.” - The Peace River Story



Photo courtesy of Paquin Sprucewood Studio

longest in Alberta - which arches high above the river cupped in the splash of valley between Grande Prairie and Peace River town.

“More than a modern engineering miracle and a monument to 20th century construction techniques, the span is the fulfillment of half a century’s hope. “As the curtain went up on the pioneer epic of the early 1900’s, Dunvegan



*“Far below the steel, the river flows on, imperturbable, timeless. But thanks to man’s conquest at Dunvegan, the cantankerous side of the river’s personality has vanished from view, and the Peace River, for northerners, has become the symbol that unites, not divides.” – The Peace River Story, 1960*







Photo courtesy of Paquin Sprucewood Studio

became the crossing-point for many of the south Peace settlers. During the winter, their sleighs crunched over river ice, and in summer rafts laden with their belongings were floated to the opposite bank.

“Later, majestic sternwheelers like the DA Thomas, cruising from above Peace River town to Hudson’s Hope, made the tiny settlement a port of call.

“The first crude wagon trails and later a dirt road, linking the districts north and south of the river, skidded down to the water’s edge at Dunvegan. A cable ferry picked its ponderous way across the river

during the summer. Travellers crossed on the ice during the winter.

“But for decades, driftwood, high water and thaws turned the river into an impenetrable barrier for months in the year. Detours of two hundred miles over temper-testing roads were the only alternative when the “No Crossing” sign was posted at Dunvegan.

“For the north, a bridge over the Peace River at Dunvegan became the synthesis of its hopes and dreams for the future. It came to be regarded as not only the ultimate topper to the solution of northern transportation woes, but also as the

symbol of a united Peace River Country.”

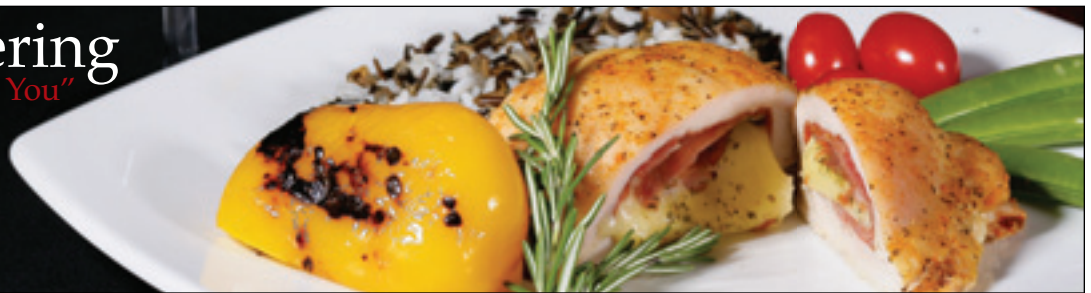
*Excerpted from “The Peace River Story”, a special supplement published by the Peace River Record-Gazette and the Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune, August 1960, on the occasion of the opening of the Dunvegan Bridge.*

*Special thanks to the South Peace Regional Archives, the files of Beth Sheehan, the Isabel Campbell Archive collection at the Grande Prairie Public Library, and especially “The Story of the Peace,” a special supplement published by the Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune and the Peace River Record Gazette to celebrate the opening of Dunvegan Bridge in August, 1960.*

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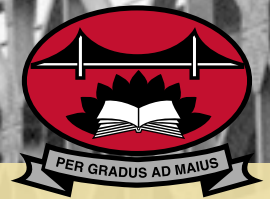
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## DUNVEGAN BRIDGE 1960

- \$5,500,000 project, 1956-1960
- In November of 1959 the actual bridge framework started.
- South tower 70.104 meters above water level.
- Two suspension towers 46.634 meters and 55.778 meters high, resting on piers 13.7 meters below water level.
- Main suspension cables consisted of 20 bridge strands, each strand made up of 91 wires.
- The weight of cables and fittings totaled 509 tons.
- Materials included: 3,300 tons of structural steel, 750 tons of reinforcing steel, 140,000 bags of cement, and 26,000 cubic yards of concrete.
- Bridge opened August 31, 1960.



*“Anyone who spent time in the Peace River country realized how powerful the Dunvegan Bridge was...the third largest suspension bridge in the West...and one of the great landmarks. Symbolically it seemed that the college as well has a ‘bridging’ function – to build connections in an educational sense across this mighty region...”*

– Dr. Henry Anderson in an interview with Dr. Jerry Petryshyn, May 11, 1990



# RECENT GIFTS



Joanne Ballance receives a cheque in the amount of \$1,000 from Jill Thomson on behalf of the ACT Club for the Jack Lyall Memorial Bursary.



Chris Jeski, Lori Pollock of Talisman present Carmen Haakstad and Don Gnatiuk a cheque in the amount of \$6,500 for the Talisman Aboriginal Bursary program.



Wendy Morrow, President of the Grande Prairie Chartered Accountants Club presents a \$5,000 donation on behalf of the Club to Grande Prairie Regional College for Scholarships and Bursaries. Accepting is Carmen Haakstad, Executive Director Community Relations. The donation will be doubled with matching Access to the Future grant dollars.

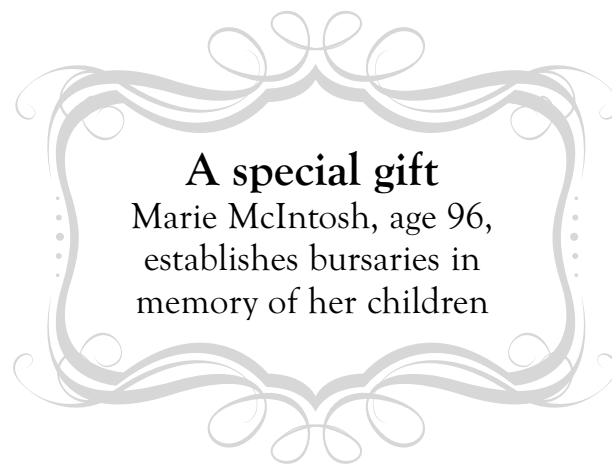


Ron Breen and Tami Arnold of Pepsi Bottling Group present a cheque in the amount of \$40,000.



Students of the GPRC Circle of Aboriginal Students and VP Academic Susan Bansgrove receive a donation from Alliance Pipeline's Trevor Lobreg in support of scholarships, awards and Aboriginal programming.





## A special gift

Marie McIntosh, age 96,  
establishes bursaries in  
memory of her children

Marie McIntosh was first Chair of the Board of Trustees, Grande Prairie Junior College



Marie and Ian McIntosh were known as “community-builders” of Grande Prairie during their time here. Marie was the first Chair of

the Board of Trustees for the newly incorporated Grande Prairie Junior College, and Ian served as a member of the Hospital Board and on Grande Prairie City Council. Their three children, Douglas, Robert and Louise, were born and raised in Grande Prairie.

Marie McIntosh was a trail-blazer. As the first woman to Chair the Board, Marie McIntosh helped set the course for what would evolve into the present-day Grande Prairie Regional College. The Junior College had been 10 years in the planning and “on September 22, the doors opened with 119 students: 69 full time and the remaining part time – over twice the anticipated registration. Under Mrs. McIntosh’s leadership, the GPJC adopted the present GPRC crest and motto.” (*J. Petryshyn, A Sense of Community*)

Fast forward to January, 2010 and Marie McIntosh at 96 years is once again involved with GPRC - her passion for supporting student success is as strong as it was back in 1966. Having outlived her three



children, Mrs. McIntosh, who now resides Kelowna, has generously established three new bursary funds in their memory.

Six \$500 bursaries in Physical Education and Sports are named in honour of Douglas J. McIntosh. Doug was born in Grande Prairie on March 24, 1945, and died unexpectedly October 18, 1997. He attended high school in Grande Prairie and later enrolled in Notre Dame College at Nelson BC. He was a natural athlete, a skilled pilot, and was known as a man of strong character and determination. His obituary concluded, “Doug lived in the real world. He had dreams, set goals and brought them to fruition.”

Six \$500 bursaries in Science honour the memory of Robert Charles McIntosh. Robert was born June 16, 1940 in Grande Prairie where he finished high school and worked at Northland Refinery for three years. He earned a degree in microbiology at Montana State University in Bozeman, and then returned to Calgary and a career with the City of Calgary from which he retired in 1999. He worked in waste-water treatment, and became recognized for his development of



the laboratory facilities and industrial testing program. In the later part of his career he was employed as an environmental scientist. Robert

died unexpectedly on February 13, 2009.

Six \$500 bursaries will be awarded in Visual Arts, honouring the memory of Florence Louise McIntosh. Louise was born on March 31, 1953 in Grande Prairie, where she attended high school. She studied piano and violin, and played violin with the Grande Prairie Community Orchestra. Later studies took Louise to Lethbridge Junior College, where she played in the Lethbridge College Symphony. Her adventurous spirit led her to the West Coast where she lived and worked in the Tofino area, exploring her many talents for building, creating, and small business. Music, art, and drama were constants in her life, which ended October 9, 1997 after a brief illness.

Grande Prairie Regional College is grateful to Marie McIntosh for the generosity of these bursaries, which will mean so much to so many students, and which are an enduring tribute to the three amazing people for whom they are named.



Joanne Ballance

# Matching gifts *make a difference*

Sitting down with Kerry and Kelly Boyd in their comfortable board room at the main office for Custom Cellular was more like a visit with old friends than an interview. After the Boyd's eldest daughter Kaylene, 26 dropped in to say hello and our conversation drifted to talk of our grandsons, we settled down to the real purpose of my visit - to talk about the power of matching gifts.

When Kerry and Kelly Boyd were planning a recent donation to GPRC, they realized that there were opportunities to leverage matching funds to make their gift have even more impact. In the past two years, their matched gifts resulted in \$60,000 for the GPRC Wolves Volleyball program. They achieved this result through the TELUS dealer matching grant program and through Advanced Education & Technology's Access to the Future Renaissance Fund. "The fact that our gift would be matched by government was very appealing to us," said Kerry. "We knew TELUS would match our contribution, and so when we were told about the Access to the Future Fund, the decision was an easy one," Kelly added.

But what motivated their gift in the first place came down to supporting student success. "We know sport can impact a young person in many positive ways – you learn so much about yourself along the way and you take that experience into other facets of your life," says Kerry. And they know about sport: Kelly played hockey and ball competitively for years and Kerry was a competitive swimmer. Middle daughter Krystal, 21, currently attends GPRC and is on the Wolves Volleyball squad. All three daughters, including Kolby, 16, have been involved in the

Grande Prairie Piranha Swim Club.

Kelly was born and raised east of Grande Prairie near Crystal Creek and Kerry moved to Beaverlodge in High School when her family relocated to the town through the Canadian Airforce. Kelly and Kerry launched their company, now called Custom Cellular, in 1990. In 1992 when AGT got out of the residential phone market their company saw huge growth and staff grew from 6 to 24 people in 18 months. "That was a crazy time," said Kerry. At one time their company did residential and commercial telephone cable installation, distributed phone rentals through AGT, and sold fax machines and other services. In 1994 they were the first internet provider in the city of Grande Prairie. Eventually they found their niche as an exclusive TELUS Dealer within the cellular phone market with divisions in both consumer and corporate sales. They have seven stores from Fort St. John to Calgary with over 50 employees.

The Boyd's were able to direct their donation to an area that was meaningful to them and the matching funds meant that the impact of their gift would truly be felt.

"The GPRC Volleyball coaching staff and programs have such a good reputation, and so we

wanted to help get them to another level by supporting recruitment and coaching," said Kelly.

As long time residents and business owners, the Boyd's have supported GPRC events and athletics on and off over the years but had not given a major gift until 2008. And now, what they are seeing and hearing about the College has really sparked their interest. "You are thinking outside of the box," says Kelly. "GPRC has come a long way in connecting with our community lately. I think Don Gnatiuk is the best thing that's happened to the College in some time. He is out there in the community, he is accessible."

As business owners Kelly and Kerry Boyd saw an opportunity to leverage their donation to GPRC through matching gift programs and saw their support grow to \$60,000.

As parents and community members, however, they admit that the matching gift was a catalyst for sure, but in the end "it was really about the students," says Kerry.





## Thank You to these generous donors\*

\*Charitable donations over \$4,999 from January 1, 2009 to January 31, 2010. A complete list of donations for the calendar year will be presented in our annual report to the Community.

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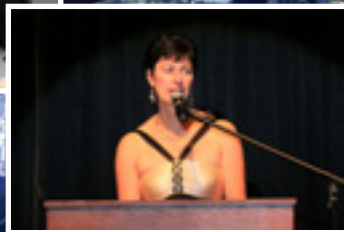
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# Building Cultural Competence in Nursing

Related to a nurse's responsibility to "do no harm" and to provide quality care to clients is the concept of developing cultural competence in the delivery of nursing care.

Reflecting on current society in many nations, it has become obvious to me that a major reason for developing cultural competence in nursing practice is related to the current trend of large numbers of people traveling and settling in countries different from their origin, for business, volunteer work or various other reasons. At some point, the nurse will encounter contact with clients of different culture entering the health care system and will be expected to offer nursing care suited to the needs of that client. The nurse may even be working with a colleague from a different culture. Without education regarding cultural competence in nursing, the nurse will experience several barriers related to interactions with a person from a different culture, starting with the basics of cre-

ating a trusting relationship with a colleague or a client.

One of the most beneficial educational opportunities I have experienced toward building cultural competence in my own nursing practice was gained through the privilege offered to me by Grande Prairie Regional College in collaboration with the University of Alberta. It was in my final year of baccalaureate studies with these educational institutions that I was offered the privilege to complete my 4th year final nursing practicum on the medical and surgical wards at the Korle-Bu Hospital in Accra, Ghana. Being immersed in an African culture challenged me to recognize intricacies of a different system of values, belief, language and religion that affect health-seeking behaviors of the client and, in effect, the outcome of health care provided to and received by the client. This learning strategy helped me to discover the realities of my own assumptions and biases related to culture that I was not conscious of. I discovered that these biases and assumptions were actually affecting my understanding about how I should approach interactions with clients

from different cultures in order to avoid becoming a nursing professional who would add to the disparities in the delivery of health care.

Unknown to me at the time, my experience in Ghana's health care system was just the beginning of a journey in building cultural competence that would be very beneficial to where my career has taken me today. The journey was not an easy one, yet it was an essential educational experience in acceptance and in the development of critical thinking skills for the delivery of appropriate nursing care. For example, it was not easy for me to understand how a client could respect the practices of a "traditional healer" so much more than those of a professional medical physician having a background in evidence based practice related to research. It was not easy for me to understand why people of the African culture value obesity. It was also difficult for me to understand why pain management for invasive procedures was not considered for the client, not only in the adult population yet even ignored in the child population. These were issues influenced by culture. I pondered the question of how





appropriate nursing care could be delivered to a people with such values. The result of meeting these issues face to face was that my eyes were opened to the fact that people of different cultures have different realities and that these realities have the potential to create significantly different views about health care among groups. A most valuable lesson that I walked away with was how important it is as a nurse to suspend judgment of a client until such time that cultural elements of the client's situation are well understood.

Other health care delivery issues that I experienced while in Ghana were related to a combination of culture and poverty. These issues also challenged my understanding of how appropriate nursing care could possibly be delivered in such a setting. It was not easy for me to understand why clients waited so long to seek medical assistance, many waiting so long, in fact, that in spite of any medical intervention received once they arrived at the hospital, the client would be scarred for life by the complications of the illness or disease...or, waiting too long for ANY medical intervention to be effective at all. It was also difficult to understand why it was even necessary to follow the rules of asepsis for performing a specific procedure while standing beside a broken, open window within the hospital's infrastructure where microbes had free access to the supposed "sterile environment". At the time, situations like this seemed hopeless to me, however, they also provided an opportunity for me to understand just how complex health care delivery can be in an underdeveloped nation. These situations also enabled me to develop my critical thinking skills through devising possible solutions to these challenges.

Currently, I am working as a nurse educator in Rwanda, Africa amongst a people who, not so long ago, experienced Genocide. Resulting from such an atrocity is a culture suffering from serious



issues related to poverty (e.g. Malnutrition), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, a significant proportion of the population living with HIV/AIDS and a vast number of orphans who do not have an adequate quality of life. As an educator, I am reminded daily to use the skills I have developed in cultural competence

to be sensitive to the way I deliver information related to specific topics. This is especially because some of my students were witness to many of the atrocities that took place during the Genocide. I also teach my students about my own culture in order that they may also be aware of the importance of culture competence



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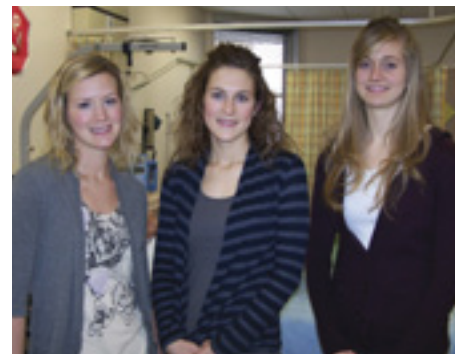




in the delivery of nursing care.

Prior to teaching, I acted often as a client advocate and also spent time collaborating with a Rwandan village government to improve community health, organize the construction of safe living arrangements for orphans and delivery of health care to the poorest of the poor. As a nurse advocate, I had several opportunities to work with clients both of Rwandan decent and expatriates. One such experience included an incident where I witnessed a hospitalized client having a seizure and in investigating the signs and symptoms she had presented to the hospital with, predicted that she was experiencing an intracranial bleed. Skills in cultural competence were the key that enabled me to convince the doctor that the client likely did not have the eye problem she had been diagnosed with, yet probably had something much more serious happening in her brain and was in need of a CT Scan to verify the suspi-

cion. In collaboration with the government, I was involved in community health assessment, proposal writing and supervision of a clean water project (the drilling of a water well), and supervision of the construction of an orphanage for 60 children. Again, skills in cultural competence were very beneficial in forming relationships and in communicating with government officials and the people of the community. Because becoming culturally competent in nursing care delivery is an ongoing process, I have yet to become an expert. However, the introduction to building cultural competence in the delivery of nursing care that I received in Ghana has certainly been a benefit to me in that I have been able to offer nursing care in Rwanda with humility and sensitivity. Developing cultural competence continues to be an objective of focus in the advancement of my nursing career.



Three students in the collaborative Nursing degree program at Grande Prairie Regional College are beginning 2010 with a great adventure – they are among the ten students in University of Alberta Nursing programs who have been selected to serve their practicum placements in Ghana, Africa.

Erica Rude, Erin Slemp and Laurie Hale are all fourth year students in the collaborative Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, offered at GPRC through the UofA. Applicants for the placements included students from throughout the UofA Faculty of Nursing, and were assessed on the basis of grade point average, an application, a letter expressing personal goals and aspirations, and a personal interview.

The three GPRC students were delighted to have all been accepted for this opportunity, and left for Ghana in early February, 2010.

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Right: Bill Fletcher and Allen Lam at GPRC, summer 2009



# Hong Kong to Grande Prairie: Alumnus Allen Lam

For the first time in more than 30 years, GPRC alumnus Allen Lam of Hong Kong revisited the GPRC campus in the summer of 2009. He was visiting his brother in Vancouver when he decided it would be a good time to reconnect with some former classmates here. The trip turned out to be more reminiscence than reunion, however, since most of his classmates have moved away from the community or are not listed in telephone directories.

Allen Lam was in Grande Prairie in 1974 for the auspicious moment when the new Cardinal building at Grande Prairie Regional College was opened by the Rt. Hon. Pierre Trudeau – and returned the next fall to enroll in Business Administration.

“I wanted to study overseas,” he explains. “I tried several colleges in various provinces, and eventually chose GPRC because it is closest to the west coast. Once I got here, I discovered there were several other Hong Kong students who were also here to study!” He completed his Business Administration diploma in 1977.

After all these years, and a career spanning several continents and a variety of industries, Mr. Lam still has mementos of his GPRC student days: student id card, transcripts, clippings of his activities and letters of recom-

mendation from his instructors.

The first moments in a new community, a new country, can be overwhelming. Lam remembers feeling very far away from home the night in 1975 that Lavern Larsen first picked him up at the airport, and invited him to spend the night at his family’s home before being introduced to the College the next day. Larsen, now retired from his days as counsellor in Student Services at GPRC, is among those still in the community, and met with Allen during his visit this summer.

Lam remembers the shock of minus 40 degree weather, and the days he walked to campus through snow up to his thighs. “It took me some months to adapt,” he says. “There was no bus at that time in Grande Prairie, so I either cycled or walked. Grande Prairie does not look very familiar any more – I think there is more than 80% change in the city!” The Dairy Queen, and the Golden Star where Lam had a part-time job are still landmarks for his memories, but the changes are vast.

Campus life was a distraction from the challenges of being so far from home, and in October 1975 Allen Lam won the first GPRC International Ping Pong Tournament – a title he says was hotly contested by runner-up Anthony Lee. One issue of *The Rag*, a College

news-sheet of the time, included a small ad placed by Lam with the offer “Want to Learn Chinese as a pass-time? A step toward the eastern culture.” – but there were no takers.

Retired business instructor Bill Fletcher is also an important connection to GPRC for Allen Lam, and the two spent a few hours catching up on the events of the intervening years. It was a disappointment, however, for Lam to be unable to find his former classmates, especially his good friend Rob Sweigard. “Rob came to visit me in Hong Kong in 1979, and I was happy to have the opportunity to show him around,” says Lam.

Allen Lam’s business career included electronics, the garment industry, and finally over 15 years in the insurance field. His earlier work meant frequent travel to India and Pakistan, but in later years he was based mainly in Hong Kong. Now fully retired, Allen Lam is a more regular visitor to Canada, as his brother immigrated in 1991 and is living in Vancouver.

Any former classmates wishing to contact Allen Lam are welcome to send messages c/o the GPRC Alumni office, to be forwarded.

# ALUMNI UPDATES

## **69-70 Darlene Repka-Smith Bachelor of Arts – University Transfer (Grande Prairie Campus)**

Involved with Wolves: '69, '70  
After completing my 2 years at GPRC, I transferred to the University of Alberta where I obtained by BA in Psychology and then took a Professional Diploma in Education (Secondary Social Studies). From there, I returned to Grande Prairie where I taught Phys. Ed. And Social Studies for 8 years at Montrose Junior High School and at Alexander Forbes School. I have been married to Rob Smith since 1982 and have 2 great children, Katelin aged 26 and Yuri aged 25. After teaching, my husband and have several businesses including the Health Hut, Tub and Spoon and Pasta Works. I am currently working as a licensed realtor with ReMax in Grande Prairie. I love helping people buy and sell homes and I also love referring people to contacts in warmer destinations where they want to escape during our cold winters!

## **74-76 Valery (Hyde) Puetz Agriculture Diploma – Crop Production (Fairview College Campus)**

Currently the Executive Director at the Campbell River and North Island Transition Society in Campbell River, BC.

## **77-78 Bradley Jones Pre-Employment Program, General Mechanic (Fairview College Campus)**

Currently employed as the Shop Foreman for Neil Wither's Trucking in Grande Prairie.

## **79-80 Neil Shelley Engineering (Grande Prairie Campus)**

After completing my first year of engineering at GPRC, I went on to the U of A to complete my degree in Mechanical Engineering. After a long and diversified career, I've finally settled in the Edmonton area where I am the Executive Director of the Alberta Industrial Heartland Association. 1979 was a good year to be at GPRC. The residences weren't built yet and with the boom going on, a lot of students from outside of the area had to live in holiday trailers in the parking lot of the college until they could find accom-

modations. This made for some interesting trips to the parking lot for "refreshments" between classes!

## **79-81 Elizabeth (Scribner) Jones Business Administration – 2 year Diploma (Grande Prairie Campus)**

After college I worked at the Grande Prairie Real Estate Board. Since March of 1982 I have been employed at the City of Grande Prairie, Assessment Department as a Property Assessor. I received my accreditation for the AB Assessors Association in 1994.

## **87-95 Della Lizotte: Bachelor of Arts (Grande Prairie Campus)**

I work with federally sentenced women as an Aboriginal Liaison Officer for the Correctional Service of Canada in Edmonton. My favourite memory of GPRC was being part of the Peer Support Team...beautiful people! The other special time was taking Native History courses with Duff Crerar. He was so sensitive to the Aboriginal world view perspective and so well-informed. He totally changed my attitude from hating history to thirsting for more.

## **89-91 Lisa Madsen: Animal Health Program (Fairview College Campus)**

Currently employed as a Animal Health Technologist for Animal Services in Calgary.

## **98-99 Ronald Morrison Welding Apprenticeship Program (Fairview College Campus)**

Currently a Welding Instructor at GPRC Fairview Campus.

## **98-01 Soonbin Lim Business Administration, Marketing Major (Grande Prairie Campus)**

I still remember many beautiful views and priceless experiences which I treasure from the time I spent attending GPRC. I have missed everything so much since I came back to my country, Korea.

## **99-00 Tracey (Muisse) Alde Visual Arts (Grande Prairie Campus)**

After leaving Grande Prairie, I took a year off to work and save money for future educational endeavors. In 2002, I moved to Kelowna and enrolled in the Interior Film & Television Training Centre where I earned a degree in Film & Television Production. I now live in Fort Nelson, BC and work for

the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality in Community Development & Planning. I married my husband Will Alde in 2007 in Oracabessa Jamaica. My favorite memories of GPRC are of my visual fundamentals class which I found both interesting and inspiring.

## **00-02 Robin (Grayson) Galloway Business Administration Diploma (Fairview College Campus)**

Currently the Human Resources Manager for the Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre in Peace River.

## **03-09 Deborah Gregson Bachelor of Arts, Psychology (Grande Prairie Campus)**

I am currently continuing my BA through Athabasca University. I am involved with community mental health and expressive arts. GPRC's smaller class sizes enabled more personalized learning for those who were interested - caring instructors who felt they had time to show an interest in their students. Thanks GPRC! Keep supporting your amazing faculty! We need to keep them all wanting to be here!

## **04-08 Benjamin Therrien Business Administration (Grande Prairie Campus)**

I've been employed by MRC Midfield for a year now. I work mainly in the Grande Prairie branch office in Inside Sales. I am the only person in MRC Midfield who also travels and assists the northern branches in our region. I am currently engaged and planning for my wedding in July 2010 with another GPRC Alumni, Tracy Driver. My favorite memory of being at GPRC was when I joined the Case Study team in my final year of Business. We travelled down to Edmonton to compete against Alberta's finest college students and placed third.

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Contact us at [www.gprc.ab.ca](http://www.gprc.ab.ca)

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## ALUMNI UPDATES



### Robin Arseneault

Robin Arseneault is an accomplished visual artist who grew up in Grande Prairie, graduated from GPCHS and is a GPRC alumna.

In 2005 she completed her MA in sculpture from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and in 2008 Robin received the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Emerging Artist Award. In February 2010, Robin was invited back to GPRC as a Visitor in the Arts, presenting a public lunchtime lecture and giving a more in-depth presentation to a second-year sculpture class. Her class visit included one-to-one studio visits with students, allowing personal time to ask questions about art, and life as an artist.

Now living and working in Calgary, Robin will be resident artist this summer at the Gushel historic photo studio in Blairmore AB. She has an impressive exhibited widely in group and solo exhibitions. To learn more about the art of Robin Arseneault, visit [www.robinarseneault.com](http://www.robinarseneault.com).

## ALUMNI SURVEY RESULTS

An email survey of GPRC Alumni was conducted between July and October 2009. Over 3,200 alumni were invited to participate in the survey and over 300 responses were received. Below is a snapshot of the survey findings.

- 94% of alumni had satisfactory experiences while a student at GPRC.
- 89.4 % have positive feelings towards GPRC today.
- 90% of alumni would recommend GPRC to others.
- Over 50% of alumni live in the Grande Prairie region and 13.75% live nationally or internationally.
- 76.1% of alumni are employed full or part time.
- 65% of alumni are unaware of GPRC needs and priorities
- Entertainment, visiting old friends and connecting with faculty members were the top three reasons our alumni would participate in a Homecoming activity.
- 70% of alumni felt GPRC prepared them for their current job
- The top five alumni benefits identified include:
  - VIP benefits across GPRC for alumni
  - Alumni Travel Program
  - Homecoming week
  - Affinity programs
  - Mentorship opportunities

Thank you to all alumni who participated in the alumni survey. If you are an alumnus from either campus and would like to update your contact information with us, log on to [www.gprc.ab.ca/alumni/](http://www.gprc.ab.ca/alumni/) to update your contact information.

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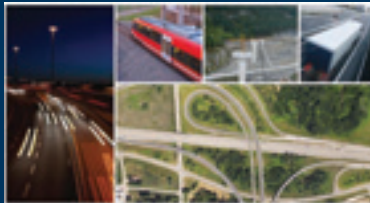
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A research project by  
Dr. Charles Backman



# The greening of business in the Peace

Charles Backman, MBA, MA, PhD, is now in the middle stages of a research project exploring “Green Opportunities” for Peace Region firms. The purpose of the research, being conducted on behalf of Peace Regional Economic Development Alliance (PREDA) through the Centre for Research and Innovation (CRI) is to try to understand where Peace firms are now in terms of environmental responsibility and to identify barriers stopping them from seizing market opportunities.

Beginning in late summer of 2009, Backman has been gathering information from area companies about their response to the increasing demands to demonstrate environmentally responsible business practices. This research is linked to earlier research at the head office level, comparing operating-level responses to head-office responses. 31 firms ranging in size from 4 to 650 employees are included in this sample, in eight broad service, manufacturing or resource sectors.

The firms were divided into two broad preliminary groups based on their orientation along four dimensions of firm behavior towards:

- Investments in green technology based competencies;
- Employee environmental skills;
- Environmental management systems and procedures; and
- Opportunity for environmental

factors to enter the strategic decision-making conversation.

“Once we get an idea where local firms are in relation to the environment and understand the barriers, then programs can be introduced,” Backman explains. “For example, a firm may be too small to make a difference – but a consortium of smaller firms might be able to get together to take green initiatives.” This is one example of the opportunities this research will help to identify.

Green initiatives are becoming an economic necessity for companies competing in the current marketplace. Increasingly, for example, the eligibility of businesses to bid on new contracts includes the ability to demonstrate environmental responsibility. There is a growing expectation on the part of consumers that a firm will 1) offer products which are environmentally responsible, and 2) manufacture products/conduct business in an environmentally responsible manner.

“In this region you can see two clusters of firms in which stance to the environmental is formalized and those in which it is not. Usually, the formalized are large firms (over 100) with well-developed policies – the environmental responsibility of a large firm is driven by policies and systems.”

Smaller companies (25-100) often also fall into the formalized category due to the requirement to have a green

footprint in order to do business with the large firm. Backman’s research has found that “formalized firms are more likely to have a dedicated environmental officer at the senior management level with reports of the firm’s environmental performance regularly sent to management, directors and other stakeholders.

The Owner-operator group (10-25 and under 10) generally do not have formalized procedures and systems in place, being more concerned with pure survival. Companies at this level tend to have little in the way of formal management systems dedicated for environmental issues beyond what is mandated by regulation. Backman notes that this is not a measure of concern for the environment; indeed environmental responsibility is personal and often reflected in how they conduct business. What identifies these businesses is the absence of codified policies, procedures and routines.

It is expected that the identification of barriers faced by small businesses and entrepreneurs in terms of environmental responsibility will help business development agencies such as PREDA to provide information and resources which may lift some impediments to exploring “Green” industry opportunities in the Peace.

The next stage of Backman’s research are the face-to-face interviews with ten selected firms which are



now underway. "A focus session is being planned for late-March or early-April 2010, and PREDA will identify how to help firms prepare a 5-year roadmap to greater environmental responsibility," Backman says. The final report on this research is expected to be complete by the end of April.

"Most respondents do have a concern for the environment," Backman has found.

"As they say, 'We live here! Of course we care!' The bottom line is there is an environmental ethic out there, but decisions are driven by the very real need to stay in business.

"Hopefully this report will further engage municipal, provincial and federal government interests and financial funding to support the initiatives of the plan."

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# RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

## EXHIBITIONS

The January 2009 exhibition “Here Now or Nowhere” curated by Micah Lexier, featured the work of international artists included Edward Bader, BFA, MFA, MA, instructor of Fine Arts at GPRC.

## PUBLICATION

Laura St. Pierre, BA, BFA, MFA, instructor of Fine Arts at GPRC recently published a review on canadianart.ca. Her article reviewed The Boundary Layer: Between Earth and Sky, an exhibition hosted at Prairie Art Gallery, Grande Prairie AB.

Elroy Deimert, BA, MA, PhD, is the author of a new book Pubs, Pulpits, and Prairie Fire, published by Roseway/Fernwood Publications, and released in September 2009. The book is a popular history of the Great Depression, the On to Ottawa Trek, & the Regina Riot. Dr. Deimert is an instructor of English in the Department of Arts and Education at GPRC.

## RECOGNITION

The graphic work of Edward Bader, BFA, MFA, MA, was noted in Cliff Eyland's blog on Akimbo, a major Canadian Art website. Eyland describes Bader as “He is a painter who also makes beautiful wordless comics.” Bader is an instructor of Visual Arts at GPRC.

Lauten Audio has posted clips from the Stealing Noise 2009 Album on their site. Stealing Noise is an annual recording by students of the Interactive Digital Design – Music program at GPRC. Lauten Audio makes high-end recording microphones (there are three Lautens here in the GPRC recording studio) and they have posted some of the material to help promote their mics – an accolade for our program and our students!



## AWARDS

Grande Prairie Regional College is highly honoured to be the recipient of the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce 2009 Employer of Choice Award. The award, sponsored by the Government of Alberta, was presented in person by Premier Ed Stelmach at the annual Excellence Awards event hosted by the Chamber on October 2, 2009.



The Students' Association at GPRC presented the annual SA Award for Excellence in Teaching to Ali Al-Asadi, BSc, MA, who is an instructor of Psychology in the Department of Arts and Education at GPRC. Students established this award to annually honour an instructor “who has demonstrated exceptional ability in conveying knowledge by presenting material in a fun and interesting manner.”

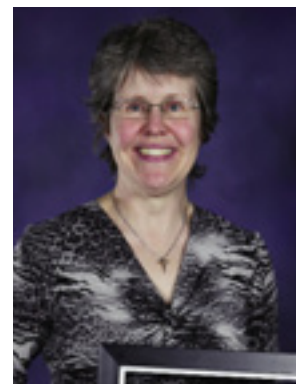
GPRC annually three prestigious community awards in recognition of the commitment of our volunteers, the achievements of our alumni, and the contributions to excellence in education by leaders in our community. Here are the recipients of the 2009 GPRC community awards:



William (Bill) and Margaret Bowes, Board of Governors Award of Distinction 2009



Jim Smith, Distinguished Volunteer 2009



Dr. Marie Moreau, Distinguished Alumni 2009



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GPRC Presidents Ball  
GPRC Golf Classic  
Ryan Blaise Come Fly with Me Foundation  
Grande Prairie Heart and Stroke  
PARDS  
Ronald McDonald House  
GPREMS  
STARS  
Swan City Rotary  
Community Foundation of  
Greater Grande Prairie  
Street Performers Festival  
Broadway off Broadway  
Sunrise House  
Odyssey House  
The Canadian Tire Luge Track  
Big Brothers and Big sisters  
World Mission  
SPCA  
United Way  
Grande Prairie Art Gallery  
Home and Garden Tour  
Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce  
South Peace Historical Society  
Ducks Unlimited  
Grande Prairie Fly Fishing Society

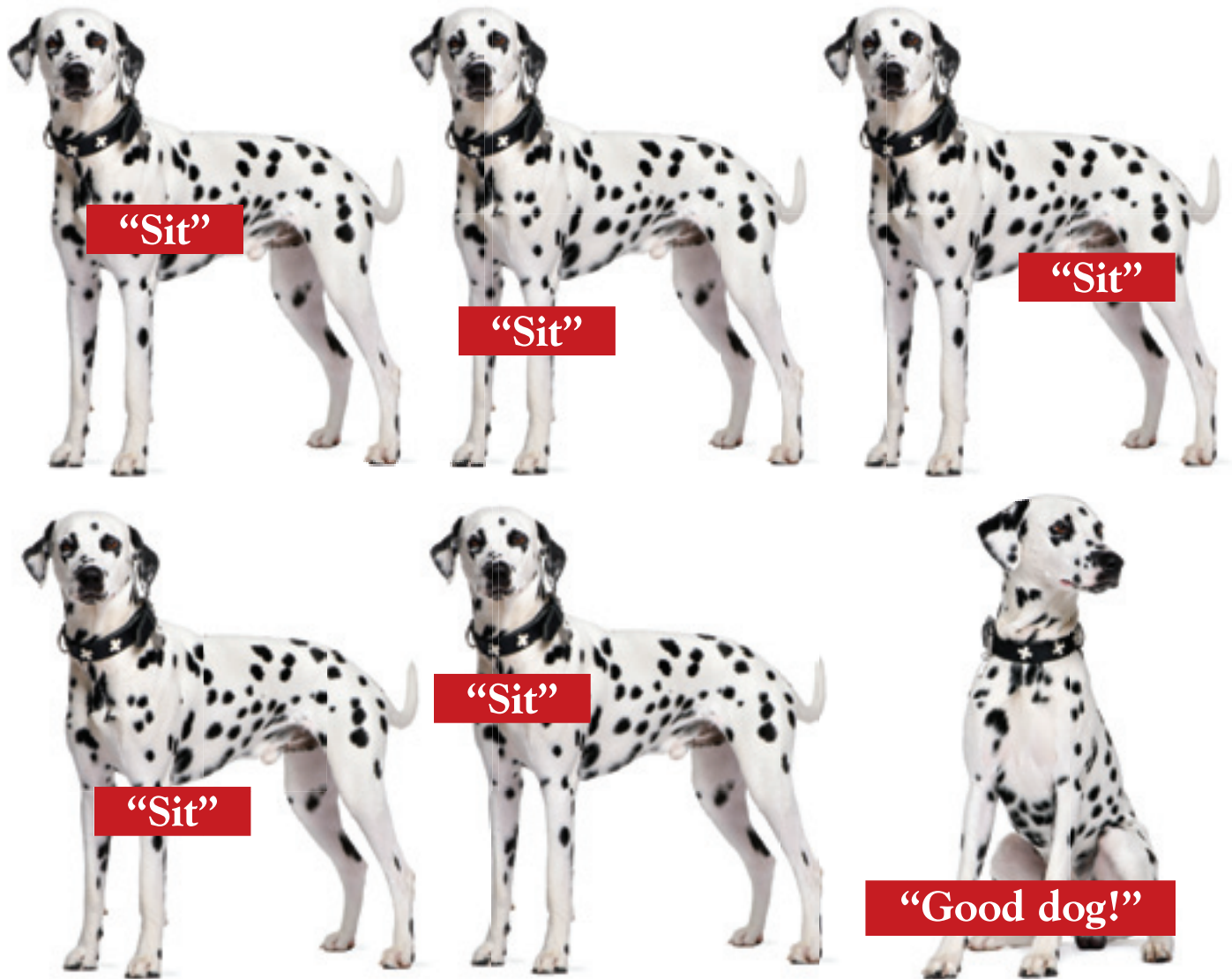


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