

Single mother wins Radium condo

By Brian Geis
Pioneer Staff

Calgary bus driver Sarah Folvik is Radium's latest homeowner, thanks to a Calgary Herald contest in which she won a brand-new \$450,000-condominium in Sable Ridge.

"Usually, it's some retired couple with a million dollars in the bank who wins these things," Sable Developments Project Manager Brian Anderson said just before Christmas, when he handed over the keys to the fully-furnished, three-bedroom mountain retreat.

Ms. Folvik, a Calgary Transit bus driver and single mother of six, wasn't even a homeowner when she was picked as one of seven finalists in the Herald's Home Free contest last April. She's still a renter, she said.

"It still hasn't sunk in yet," Ms. Folvik commented after being contacted by Mr. Anderson.

Offered her choice of five condominiums, including one in a Statesman Group development in Phoenix, Arizona; Ms. Folvik chose the scenic Sable Ridge resort for its proximity to Calgary and central location for family members spread out around the west.

With a daughter in Kelowna and her father in Sparwood, she said, the Radium location will be the perfect meeting spot for family gatherings.

"And, it's in a location the kids can get to on their own when they are old enough to drive," she said.

"It's a big honour that she picked Sable Ridge over all the others," Mr. Anderson said. "We were really ex-

cited, because this project is all about families."

Sable Ridge is a three-building project situated around a 1,700-square-foot clubhouse with a 30-foot ceiling, fireplace, full kitchen, seasonal swimming pools, hot tub and barbecue.

Calgary-based developer Sam Boguslavsky said everything from the location to the materials was designed for Calgary families.

"We identified the key elements of what Albertans are looking for and part of that, too, is the geographical proximity to Calgary. Radium is less than three hours away allowing for the spontaneity of a weekend getaway," he said. "Through our multi-family experience, we understand the consumer, so that our layouts, standard features and finishings very much speak to family needs. We know what it takes to make people comfortable and, if the layout is right, that can be done in as little as 1,000 square feet."

Ms. Folvik said her family scoffed as she faithfully clipped entry forms from the pages of every copy of the Calgary Herald that fell into her hands.

Her boyfriend, Colin Nicholson, taught her how to clip an entry form from the middle of a page using a credit card, sparing the rest of the page.

Still, she said, to everyone else, it seemed like a long shot. It was the biggest contest ever held by the Herald. The 250,000 entries received were piled into a box the size of shipping pallet, four feet deep.

But her optimism never wavered.

"She was so sure," Mr. Nicholson said. "She had to

have a sixth sense about it."

Said Ms. Folvik: "I honestly prayed about it. If it is God's will that it go to someone more deserving, then so be it."

The dream started to look more like a reality when her entry form was picked along with six other finalists to vie for the grand prize. Ms. Folvik said she was working a split shift and only had a few hours to participate in the contest, but organizers assured her she would be back to work on time.

The contestants were each given a key and a chance to try it in the door of the show home. The contestants, she said, were told that if the key fit in the lock to twist it to the left and, if it turned, they were holding the winning key.

Ms. Folvik was the fifth in line and, as each one before her tried and failed, he said, her odds began to look better and better.

When her turn finally came, she said, the key wouldn't go in at first. After it slid into the lock it turned a little. When it went over all the way, she said, her heart stopped.

"I just froze," she said. "Then I heard people screaming behind me and it snapped me back into reality."

Breaking the news to family and friends was met with continued incredulity. "Even Colin didn't believe me," she said.

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Her 15-year-old daughter, Jamie-Lee, she said, responded with screaming and tears, then flopped onto the floor once finally convinced.

Her eighteen-year-old son Alphonsus, who was living in Ontario at the time, said he heard the news second-hand. "It's nice to see a break go our way for a change," he said.

True to their word, Ms. Folvik was back at work an hour later, but the good news didn't stop there.

The corporate sponsors of the contest pitched in to lighten the burden of owning the condominium. The Herald, she said, covered the lawyer's fees, transfer fees and closing costs. The Brick stepped up with \$20,000 for home furnishings and—fearing that Ms. Folvik would be forced to flip the property—developer Sam Boguslavsky paid the first year's condominium fees and property taxes.

Ms. Folvik, with the help of Mr. Nicholson, and four of her six children, drove over from Calgary in December with all the ingredients for a turkey dinner and a mattress and boxspring tied to the roof of Mr. Nicholson's truck.

"The first thing she did," Mr. Nicholson said, "was turn on the oven."

With a professional management company on hand to rent it out when not in use, the unit will be an income producer for the Folviks.

"It was an early Christmas for us," she said. "How do you say thank you for something like this? We will be eternally grateful for everyone's generosity."



RADIUM WINNERS—The Folviks, left to right: Rebekah, 19; Rebekah's fiancé Tony Pallo; Alexis, 13; Sarah Folvik; Colin Nicholson; Joshua, 10; and Alphonsus, 18. Daughters Brandi, 24, and Jamie-Lee, 15, were absent.

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