

# Perspective



**KATE JACKMAN-ATKINSON**

## MY PERSPECTIVE

### Hope for east side

Since Mount Agassiz, near McCreary, shut its doors in 2000 and went into receivership, communities along the east side of Riding Mountain National Park have been struggling to find their way without the dollars brought in by tourists visiting the resort. Businesses and communities faltered since much of their economic activity was tied to the now-defunct ski hill.

Since the resort is located in Riding Mountain National Park, in 2007, area residents were dealt another blow when the park's management plan, the document which guides park policy for five years, said that the development of a down hill ski resort wouldn't be allowed.

With the resort's physical assets deteriorating due to lack of upkeep, reopening the resort wasn't looking like a promising prospect.

In the past, area residents complained about a lack of communication between them and Parks Canada regarding what was going on at the site and what they would like to see in the area. Many residents complained that opportunities to purchase the resort's lease or have a say in the development of the 2007 management plan weren't made available to them.

The good news is that the future is looking brighter.

Much of the adversarial attitude between the Park and it's neighbours seems to be changing through the development of the East Escarpment Strategy. Run by Parks Canada, it is drawing on a wide range of sources to develop a vision and series of actions that will offer something for visitors, stakeholders and neighbouring communities on the east side of the Park. The Strategy will be included in the 2012 Park Management Plan.

The big difference is that, unlike previous initiatives, Parks Canada has been very open about communicating with area residents and drawing input from those who will use and support activities in the area. The advisory board is made up of 17 people, in addition to the Parks Canada staff who are also participating. They have even set up a website to not only let the public know what they are doing, but to also provide a place for the public to send feedback or sign up to receive electronic updates.

The east escarpment is one of the most beautiful places in the province and it's good to see diverse groups coming together to promote it. It's a unique area, different from the surrounding land, and certainly not something someone would automatically associate with the prairies.

The Strategy's website offers a wealth of information about the strategy, but it also strives to educate people about the escarpment. Interesting facts include that the CN Tower is nearly the same height as the distance between the escarpment's highest peak and the Manitoba plains below.

It's no secret that area residents would like to see the Agassiz site re-opened and playing an important role in the future of the east escarpment and Parks Canada addresses this in the Strategy's website. In numerous conversations, Parks Canada officials have said that the strategy won't just focus solely on Agassiz since they don't want to put all their eggs in one basket.

Unlike the 2007 Management Plan, the good news is that the option of reopening Agassiz isn't being ruled out. Parks Canada is currently seeking a contractor to develop a feasibility study for policy options for Mount Agassiz and they also to include options identified for Mount Agassiz in the upcoming 2012 park management plan review.

The development of a long-term and feasible economic development strategy for the east side of Riding Mountain National Park can be nothing but positive, not only for those communities along the Park. The east escarpment is a jewel and I look forward to seeing what its bright future will hold. To have your say in the East Escarpment Strategy, go to [www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/mb/riding/ne/escarp.aspx](http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/mb/riding/ne/escarp.aspx).

## Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



**KEN WADDELL**

## RIGHT IN THE CENTRE

# Think, parents, think!

Nick Martin is a columnist with the Winnipeg Free Press. He's also an amateur youth soccer referee in Winnipeg. In his Tuesday column he writes that, after being yelled at several times by at least one parent of a nine-year-old soccer player girl, "End of the match, the coach comes over and tells me that he's told his parents that it's unacceptable for them to yell at the referee, whereupon he starts telling me what a crummy job I did and arguing call upon call."

One only has to attend any soccer or hockey game to realize that the intensity of the parents is, in many cases, way over the top. Yelling at the ref is almost always unacceptable. It's not as if a person's livelihood depends on the outcome of the game. It's not as if the national championship is in the balance when a youth soccer or hockey coach or baseball ump blows a call.

The shame that an over-the-top parent brings upon themselves and on their children causes a turning

in the pit of my stomach. A shame sweeps over me when parents get all steely-eyed and nasty about the referee's calls. Over-the-top parental calls shame their child, shame themselves and degrade the game to a point that many fans, parents and kids just don't want to be there. And that in itself is a shame.

Yelling at the coach or at the child player is just as bad, maybe worse. Quite frankly, if a parent can't shut up, they shouldn't be at the game. It's called a spectator sport for a reason; you are supposed to watch and cheer.

Why people engage negatively in youth sporting events is beyond me. Perhaps I'm too self conscious, but stupidly drawing attention to oneself is a folly that evades my comprehension.

Cheering is great. Applauding a good play is very good. Expressing some kind of anti-cheer for a bad play or a questionable call is fair. But to berate a ref or a coach or a kid, that's totally wrong.

If I were a coach or a referee, I would walk over to the offending person and hand them the whistle or the clipboard and walk off the field or out of the arena. If you are that intense about your feelings about the coach or the ref's incompetence then you should be a more than adequate replacement.

Sports is supposed to bring about maturity and growth. If that's the case, it's obvious that some parents have never played sports.

Sometimes sports aren't fair. Get used to it. Life isn't fair. No amount of protesting and whining is going to change that fact. The world disasters aren't fair. The incidence of disease in a person's life isn't fair. Most of the things that we have no control over aren't fair. Get used to it buddy (or honey)!

Life's unfairness doesn't need to be made all that much worse by idiot reactions to a nine-year-old's hockey or soccer game. We expect our children to grow up. We should expect the same of the parents.

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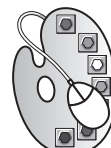
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