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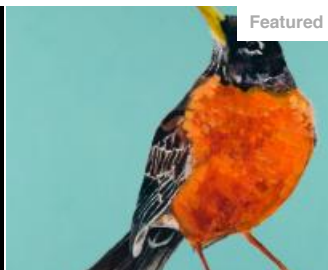
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4 Reasons to Love Saskatoon

Running Back to the Bridge City

Tue, 05/29/2012

My only Postcard Home:

Saskatoon, I love you. But I have to admit; I have been cheating on you...for five years. Yes, for five years I have been chasing the sun, skipping out on your tree frosted winters to work, travel and enjoy the likes of Australia, Asia, Mexico and the Caribbean. It isn't to say I don't miss you or... ah... appreciate your creatively provoking, brisk winters. I do. The thing is, we just seem to get along so much better in the summer, those glorious prairie summers with late sunsets, placid lakes and festival liveliness.



By Johnny Early

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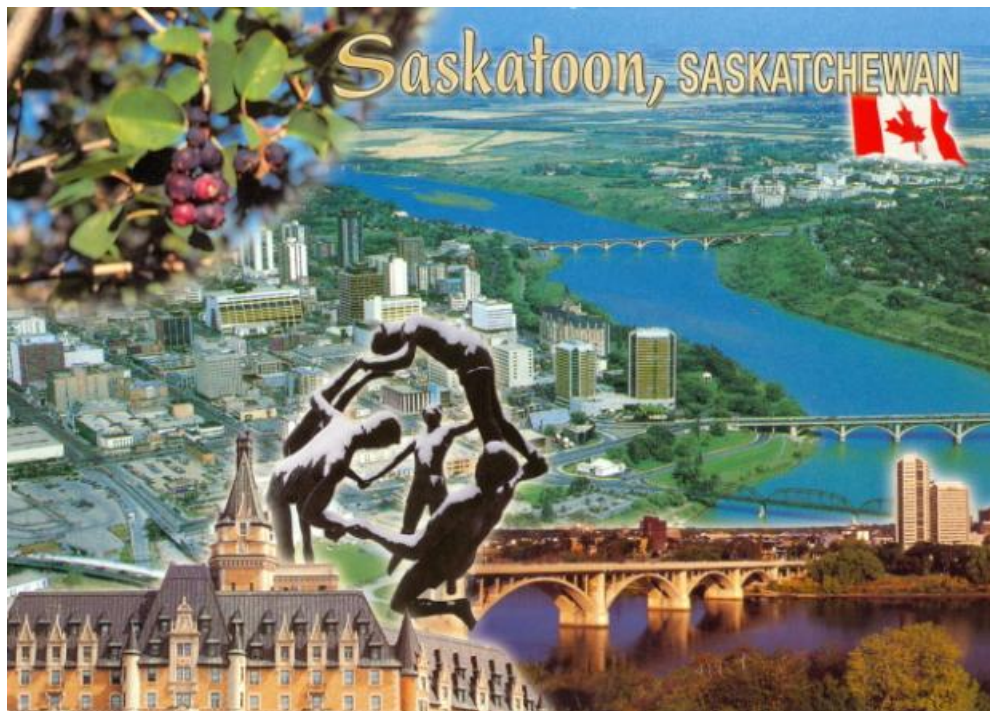
The Rooster **INSTAGRAM**

I guess the last few years I have just been testing the waters to see what else is out there. My chance to take home these contrasting lifestyles and worldly knowledge to share with you and our community; to become more than just that fuel stop to simple minded passersby, in between your perfecting rigid lines of a rectangle within Canada. Oh Canada, you are a trip.

So I will be home soon. After over eight months of being away I will be back. I have been looking forward to seeing you for some time, especially when you will be looking your best dressed in your summer colours, tanned and full of energy. You know we will always be together. Maybe it is just that simple time apart that makes me appreciate what we will always have.

Cheers from Chiang Mai

-John E.



~

Sure, Saskatoon and the Prairies get some flack –often only from people that have never visited or simply driven the highway through and considered it ‘seen’. People call it a flat and boring winter town, but in actuality (especially with a little endeavor), could not be further from the truth. After my eight months away from home, I can’t wait to be back, especially for summer. Here are four things that create the Saskatoon I love and place I proudly call home.

4 Reasons to Love Saskatoon:

The People: Good places keep good people. Saskatoon would not be what it is without the amazing and diverse people that inhabit it. Whether it is the University’s presence that keeps the people hip and creative, the cold winters that demand appreciation and optimism or the simple openness of the prairie spirit, Saskatoonians have true character.

The Size: 250,000 is a unique number. People will forever debate whether Saskatoon is a ‘big city’ in waiting or simply an oversized town but for me it is the perfect size. I am not just referring to the fact I can drive anywhere in town in under 15 minutes (which is great) or the fact that we are still big enough to pull in world class concerts and events (Elton John, The Eagles, The Juno Awards, etc) but I am alluding to what the size of our city does to its people: A city of our size forces people to be engaged and involved with all events and functions. They simply wouldn’t happen otherwise. Living in a big city you go out to see what the city is doing – in Saskatoon you *make* something happen. This is why Saskatoon has one of the highest volunteer per capita ratios in the world. Good luck throwing a party that makes a dent in New York’s

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nightlife...

The Summer: You can't beat a summer in Saskatoon. It is the energy of the people and their eagerness to make the most out of each summer day that breathes such positive vibes into the air. I've swam the turquoise waters of Jamaica, climbed the hills of the Greek Islands and surfed the beaches of North Sydney but they do not really 'get' summer as they do not have to battle through six months of prairie winter to get it. Saskatoon's perfectly laid out backbone of a river valley creates the ideal backdrop and playground for strolling, biking, water sports and as many festivals as we usually cram into our summer months. On top, with access to our province's 100,000 lakes, cabin and outdoor lifestyle is not just available or affordable it is engrained in our summer existence.

The Music: Not the first thing most people think of when talking about the City of Bridges - but I would not be the traveling musician I am today without the influence of Saskatoon's music scene. It has raised the diverse sounds from *Joni Mitchel* to *Wide Mouth Mason* and recent success stories include *The Sheepdogs*, *Deep Dark Woods* and *Reignwolf AKA Jordan Cook*. When a musician grows out of the distant shadows cast by the big music scenes of Toronto or New York, one instinctively calls on others in order for survival. This forms the basis of Saskatoon's music community – open, accessible and constructive for the collective goal of making good music and getting it heard. Saskatonian's also happily take advantage of having both independent and well-established touring acts play our small venues nightly for a fraction of the cost of shows in the big cities.

In summary, all four reasons I love Saskatoon are related and come back to one thing: the People. When you are away from home for as long as I have been, it *should* come back to being with family and friends. Returning home, I am fortunate that my friends and family are the key component into getting the most out of my beautiful city. Like most relationships, you get out what you put in. So get out and enjoy. Saskatoon deserves nothing less.



The City view from Saskatchewan Crescent

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A Saskatoon summer sandbar



The always changing scene of the Sunday TamTam's at Rotary Park



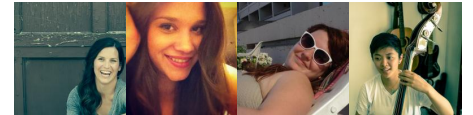
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The U of S Campus



A summer afternoon along Broadway



LISTENING STATION

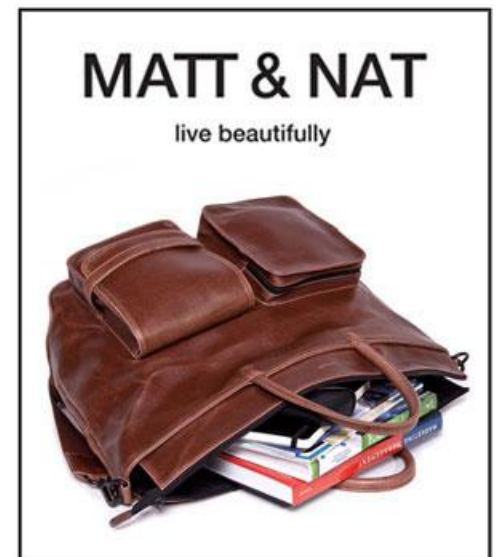




The painted rocks under Broadway Bridge



Local band The Steadies rock the main stage at SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival





The new Downtown River Landing development



My last view of Saskatoon, from the plane to Sydney (October 2011)



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Love this link. After all my travels, I still hold Saskatoon close to my heart.

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