



Michele Moore Veldhoen will read from her memoir, *The View From Right Field*, which tells how playing with the Okotoks Rainbows women's slowpitch team helped bring her out of her depression, on June 14 at The George.
Photo credit: Bruce Campbell/OWW

SCENE

Ball-playing Rainbows inspire author

Okotoks: Michele Moore Veldhoen to read from her book *The View From Right Field* June 14 at The George

BY BRUCE CAMPBELL JUN 12, 2018

Some rainbows helped brighten an Okotoks area woman's life.

Michele Moore Veldhoen, a former councillor with the MD of Foothills, will read from her memoir *The View From Right Field*, which she calls "a tribute to the ball team that not only cured her depression but also rescued her from her own righteousness," June 14 at The George.

"My doctor said, 'You are depressed. You have to go out and do something for yourself,'" Moore Veldhoen said. "I wanted to do something that was fun, outdoors and I always played ball – I played ball in the Yukon in B.C. and that is how I joined the Okotoks Rainbows.

"That was one of the best things that could have happened."

Moore Veldhoen became a mother in 1983 at the age of 21.

She said it was a time when stay-at-home moms were sometimes chastised by other women in the years after the women's liberation movement.

A couple of years later she went back to work part-time as a paralegal. When she informed a co-worker she had previously worked as a "full-time mom" Moore Veldhoen didn't get the response she expected.

"Her body cringed and she got a look on her face of disgust and just looked away," she said. "That was just the mentality at the time, it would have been about 1986, '87 or so... The 'Mommy Wars' were quite vicious at the time. Women were hard on each other."

Joining a friendly Okotoks women slowpitch team in the mid '80s turned out to be her pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

"The one thing first and foremost with the Okotoks Rainbows is they were the full expression of the women's movement, most of them were up to a decade older than me and had gone into their womanhood through the '70s," Moore Veldhoen said. "I had it in the back of my mind these ladies all had kids, but had gone to university and were working... They inspired me, that you could do things you need to do for yourself without compromising the welfare of the family."

She said the team included a geologist, teachers, an accountant, farmers and, of course, mothers.

Not only did they inspire, the Rainbows could also have a whack of fun and win a few slowpitch games and tournaments along the way.

"A very important of our team collectiveness – and our success – was our friendship and socializing," Moore Veldhoen said. "We made a point of going out for beer and went to the Lazy L for the first 10 years or so... We always celebrated birthdays and there was one night when our celebration became a food fight.

"It started out with a pie made for the birthday girl and then it became anything on the table... We always made sure we didn't get too serious about anything."

Moore Veldhoen played for the Rainbows for 16 years. The team stopped playing in 2001 – a year after she was elected for the term as an MD of Foothills councillor for the Dunbow Road area.

"We still stay in touch – the core group still lives in Okotoks," said Moore Veldhoen, who now lives in Calgary and is an English as A Second Language teacher.

Some of those players include well-known Okotoks curlers Debbie Miller – the unofficial Rainbows captain – and Kerry Imler. As well as Mary Hoiland, Karen Gillingham and others were part of the squad.

Moore Veldhoen said writing a book was a childhood dream and admitted: “It’s kind of a scary thing to put yourself out there.”

She may be out there, but her intention is to bring a smile and to inspire.

“It’s a happy book,” she said. “It’s primary about my view and experience with the Rainbows. Being connected to them allowed me to explore and do more of the things I wanted to do for myself – including my stint with the MD of Foothills.”

Moore Veldhoen’s reading of *The View From Right Field* is at 6 p.m. Thursday at the George.