



From left, Cam and Kim Shaw, formerly of Lloydminster, now proudly satisfy chocolate cravings on the west coast. - Photo Submitted

A chocolate dream come true

KATIE RYAN STAFF WRITER

Sometimes some things are just meant to be, whether you know it or not. Call it fate or just sheer luck, but dreams can come true even if you didn't realize you were dreaming.

That proved to be the case for former Border City couple Kim and Cam Shaw, who now spend their days making gourmet chocolate in the best surfer town in North America.

"It's kind of like a dream come true but we wouldn't have even known that until we had heard about it. Some things you don't know you are dreaming them until you see them and then it's just like - wow - we have to do that," said Cam over the phone while the rain fell in Tofino.

"It was a huge surprise because chocolate and ice-cream are not in our field of training or anything like that but when the opportunity came up, it's just like, whoa, we are going to regret this forever if we don't do it."

And they're doing it - calling the village of Tofino home, spending their days surfing and making chocolate - after packing up their lives in Lloydminster. The road to the coast had its share of bumps along their way though.

The couple, who originally met on a mission trip to Nicaragua in 1998, were hit hard by the recession in 2009. Kim lost her job and Cam, who in his former life on the prairies was a graphic artist, saw his work slow to a snail's pace. Both were in need of a change.

"Well, we don't have kids and there is absolutely nothing holding us back, so we thought let's just borrow my Mom's VW van and drive out to Tofino and just live in the van, eat simply, surf every day," said Cam, who grew up in Lloydminster.

The soul searching surf sabbatical was not a last minute vacation for the couple. Each agreed to work

on improving themselves through disciplined practice. Cam chose to surf and work on his ukulele skills, while Kim taught herself Japanese among other activities.

"In the five weeks that we were out here, every day we had things that we had to do. Whether I wanted to or not, I had to surf, I had to play the ukulele and even though they are all things you like to do, when you force yourself to do them they are not always what you want to do," said Cam.

"Basically, in your day-to-day life you get tied down to mowing the grass, doing dishes and all that kind of stuff, so we thought if we removed all of that noise, let's just do the things that we want to do and just

"It just goes to show that if you just step out and do it, you can ..."

Cam Shaw

figure some stuff out. Every day we would just do the things we loved, whether we would like to or not. It was a really pure kind of time."

During their time on the west coast the Shaws began stopping by one of Tofino's treasures - Chocolate Tofino - where fresh hand crafted chocolates are made daily, as are home made gelato and sorbet. Chocolate Tofino became a daily destination.

"A friend had mentioned that we should stop by because they had a basil chocolate, so we started going because of that. I don't think I had ever eaten good chocolate before, just stuff from gas stations. Once we learned about their product and started eating it, we wanted more of it," said Cam, who prefers bear claws over all other chocolate now.

"It was conveniently located between the beach where we would surf all day and the place where we were staying so, every day on our way back from surfing we would stop in and grab some chocolate for the road," added Kim, whose enjoys the blackberry

buttercream chocolate the most.

Once their coastal sojourn was over the Shaws were back to the daily grind in Lloydminster and while the sweetness of Tofino chocolate had long left their lips, it was not far from their dreams.

"When we got back to Lloydminster, I couldn't picture myself doing another winter in Lloyd. You know, 31 years of that - that seemed like my max," laughed Cam.

As time went on the chocolate shop was never far from their thoughts and finally an email was sent to inquire about purchasing the shop.

Neither Kim nor Cam had ever tried their hand at making gourmet chocolate, but that wasn't about to stop them from pursuing the venture. And call it a twist of fate, but pastry chef and owner of Chocolate Tofino Gord Austin has Border City connections and is in fact the nephew of Murray and Betty Leach - Cam's next-door neighbours for 18 years.

"When I found out it wasn't just people from Lloyd, but that it was my next door neighbours who pretty much raised me I thought that was pretty amazing considering this is just some small chocolate shop 23 hours away," said Cam.

"(Tofino) is a spot we come to all of the time because Cam has been a landlocked surfer for the last 10 years. We've been making trips to the coast for at least that long, so the location was ideal. My background is in environmental sciences so I feel very strong pull to be close to a national park," said Kim.

"The idea of making chocolate and ice-cream all day, Cam surfing and me walking in the rain forest just sounded amazing.

"And we thought if they train us and they can train their staff to do this, it's not rocket science. It is an art and it is a science, but we thought

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CHOCOLATE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A3

that the risks were fairly minimal – can you really go wrong with chocolate and ice-cream.”

This year in April, Kim and Cam took over the business and in July, officially became the proud owners of Chocolate Tofino – a dream come true for the couple whose families have backed their decision 100 per cent as well.

“They were actually surprised we didn’t leave sooner,” said Cam with a laugh. “But I think we could be content anywhere. We were content in Lloydminster and it’s super great to be here as well.”

No longer waking up each day in a booming oil town, life is experienced at a new pace now for the Shaws who open the shop at 10 a.m. to satisfy sweet teeth.

“It’s unbelievably laid back. They call it Tofino time and it’s basically the fact that nothing happens when it’s supposed to. In an oil town everything moves at such a fast pace and it just keeps going faster, out here things go at such a slow pace and I think it keeps getting slower as far as people’s pace of life,” chuckled Cam. “We were all wrapped up in trying to get things done in Lloydminster, out here you are just always hiking, you are always surfing. Life is so much simpler.”

Honing their craft as chocolatiers, Kim and Cam plan to continue to develop their skills.

“Definitely, when you are growing you



are happy and so we’d like to continue to learn. There is so much you can know about chocolate,” said Cam, who’s had Hollywood encounters in Tofino already when he hand delivered freshly made chocolates to Jack Black on the set of *The Big Year*.

According to Kim, it’s important to invest time, effort and creativity into every piece of chocolate, even if it’s gone in a few small bites. Using quality chocolate from Central America is key as is cocoa butter and incorporating local flavours into their selection such as organic lavender truffle and wildflower

honey.

“For us it’s the freshness of our chocolate, we don’t use preservatives,” said Kim of what sets Chocolate Tofino ahead of the rest.

Summer months are the busiest for the shop, where several Lloydminster residents regularly pay a visit already. And with chocolate holidays throughout the year and strong local support, the Shaws are ready for their new life on the west coast.

“It just goes to show that if you just step out and do it, you can,” added Cam.


CHOCOLATE DREAM

Left, Cam adds the finishing touches to the chocolate.

Right, Kim smiles as she prepares the fresh gourmet chocolate of the day at Chocolate Tofino. – Photos Submitted



LOCAL AUTHORITIES ELECTION ACT
(Sections 11, 35, 46)



NOTICE OF ADVANCE VOTE
LOCAL JURISDICTION COUNTY OF VERMILION RIVER
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
BUFFALO TRAIL PUBLIC SCHOOLS REGIONAL DIVISION No. 28

Notice is hereby given that an ADVANCE VOTE will be held for the filling of the following offices:

SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEE – ELECTORAL SUBDIVISION No. 1 – Town of Vermilion
SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEE – ELECTORAL SUBDIVISION No. 4 – For the purposes of this Notice, Electoral Subdivision 4 is defined as that area of the County of Vermilion River north of Twp. Rd. 522, east from the County’s west boundary to Secondary Hwy. 893, north to the County boundary; and the area north of Twp. Rd. 514 east from Secondary Hwy. 893 to Hwy. 17, north to the County boundary; inclusive of the Villages of Dewberry and Marwayne.

Voting will take place on the 6th day of October, 2010, between the hours of 3:00 PM and 8:00 PM. The voting station will be located at the County of Vermilion River Administration Building, located at 4912 – 50th Avenue, Kitscoty, Alberta.

Dated at the Village of Kitscoty in the Province of Alberta, this 22nd day of September, 2010.

Colleen Leighton
Returning Officer

Note: Any elector who is eligible to vote in this election may vote at the advance vote.

Make us **laugh!** Contest **WINNER**

Shelley Denis



Please continue sending us your funny photos for next month’s Make us Laugh Contest. Thank you to everyone who entered

Simply send your photo to the **Lloydminster Source** 6209A-50 Ave., Lloydminster, SK, or email us at jen@lloydminstersource.com. Photos will appear in the Lloydminster Source and a monthly draw will be made and the winner will receive \$50. Please include your phone number in the email.





