

Appreciation

A Beautiful Place! My thoughts on Kananaskis,
The William Watson Lodge. Tracy Vander Vinne, Edmonton, AB

I don't know what day of the week it is! Or the time. Who cares? No television, computer or cell phones, awesome!

I'm fairly convinced that the Lower Lake Kananaskis lookout point (attached photo) at the William Watson lodge, is much what heaven will not only look like, but "feel" like. Our family has the privilege and honor to be

given the use of this fabulous facility. Our youngest daughter Melanie has Down Syndrome, and we have been going there for about twelve years now. Often we make it out two times a year. And each time we arrive I'm always amazed at the quiet and wonderful feeling of heaven we experience.

Here is a place where Albertans with disabilities, and the elderly, with their families, may come and just be. Twenty-two comfortable cabins, all wheelchair accessible, nestled in Peter Lougheed

Provincial Park. The lodge sits at an elevation of 5600 feet. So some mornings when you head outside there are big fluffy clouds resting in the tall pine trees, and floating just above the lake, with the mountains peaking through.

My husband John takes hundreds of pictures wherever we go, and they are all very beautiful. However, a picture or these words cannot begin to explain the feeling of being completely accepted for who you are, in a place where the beauty of nature in Kananaskis lets you forget about the rat race of life.

Thank you Lord for the beautiful Canadian Rockies, and thank you William Watson for having your vision of a place designed for individuals with disabilities, who can have the facilities they need for comfort and rest, in the magnificent province of Alberta, at the William Watson lodge.



Melanie (right) and her older sister Justine on the deck at WWLodge cabin.

Lower Lake Kananaskis facing south. That was the very morning I wrote the article. It was what I like to say, "a God moment". I've been inspired about a half dozen times in my life to write about something and this was one of them ~ Tracy

Annual Meeting

William Watson Lodge Society
At William Watson Lodge
Saturday, June 23, 2012 1:30 PM

Please Join Us

Note: Highway 40 south opens the first of June

Society Mandate

To raise funds that will be used to enhance the use of the Lodge for the benefit and enjoyment of disabled and senior citizens of Alberta

The WWLodge Society welcomes your comments and active participation which help to achieve the objectives of William Watson Lodge

Volunteers – Camp Hosts

During the camping season you may wish to volunteer as a camp host for two weeks. The WWL front desk will provide the duties of a host upon arrival. There are thirteen fully serviced sites; one is set aside for the host.

**Ross Watson,
Manager, selects hosts**

Gifts

Your membership and donations as well as bequests or legacies are gratefully received and appreciated.
Gifts may be made at the Lodge or by mail

Accommodation Reservations

- Cabins
- RV Site
- Main Lodge Day Use

Call (Rite) toll free 310-0000, then 403-591-7227

For More Information

William Watson Lodge
1(403)591-7227

Brochure Peter Lougheed Visitor Information Centre
(Toll free) 310-0000
then (403) 591-6322

Kananaskis Park Website
www.parks.gov.ab.ca/kananaskis

Contact Us

William Watson Lodge Society
Box 30344
Chinook Postal Outlet
6455 MacLeod Trail SE
Calgary, AB T2H 2W1

Website: www.williamwatsonlodgesociety.com
Email: wwlodesociety@shaw.ca

The Interpretive Programs

The Interpretive Programs are designed with environmental awareness, education and fun in mind. They include elements that appeal to various learning styles which in turn brings something special for everyone. Bright visuals can be seen in the backdrops, educational posters, costumes and props. Music, singing and sounds of the various animals all help to bring each program to life. Scripts are also available at the sessions for the hearing impaired.

On this Thanksgiving weekend, the Smith family from Sherwood Park, Alberta enjoyed learning how the highly intelligent members of the Corvidae family are helping to tackle "Operation Ghost Tree" in Kananaskis Country. Six year old twins, Victoria and John, were active participants of the presentation, transforming into Raven and Gray Jay to assist Julie.

The Smiths have been coming to the Lodge every spring and fall for the past two years. Mom, Lisa, described how the Lodge provides an opportunity

for a whole family experience. The accessible trails and electric bike allow Victoria and John to go everywhere with Dad, Michael. This, along with the unique children's park, games, puzzles, and coloring books in the Lodge, always have the family eagerly anticipating their next visit. The opportunity to attend one of the Interpretive Programs together was yet another amazing event to share.

Julie is one of several Interpreters who deliver programs through Alberta Parks and to schools in and around the Calgary area. On this evening it was clear to see the passion and enthusiasm she brings. Whether she was a quick change artist transforming from a mighty jay into a great white pine or singing out a corvid chorus – the audience was charmed. What Julie values most about bringing the programs to the Lodge is the sense of community. Each time she returns, there are familiar faces, families that come back time and time again.



President's Message

The William Watson Lodge Society has a number of new directors and I am looking forward to working with them. At this time we have projects under discussion that would improve the experience of our guests. The directors and I are looking forward to a great year. We wish all of you a healthy and prosperous 2012.

Acknowledgment of Service

We respectfully acknowledge the good work and dedication of Board members whose several years of office with the William Watson Lodge Society have come to a close over the past three years. They are: Dick Clossen, Neil Holling, Grant Howell, Wendy Morin, Sheila Power, Jon Solberg, Val Scholefield, Luanne Whitmarsh, Maureen Wills, Claire Young.

WW Lodge Society Board of Directors

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| President | Donna Fox |
| Vice President <i>Casino/Catering</i> | Wayne Pelletier |
| Treasurer/ <i>Casino</i> | Farhood Rahnama |
| Secretary | Carol Page |
| Director <i>Membership</i> | Cathy Holling |
| Director <i>Newsletter</i> | Terry Garvin |
| Director <i>Grants</i> | Angela Murphy |
| Director <i>Newsletter/Website</i> | Enid Pettifer |
| Director <i>Northern Alberta Liaison</i> | Ross Wein |

Technical Resources

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| William Watson Lodge <i>Manager</i> | Ross Watson |
| WW Lodge Staff <i>Resource Associate</i> | Gwen Ross-Cieslak |
| WW Lodge Staff <i>Resource Associate</i> | Patti Johnston |

A Special Thank You to our Donors

Many people and organizations support the work of the William Watson Lodge Society with financial gifts, membership fees, voluntary service and in-kind material and supplies.

Push To Open

Is an event held annually at WWLodge and area as part of Alberta's Plan for Parks to remove barriers and create opportunities for people with disabilities. The Push To Open nature initiative in Alberta Parks is the topic of a two page spread in Alberta Parks free guide **Explore**.

Financial Statements

William Watson Lodge Society Balance Sheet

As of 21/11/2011

| ASSETS | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Cash and Bank Accounts: | |
| Bank Operating Account | 33,979.14 |
| Casino Account | 16,196.63 |
| ING Saving Account | 66,738.00 |
| TOTAL Cash and Saving | 116,913.77 |
| Other Assets | |
| Account Receivable | 0.00 |
| GST Receivable | 767.28 |
| Interest Receivable | 196.44 |
| Prepaid Expenses | 271.99 |
| TOTAL other Assets | 1,235.71 |
| Investments | 30,000.00 |
| TOTAL Investments | 30,000.00 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 148,149.48 |
| LIABILITIES AND EQUITY | |
| LIABILITIES | |
| Other Liabilities | |
| Account Payable | 0.00 |
| Deferred Revenue | 22.40 |
| Recycle Program | 871.70 |
| TOTAL Other Liabilities | 894.10 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | 894.10 |
| EQUITY | 147,255.38 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY | 148,149.48 |

Commendation

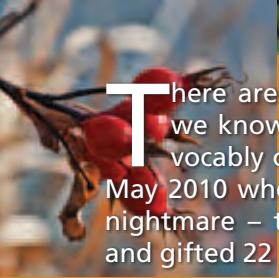
The William Watson Lodge Society congratulates and commends the Lodge and Parks staff for their tremendous dedication and delivery of service to the many people who use and visit the Lodge.

Did You Know?

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was established by United Nations decree in 1981.

Serenity in the Mountains

by Carol Page



There are defining moments in our lives when we know within one breath that life has irrevocably changed for us. That moment came in May 2010 when I experienced every parent's worst nightmare – the sudden passing of my handsome and gifted 22 year old son, Douglas LaBelle.

In the surreal days and weeks that followed, there was an outpouring of love and support from family and friends who in their own ways were also trying to cope with the loss of a beautiful and promising life at such a tender age. A memorial fund was established as one way for people to honor Doug and to create a lasting connection with him.

One of Doug's favorite activities was spending time in the Rockies. For many years, he camped with his family in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park. He was also the one that friends and classmates would look to for guidance when hiking in the Banff and Canmore area. So it was only fitting that the memorial fund be dedicated to celebrating Doug's life with a resting bench along a mountain trail.

Our family was presented with some options west of Calgary for the placement of the bench. When

visiting one of these locations on the Lower Lake Interpretive Trail, there was instant sense that this was the place that was meant to be. The site was a rich mossy green in a protected ravine, and the sound of the small tumbling creek running beside the trail was soothing and tranquil.

The Interpretive Trail near William Watson Lodge is picturesque, and wheelchair accessible. It has been carefully designed with educational sign boards along the way that highlight the wildlife and natural surroundings of the area, further adding interest and enjoyment for all users of the trail. Doug was always respected and admired for his intelligence and desire for continuous learning, so the educational element was an inherent fit as well.

Each visit to the Trail holds something new and comforting, whether it be the colorful Calypso orchids in the spring, the ruffed grouse foraging along the forest floor, or the red rose hips of fall. This beautiful mountainous location and serene sound of the creek beside the bench make it an amazing place to visit to share Doug's spirit and energy, gifts that I will be eternally grateful for.



Manager's Message

Ross Watson



I would like to start by noting that for most months the Lodge is fully reserved. I will explain why the yearly statistics show a vacancy of 9%. What causes this vacancy if the Lodge is fully booked?

There are three factors:

1. June, July, August and September, show occupancy of 98% while November, December and April show an average of 70%. These slow months affect the yearly average. The Lodge takes advantage of the low user demand in November and April to close for two weeks for maintenance in each of these months. The reason for the lack of demand for these months is simply that late in the fall the weather is too poor for summer activities, and the winter activities haven't started. In the early spring the snow has receded, skiing has finished for the year and summer activities haven't started.

2. The second reason for the 9% vacancy is what I call "fragmentation". To explain this, think of someone checking out on Tuesday and the next person checking in on Thursday. What happens to Wednesday? Well, simply, the one day never fills because the

Lodge is too deep into the mountains for any one to travel for just one day.

3. The third reason for the vacancy of 9% is cancellations. The Lodge has a waiting list and when given enough time staff can fill these dates. Unfortunately last minute cancellations are too near the check in dates for staff to fill them.

Some interesting facts about the user patterns at the Lodge are:

- 70 % of Lodge users come from the southern half of the province.
- The average stay is 3.5 days.
- The average group size is 4 people.
- The Lodge campground is 94% full for July and August, with vacancies of 40% for June and September.
- Prime times of summer and major holidays are 97% filled with the disability community.
- The senior population makes up 55% of the Lodge's winter use.