

Author shares one of Sask.'s better kept secrets

By **ROSE SANCHEZ**
SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan author Jacqueline Moore has been surprised by the response to her first book, *The Saskatchewan Secret: Folk Healers, Diviners and Mystics of the Prairies*, now in its third printing.

Four years in the making, the book features 13 Saskatchewan residents who are folk medicine practitioners, using their gifts to naturally heal others.

Moore received a grant from the Saskatchewan Arts Board in 2005 to help her start the process of recording the stories of these individuals who don't advertise their skills.

Her criteria to be included in the book were that the individuals had not received formal schooling in the healing

arts, their abilities were passed down in their families or innate, and the healer's name came to her through word of mouth or by someone who had received healing.

"I was looking for people who had been healed to contact me, rather than the healer," says Moore. "I wanted humble folk healers. All (the participants) were almost reluctant healers in that their gift chose them."

An author's note at its beginning asks readers to approach the book with an open mind.

"In this book, you'll be introduced to some unique and talented folks who have been gracious enough to share what they know. You need not alter your own knowledge and beliefs — whatever you believe is exactly right for you. I would ask that you simply accept that these are other good people's real experiences; and that you keep an open mind."

Through sharing some of her own experiences and trepidation in meeting these healers, Moore shares insights into how they use their gifts to help others. She met with the people on numerous occasions, and devoted one chapter in the book for each person.

Moore begins with the story of Betty McKenna, who has a knack for reading palms or a palmist as they are known. Moore shares with readers her concern that McKenna is known for telling a

person how old they will live to be. She's also concerned the two times McKenna has seen a person's death in a palm, she feigned a headache and ended the palm reading sessions. Moore explains she has a fear of dying young, but her fears were put to rest when McKenna told her she will live into her 90s.

From the first chapter, Moore takes the reader on a journey with her visits to various kinds of healers from water dowsers to herbalists and wax pourers to religious faith healers.

As she wrote, Moore found she had to include herself into the stories, which is different than the journalism freelance writing she had done in the past.

"I ended up being the interface between the healer and the reader," says Moore. "I had to do some digging myself to see how I had been

affected by these people." The reader will see Moore's writing transform from hesitant about what she will find as she meets each person to finding confidence and peace as she learns more about these people's mystical abilities.

At the beginning of the book, Moore is worried about what she might be told by a palm reader, but by the end is "very much on board" as she is speaking with a medium who has contact with Moore's dead father.

"What I really got out of it was being more aware of my thinking," says Moore about the book. "My thoughts really do affect my health. I'm more aware of what I'm thinking and how that's affecting my emotions and what's going on."

To that end, after completing the book, Moore set up a dedicated yoga and meditation room in her home that she still uses to this day and is more aware of her diet and eating less red meat — something suggested to her by a few of the healers.

She spent two years researching, one year writing the book and then another year trying to find a publisher. Two publishers showed interest, but wanted re-writing done, and Moore was eager to get the book out before some of the elderly people she had interviewed

passed on. She chose to self-publish the title — something she hasn't regretted.

"I loved the self-publishing process. I didn't realize I would," she says. "I was nervous about self-publishing, but it's been the best experience and I would definitely do it again. You can put your energy into selling it."

She has thought about writing another book about Saskatchewan folk healers, since she has some more people she didn't contact for the first one and she has been pleasantly surprised by the reaction from the public to the topic.

For now, she is working on stories about herself and people she knows dealing with an element of paranormal activity and inexplicable incidents.

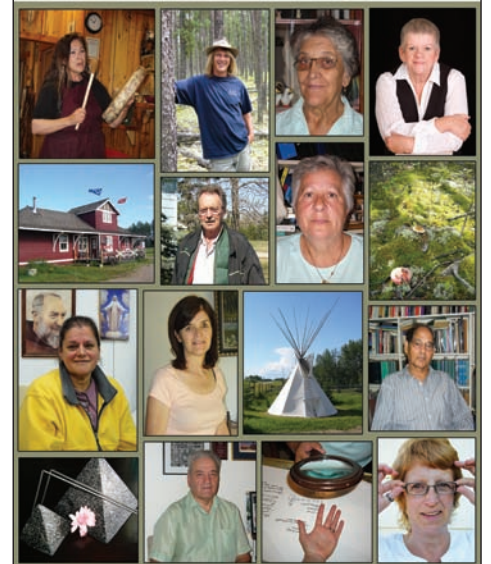
"It's for my interest," says Moore.

With two irons in the fire as far as potential future books she could self-publish, Moore is also keeping busy working with two horses she recently acquired. She doesn't dabble in freelancing for newspapers or magazines.

"If I sit down to write, it really is my own creative writing now."

More information about Moore and her book or to order a copy, which she will sign, visit her website at: www.folkhealers.ca.

Jacqueline Moore



The Saskatchewan Secret:
Folk Healers, Diviners and Mystics of the Prairies

Jacqueline Moore's book, *The Saskatchewan Secret*, is already in its third printing. It gives an intimate glimpse into the lives of a few of Saskatchewan's folk healers.

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