

takefive

DIAMONDS ARE A MEMBER'S BEST FRIEND



CAA/AAA Diamond ratings are an invaluable resource for travellers. As North America's premier hotel and restaurant rating system, the diamond-award process includes an annual on-site inspection during which properties must meet rigorous requirements to be approved. Professional evaluators then give each approved hotel and restaurant a rating from one diamond (lowest) to five (highest). Top-rated facilities consistently deliver premier experiences, complete with superior personal service, first-class amenities and impressive surroundings.

- In 2009, for the 15th year in a row, the Hotel Saskatchewan Radisson Plaza in Regina has been awarded a Four Diamond designation. Only 3.9 per cent of the more than 31,000 lodgings rated received this designation. The hotel is also the only Four Diamond property in the province.
- CAA/AAA Diamond ratings cover establishments across North America, as well as top destinations in Mexico and the Caribbean. www.aaa.com/diamonds

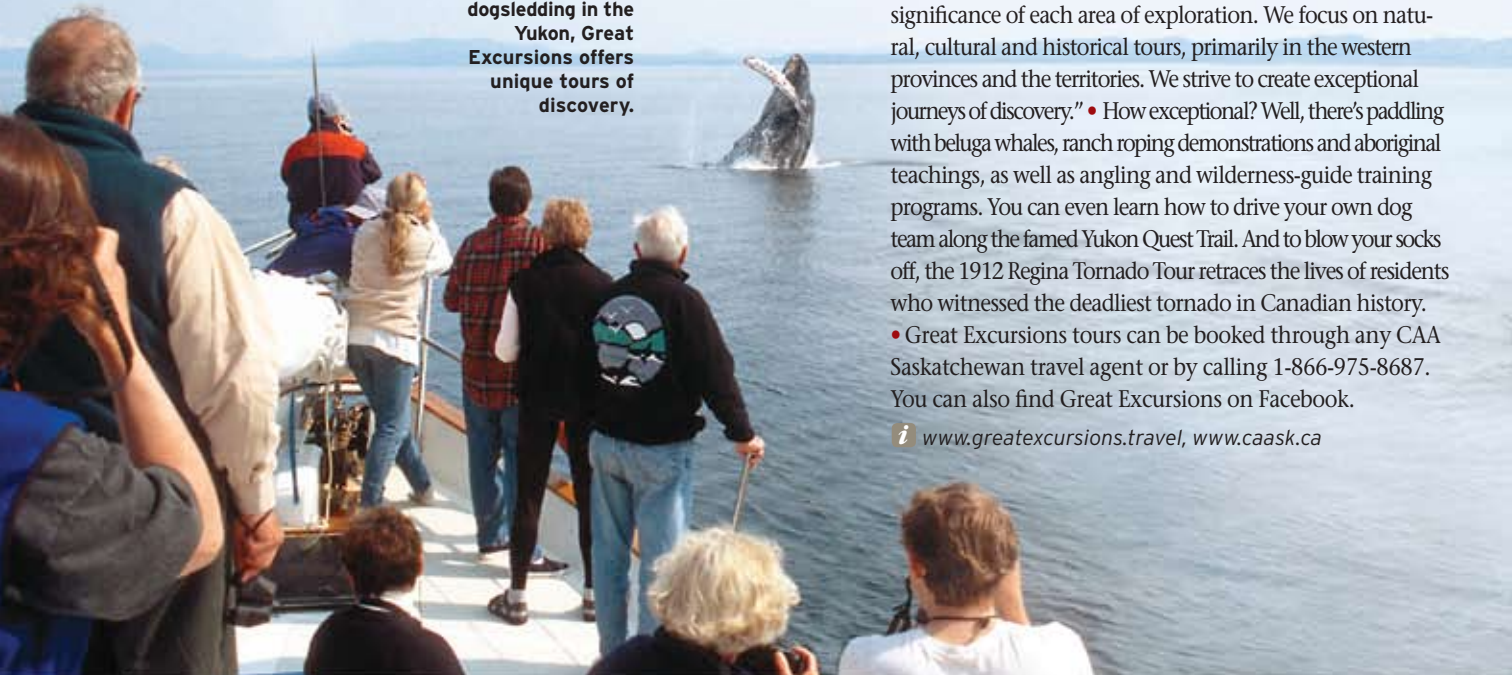
THE Trails Less Travelled

FROM WHALE-WATCHING in B.C. to dogsledding in the Yukon, Great Excursions offers unique tours of discovery.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF VACATIONERS: THOSE WHO grumble, "Are we there yet?" and those who exclaim, "Getting there is half the fun!" For Saskatchewaners who want more than what conventional vacations offer, there's Great Excursions, CAA Saskatchewan's newest travel partner. Launched in 1998, Great Excursions offers distinctive and authentic Canadian tourism adventures that run the gamut from grizzly-viewing horse-riding trips in the Rocky Mountains to whale-watching cruises in British Columbia's coastal waters.

- "Our clients embrace the idea that the journey is the reward," says Claude-Jean Harel, founder and manager of Great Excursions. "We offer experiences that fully engage guests, with tour leaders who take the time to interpret the significance of each area of exploration. We focus on natural, cultural and historical tours, primarily in the western provinces and the territories. We strive to create exceptional journeys of discovery."
- How exceptional? Well, there's paddling with beluga whales, ranch roping demonstrations and aboriginal teachings, as well as angling and wilderness-guide training programs. You can even learn how to drive your own dog team along the famed Yukon Quest Trail. And to blow your socks off, the 1912 Regina Tornado Tour retraces the lives of residents who witnessed the deadliest tornado in Canadian history.
- Great Excursions tours can be booked through any CAA Saskatchewan travel agent or by calling 1-866-975-8687. You can also find Great Excursions on Facebook.

www.greexcursions.travel, www.caask.ca



Not Left Holding the Bag

In our efforts to be environmentally responsible, CAA Saskatchewan is offering reusable bags for 99 cents at all our offices. We hope to cut down on the 10,000 plastic bags that end up in Saskatchewan landfills every year. Just one reusable bag can eliminate as many as 1,500 plastic bags in its lifetime. When purchasing merchandise or picking up travel or insurance material from CAA, please consider choosing a reusable bag.



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THE BEST OF

You can count on them any time of day or night when you need help with your vehicle. That's why every year, CAA Saskatchewan recognizes contractors who provide outstanding assistance to members by presenting them with a CAA Award of Excellence. Congratulations and thank you to this year's recipients: (back row, l-r) John Walker, Walker's Towing, Moose Jaw; Darren Schlamp, Schlamp's Tirecraft, Grenfell; Kevin Lane, vice-president of Automotive Services, CAA Saskatchewan; Ryan Williams, Top Notch Towing, Weyburn; Michael Paul, Al Locksmithing, Prince Albert; Dallas Baillie, Baillie Boys Towing, Abernethy; (front row, l-r) Ralph Yakowec, Lightning Towing & Auto, Birch Hills; Ralph Burnett, Ralph's Mechanical & Towing, Medstead; Marj Walker, Walker's Towing, Moose Jaw; Blaine Hudecek, White Knight Auto Rescue & Towing, Gull Lake; Craig Petit, King Towing, Warman.

Disney's Tunesmith



When Walt Disney needed a soundtrack for his new attraction at the 1964 New York World's Fair, he called on the Sherman brothers. Richard and Robert Sherman – whose songs set audiences humming in Disney classics such as *Mary Poppins*, *The Jungle Book* and *The Parent Trap* – came up with "It's a Small World (After All)". Walt was so happy, he paid it his highest compliment: "That'll work." It became one of the most translated and performed songs ever. We recently talked with younger brother Richard.

Q: What's the secret to writing a pop song?

A: Three things: Make it simple, singable and sincere. Do that and stay original, and you can make it in this business.

Q: What was it like working with Walt?

A: The man was such a creative genius. He had a way of visualizing a story in his head that I've never seen before.

Q: Have you taken a ride on *It's a Small World*?

A: Are you kidding? Till this day, it's our very first stop every time we bring the family to the park.

Q: Is it still a small world?

A: Oh, smaller than ever. Which is why the song's message is still so relevant: 'There's so much that we share/That it's time we're aware.' You know? So let's not blow each other up. –*Nino Padova, courtesy AAA's Via Magazine*

Throughout February, CAA Saskatchewan is celebrating Disney Days. For special travel savings to Disney resorts, visit your local CAA office, call 1-800-564-6222 or visit www.caask.ca.

Celebrate Your Birthday with Mickey Mouse – for Free!

Throughout 2009, choose your birthday destination – Walt Disney World Resort in Florida or Disneyland Resort in California – and register for free admission on your birthday to one of the theme parks at either resort.

www.disneyarks.com

FEBRUARY IS Universal Month at CAA

February is the best time for CAA members to book their next vacation to Universal Orlando Resort and enjoy the excitement of two amazing theme parks, non-stop nightlife and three world-class on-site hotels. Book a vacation during the month of February and receive:

- \$100* in Universal Orlando Dollars with a vacation of six nights or more
- \$50** in Universal Orlando Dollars with a four- or five-night vacation
- the *Universal Orlando Resort-Wide Savings Guide*
- a souvenir photograph from a selection of the resort's most popular rides and attractions

*Must use promotion code UNIAAA100. **Must use promotion code UNIAAA50. Offers valid for bookings February 1-28, 2009, with travel March 1-December 31, 2009, booked through Universal Parks & Resorts Vacations. Bookings must include Universal Orlando admission tickets for every person in the party. Restrictions apply. Excludes special offers; includes Kids Free vacation.

jaunts & journeys – **CAA** style

Exploring the Rivers of Europe

by Shannan Schill
Senior Travel Consultant, Regina South

River cruising is a truly unique way to travel Europe, offering a historical journey through the countries' waterways. Towns along the way are authentic, and the locals take pride in their rich history.

My adventure began in Basel, Switzerland. After a day of exploring, it was time to settle into my "floating hotel." We travelled on the legendary Rhine and Main rivers with stops in Strasbourg, Speyer, Heidelberg, Rudesheim, Aschaffenburg, Miltenberg, Würzburg, Bamberg and Nuremberg. Highlights included Aschaffenburg's 1,000 years of history and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bamberg, an architectural gem spread across seven hills in the heart of Northern Bavaria. Heidelberg is one of the best-preserved medieval cities in Europe; in Rudesheim, a gondola ride took us to the Niederwald monument, which depicts the



Germany's Burg Katz castle overlooks the Rhine River.

mythical figure of Germania, while offering spectacular views of the vineyards below. In Würzburg, we saw the world's largest ceiling fresco in the 18th-century Residence Palace and tasted the fruity Franconian wines in its cellar. Strasbourg, with its half-timbered houses clustered along narrow winding lanes, quaint canals and magnificent single-spire gothic cathedral of Notre Dame, looks as if it came straight out of a Grimm's fairytale.

Ask CAA Travel about the Blue Danube Discovery – an exclusive CAA group departure cruise, September 17-30.

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Focus on ...

Collette Vacations offers a wide variety of tours, with an exciting range of destinations to satisfy differing tastes in travel. CAA is pleased to join Collette on **February 18, 2010**, for an exclusive group departure to spectacular **South Africa**. Search for the Big Five (elephant, Cape buffalo, rhinoceros, lion and leopard) during safari game drives. Visit a working ostrich farm, a local vineyard, Table Mountain and Cape Point. Ask us about the Victoria-Falls-in-Zambia extension. Seats are limited, so call today.



Tourists spot one of South Africa's Big Five during a safari game drive.

CAA Travel

Exclusive CAA Group Departures

■ **Ireland: May 30-June 12** A whole lot of *craic* and a bit o' blarney! The Country Roads of Ireland tour is a Saskatchewan favourite, with beautiful emerald landscapes, history and a shot of humour on the side.

■ **Blue Danube Discovery: September 17-30** From Budapest to Prague, a serene sail on the river of poem and song. During stops in Vienna, Melk, Regensburg, Nuremberg and more, discover the beauty and mystery of old Europe.

CAA Group Cruise

■ **Gems of the Baltic, June 22-July 2** Board Holland America's new MS *Eurodam*, highlighting the cruise line's new Signature class and the evolution of sophisticated mid-size ships. Sail roundtrip from Copenhagen, with stops in Warnemünde (gateway to Berlin), Tallinn, St. Petersburg, Helsinki, Stockholm and Kiel.

CAA Vacations

Sail with CAA members from across the country. Our preferred cruise partners offer a variety of packages to destinations around the globe, often with group rates and extra amenities. How about Europe in the spring with Princess Cruises, or the Western Caribbean on the Disney Magic? Holland America, Princess, Disney . . . ask your CAA travel consultant about the many options available and join us!

CAA Vacations Friendship Cruises

In addition to special pricing and benefits exclusive to CAA, enjoy shipboard credits and welcome-a-board cocktail parties on a CAA Friendship Cruise.

■ **Alaska: July 4-11** Aboard Holland America's MS *Zuiderdam*.

WestWorld Tours

Travel with someone you trust

■ **Glory of Easter: April 4-18 and April 5-19** With 10,000 windows of tempered silver-coloured glass held in place by a lace-like frame of white steel trusses, the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, is a must-see. Enjoy a tour of the building, as well as the annual *Passion Play*, a spectacle brought to life through drama, song and pageantry. Tour highlights also include Salt Lake City, Utah; Laughlin and Reno, Nevada; and Los Angeles and San Francisco, California.

■ **Victoria: April 20-May 1 or May 11-22** Experience spring in beautiful British Columbia. Like the blooms of Butchart Gardens, this tour is a perennial Saskatchewan favourite. Travel west with interesting stops along the way, then spend one week near Victoria's Inner Harbour while making daytrips to the murals of Chemainus, Butchart Gardens, Salt Spring Island and Cathedral Grove. New this year – Butterfly Gardens.

■ **Our signature tours – Alaska and the Yukon** WestWorld Tours started in 2000 with the Alaska tours, and their popularity continues to grow. Why? Because of the awe-inspiring beauty, history, fun and frivolity experienced on every journey.

● **All Coach: June 13-July 2**
 ● **Voyage of the Glaciers Cruise & 12-Night Coach: northbound, June 15-July 4; southbound, June 10-29.** Sail with Princess cruises through the Inside Passage.

■ **Churchill 15th Annual Explorer Tour: July 26, August 2 & 9** Put on your adventure hat and ride the rails. Journey into Canada's north with these annual chug-along-to-Churchill tours. Whales, tundra buggies, the Churchill grain terminal, flora and fauna and so much more.



Severe storms, widespread floods and droughts, massive power failures – Canadians have already begun to see the results of climate change. During the past 50 years, Canada's average temperature rose 1.3°C. By the end of the century, it's expected to increase by 5°C due to the buildup of greenhouse gases.

In a 2007 Harris-Decima survey (commissioned by CAA), 37 per cent of Canadians said they were extremely concerned about global warming – a 50 per cent increase from 2006. Yet only one in 10 Canadians reported that government had done a good job addressing the issue.

CAA has always advocated for “better drivers on better roads.” That now includes “in a better environment.” Our policies support reductions in fuel consumption, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, research and development of alternative fuel technologies, and the growth of hybrid and fuel-efficient vehicles. Since 2003, CAA has recognized initiatives that reduce the impact of automobiles on the environment with its annual Pyramid Award. CAA is also proactive in providing

driving-green advice, including the online resource, *Making the Shift to Eco-Driving*.

As well, CAA has partnered with Pollution Probe and Natural Resources Canada to produce the *Primer on Vehicles and Fuel Efficiency*, a publication providing advice on how to be an environmentally friendly vehicle owner. It follows on the heels of *Driving Towards a Cleaner Environment*, produced by CAA and Pollution Probe in 2006.

CAA Saskatchewan recycles everything from paper and tires to beverage containers and vehicle batteries. *Westworld* magazine (printed on 10 per cent post-consumer waste paper) includes stories related to the environment. In 2008, CAA Saskatchewan participated in the Regina Commuter Challenge, was the exclusive provincial sponsor of Rideshare Week and began offering reusable bags.

Living greener and cleaner is about making wise choices. Individuals, companies and governments must all work together to ensure we have a healthier, safer and sustainable lifestyle.

📄 www.caa.ca/eco/; www.commuterchallenge.ca/; www.carpool.ca/

My CAAsh Saving Story

Last winter we arrived at the Regina airport at 11 p.m. from a holiday in Mexico to find that the trunk of our car had been smashed in. We couldn't get into the trunk to get our winter boots and coats, so, as a CAA member since 1977, the first thing I did was phone CAA. The person taking the call said it was unusual and that their trucks were not equipped for that kind of job, but she would send someone to see if they could help. Though it was -30°C, a friendly and helpful fellow worked on the trunk for more than half an hour until he finally got it open. That night my CAA card saved us a bundle. Taking it to a garage would have been costly. Thanks again, CAA, for your prompt and courteous service. ❖ –Bette Malesh, Assiniboia

Have you saved money with your CAA membership? Send your CAAsh Saving Story to us at caa.admin@caask.ca, and, if we print it, you'll receive a special gift worth \$20.