

Uncovering a provincial secret

■ Daniel Bushman/The Watrous Manitou

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After travelling to different corners and through various landscapes of the province, author of the book *The Saskatchewan Secret: Folk Healers, Diviners and Mystics of the Prairies* began a tale of her own that would be a rewarding experience. That experience would also allow author Jacqueline Moore the chance to meet 13 people from all walks of life, a story she will be sharing during an evening during March at the library in Watrous.

The book came to fruition after hearing about several healers residing in Saskatchewan. "As a journalist, I was curious to meet these people and write their stories," said Moore. "I set out to write some objective magazine articles, but the encounters were so personal the stories came out as first-person revelations. Once inside this world, I learned of several other naturally-gifted healers, and the project grew into a book."

The Saskatoon resident kept an open mind as she sought out and connected with the 13 subjects of her book. She also admits there was some trepidation at first and the author was not sure what to expect when she encountered the healers. "What I found was openness and sincerity. Each of these healers was welcoming and truly interested in helping other people. Moreover, I was impressed by their humbleness; none of these people took personal credit for healing, and all attributed any success to their concept of the divine."

The healers who came from all backgrounds and walks of life reside in the country, forest and suburbs. "What they shared is that these were almost what I call "reluctant" healers. None of them had taken any formal schooling in the healing arts; rather, their gift had chosen them, and most of them had spent years denying their peculiar extrasensory perceptions. For the most part, none of them were doing this as a business; they didn't advertise and usually one would learn of them only through word-of-mouth."

The people she met all "enriched and transformed my life." She found it interesting that while they all came from different cultures and backgrounds, there was a similar concept of death and the idea of life after death. "These were people who've had a lot of insight into realms most

of us have not. This book is an homage to these healers, and an offering to share in the wisdom they have gathered about the natural world and our place in it."

The experience of getting to know the stories of the healers was unique for Moore and each resonated on a deep and personal level for the author. "Betty McKenna identified an obscure but significant health problem that was not found for four more years by my doctor; Joe Menz showed me the amazing effects of earth energy on our health; Pat Hollier gave me poignant messages from my deceased father without me having told her a thing about my life or that my Dad had died; and there were many more."

It appears as though Moore is not the only one taking an interest in the local healers as her book has sold over 2,300 copies and is now into its fifth printing. *The Saskatchewan Secret* was also on McNally Robinson's best-sellers list for some 25 weeks and in 2010 was its third-bestselling non-fiction book.

"I think different people relate to different stories in the book. For me, what's fascinating about them all is that these are very unassuming, "normal" people that have such amazing abilities. They're your neighbour, your esthetician, your insurance agent. And I'm so heartened that there are people like this out there, quietly healing difficult diseases like cancer and MS . . . that there are such good folks among us making a remarkable difference in the lives of others."

Two of the stories in the book also won literary awards from the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild, which was "a real honour for me. It's hugely affirming to be recognized by your peers."

"The sales have been incredible, and two years after its release, there is still a keen interest in it. I think that the timing happened to be right. Certainly when I first started doing research on energy healers and mystics, I ran across a lot of skepticism. Several years later, I have noticed a definite shift in the general perception about these metaphysical concepts."

Since the book has come out, Moore continues to write non-fiction stories. She also figures there will be some stories that will form themselves into another book. "Everyone has 'the life stories' that make up their personal history and narrative. That's what I'm writing these days."

Visiting a secret

Author Jacqueline Moore spent numerous hours in different parts of the province meeting people of all walks of life. Moore's book *The Saskatchewan Secret* talks about 13 of those people and their healing methods. She will be doing a reading at the library in Watrous in March.

-Daniel Bushman/TWM

