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PEOPLE

Leaving Alberta for a better life

Going against the grain, a Western Canadian ranching family moved to Newfoundland, put down roots and opened a golf course

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Special to The Telegram

When Barrey Stuber talks about meeting Dave White of Summerville and his family for the first time, his eyes grow moist and his voice begins to break.

And, no, the Alberta-born businessman and rancher is not suffering from a midsummer flu bug.

Stuber met White and his family in 1999 when he and his wife, Linda Stuber, were vacationing in their fifth wheel from their home south of Medicine Hat, Alta. Their plan was to spend two months seeing the sights of their country.

The trip was the Stubers' first to Newfoundland and Labrador, and they had no family or friends here.

The Stubers own a trucking company, among other assets, in Alberta. One of their employees, a Newfoundlander named Barry White, suggested that once they reached Newfoundland, they drop by and visit his relatives in Princeton, Bonavista Bay.

And so, after getting off the ferry in Port aux Basques and spending time on the Northern Peninsula, the Stubers made their way to the Clarendville area and headed for Princeton.

"We knocked on Dave White's door and we said, 'You don't know us, but we know Barry,' and we told him who we were," Barrey recalls.

"We planned to spend a night here just to see a little bit of this neck of the woods," Linda adds. "But we ended up staying for three days. We went out in a fishing boat with them and got to see their little cabin that you can only access by water. And we saw whales. They showed us a way of life here and they introduced us to people in this area."

"And it was the place and the people that hit us in the heart."

Barrey will never forget what Dave said to him when he and Linda were about to head back to Alberta.

"When we left Dave's cabin, it was getting dark," Barrey recalls.

"We said, 'We're coming back.' And I told him that departure is like a sweet sorrow, because you've got to leave in order to come back. And that's when Dave said, 'We'll leave the door open for you.'"

"And that's what really hit us. That comment still rips at me every time I think of it," Barrey says.

The Stubers returned to Alberta and started making plans to build a summer home in the Princeton/Summerville area.

"We came back in the fall of 1999 to look for a piece of property to come for a bit of a retirement for a few weeks a year," Linda says.

"We never found anything then. But we put the word out that we were looking."

Linda returned again in March 2000 and found just the right property on the water.

"Then we came back in the summer and started to build the cabin, which we were only going to live in for three weeks of the year," Barrey says.

Instead, the Stubers live there all year long.

After they built their summer home, they returned to Alberta in August and then drove back again that fall to experience their first



The Stuber family, originally from Alberta, (from left) Travis, Linda, Barrey and Trevor, stand at the entrance of the chalet at The View Golf and Lodgings, on which fly the flags of Alberta, Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador.



Barrey Stuber looks out over some of the 125 acres on which he and his family built The View Golf and Lodgings.

Newfoundland winter.

However, when Barrey's father had a stroke in January 2001, the couple returned to Alberta to be near him.

By May, they were back on the Rock, not only to live year round, but to flesh out their idea of starting up a business.

"Our initial plan was to open a little campground and RV park that would keep the two of us busy through the summer season," Linda recalls.

"But when we looked into that, we got a lot of negative feedback from the government. We were told there wasn't a need for it."

The Stubers gave up on their idea of starting a business in Newfoundland, but Linda says their new friends in the area told them not to be discouraged.

"They told us not to give up, that they needed something here because things weren't going well with the fishing industry here," she says.

"A lot of our friends and neighbours are inshore fishermen with small boats. They could see that that was dying out and they could see us starting a business here as an opportunity to employ people and to draw people into the area."

When Barrey suggested to his friend Dave that he might build a golf course, his response was, "I know exactly the spot for you."

He took Barrey through the woods to the top of a mountain, where there was a spectacular view overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

Barrey agreed with Dave — the 125-acre property, situated between Princeton and Summerville, was perfect.

Once they purchased the land, the Stubers turned to their eldest son,



Linda Stuber stands on the ninth green at The View.

too. But at that point, he wasn't ready," Linda explains.

Travis was looking after the family's ranch in Alberta at the time.

While Travis wasn't ready to join the family when Trevor moved here just over two years ago, he did make the move this spring. Like his brother, he'd visited his parents on the island over the last few years, which helped him make up his mind, he says.

The Stubers are heavily involved in their community. Both strapping young men are members of their community's volunteer fire department.

"We didn't have to try and fit into the community here because, as soon as we arrived, we were part of it. They welcomed us that much. So we became a part of their lives just as they became a part of ours," Linda says.

Since his move two years ago, Trevor's Calgarian girlfriend, Desirae Bellisle, has also moved to Newfoundland. While she works in St. John's, she spends her weekends at The View and, according to Linda and Barrey, is a very much-loved member of their family as well as an asset to their business.

For Linda and Barrey, having their only children work alongside them in establishing and expanding their new business makes the move complete.

The View Golf and Lodgings includes a nine-hole golf course that is as beautifully built as it is challenging. The resort's clubhouse has a scenic view from every window, with a pro shop, lounge and full-service restaurant, all open year-round.

A three-story chalet, with six suites overlooking the Atlantic, has also been erected on the site. The units are available as investment properties.

"Investors can buy these as vacation properties and when they're not using them, we'll rent them out on their behalf," Trevor says.

The view from the Number 9 tee-off overlooks scenic Southern Bay Harbour. Tucked behind another mountain is the picturesque community of Sweet Bay.

With more than 100 acres to work with, the Stubers have only just begun in terms of what they will eventually offer residents from down the road and tourists from the other side of the world.

When the resort was in the construction stage, the Stubers employed about 30 people a day. It's a community effort, Linda says, where the entire family worked side by side in the trenches with its employees.

"The people that worked here, who were involved from Day 1 when we started this project, they're all local people from four or five small fishing villages in this area. Every tree was

cut with a chainsaw. And we were hands-on as well. Every one of us has had a chainsaw and a shovel and work clothes on. We got dirty just like the other workers. We were all involved physically seven days a week, with every part of the construction," Linda says.

When asked how the government felt about the project, Barrey chooses his words carefully. An astute businessman, he'd rather concentrate on the positive relationship that has grown over time than rehash the early days and getting through the red tape that often comes with starting a new business.

"Government was very, very cautious initially, but we get the feeling now they are more on our side and more working with us. Their involvement initially was giving us the OK to purchase the land and for approval for us to build it. And they helped us with JCP (Job Creation Program) for two summers."

A quick glance through The View's promotional brochure makes it evident that the Stubers are doing much more than advertising their facilities. Instead, they are promoting the entire Bonavista Peninsula as well as the province as a whole.

Since settling in Newfoundland, Barrey has made two promotional tours to Western Canada to promote his business and the province. He has another tour planned for Fort McMurray in August.

"We think Newfoundland is something everybody needs to see. And for us, it's easy to promote because we feel so strongly about it," Trevor says.

"We're on a part of the island that doesn't have a lot of tourism development on it. So we are part of a growth process that's going on," Linda says.

"And we think everyone should see not just our place, but this peninsula and the rest of Newfoundland," she adds.

The Stubers' promotion of this province has already paid off, as tourists from Western Canada are making their way to Newfoundland and to The View.

While their extended families and friends remain in Alberta and will always hold a special place in their hearts, the Stubers are selling their assets in that province as they settle for the rest of their life's journey in this province. They've already sold their home in Alberta, Linda says.

"Slowly we are cutting ties and moving our roots here," she says.

The Stubers are forever grateful to Dave White and his family for opening their hearts and home to them when they knocked on their door as strangers and left three days later with fond affection in abundance for both families.

"To say we're content here wouldn't even be the tip of the iceberg," Barrey says, looking out the window of the resort's lounge, where several tiny birds perched on a table on the deck are looking in at him.

"When I stood on that rock cliff with Dave and this was all mountain and bush, it was beautiful, what I saw. But it turned out to be way beyond our expectations."