

Denham Inn Reaps It's Rewards



Holding some of their multiple awards are from left to right; Amelia Reyes, Housekeeping Supervisor, Sue Bagga, Housekeeping Manager, Perry Batke, General Manager, Marvin Plitt, Maintenance Manager and Bev Borys, Assistant General Manager.

By Lorna Lowe

From April 6th through the 9th 2008, the staff and management at Leduc's Best Western Denham Inn were being showered with praise for the good work that they do.

They were invited for the weekend to attend a Gala and luncheon at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise hosted by the Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association. The reason for the invitation was so they could receive five different awards that they had won over the previous year.

"We are very proud of these awards," said the Denham Inn's General Manager Perry Batke. "But we are also very humbled by the whole thing."

This year the Inn was awarded the Housekeeping Award, which is a very difficult category to win, said Perry. "It is inspection based, where judges come to the hotel to check out a variety of guest rooms, and they are extremely picky as they go through. However, we have such great staff that we have managed to win this award twelve times since 1988."

Two more honours that the Inn picked up this year was for their food. "We are designated as a Category 'A' hotel," said Perry. "This means we are deemed a 'large' hotel and are in competition against other 'large' hotels across the province." Despite the stiff competition, Jonathan's Lounge won the sil-

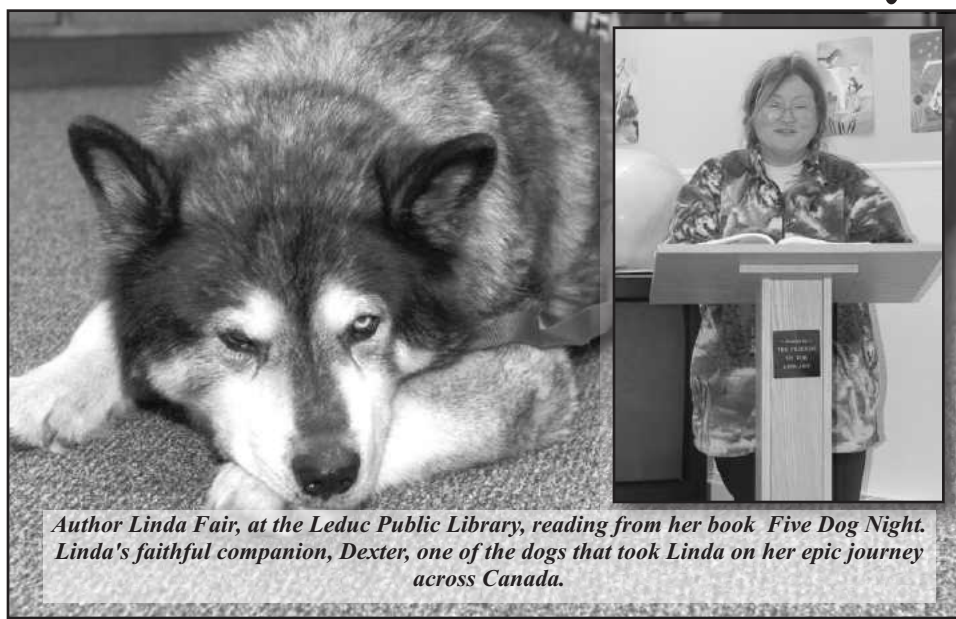
ver Menu Award for dinners and O'Brian's Restaurant won gold for their lunch menu. The Denham Inn also retained their certification as a Partner In Injury Reduction. "I know that doesn't sound all that exciting," laughed Perry, "but it's an extremely important award for us as a hotel, to know that we are training our staff properly and keeping them safe at work."

Perry has been the General Manager at the Denham Inn for over fifteen years, and throughout that time has seen awards come and go, but this year he said that the "topper" for him was winning the inaugural Employer Of Choice Award. This was the first year for this particular award and only sixteen hotels across the entire province of Alberta merited this award.

The Employer Of Choice Award is determined by a rather intensive set of criteria. Hotel management must submit a 50-80 page report on their human resource policy and practices, on-site auditing is done to ensure it's accuracy, and confidential, individual employee interviews are also conducted by the AHLA.

"I believe a lot of the credit for this award belongs to our management team," said Perry. "This shows how much we value our employees. The other great thing about this award is that I believe it will challenge every hotel in the province to raise the bar toward having more satisfied staff, and ultimately more satisfied customers."

Local Author At Leduc Library



Author Linda Fair, at the Leduc Public Library, reading from her book *Five Dog Night*. Linda's faithful companion, Dexter, one of the dogs that took Linda on her epic journey across Canada.

By Lorna Lowe

Author Linda Fair, who was born in Olds, Alberta and has been featured on Ripley's Believe It Or Not, made a personal appearance at the Leduc Public Library on Thursday, April 24th.

This multi-talented, extremely well educated Albertan woman who vowed at a very young age that she would "never work at a job I didn't like," has held various careers throughout her life. Including, but not limited to, registered nurse, animal health technician and computer maintenance technician, can now add published author to her extensive resume.

Five Dog Night is Linda's first book that recounts the first year of the four years she spent traveling 5000 miles across Canada in a modified, home made dog sled.

Escaping an abusive relationship, Linda left her Ellerslie area home with no advance planning, her five large dogs and whatever she could carry on a moments notice, which was next to nothing. For the next four years it was just Linda and "The Muttley Crew", which consisted of Dexter, Mork, King Ted, Bug and Harly, relying on their own strength and the kindness of complete strangers.

Linda's book, which is anticipated to be the first in a series that will encompass all four years, is a warm, funny, heartfelt, serious, at times almost heartbreaking, but always un-

flinchingly honest look at her life, and the lives of her dogs over those four years.

The actual trip took place during the mid to late 1990's so unfortunately Linda only has three of her original five four-legged travel companions left. A real treat for the people that came to her book reading at the Leduc Library was that she was able to bring one of the original dogs, Dexter, along with her. Definitely showing his age now, but still very interested in meeting and greeting everyone in the room, Dexter is a testament to the care and love that Linda has given him over the years as he is still going strong at 16 years of age.

After reading chapter ten of her book to the audience, which details a brutally hot summer spent crossing Manitoba, Linda then brought out several items that she had brought along to show everyone. One of the items was one of the original harnesses that the dogs wore in order to pull the sled. Obliging, Dexter allowed Linda to place him into the harness one more time to demonstrate how it worked, and Linda then laughingly had to explain to everyone how it used to fit a little better but that Dexter had put on a little weight during his retirement. This is simply a must read for anyone who loves Canadiana, dogs, or just a well written true life story about a very unusual life. Copies of Linda's book can be purchased through Fairberry Press, RR#2, Thorsby Alberta, T0C 2P0, or by calling 780-362-0411 and ordering a copy.

**Kirsten Montgomery B.Sc.
Registered Acupuncturist**

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