
RURAL CONNECTION

Photos and Text by Dana Prediger



COFFEE BREAK The three men in this “coffee house” are long-time family friends. Sadly, the gentleman on the far left, Henry, passed away in January. He was such a special man. Henry’s coffee house is legendary in the town of Ponoka, and even now his wife, Carol, continues to keep a pot of coffee on and cookies nearby to welcome all into what he liked to call “the man cave.” Coffee breaks are a quintessential part of small-town life, when men gather to pause the day’s events and listen to one other. Bob (middle) and Merv (right) regularly dropped by to share a cup with Henry.



CLUBHOUSE This is a gathering spot for locals who enjoy camping in the summer, snowmobiling in the winter and fishing year round. Here, people can warm themselves near the stove or play darts or a game of shuffleboard or crib. In this, the space is similar to Henry's coffee house—it's a connector, a gathering spot for outdoors enthusiasts. It speaks of the untamed spirit that exists in the community.



WORKING TOGETHER Ron and Joan co-owned a carriage company with Henry, their best friend. They'd known him for over 50 years, so his frequent visits and sage advice are missed. Small-business owners and farmers, Ron and Joan are always working on something around their farm, and on this day a piece of equipment kept breaking down. There was some urgency; the forecast was for several days rain and they needed to get hay off the field. They have such a supportive relationship and are always there for each other. Their sons and friends also showed up to help. This value underlies many family farms. Wearing a mask while working during the pandemic has been annoying for Ron, but he does what he must to protect his family and get the job done. ■