

New author has Birtle roots

By Jessica Ludwig

She's a small town girl with big dreams and success.

Carly Sotas, who grew up in Birtle, MB, on her family farm, was raised like any other typical kid would be in a prairie family from a small town. However, in the eleventh grade, Sotas suffered from a form of depression and she felt like she was meant to do more with her life than she was currently doing.

In her twelfth grade, after graduating from high school early, she moved to Winnipeg, but after being let go on her first day of work after admitting she planned to attend school in the fall, Sotas knew she had to dream bigger.

After watching more than a few episodes of a popular TV show featuring New York real estate, Sotas called the firm and offered to be an intern. And after many phone



The book cover for *Illusion* by Carly Sotas

calls between her family, and the real estate firm, she was on her way to New York at the young age of 17.

Fast forward three years, Sotas has had the pleasure to attend schools across the globe from BC to England and her current location, Bangkok.

June was an espe-

cially exciting chapter in Sotas's life as she became a published author when her book *Illusion*, a non-fiction self-help book, was released.

"Growing up, I always turned to young women's magazines for advice on how to be happy and confident, but eventually

came to realize that most of the content was focused on selling false promises." Sotas said.

"My frustration with the industry motivated me to write *Illusion*. I wanted to offer something from the perspective of someone that other young people might actually be able to relate to. Through sharing my own struggles, I hope to let others know that they aren't alone and that it's okay for us to talk about our insecurities and weaknesses. "The release of *Illusion* also secured her an appearance on CBC's *Weekend Morning Show* at the end of June.

"I reached out to the show host at CBC and, after reading the first segment of the book, he decided to go ahead with the interview."

Illusion is currently available on Amazon, as well as various store locations in Birtle.

CAA Manitoba calls province to be tougher on distracted drivers

submitted by CAA Manitoba

Just like it may be hard to teach an old dog new tricks, it is harder to break a habit than to prevent it from starting in the first place. That's why on the fifth anniversary of the distracted driving ban, CAA Manitoba is encouraging the Government of Manitoba to be firm with new drivers: drive safe, or be at risk of not driving at all.

According to Manitoba Public Insurance, 38 per cent of all collisions caused by distracted driving were from drivers in the GDL program between July 2010 and December 2013.

"New drivers are at a higher risk of collision even before adding a cell-phone to the mix," says Mike Mager, President and CEO of CAA Manitoba. "Knowing that even with one distracted driving offence could cause you to lose your license will help

prevent this dangerous behaviour from becoming a habit, the same we have done for drunk driving."

Ninety-six per cent of CAA Manitoba members would support a zero-tolerance policy for distracted new drivers if introduced in our province.

Mager notes this societal change is similar to when seatbelts become mandatory. "Many drivers nowadays couldn't imagine not wearing a seatbelt in a car, but there was a time it wasn't commonplace."

In the five years since distracted driving has been outlawed in Manitoba, the province has continuously improved the legislation. In 2011, two demerits were added to the penalty and earlier this month, those demerits upped to five, giving Manitoba one of the harshest penalties in all of Canada. Still, CAA Manitoba says, there is much more to be done.

Tundra did not use an Aboriginal agreement

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Jim Tanner, consultant for Gambler First Nations, with 30+ years' experience in the oil and gas business, and a doctorate in Oil and Gas Economics, claims Tundra didn't have the right licenses.

Tanner explained that when an oil company explores for oil and gas, they employ people who are called landman, or some women are called land people. Landman go through an education program and are a profession within the oil and gas business. In their training, they are taught how different lands require different procedures. The Crown land requires the company to approach the Crown, Freehold needs the land owner such as a farmer and the mineral holder, while the Aboriginal land needs to have the permission from the Indian and Gas Depart-

ment in the Federal government.

"The people who approached the chief, I believe they were registered landmen within the oil industry," Tanner said.

Later in the year Jim Tanner, along with the Chief and council met with Tundra.

"We met with the people from Tundra when I was there, they must have had at least three landmen in the room. The vice president was a landman, and they had two other qualified land people in the room. When they were in the room, they swore to us that they had presented a freehold, freehold that means if they were dealing with a farmer or something like that, a freehold license that they asked the chief to sign. As somebody who has been involved in the oil and gas for years, for me to see a

landman do that to a First Nation, that's pretty close to fraud. In my opinion that is a fraudulent activity," Tanner added.

"They would know very well that they would have to approach the government to get a permit to do any kind of seismic, any kind of exploration, any kind of drilling, anything like that. And if they were going to do that, they'd have to go through special environmental procedures. They would have to do special consultation process with the First Nation and they would really have to undertake the proper federal regulations that are associated with this kind of activity. Tundra chose not to do that clearly."

Tanner went on to say that Tundra drilled a vertical well 100 meters away from the edge of the First Nations

property, which is the bare minimum distance an oil company can drill next to a property, and that the well produced very good. After their initial success, Tundra then drilled a horizontal well on the very edge of Gambler's property line. To date, Tundra has four other wells in the area.

"They keep the wellbore, the hole, outside of the reserve land but in reality the spacing unit, the area that those wells drain is much greater than just where the wellbore is. The area drains, in this area, probably 40 acres spacing, so every 40 acres they would drill a well. Well if you were to take a look at 40 acres spacing it would go well into the reserve for the vertical drill. Then if you were to look at the horizontal well it would go all the way along the reserve, taking oil out from

under the reserve along with all the along the edge of the community."

Tanner then added that he had tried to contact Tundra several times over the course of a few months while these events were occurring, and he informed Tundra that what they were doing was incorrect. After finally getting in touch with their Vice President, a meeting was called with Gambler First Nation community. At the meeting, Tundra maintained that they followed all proper protocol. Tundra also offered to lease Gambler's land at the meeting, with no promise that a well would be drilled on their land. Granting a lease would prevent any other company from drilling on that land.

Tundra CEO Ken Neufeld declined to

speak further on the lawsuit against Tundra, citing it was before the courts. However, he did say he was surprised to hear some of the statements made. Neufeld felt his previous interview with CBC represented Tundra well.

"I wished that we could have found a way to work out their concerns. We remain willing to meet with them at any point in time. I think it would be to everybody's benefit if we could do this outside of the courts. We've met them in the past, I feel we've listened to their concerns, and I feel we've made efforts to respond," Neufeld said.

The lawsuit is also against the province, claiming it should not have granted the license for Tundra, as the initial testing was not approved by the Crown.