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Just One More Day

I'm amazed by how quickly 2007 has come and gone. With the New Year upon us we'll be taking a few weeks away to reflect, refresh and recharge for 2008. I hope that you're able to take time and do the same.

In the spirit of the holidays and keeping true to what is important, I have included this story that was found in the 'Letter's To Santa' box at the post office in Thompson Falls, Montana.

A Letter To Santa

Dear Santa:

What do I ask this year? I have perused each ad in my mailbox, pored over the colorful ads in the newspaper. So many lovely things, and yet I need nothing.

I realize this as I walk up the hill on my strong legs. I can hear the air fill my lungs. I feel the cold on my cheeks. I smell the smoke of the fire that warms my home.

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I see the snow-capped mountains and the slate gray river peppered with fat geese.

I need nothing: there are people who love me. There are people who forgive my sometimes-wretched temper and who touch me with loving hands.

Continued on page 2....

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Just One more Day

Article by Glenn Simon Inc.

There are neighbors who smile in the store. There are shopkeepers who are tolerant when I don't have enough money. There are kind faces in public places.

There is a fat pregnant cat who sneaks into my garage. Dogs and other cats share my hearth; I love to feel their fur with my feet. There are hawks that teach their young of flight, right there behind my house. There are deer that tiptoe into my yard and savor the fat apples in the snow.

Rows of glassed vegetables; green beans, tomatoes, peas and carrots color my pantry. And a rusty bucket of hand tools and neatly dried seeds promises next year's riches.

I need nothing! Christmas promises already fulfilled redeem my foolish life, and occasionally I glimpse the feast that awaits me when this earthly one is done.

The Trouble Tree

Author Unknown

The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough first day on the job.

A flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit, and now his ancient pickup truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence.

On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

Today I discovered a hole in my jeans. I felt the December air slither down my leg. How mighty is the hand that sweeps the wind along the mountains. Santa, dear old soul, just give me another day like this one in my life.



"Oh, that's my trouble tree," he replied." I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again."

He paused. "Funny thing is," he smiled, "when I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there ain't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before."

Economy Expected To Continue To Soar In Western Canada 2008

By: The Canadian Press: Oil Week

Published: Thursday, December 13th, 2007

Edmonton – The boom that has radically transformed the economy of Western Canada will begin to alter the very skylines of its core cities starting in 2008. But at ground level, the battle will rage on for the most precious and scarce of Canadian commodities workers.

In Drive through Calgary’s downtown and you’ll come across the footprint of the Bow Tower. It’s one big hole in the ground, blocking off a street and further snarling the maddeningly congested traffic that perpetually inches and honks its way through the city’s concrete heart.

When completed in a few years’ time, the curvy structure will rise 59 storeys the tallest building in Western Canada, second only to Toronto’s 72-storey First Bank Tower. It will cost well over a billion dollars, and its 1.7 million square feet (153,000 square metres) of space will be home to about 4,000 employees of natural gas giant EnCana (TSX:ECA) as well as retail shops and sky gardens.

In Edmonton, shovels will clash with earth early in 2008 on the new 265,000-square-foot (23,850 square metre) Epcor Tower, which will eventually rise 28 storeys to dominate the downtown landscape behind City Hall.

Nearby, a crane is already tearing apart the old art gallery to be replaced by a state-of-the-art centre. In south Edmonton, three cranes tower over the University of Alberta campus, where the leading-edge Mazankowski Heart Institute is set to open in the new year. Three more highrises are slated to follow on the same parcel of land the first highrise construction in the Alberta capital in two decades.

“In Alberta, we’re looking at \$200 billion of construction,” said Bruce Irvine, vice-president of development and retention for Calgary Economic Development.

“To find a similar level of activity you have to go to Dubai or Shanghai. “It’s world-scale.”

In Calgary, an estimated \$24 billion is spread over 251 projects, including a \$1.3-billion hospital in the teeming south, and a twin-tower office complex in the core. Residential construction is roaring in the Beltline district south of downtown. Thousands of condos are being built or are on the drawing board for a city of one million-plus that has grown by 115,000 in the last half-dozen years.

“In Alberta, we’re looking at \$200 billion of construction. To find a similar level of activity you have to go to Dubai or Shanghai. It’s world-scale.”

- Bruce Irvine, VP Calgary Economic Development.

Irvine said the key is blending the residential near the commercial areas to more vibrancy and activity in the downtown. “In the last boom it was all about building office space and single-family homes,” said Irvine. “This time it’s about building a city, a great city.

“The skyline will change because of the signature architecture, but the biggest difference in two to five years will be felt on the street.” Alberta’s population has now surpassed three million, a hike of 3.1 per cent over 2006.

Next door in Saskatchewan, the province long-considered Alberta’s impoverished Confederation twin, history is being turned on its head. The province according to Sask Trends Monitor has fewer people leaving and more arriving to seek rewards in a hot economy galvanized by potash, uranium, oil and gas. The demographic tracking firm estimates that more than 7,700 newcomers arrived in Saskatchewan by late 2007 about 2,700 more than had left.

“When you grew up in Saskatchewan it was, ‘Where are you (eventually) going to go? Calgary? Edmonton? Toronto? Vancouver? We didn’t have the opportunities here in Saskatchewan,” said John Hopkins, CEO of the Regina and District Chamber of Commerce. “That has drastically changed. We need to get the message out to kids as low as Grade 6 to say ‘The opportunities are here in Saskatchewan and they’re very good opportunities.”



The New Year is set for continued economic success in Alberta and Western Canada

Economy To Soar in 2008...

With a provincial unemployment rate well under five per cent, employers remain desperate for skilled staff across the board and that means the fight is on.

Saskatchewan launched a \$6-million ad campaign in 2007 to lure Albertans who may have become disenchanted with the long lineups, soaring home and rental prices and the province's five per cent inflation rate. (A Canadian Association of Food Banks survey found 40,000 Albertans use food banks in an average month one in four have jobs but are forced to choose paying for rent and utilities over food.)

Alberta employers, facing an unemployment rate of less than four per cent at home, fanned out in November to Ontario to work a job fair to fill some of the estimated 400,000 new jobs in the West over the next two years.

Manitoba is pushing hard on immigration. It has doubled spending in the last two years to settle and train foreign newcomers and that has paid off. Manitoba took in almost 10,000 immigrants in 2006, up 23 per cent over 2005.

Fast food chains offer health benefits and tuition bonuses to keep workers. Recruiters head to campuses to lure away students with big-ticket offers before they've even graduated. The upside is work for everybody. The downside is a culture that abides workers changing jobs like underwear. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business reports that small business is hit the hardest. A survey suggested that over seven per cent of small-business jobs in Canada are left vacant for months because they can't be filled.

In the West the problem is far more acute, with shops and restaurants closing early or turning away customers for lack of staff. Some Alberta employers even offer bonuses just for showing up every day.

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“Good things come to those who wait, but only those things left behind by those who hustle.” –Abraham Lincoln

In Sherwood Park, just east of Edmonton, Charmaine Rose of La Belle Femme Fine Lingerie decided enough was enough. Fed up with workers who wouldn't show up, left early or treated her cash register as their personal ATM, she took out a want ad but made it clear that only those who “come to work on time, not steal from us (and) not show up drunk” need apply.

Rose said scores of employers called to commiserate: “They said to me, ‘At least (your staff) came to work washed, at least they came to work clean, at least they didn't commit crimes at work.’”

Rose was swamped with applicants, but is considering turning to temporary foreign workers to get the quality she wants.

Hopkins said Regina businesses are also pushing hard on immigration. One Tim Hortons franchise owner told him she applauds hiring foreign professionals but that she didn't need PhDs, just people to pour coffee. **The message is clear, said Hopkins: “We need people. Period.”**

Boiling It Down:

My message this month is simple; spend your winter break with friends and family. Reflect, listen and relish your time with them.

Thank you for reading my Newsletter I hope you found at least a few good nuggets in it. Wishing you an abundant New Year filled with health, wealth and happiness.
Todd and Danielle Millar-



Todd Millar, Glenn Simon Inc.

