

Larger Than Life Attractions

Saskatchewan is home to many odd, interesting, creative and, sometimes, gigantic attractions. We've listed a few here: some that have made the World's Largest List and others that didn't - but they're all quite amazing. For more Larger than Life attractions, check out: bigthings.ca/sask.

World's Largest Paper Clip. *Kipling* holds the Guinness World Record as having the *World's Largest Paper Clip*. Made of solid steel, it is 15 ft tall, 3 ft wide, 45 ft long and weighs 4,000 pounds.



World's Largest Tomahawk is a symbol of unity and friendship among the people of *Cut Knife* and area and stands 40 feet high with a suspended weight of about 18,000 pounds.



World's Largest Lily was erected in *Parkside* as recognition to long time resident, Dr. Bert Porter.

The lily represents one of many varieties he developed at Honeywood Nursery he founded in 1934.

World's Largest Coffee Pot symbolizes *Davidson's* friendliness and hospitality. This 24-foot coffee pot is capable of holding 150,000 8-ounce cups of coffee.



World's Biggest Honey Bee is *Tisdale's* mascot weighing two tons. It's 18 ft long, 4 ft wide, 6 ft high and hovers near the Tourist Booth welcoming visitors to town.



World's Tallest Ukrainian Lady. *Lesia*, a 25-foot statue in *Canora*, dressed in traditional Ukrainian costume, displays the traditional Slavic greeting of bread and salt.

Huge Canada Dollar Coin created to commemorate Rita Swanson of *Churchbridge* whose design for the coin was chosen to mark Canada's 125th birthday in 1992. At six feet across, it's possibly the largest loonie you'll ever see!

World's Largest Moose. Mac the Moose, of *Moose Jaw*, standing 32 feet tall and weighting in at 10 tons, is one of the most photographed attractions in Canada.



Giant Wheat Sheaf is a 43-foot metal sculpture symbolizing the many achievements of Seager Wheeler, five-time world Wheat King Champion, and one of Canada's great agricultural scientists, who farmed near *Rosthern*.

Mo the Sea Reptile is a replica of a Plesiosaur *Elasmosaurus* (a massive sea reptile) that was found near *Ponteix* and lived some 70 million years ago. The find was commemorated by a replica nearly 26 feet in length - almost half of which is neck.



Eiffel Tower. You don't have to cross the Atlantic to see the Eiffel Tower. Just head to *Montmartre* where you'll find a 30-foot exact replica, built to scale.

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From The Editor ...



The past year has been a busy time for CASK as we continue our expansion of information through digitization - disseminating more and more consumer information through our website and through our social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter.

Our organization continues to inform and educate readers about consumer issues, rights and protection through our quarterly publication *SaskWatch*. If you have any suggestions about topics you'd like to see featured, please contact us.

Over the past year, *SaskWatch* has reported on dozens of different topics, including: Truth in Advertising, Product Safety, New CRTC Rules, Internet Protection, High Pressure Sales, Reducing Waste, Alzheimer's, Restaurant Inspections, Excessive Consumerism and Avoiding Scams. Our readership has more than doubled in the past year because an increasing number of people are accessing *SaskWatch* online.

This issue of *SaskWatch* features articles on: Larger Than Life Attractions; Your Credit Report; Exchanges/Returns; Pulses; Ransomware; Phobias; Frugal Family Fun, and more. I hope you find our

Summer Edition informative and enjoyable.

Volunteering. Our organization exists because of the generous support and commitment of its volunteers. If you're interested in consumer rights and want to make a difference, consider becoming a volunteer. If you can devote even a few hours a month, your assistance is appreciated. We could use your help in a variety of areas:

- conducting surveys
- reviewing government policies and programs
- participating in rate reviews for SaskPower, SaskEnergy and SGI
- writing articles for *SaskWatch*
- organizing public information forums

We'd like to hear your ideas and best of all, we'd like you to consider being part of a group.

Problems. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you experience problems in the marketplace, if you want to check into a product prior to purchasing, or if you need information on your rights and responsibilities.

Have a consumer-smart summer!
~ Brenda Goldsworthy, Editor

Annual General Meeting

CASK held its Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon on May 31st. As well as CASK directors and members, Eric Green, the Registrar with Consumer Protection Branch, Ministry of Justice & Attorney General was also in attendance. It's always

a pleasure to have Eric attend our AGMs. This year we had enlightening and in-depth discussions with him, getting his helpful input on a number of important consumer issues. Regular business of the AGM was attended to, including: pre-

sentation of audited financial statements; approval of budget for the coming fiscal year; appointment of auditor; and presentation of committee reports. The AGM concluded with election of the New Board of Directors for the 2016/2017 season. (see box at left)

Your Credit Report

If you've ever borrowed money, or applied for a credit card, you have a credit file. And most of us have no idea what's in it. Are there mistakes? Have you been denied



credit and don't know why? Is someone trying to steal your identity? A simple check of your credit report will probably give you answers.

Your credit history is recorded in files maintained by Canada's major credit-reporting agencies: Equifax Canada and TransUnion Canada. A credit report is a 'snapshot' of your credit history and contains information about every loan you've taken out in the last six years, whether you regularly pay on time, how much you owe, and what your credit limit is on each account.

Any company that's thinking of granting you credit or providing you with a service that involves you receiving something before you pay (like phone service or an apartment) can get a copy of your credit report. And your credit report has a long history - all good and bad information remains on file for at least six years.

Equifax and TransUnion use a scale from 300 to 900 to determine

your Credit Score - the higher, the better. Someone with a credit score below 650 may have trouble getting new credit. Some mortgage lenders want to see a minimum score of 680 for you to get the best interest rate. Your Credit Rating numbers go from 0 (too new to rate) to 9 (bad debt or placed for collection or bankruptcy.)

The exact formula that bureaus use to calculate credit scores is secret. Paying bills on time is clearly the key factor. But because lenders don't make any money from you if you pay your bills in full each month, people who carry a balance month-to-month (but pay their minimum monthly balances on time) can be given a higher score than people who pay the amount due in full.

This isn't too surprising when you realize that credit bureaus are primarily funded by banks, lenders, and businesses - not by consumers.

You can ask for a free copy of your credit file by mail. Equifax

and TransUnion provide detailed information on credit reports, including: how to order a credit report; reporting an error; and what to do if you suspect identity theft. If you spot entries in your credit report that don't seem to relate to you (charge accounts you never opened or bad debt notations you never got), you may be a victim of the rapidly-growing crime of identity theft and should notify the credit reporting company immediately.

You can always check your credit report for free by mail. Or, you can pay to get it online whenever you want. Both companies provide paid credit monitoring services at \$15-\$20 per month. People who've been victims of identity theft or are worried that they may be susceptible may consider the expense worthwhile.

Equifax Canada:

1.800.465.7166; equifax.ca

TransUnion Canada:

1.866.525.0262; transunion.ca



Refunds and Exchanges

Always ask what the return policy is before completing a purchase. When you make a purchase, you are entering into a contract and can only get an exchange, or a rebate, if the product is faulty or not living up to expectations. Canadian Consumer Handbook says, "While no legal obligation exists for businesses to accept returned items unless they are defective, retailers and other businesses generally agree that offering refunds or exchanges is a critical part of developing and maintaining good customer relations. If you are having problems with an exchange or refund or feel as if the seller is not upholding their policy, contact your provincial consumer affairs office for help." The Ministry of Justice and Attorney General is responsible for the regulation of consumer and marketplace relations in Saskatchewan. Their website offers information on a number of issues, including: deposits, refunds, exchanges and returns: justice.gov.sk.ca/refunds-exchanges-returns.

Recycle Your Old Fridge.

The time is nigh to recycle your old fridge because SaskPower's fridge recycling program is almost over. You can have your old fridges or freezers (2004 and earlier) picked up to be recycled - and it's free - but only until Aug. 31. SaskPower said the program is ending due to a decrease in demand. "After six years we've gathered a lot of Saskatchewan's old turquoise and tanned fridges. We're seeing less and less requests for this service." Since 2011, there have been 31,000 appliances recycled under this program. Power bill savings for people who replace their old fridges can be up to \$130 a year, and recycling old appliances prevents components like freon, mercury and hydrocarbons from making their way into the environment from landfills. Book your fridge pickup before August 31 by calling 1.877.757.3292 or by booking online: www.skrecycle.ca.

Car Headrest Could Save Your Life.

While it's true that car headrests can be used to break windows, there's no indication that they were designed for that purpose. Car windows are made with tempered glass and very difficult to break. They can, however, be broken by hard objects with pointed tips like the metal punches found on hammers made specifically to shatter glass windows in emergencies. When using a headrest to break a car window, instead of swinging it like a hammer, use it as a lever. Insert one of the metal posts between the window and the door (glass is weakest at a corner), shoving it down as hard as you can and pull back on the headrest. Pressure placed on the end of the metal post shatters the glass. The best method, though, is to keep an emergency hammer and seat belt cutter in the car at all times. They're easy to get and very inexpensive. (truthorfictios.com; lifehacker.com)

SaskFoodFind.com is an online resource for connecting consumers and producers of Saskatchewan-made food products. Saskatchewan producers are given the opportunity to promote their operations and sell products directly to the consumer. This website allows province wide access to a consumer base looking for high quality, Saskatchewan grown products. You can filter your search by location and food type.

Redheads.

Redheadedness is the most recent successful human mutation. Between one and two per cent of the world's population is redheaded. In north European and western countries, this number can rise to six per cent. Red hair appears most commonly in people with two copies of a *recessive allele* on *chromosome 16* that produces an altered version of the *MC1R* protein; a complex way of saying there's no way of telling when a gene is going to change and what sort of characteristic it will bring about. This genetic magic is a microcosm of the way all life on Earth changes with time. Some estimates say Scotland has the most redheads with as much as fourteen percent, while the United States has one to two percent, which is the norm, worldwide.

Dangers of a Hot Car.

Every summer, hundreds of preventable deaths happen when children and pets are left in hot cars. "It is never OK to leave kids or pets in a car - even with the windows down," says Christopher McStay, an emergency room doctor at Langone Medical Center. "Your car is a greenhouse and temperatures can get exceedingly hot in an exceedingly short period of time." Just a few minutes can be extremely dangerous - even fatal - for a small child. A vehicle's temperature can rise 20 degrees, to dangerous, life-threatening levels, in only 10 minutes. In less than an hour temperatures can increase 50 degrees. If you see a child alone in a hot vehicle, call 911 immediately.

Toilet Bowl Cleaners.

2000 Flushes is considered by the Environmental Working Group as one of the most harmful cleaning products in your home containing cancer causing ingredients, asthma instigators, and poisons. The label says: *may be fatal if swallowed* and warns customers to wear rubber gloves when handling, hold the disc away from the face and avoid inhaling the fumes. Hard to avoid inhaling the fumes when it's in your bathroom and being flushed into the air. Many other toilet bowl cleaners are also highly toxic and have warnings like: *causes irreversible eye damage and skin burns* or *not recommended for use by persons with heart conditions*. There are lots of safer alternatives available.

PIECES

Bits & Pieces

Prevent & Treat Insect Bites.

Preventive measures to avoid getting bit by insects such as mosquitoes include: avoiding the outdoors at dawn and dusk, draining stagnant water sources, planting marigolds around your yard, and installing bat boxes. The following can be used to repel bugs: Vick's Vaporub®; cinnamon leaf oil; clear liquid vanilla extract mixed with olive oil; citronella essential oil; catnip oil. Most commercial insect repellants contain DEET which many studies have found to have harmful effects. Herbs and other natural agents can help soothe itchy bites, such as: aloe vera, calendula, cinnamon, chamomile, lavender, neem oil, tea tree oil, basil, peppermint, lemon and lime, and baking soda mixed with witch hazel. Using either ice or heat are other options that can help ease the discomfort associated with bug bites. *(from mercola.com)*

Ripening Avocados Quickly.

Avocados have a pretty small window of ripeness and figuring it out can be tricky. Mostly we buy ones that seem close to being ripe and let them sit on the counter until we think they're ready. Some of us stick them in a paper bag to ripen a bit faster. According to *PureWow.com*, it's possible to hurry up that ripening process to about 10 minutes. Wrap avocado in tin foil, place on a baking sheet and put in 200°F preheated oven for 10 minutes. Then place in the fridge until cool. If you have an avocado that's rock-hard, it might need up to an hour but your average avocado only needs about 10 minutes. So why does this trick work without baking it? It's the combination of the heat and foil. Avocados produce ethylene gas, which is typically released slowly, causing the fruit to ripen. But as the avocado heats in tin foil, the gas surrounds it, putting the ripening process into hyperdrive.

Costco Refuses to Sell GMO Salmon

Costco is promising not to sell the genetically modified fish, according to environmental group Friends of the Earth. "Salmon is too important for our diets, economy, and cultural heritage to accept anything made in a lab. We want the real deal and applaud Costco for ensuring its customers that is what they'll get," Heather Day, executive director of Community Alliance for Global Justice, a grassroots group focused on social justice and sustainability, said recently.

Floater.

Every so often, a person may see floating things in the air in front of their eyes that look a little like worms and move around with eye movement. The correct term for floaters is *muscae volitantes* which are made up of tissue, red blood cells, or protein. These small chunks are seen when they move near the back of the eye where the retina is located. We are not seeing the floaters themselves, but the shadow they make on the retina. As your eye tries to follow them, they move away quite quickly. This is common as the floater is in the liquid of the eye and will move with it. Floaters pose no potential health risk at all. They can, however, make some people nervous if they don't know what they are seeing. Because they pose no harm to the eye or vision, there is also no treatment. Most people tend to ignore them as they only show up when one is looking at a bright or mostly white surface. *(davidwolfe.com)*

... Did You Know ...

- The standard plate is 36 percent larger than it was 50 years ago.
- There are about 4,000 known varieties of potatoes (with about 3,000 in the Andes alone) and about 5,000 varieties of sweet potatoes grown worldwide. And potatoes were the first vegetable to be successfully grown in space.
- Pumpkins are not a vegetable - they're a fruit.
- Cherries are a member of the rose family.
- To keep berries longer, swirl them around in a one-part vinegar/ten-parts water solution, drain and pop in fridge. Vinegar kills mold spores and other bacteria so they'll stay fresh for several weeks.
- Feeding preschool-aged children junk foods high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats creates a long-lasting impact on their taste preferences. Part of the reason is that children's taste buds are trained within the very first years of life and, in some cases, from birth.
- Gum thrown on the ground looks like bread to birds and they try to eat it. It fouls their entire system and prevents them from ingesting any real nourishment or water - so they die slowly. Be responsible with your trash - don't throw it on the ground.

PULSES

peas, beans, lentils, chickpeas, soybeans, fava beans

2016 has been declared *International Year of Pulses* by the United Nations, and that's good news for Saskatchewan. Pulses are the edible seeds of annual leguminous plants like lentils, dry peas, chickpeas, and beans. Canada is the world's number one exporter of lentils and dry peas, and Saskatchewan is Canada's number one pulse producer, accounting for just over 65% of Canada's pulse farms.

It's not just farmers and economists who have reason to be excited, though. There are many reasons consumers should be interested in our province's main cash crop.

Pulses are incredibly rich in protein, making them a mainstay in most vegetarian and vegan diets. Even if you're more omnivore than herbivore, there are a few reasons to trade some of the chicken on your plate for chickpeas. Pulses are also an excellent source of fibre, as well as complex carbohydrates. Furthermore, unlike many carbohydrate sources, pulses do not cause a fast rise in blood sugar after eating. This is good for everyone, but especially beneficial for diabetic individuals looking to balance nutrition and blood sugar levels in their diet.

The protein found in pulses is also less expensive, both to the consumer at the grocery store and to the planet as a whole. The amount of resources required to grow, harvest, and transport pulses is far less



than what's required to breed, keep, slaughter, and transport livestock. Additionally, pulses can be stored for long periods of time without losing nutritional value, which makes for easy exporting and minimal waste. As the global population climbs, pulses are emerging as an efficient and dependable way to make more food with less space.

How can I get pulses into my pre-existing diet, you ask? Quite easily, it turns out. Pulses can easily be tossed in a salad or soup, or served on the side. If eating a bowl of lentils isn't your thing, try slipping pulses into your baking. Peas and beans can be ground into flour (you can do this yourself or buy it pre-ground) that's both nutritionally dense and gluten-free. Even if you have no reason to avoid gluten, replacing some or all of the wheat flour in your recipe with pea flour can fortify your baking with added protein, fibre, and essential vitamins and minerals. It will also

add to the taste and texture of your dish, giving you new ways to approach tired recipes. More nutrients and more flavour? Sometimes you really can have it all.

2016 may be the year of the pulse, but don't expect them to go anywhere soon. In a world where eating healthily often comes at the expense of affordability, savvy consumers should embrace pulses as an opportunity to save money while bolstering their diets. Inexpensive, nutritious, sustainable, and grown in our very own province. What's not to love?

by Dylan Stansfield

*(Sources: pulsecanada.com/;
pulse.ab.ca/consumers; statcan.gc.ca/;
leaderpost.com/; fao.org/resources/)*



Saskatchewan Pulse Growers (SPG) is a non-for-profit organization representing and supporting approximately 17,000 pulse crop growers in Saskatchewan. They produce two magazines, both aimed at getting timely information into the hands of growers. *PulsePoint* magazine is produced quarterly while the *Pulse Research* magazine is produced once a year in August. Check out their website at: saskpulse.com.

Ransomware



Ransomware is a type of malware (malicious software) that prevents or limits users from accessing their system, either by locking the system's screen or by locking the users' files unless a ransom is paid. It is considered *scareware* as it forces users to pay a fee (or ransom) by scaring or intimidating them. It works by taking control of your system and holding your information hostage until you pay a ransom to get your data back and is one of the most blatantly criminal, moneymaking schemes out there. And because it can be immediately painful to you by locking up your data, it's also one of the most successful.

Like most virus and malware attacks, ransomware attacks happen through a combination of exploiting vulnerabilities in software, convincing users to visit malicious or compromised websites (often by misleading users of its true intent and/or disguised as a

legitimate file), and by using social engineering attacks to convince you to download the ransomware.

Once the ransomware is on your system, it will identify files that the attackers think are valuable to you and lock them away in an encrypted format so you can't use them. Ransomware will appear on your screen explaining that it's taken your files hostage and gives you information on how to make payment to get your files back. Typically, if you follow the instructions and pay the ransom, you will get access to your files again. But at this point, the attackers often have your credit card information so you're at risk of further financial losses.

Because ransomware locks up your files in hard-to-crack encrypted files, recovering from this attack can be very difficult. Prevention is the best solution.

To avoid getting infected:

- Regularly update your computer's software, anti-virus programs, and applications to protect against the latest vulnerabilities.
- Avoid suspicious sites and unverified emails and don't click on any links on a webpage, in an email, or in a chat message unless you absolutely trust the page or sender..
- Back up important files using the 3-2-1 rule: create 3 backup copies on 2 different media with 1 backup in a separate location.

Phobia

A persistent, irrational fear of a specific object, activity, or situation that leads to a compelling desire to avoid it.

How many phobias are there? Apparently too many to count. Considering anyone can be afraid of anything, the list is endless. ANY object can be a phobia, ANY animal can be a phobia, ANY situation can be a phobia - even Phobophobia - Fear of Phobias! Bugs, animals, people, heights, trains, food, standing, sleeping, clocks, numbers, letters, lights, noises, flying, driving, crowds, germs, urinating, being touched - the phobia list goes on. The website www.phobialist.com lists hundreds of them. Here are a few examples:

Alektorophobia: Fear of chickens

Alliumphobia: Fear of garlic

Arachnophobia: Fear of spiders

Aulophobia: Fear of flutes

Barophobia: Fear of gravity



Bibliophobia: Fear of books

Cacophobia: Fear of ugliness

Chorophobia: Fear of dancing

Coulrophobia: Fear of clowns

Dendrophobia: Fear of trees

Disposophobia: Fear of throwing stuff out - hoarding

Geliophobia: Fear of laughter

Genuphobia: Fear of knees

Lachanophobia: Fear of vegetables

Logizomechanophobia: Fear of computers

Ornithophobia: Fear of birds

Paraskavedekatriaphobia: Fear of Friday the 13th

Pogonophobia: Fear of beards

Scolionophobia: Fear of school

Selenophobia: Fear of the moon



Frugal Family Fun

by Morag Embleton-Kimpton

There are plenty of free and inexpensive things to do with kids in Saskatchewan this summer. We've listed a few. To find additional activities, check your town or city's Leisure Guide and go online and google *things to do with kids in (insert place)* - and you'll find tons of activities, entertainment, games, play areas and outdoor fun for the young and young at heart - many free or fairly inexpensive.

- The City of Saskatoon operates 45 weekday and 16 weekend Play Programs at various playgrounds in Saskatoon in July and August. Play Program leaders plan and supervise activities for children ages 2 to 12 years, while the adjoining Paddling Pools and Spray Pads offer kid-sized opportunity to cool off and beat the heat. Drop in for free water play, sports, crafts, games, music and much more! Check out their website: saskatoon.ca/parks-recreation-attractions for more information on locations and hours of operation.
- The City of Regina has multiple spray park locations that are free of charge as well as several outdoor pools, some of which have free admission later in the evening. regina.ca/residents/recreation/recreation-facilities/spray-pads.
- www.kidsbowlfree.com/: participating bowling alleys in Shaunavon, Regina and Saskatoon.
- Kinsmen Park Saskatoon: \$2 per ride per person or \$20 for 12 tickets. Ferris Wheel, train and carousel plus the children's play area. Climb the pyramid tower, ride the hill slide or rock in the huge saucer swings. Have a splash while working the sprayers, play in the sand, and try the double cable ride, log

climber and dome mountain. All free except for the rides.

- Children's Discovery Museum, Market Mall, Saskatoon: \$3.75 per child or adult, under 1 year no charge. Free parking.
- Marr Residence, Saskatoon: various programming throughout the year. Admission by donation.
- Meewasin Valley Authority, Saskatoon: oversees various sites including the Meewasin Trail, Beaver Creek and Cranberry Flats. meewasin.com/visitor/trails.
- Public Libraries are a fabulous source of activities this summer and year round! Check your favourite branch for activities and events. Don't forget the summer reading program for kids.
- Tourism Saskatchewan: A fantastic resource. Filter your search by town/city, region and event. tourismsaskatchewan.com/things-to-do/events.



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