

## "Home is a Manitoba Farm" quilt selected in Homecoming 2010 competition

BY LORRAINE STEVENSON  
Co-operator staff

**BRANDON**  
It's a familiar rural scene to many present-day Manitobans and former residents too.

Now a farm set against a brilliant Prairie sky will depict home in Manitoba, captured as a fabric image by two women in their exquisite art quilt.

Phyllis Gagne's and Coreen Zerr's quilt, titled *Home is a Manitoba Farm* and submitted to the Homecoming 2010 Quilt competition, was selected last weekend out of 17 quilt entries as the prize winner to be featured at select Homecoming 2010 events during the upcoming year.

The quilt competition was jointly hosted by the Manitoba Association of Agricultural Societies (MAAS) and Homecoming 2010, and unveiled at Hip 2 b Square: Elevating the Art of Quilting, a gala event to kick off rural homecoming events scheduled for this year.

Judges selected the quilt created by Zerr, formerly of Manitoba and now living in Nanaimo, B.C., and Gagne of Portage la Prairie, as the best depiction of Manitoba in the provincial Homecoming Quilt 2010 competition.

Neither Zerr nor Gagne could be present to learn their quilt had won. The honour was accepted by Zerr's sister Doreen Stapleton.

"I know they'll be thrilled," said Stapleton.

A cash prize of \$2,800 accompanies the honour. The quilt will also be displayed at Manitoba House during the Vancouver Olympics.

Gagne and Zerr both grew up on farms near Rock Lake, Man. They created the composite



**HOME IS A MANITOBA FARM:** A composite scene of the two farms Phyllis Gagne and Coreen Zerr recall growing up on was the winning entry in the Homecoming 2010 Quilt competition hosted jointly by the Manitoba Association of Agricultural Societies and the provincial Homecoming committee. The quilt is seen on the far right while on display alongside winning MAAS provincial competition quilts.

scene of both farms from memory and using family photos.

"When we heard about the Manitoba Homecoming Quilt competition our thoughts went right to the farms we were raised on in Manitoba," they wrote in a description accompanying their quilt.

Officials with Homecoming 2010 hope the thoughts of many more thousands of Manitobans turn homeward this year.

Homecoming 2010, which is promoting the province across Canada, hopes to lure at least 50,000 former Manitobans home for a visit this year, said Homecoming 2010 executive director Kevin Walters.

Family, school and town reunions and many other com-

munity events are now on a lengthening list of celebrations being held and promoted under Homecoming 2010, he said. On May 15 over 60 towns will also host a social in conjunction with Homecoming. Neepawa was chosen to be provincial host of Manitoba's 140th birthday and has five days of celebrations planned.

Anyone with an event planned that brings people home is encouraged to list it on the Homecoming website, Walters said.

The whole idea behind this is reminding former Manitobans what a great place home is and encouraging them to make 2010 the year they decide to come back for a visit, he said.

"This is a year-long event and

it's for the entire province, not just for Winnipeg," he said. "Our theme is 'Who are you inviting home and where are you taking them?'"

### 10 per cent jump

Another goal is to see communities record at least a 10 per cent increase in attendance at events promoted under Homecoming 2010, Walters added.

That includes all agricultural fairs hosted by this province's 59 respective agricultural societies.

Liz Roberts, MAAS superintendent and MAFRI rural leadership specialist, said their provincial board jumped at the opportunity to partner with Homecoming 2010.

"We're always looking for opportunities to partner and create new events," she said.

Fairs are a perfect fit with Homecoming 2010, given that these events annually and traditionally lure thousands of visitors home, she added.

### More quilts

The winning entries in MAAS's annual provincial quilt competitions were also unveiled at Hip 2 b Square, which also kicked off the annual convention of MAAS in Brandon.

This year 20 quilts made it to provincial finals. First place in the hand-sewn category went to Maria Branum of the Oak Lake Ag Society and second place to Joyce Scott of the Pelican Lake Ag Society. Juanita Williams of the Springfield/Dugald Ag Society is the first-prize winner in the machine-sewn quilt category. Lois Acheson of the Miami Ag Society won second place.

The Hip 2 B Square reception also featured designer quilts, created as a special initiative of MAAS, with quilt squares purchased by agricultural societies, businesses and individuals, then designed and pieced together by a special quilt-making committee. MAAS's designer quilts are being donated to Ronald McDonald House.

Provincial Agriculture Minister Stan Struthers said he was very impressed with the skill and creativity expressed in all the displayed quilts.

"I was thrilled to walk through here and see the stories that these quilts tell," said Struthers, who addressed the Hip 2 b Square gala.

lorraine@fbcpublishing.com

How will rural needs be met?

## Report predicts rise of dementia among aging Canadians

BY LORRAINE STEVENSON  
Co-operator staff

Canada must get ready now to care for a future onslaught of Alzheimer's disease anticipated among its aging population, says a new study predicting the number diagnosed with the disease, or some form of dementia, will double in a generation.

By 2038 as many as 1.1 million Canadians are expected to have the disease, according to *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society*, released by the Alzheimer Society of Canada this month.

Currently, about 500,000 Canadians now live with it. Dementia first impairs memory and eventually ends a person's ability to live independently.

The report says the increase will create huge new demand for long-term care beds in personal-care homes, and add significant

pressures to family members who will need to serve as long-term caregivers for parents and spouses.

Presently, hours logged by caregivers of persons with dementia sit at around 231 million. That number is expected to triple in the next 30 years.

The impact of this will be felt on families everywhere, including rural families, said Norma Kirkby, program director with the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba.

More people may require more care for longer periods of time in the community, meaning more demands placed on caregivers, she said.

"Even if the health system grows the number of personal-care home beds, there's still going to be pressure where not everyone will get the care as soon as they would wish," she said.

In rural areas, that will mean additional pressures on persons to drive to wherever a family

member is in care, or risks for those individuals if they try to remain living independently.

In Manitoba about 18,000 people are now diagnosed with some form of dementia, or are believed to be living with some form of impairment not yet diagnosed. It's estimated up to 80 per cent of persons residing in personal-care homes have some form of dementia, Kirkby noted.

With the anticipated rise of the disease, Manitoba's numbers are expected to swell to around 34,000 in a generation.

The increase could have significant impact, particularly on rural areas if these remain places where large numbers of older persons continue to reside.

Age remains the No. 1 risk factor for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

A big question ahead for health authorities and communities ahead is where best to locate new

personal-care homes to meet rural needs, Kirkby said.

More personal-care homes in more smaller communities would be ideal. But health authorities are going to have to forecast where populations are going to remain sustainable to merit building and staffing new facilities.

What's key right now is ensuring rural communities don't lose health-care services they currently have, Kirkby continued.

"There is a need for farm advocacy groups, if a hospital is becoming aged stock, or a personal-care home is becoming aged stock, to say to the health authority, 'We will need to serve our own people close to home. How can we do this?'"

### Strategies

The Alzheimer Society's study outlines potential intervention strategies that can be implemented now, including

creating integrated models of care to link primary and acute care with community support networks.

Chronic disease prevention strategies now will also go a long way to preventing more dementia for developing in the population, the study suggests.

Age or an underlying health issue is the causative factor behind 90 to 95 per cent of diagnosed cases of dementia. Only five to 10 per cent are a genetic formation.

Care for one's overall health can greatly help reduce risk factors for developing the disease, so eating well and getting exercise, keeping cholesterol levels in check and avoiding becoming obese can all help ward off the disease. Staying in social networks and keeping the mind engaged are also helpful.

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