



Norm Lucas plans to use this ramp as a launching board during this week's Western Canadian Water Ski Championships in Saskatoon

—Sun Photo by Kevin Mitchell

# Leap of faith

By Kevin Mitchell  
Sun Sports Editor

## Water skier loves to slice and soar

Some people go camping. Norm Lucas goes ramping. "There's not much like it," Lucas, a Saskatoon water skier and jump enthusiast, said this weekend. "The acceleration is a real powerful feeling. You have 2,100 pounds of pressure on your knees, on the ramp, for 1/16 of a second. Then you're floating."

Lucas, 25, donned his first pair of water skis at the age of four.

Twenty-one years later, he's waked up a lot of water — and he's good enough to have spent last winter working on his skills in Australia and New Zealand.

He took away a lot of memories — some scarier than others.

Take his night-time stint at the prestigious Moomba Masters in Melbourne, for example.

"I'm used to skiing out here," Lucas said, gesturing at the local ski site.

"Then all of a sudden they say 'Okay Norman, get ready to go

jump.' It's 10 o'clock at night, and I've never skied at night. Seventy thousand people on the shore; the site is so narrow that when you're jumping, people can reach out and touch you. It's crazy and exhilarating. The music's blaring, and they have a spotlight on the jump. People are throwing beer cans . . . All they care about is seeing you go really far or crash on your face. You're there to entertain."

The ultimate form of entertain-

ment? Crashing the 200-foot barrier. Lucas is still waiting for his dream moment.

"That's my ultimate goal — before I'm 27," Lucas said. "There's probably 20 guys in the world who have done it."

Lucas figures he's improving 20 to 30 feet a year; he won bronze at this winter's New Zealand amateur nationals with a leap of 49.8m.

This week, Lucas is back in action. The Western Canadian

Water Ski Championships will be held at the local club, and his goals are to grab a top-two finish.

He has a previous jump bronze and placed eighth at last year's nationals.

The western event — it's expected to draw 200 competitors aged eight to 60 — is another in a set of natural progressions for the local water enthusiast.

At the age of four, he wasn't keen on the whole idea of strapping boards to his feet and slicing through water.

"I didn't want to go," he recalls now. "I was sitting in the water and this girl was holding me; I was 'Aaaahhhhh! I don't want to go! I can't do it!' But the guy who was driving the boat took off as soon as I had my skis in position. He just hit it. And I never stopped doing it after that."

This week's championships, hosted by the Saskatoon Water Ski Club, will be held off the Idylwyld Service Road at 54th Street. Admission is \$3; kids 12 and under get in free.

### SPORTS CALENDAR

#### WEDNESDAY

**BASEBALL — Prairie League:** Grand Forks Varmints at Saskatoon Stallions, 7:05 p.m. at Cairns Field.

**SOFTBALL — Special Men's:** Merchants vs. Bandits, Bruno vs. Delisle. Games at 6:45 and 8:45 p.m. at Gordie Howe Park; **Division I Men's:** Success vs. Hanley, Wings vs. Cannons. Games at 6:45 and 8:45 p.m. at Bob Van Impe Field.

#### THURSDAY

**BASEBALL — Saskatoon Senior League:** Spirit vs. Nationals, 7 p.m. at Cairns Field.

**SOFTBALL — Special Men's:** Steelcraft vs. Bruno, Bruno vs. Selects. Games at 6:45 and 8:45 p.m. at Gordie Howe Park.

#### SATURDAY

**HORSE RACING — Marquis Downs:** Post time 6:30 p.m.

#### SUNDAY

**HORSE RACING — Marquis Downs:** Post time 1 p.m.

**BMX — Bridge City BMX:** Registration 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., racing starts at 7 p.m. at Exhibition Grounds.

## Race seeks volunteers

The engines are revving up for The Arthritis Society Mini Grand Prix Aug. 23 and 24, but volunteers are needed to make the race and surrounding activities run smoothly from start to finish.

Race officials estimate that thousands of people will line the course while teams from corporations from Saskatoon, Regina and Edmonton compete in miniature Indy-style cars on a professionally designed race track at the Prairieland Exhibition Centre in Saskatoon.

"Plans are going extremely well, but we do need volunteers to help with a large number of details on the day of the race and even before," said Colleen Maloney of The Arthritis Society.

The Arthritis Society is the source of hope for over 25,000 individuals with arthritis in Saskatoon.

To volunteer your help on race day, contact Colleen at 244-9922.



Botanists say that the banana plant, the most prolific of food plants, dates back to the Pliocene era, a million years ago.

