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Environmentalists go to great lengths to promote alternative fuels

Nick Lees, The Edmonton Journal

Published: Wednesday, September 10

Former Archbishop Macdonald High School student Cloe Whittaker, 22, and her boyfriend Tyson Jerry, 24, plan to set a world environmental record.

It's a spinoff of a dream she developed after going to study at the University of Victoria.

"I thought one day I'd get rid of all the stuff I'd collected and travel across Canada in a van," she says. "I wanted to meet people and live in different places."

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The plan has changed. She will next month begin a drive around North America on a bid to record the world's longest journey using alternative fuel.

"Tyson and I plan to set a new Guinness Book of World Records mark by travelling 45,000 kilometres using alternative fuel," says Whittaker.

"We've been in touch with many restaurants and they say they will help supply us with waste vegetable oil."

Whittaker's father, Dr. Bryn Whittaker, a family physician with a strong interest in geriatrics, says: "We're very proud of them. Their aim is to make many more people interested in a sustainable environment."

The couple met a year ago in Victoria. Whittaker had finished her degree, an anthropology major and environment studies minor.

Jerry, originally from Wyevale, Ont., grew in the Georgian Bay area. While completing post-secondary studies in environmental management and natural resource law enforcement, Jerry has worked in B.C.'s forestry industry.

"I'd thought of making the trip for some time and when Cloe and I got together when I was on vacation, the idea really took off," said Jerry.

The couple bought a 1993 Mitsubishi van for \$10,000 after promising the owner, who wanted \$11,500 for it, that he could be a sponsor and they would put his name on their trailer.

A friend is converting the van to run on waste vegetable oil and Whittaker and Jerry are adding a roof rack and floodlights to it. They will use a trailer to carry their waste vegetable oil.

They are also looking for sponsors.

"We plan to drive to the Yukon, Alaska and the Northwest Territories before hopefully arriving in Edmonton next month," says Whittaker, who is saving hard while working at a hotel's front desk. "After that, we will criss-cross North America to accumulate miles, perhaps even dipping into Mexico.

"Our research shows we must beat a German team which logged 38,137 kilometres on natural gas."

THE BONNIE PRINCE OF TARTAN

Michael Kaye hopes University of Alberta president Indira Samarasekera will wear one of his creations when she welcomes Lt.-Gov. Norman Kwong and Premier Ed Stelmach to the university's centenary gala at the Shaw Convention Centre on Sept. 20.

"I've created a modified kilt, a full-length, sunburst pleated skirt and an ivory, silk taffeta blouse with a sash of liquid gold lame," says award-winning fashion designer Kaye.

Kaye, a 1987 U of A graduate, now works in New York and has created distinctive garments for some of America's most powerful and discerning women.

His work has been featured in top fashion magazines and among his clients he counts Martha Stewart, Robert DeNiro's wife Grace Hightower and socialite Muffie Potter Aston.

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