

‘A great challenge’

Reality television star attends Lac du Bonnet seniors council anniversary celebration

By Marc Zienkiewicz
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Lac du Bonnet’s Pioneer Seniors Club was the recipient of a special visit last week, when one of the stars of a popular television show dropped in to speak to local residents about her 1,200-kilometre paddle from Winnipeg to Hudson Bay.

RoseAnna Schick, one of the stars of the 2002 reality television show *Quest for the Bay*, served as guest speaker for the 30th anniversary celebration of the Eastman Senior Citizens Council, which is made up of seniors clubs from the North and South Eastman regions.

Schick appeared on an invitation from past council president and LdB resident Bob Pinnell, whose daughter went to school with Schick, who now runs the Winnipeg-based consulting firm RAS Creative.

“It was an amazing experience,” Schick told the crowd of seniors, most of whom were familiar with the five-part television series now in syndication on several TV networks.

“It drastically changed my life.”

In 2001, Schick and seven men were chosen out of hundreds of applicants to paddle a 19th-century York boat from Winnipeg to Hudson Bay following the same route taken by fur traders in the 1800s.

The trip took over nine weeks, and the eight adventurers paddled 10 lakes, four rivers, and 43 sets of rapids.

Not to mention portaging with 1,200 pounds of cargo and a 2,000-pound wooden boat.

“It was the most difficult thing I’ve ever done -- emotionally and physically,” Schick said.

The group was given only 19th century gear and provisions, and were not allowed the use of modern conveniences.

A 10-minute video Schick showed to the crowd documented the rigorous training they had to go through before embarking on the trip, and also showed the difficult conditions they were under for the 61 days it took them to reach Hudson Bay.

They survived mostly on lake water and pemmican, an aboriginal dish made from meat, berries,



Schick speaks to the crowd at Lac du Bonnet’s Pioneer Seniors Club last week.

Photo by Marc Zienkiewicz

and fat.

They were followed by a camera crew that documented the journey from start to finish.

“Just surviving every day and staying balanced was a great challenge,” she said.

Since finishing the journey, Schick -- who was 33 when she made the trek to Hudson Bay -- has gone on to publish numerous articles about her experience, and serves as a speaker at functions around the province.

She tailors her presentations to specific audiences, and her presentation to the seniors in LdB last week concentrated heavily on staying healthy both mentally and physically as one gets older.

“It taught me the importance of being as positive as I can be,” she said.

“I had to be determined and, most of all, confident.”

Although the crew experienced their share of troubles along the way, among them a damaged boat, hordes of mosquitoes and mouldy food, Schick said having faith in herself was the only way to get through it.

“There’s an old saying that goes ‘when you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot and hold on,’” she said.

“The biggest lesson was to learn to appreciate everything I have in my life.”

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