

# Family on the run

Usually, the guy who finished in 153rd place doesn't get to give an acceptance speech.

That said, most of the participants in last weekend's Queen City Marathon (QCM) don't also have a newspaper column to write.

So here we are.

For finishing the half-marathon in Regina in one hour, 48 minutes and nine seconds, I received a snazzy participant's medal, shaped like a maple leaf. Then I quickly moved aside to make room for Miss 154, Mr. 155 and so forth.

Within seconds of crossing the finish line, I met up with my wife Adrienne, who was carrying three-month-old Francis in a Snugli and pushing three-year-old Ellie in the stroller.

She was cheering me on, just as she has done for the last four years.

(Francis was asleep and Ellie was mostly interested in the bouncy castles, but the important thing is they were there.)

I know it sounds corny, but the fact is that I wouldn't have been there without the support and encouragement my wife gives me each day.

Training for a



**Joel van der Veen**

21.1-kilometre run takes time, and Adrienne has been most gracious in holding down the fort while I go for my regular runs.

I started running about three years ago and completed my first half-marathon in Saskatoon in May 2016.

Lately, on my morning runs I've ventured out onto rural roads, which offer multiple advantages.

Generally, there are fewer twists and turns slowing you down, and I'm told gravel is easier on your joints than asphalt.

Also, I think the gravel roads might actually be safer, since the few drivers you do meet can see you coming from a mile away and generally give you a wide berth.

For Sunday's run,

Adrienne made bibs for our whole family with "Joel on the Run" in large, narrow letters.

She was imitating the design of the Wings album "Band on the Run," even making the bibs in the shape of Granny Smith apples, like the Apple Records label. (My wife gets me in a way nobody else does.)

In the weeks leading up to the QCM, I'd run 21.1 kilometres four times, trying to make sure I was ready for the big day.

As it turned out, the heat got the better of me on Sunday, and around the 17-km mark I had to slow down in order to avoid dehydration.

I have only my own poor planning to blame, as there was lots of water available and I didn't take advantage when I should have done so.

I was disappointed, but I did finish the route without fainting, and I was happy with the result.

This year participants were provided with free professional photos taken during the run. It was a nice touch and I appreciated the gesture, but I'd also appreciate if most of those photos never saw the light of day again.

(When I'm running I tend to look deranged or like I'm suffering a cardiac event, neither of which has been true so far.)

The event gave me my annual dose of "marathon culture," which includes runners cheering each other on, spectators cheering us on from the sidelines, and boomboxes on every corner playing "Eye of the Tiger."

For an introvert like myself, solitude is part of the appeal of running, but there's also a certain joy in sharing the day with hundreds of strangers, bonded by a common goal.

Overall, my pace has increased and I know I'm capable of better.

Next time, I'll be ready.

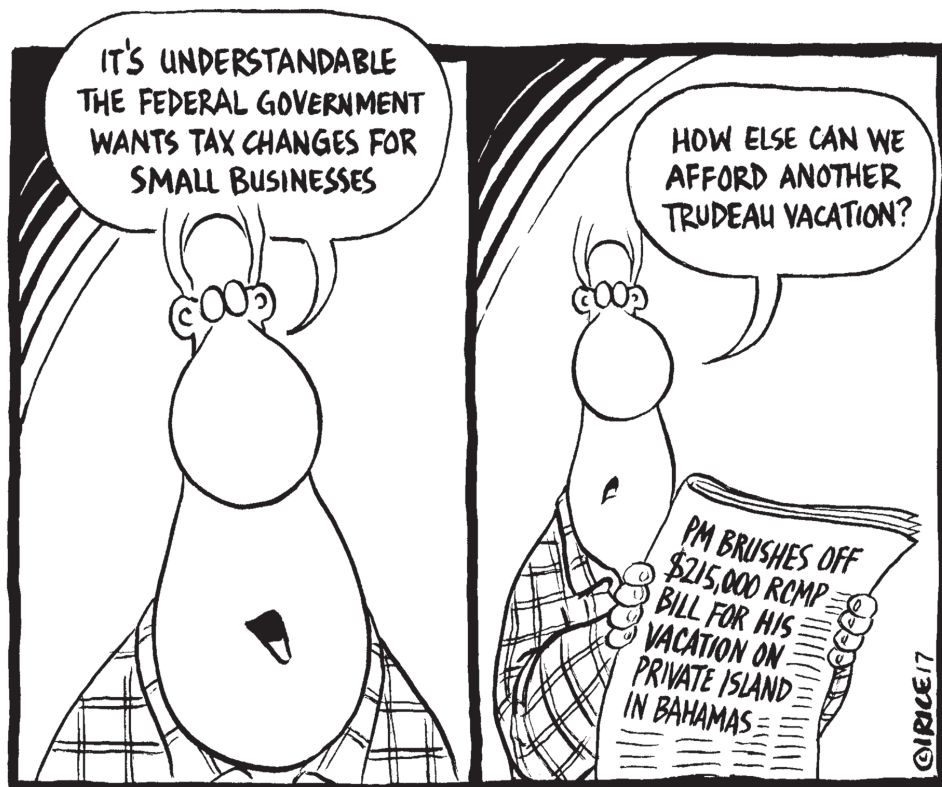
That is, as long as Adrienne and the kids are along for the ride.

## Letters

We welcome our readers' thoughts on issues and concerns of local interest. Please send your signed letters to: Box 786, Davidson, SK, S0G 1A0. We also accept letters sent via fax to 567-2900 or by email to davidsonleader@sasktel.net.

Letters should be no longer than 250 words and may be subject to editing.

# Leader Opinion



## The Way It Is

By Flo Shaw

## Reflections from a reunion

August 1, 2017.

The last of our company left for home today. The weekend is now just a memory: the sound of the children's laughter, the echo of memories shared and the cries of joy when we spotted familiar faces we hadn't seen in years linger in the quiet twilight. This has been a weekend to remember, a time in which we got caught up with each other's lives. Smiles were plentiful, tears of happiness fell on smile-widened cheeks as we hugged, shook hands and hugged some more. I am so happy that we all had the chance to be together. I had a wonderful time and I hope y'all did too. I think we should do this again soon, all in favour? Raise your hands.

I so love my "Diary of our Family Reunion/100th Birthday" book, and I haven't even read it all yet. It's too hard to read with tears of happiness in my eyes and now my Kleenex box is empty. Thank you everyone for the kind words and wonderful memories. I will cherish this book forever. And a big thank you to my girls for coming up with the idea. And the guest board instead of a guest book was a brilliant idea, Monkey.

Our guests started arriving on Wednesday when two of my granddaughters came early to help and a big help they were, thanks girls. Then on Thursday the party got started early with the arrival of my number four son and his three boys, my brother and his twin sons from the U.S. and my sister from Regina. Friday night's wiener roast/hamburger barbecue got things rolling as people arrived and the

tent filled up. My boys did a great job with the barbecue. Thanks guys, I appreciate your help. I think everyone went to bed that night with full tummies and smiles on their faces.

Saturday morning arrived and with it relatives we hadn't seen in ages. What a wonderful reunion as we hugged, talked, laughed and told stories of days gone by. By the afternoon the tent was full to overflowing and even the cows and horses seemed to enjoy the festivities as they spent the day in the corner of the pasture as close to us as possible. Our cows and the horses are always interested in what goes on in the yard and I do hope they enjoyed seeing all the people who went to visit them. I know the children were happy to see real live cows and horses so close. I have to mention that we had some doggie guests too who, along with our dogs, seemed to be enjoying the attention and petting they got as well as the opportunity to play with each other.

The yard rang with the children's sweet voices as they got acquainted with each other, jumped on the trampoline, explored the farm, played games and searched for items for the scavenger hunt. Again my granddaughters were a wonderful help as they organized the children's activities. The slip and slide on the hill got lots of use as young and old ventured out to check it out. As far as I know the adults didn't participate but I'm sure they enjoyed watching the children as they slipped and slid down the slide with shouts of joy. And

when the water balloons came out our children had a wonderful time soaking each other and any adults who happened to be in the way. I noticed a few children and some not-so-little children with water guns too and though it was a very hot day, I think all of the adults were happy that the balloons and guns stayed far away from our tent.

Of course a get-together just wouldn't be right without pictures. My nieces were the very able photographers who did a great job of getting everybody lined up, smiles on faces and mouths shut (sorry girls, I just couldn't stop talking). Our supper on Saturday night was delicious, thanks to our caterer. Awards were handed out, the farm history told and long-forgotten memories surfaced to be told to all.

Once darkness fell we got a wonderful surprise as fireworks lit up the night. Amid the oohs and ahhs of the grownups and crack/bang of the fireworks the youngest children stood awestruck at the sight and as one of my great-grandsons said, we had sparkles in the sky. They were sad when the show was over but more games helped to put smiles back on sleepy little faces.

Sunday morning after a brunch of pancakes and sausage, some of our guests said their goodbyes. We all promised to "do this again soon, keep in touch and visit more often." And with tears in our eyes we hugged for the last time and waved our goodbyes. And as they drove out of the yard I do hope they all read and took seriously the sign that said, "Y'all come back now."

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