

Coming Home

My Saskatchewan Tour



My "little house on the prairie"

It all began when my son Bryan suggested I should do a Saskatchewan premier of my DVD, preferably at my Alma Mater, the University of Regina. This became a reality thanks to him and the sponsorship of the Department of Media Production and Studies.

Regina

I was honoured that Department Head Gerald Saul came out on such a blustery Tuesday evening to facilitate the showing. I first met Gerald in the 80s around the same time I met Jean Oser, my film prof, my major film influence and one of the people to whom I dedicated my DVD. It felt right to be at the U of R - the late Dr. Ann Leger-Anderson encouraged me many years ago to write my history. How I wish she and Jean could have seen the completion! But it was great to exchange memories of Jean with Gerald before the showing.

Family and friends attended in spite of the inclement weather and heavy snowfall. My brother Norman, who wrote "Winter Solstice" and "Spirit of Giving" was also in attendance. Both songs always receive positive response and I've had many glowing comments about the crocus shots, which he and Bonnie Young contributed to the DVD.

Norm drove me to Moose Jaw the next day for a showing at The Bentley, a seniors' residence where Alma Eastley, my teacher for four years and colleague for my first years of teaching, resides. I was thrilled with positive response from the elders of my province. My sister Audrey also attended this showing.

Moose Jaw

Wednesday night found me back in Regina at Huston Heights (Independent Living) Apartments, where Sharon Morris organized a showing that was enthusiastically received. Of all my performance audiences, this one was certainly the warmest! I've promised to do some live music there in the future.

Saskatoon

On Friday afternoon I was at Saskatoon's Frances Morrison Library where Dana Jacobs and her assistant Judith accommodated a multi-media presentation. The Saskatchewan Arts Council sent a representative to the presentation. As a fledgling presenter, I recognized that supportive face right away! I was delighted when people shared their stories in conversation after the event. Other than Paddy Tutty, it was a completely unknown audience to me so it was a unique experience on this trip.

Although it was running for people to see when they entered, I do wish that I had showed more of my DVD during the presentation, and talked a bit more about the process. I also bravely test ran a poem in progress, and sang one of the songs on the DVD "Anti-Carol" which is really difficult when the person you learned it from is sitting in the audience!

Later that evening, I was able to hear Paddy perform as she opened Sundog, Saskatoon's long running arts fair. True serendipity!

A week earlier, I began my tour in the Tisdale / Melfort area. I am hoping to do more live music at these two communities in the near future!

In Tisdale, Sandra and Shaun Dancey opened their home and art gallery to me, organizing a Saturday night jam with folks who had Yellowknife experience - one couple had attended Folk on the Rocks celebrating their marriage. Sandra also initiated great local contacts and helped organize events.

My first presentation at Melfort Bookshop was a bibliophile's dream – a coffee shop / bookstore open to performance. Gail-Marie Anderson, its owner, is also active with the local museum where I was able to catch a nostalgic photography exhibit of old houses. I did an interview with the local newspaper while in Melfort.

Melfort

Tisdale

Back again in Tisdale, my Saturday performance was supported by the Tisdale Writers' Group, family and friends. Tim Shire gave me great promotion on his website North Central Internet News (faster than light). Tisdale Library is part of an amazing complex that combines community assets school, curling rink and small theatre, to name a few. Truly an inspiration.

My friend Paddy quotes "There are only 52 people in Saskatchewan and they all know each other." She's right, because her relative Charles Mackenzie at Star City United Church opened children's story time to me. It felt like coming home to be in that small country church not unlike where I sang my first solo song at age two.

Star City

d e g h i j U

What thrilled me most was at each of these events folks came and shared their stories. This was the evolution of my project – to affirm that each of our stories is important and that our songs we sing, our histories, our anecdotes are a valuable oral tradition.

This was a huge step for me to take – to stand alone and tell my story, whether by showing the DVD, singing a capella songs from it, or sharing poetry. In each segment of the DVD, that was my lesson, to learn to stand alone and to be supported and shaped by my friends, my family and my community.

I began the circle fully supported by a former student and ended honouring my teachers. We are all peers now and coming home was all it should be – a renewal of friendship, a gratitude for my roots.

d e g h i j U

Five dollars from the sale of each DVD is being donated to local homelessness organizations.

d e g h i j U

A huge thanks to special folks who made this tour possible:

Melfort Bookshop – Gail-Marie Anderson
Tisdale Public Library – Isabelle Hankins-Wilke and Deanna Gruending
Star City United Church – Charles MacKenzie
Doghide Gallery – Sandra and Shaun Dancey
University of Regina Department of Media Production and Studies – Gerald Saul
The Bentley staff and Marion Lake
Huston Heights Independent Living – Sharon Morris
Frances Morrison Library – Dana Jacobs and Judith
Saskatchewan Arts Council
Celtarctic website – Moira Cameron

Special mention to:

Sandra, Shaun and Sam Dancey; Bryan Lacey; Cyril and Velma Lacey; Alma Eastley; John and Marion Lake; Norman Walker; John Walker; Paddy Tutty and Bill Walker - *who graciously provided transportation, bed & board to this wandering gypsy.*

Caitlin Lacey
administrative support

Steve Lacey
financial backer and moral support