

Healers, diviners, mystics of the Sask. prairies

By DEVIN WILGER
N-R Writer

– Sask. author releases book

Many people have heard stories of those who can heal with a touch of their hand or who can contact those we cannot see. Jaqueline Moore wanted to find these people and over four years has written *The Saskatchewan Secret: Folk Healers, Diviners, and Mystics of the Prairies*. The recently released book chronicles the stories of thirteen such people in the province.

The stories of these healers in the province is something that long fascinated Moore. As people told her about the things they had witnessed and heard from those who had enlisted the services of a healer, she became increasingly fascinated by the subject.

"I really wanted to go meet them. However, I didn't have an illness myself, so I decided to write their stories, to honour them," Moore says.

After receiving an Arts Council grant to embark on the project, Moore discovered that the hardest part would be finding the people. She tried getting word out through newspapers and community bulletins, looking for people who had been healed in order to find the healers. She did this because she wanted people who were not advertising and self-promoting, and those who did not accept money for their services.

Moore describes the process of writing the book as a personal journey. While she admits that she was initially uncomfortable inserting herself into the stories, as the journey went on she felt it more appropriate, as it changed her outlook on life, and on death.

"My life was changed... I am more aware now of my thoughts, and how what we think and what we believe does in fact change our reality, it affects what goes on around us... I learned more about other people's concepts of what happens when we die... Because there were a few

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– Jaqueline Moore

very poignant personal things that happened to me with these healers, I actually came away feeling more at ease with this concept that death isn't a finite black and white line," Moore explains.

The stories collected are from a wide variety of people, from healers who are purported to "undo illness" – though Moore emphasizes that they don't guarantee their methods work – to people who are diviners who interpret signs around people, to those who she describes as mystics, who say they are in contact with the spirit world. One experience that sticks out in her mind was the final story, which was a visit to a psychic medium.

"She was out in Hudson Bay at the time. She knew nothing about me, but within a couple minutes

she was looking over my shoulder and listening to someone speaking to her. She said 'You have a father spirit with you, has your dad passed on?' I said 'yeah', and then she proceeded to relay very personal and very specific messages from my father, which frankly, no one else would have known. I came away from that fairly affected, thinking 'wow, maybe she's right, maybe my father is still around in some form,'" Moore recalls.

Moore feels that now is the right time to explore alternative ways of healing, and sees it getting more accepted in the mainstream culture. While the book was the top selling paperback in McNally Robinson in Saskatoon the week it was launched, people were not as interested even four years ago, when the project began.

"When I started in 2005 looking for people to interview, I spoke to lots of people about this project. There was certainly some interest, but there were glazed over looks too. Now, you can turn on the TV and there are all sorts of shows on paranormal investigations and alternative healers, it's certainly become more mainstream... People are more open to this concept, moreso than they were five years ago," Moore recalls.

While Moore has been affected by her journey and the stories of the people in the book, she emphasizes that the goal is not to change minds, but rather to chronicle the stories of fascinating people

"I don't feel it's up to

me to prove anything. I really think people's belief systems are how they should be for that person, it's not necessary for them to change... What I would ask for is that people keep an open mind. What I do vouch for is that all of these people are honest people of integrity, and they are telling their truth. While I had never experienced these things, I didn't doubt that they had," Moore concludes.

The book is available from www.folkhealers.ca and Moore encourages anyone interested in learning more to visit the site.



JAQUELINE MOORE has travelled the province searching for folk healers in order to tell their stories. In the end, she found thirteen different people, and has chronicled the journey in *The Saskatchewan Secret: Folk Healers, Diviners, and Mystics of the Prairies*.

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