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TORNADO PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

1. DATE AND TIME June 29, 1984 1753 MDT

2. LOCATION OR PATH (attach map)
Big Coulee, Alta.

3. PATH LENGTH ☐ NOT KNOWN ☐ <1 mi; ☐ 1-4 mi; ☐ 5-10 mi; ☐ 11-50 mi; ☐ LENGTH IF >50 mi

4. PATH WIDTH ☐ 5. TORNADO PART OF SQUALL LINE? ☐ YES; ☐ NO; ☐ UNKNOWN:

6. ANY UNUSUAL COLORATION? ☐ YES; ☐ NO; ☐ UNKNOWN

7. ANY UNUSUAL SOUND? ☐ YES; ☐ NO; ☐ UNKNOWN

8. IF ANSWER TO 6 OR 7 YES, ELABORATE;

9. LIST ANY ASSOCIATED PHENOMENA (Such as hail, vivid lightning heavy rain, no rain, etc.)
Hail

10. TOTAL DAMAGE ESTIMATE $ > 30,000 11. TOTAL DEATHS 1

12. TOTAL INJURED 1 13. TOTAL HOMELESS

14. LIST ALL REFERENCES

15. SUMMARIZE REMARKS PERTAINING TO (a) FUNNEL; (b) INTERESTING OR CAPRICIOUS EVENTS.
- 35 farms affected
- 1 house destroyed and 2 severely damaged.

T.D. 1235 3625
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ALBERTA REPORT

Vol. 11, No. 29
July 9, 1984

The Weekly Newsmagazine

AR This Week

Assistant Executive Editor Link Byfield was dispatched to Vancouver last week to witness the presentation of the second annual Western Magazine Awards. A year ago *AR* had won in two categories: "Business/Politics" (for coverage of the WCC's by-election victory in Olds-Didsbury) and in "Environment" (for a story on the 1982 mosquito epidemic). This year a total of 36 publications from all four western provinces were in the running, having submitted 355 entries for the WMA's 20 prizes. *AR* was a finalist for four.

Mr. Byfield returned triumphantly with three. His own story on the fight of the Ferguson family with Social Services ("The Child Grab," Jan. 31, 1983) took top place in the "Business/Politics" slot. The "Energy and Science" prize went to editor D'Arcy Jenish and reporter Eric Reguly for "Into the Soup and Out" (Sept. 26, 1983), a story on the efforts of Dome Petroleum to survive. The "Health" prize was awarded to editor Brian Wilford and reporters Jennifer Westaway and Chris Hayes for a January 24, 1983 story entitled "Flu."

AR did not, however, win in its fourth category, the Esso award for "Magazine of the Year." The other contenders were *Lethbridge Magazine* and *Vancouver Magazine*. For the second year it went to the latter, a free-circulation monthly.

In a way, remarked Mr. Byfield afterwards, the contest attempts to compare apples and oranges. *AR*'s news focus gives it a natural advantage over monthly feature magazines for getting at serious subjects and examining them. But its weekly schedule places severe constraints upon graphic illustration, which is very much part of any magazine. Still, nothing says *AR* won't get the top award next year.

The Cover — Cover illustration by John Smith, Graphic Studios — 32
Edmonton's United Way bows to liberal pro-abortion pressure, admits Planned Parenthood, and infuriates its large Catholic component.

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The national parties gear up for a fast, furious election

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Edmonton veterans battle to preserve the Prince of Wales Armoury

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A tornado lays a swath of destruction north of Edmonton

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Russell A. Parker brings Triple "A" baseball to Calgary

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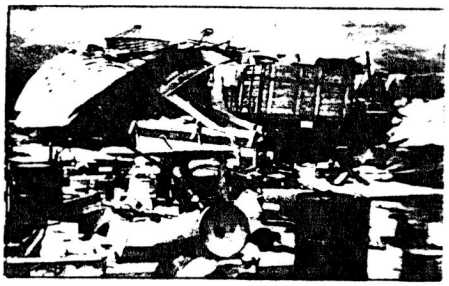
The Cover—The Edmonton United Way's Frederick Day faces a riled public



Land—A tornado tears up northern Alberta



Law—What Mitzi Dupree does with ping-pong balls is judged obscene

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Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations

Reaping the whirlwind

A tornado exercises an awesome rage for 120 miles

It was a wild Friday evening last week in a strip of land west and north of Edmonton. The first report of the tell-tale black "twister" descending from a pattern of massive thunderheads came into Environment Canada's severe weather office in Edmonton at 5 p.m. It was seven miles north of Stony Plain, 15 miles west of the capital. Over the next two hours the tornado rained destruction upon houses, barns, fences, granaries, trees, fields and livestock for 120 miles.

"I looked out the window and I saw the funnel zig-zagging towards us," remembers a shaken Jean Radkewich, who operates the Northern Heights General Store 14 miles north of the town of Athabasca. "You could hear the roar. It kept coming closer and closer, and I thought, 'I'll never get out of this alive.' I just sat in the corner of the kitchen and screamed and cried and hollered." The tornado barely missed their house and store; it ripped their patio door from its hinges, cleaned the shingles off the west side of their house, and buried her garden under two and a half feet of hail. Her husband Bill, driving home from Athabasca, encountered a near neighbour named John Fesuk, 70, stumbling in a daze down the road, his face covered in blood. He was still muttering incoherently when the Rankewiches sent him with their son to the hospital.

Farmer Melvin Schultz, who lives along the same road between Athabasca and Calling Lake, was at home when the storm hit. "We lost everything except the house," says his daughter Deborah Harrison. Her father and mother, she reports, ran into their basement when they saw the gale carry their machine shed into a nearby hay meadow, along with granaries once bolted to concrete pads. It flipped the farmer's swather before his eyes. Planks were driven through galvanized steel buildings, and fence posts were shorn off at the ground. The whole neighbourhood was later searching out and sorting stray, spooked cattle. The Schultz house was nearly smashed when the wind rolled a big hay-chopping machine to within feet of the front door.

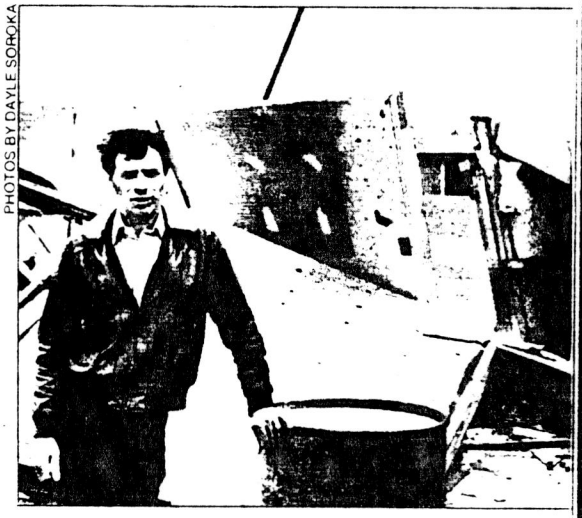
Further south, in the Rochester area 55 miles north of Edmonton, 62-year-old widow Margaret Knott was working in the yard of her quarter-section farm when the wind rose suddenly and began blowing over spruce and poplar behind her house. She ran inside and watched it, transfixed, she says, for a quarter of an hour. Then it became quite dark, and the roar mounted to deafening proportions. When at last it had subsided an hour later, and neighbours had cleared a pile of splintered lumber away from her front door, she went out to find that her barn had been carried 30 paces through the air and had crushed her pick-up truck.

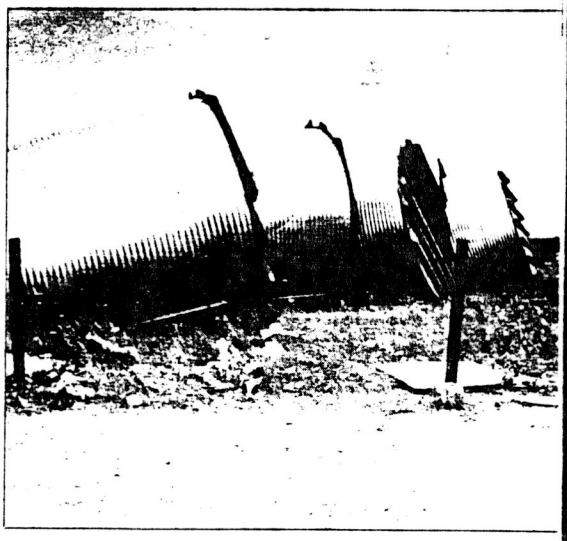
Others were similarly stricken. Chester and Jeanie Wiselka, who farm north of Athabasca, say they suffered 100% hail damage on two quarter-sections, and extensive crop loss elsewhere. "One of our steel granaries landed in the neighbour's yard. Our own machine shed [housing at the time a swather and a combine] is demolished." Frank Deren and his family had barely left for a birthday party elsewhere when the twister tore through their yard, turning their three-bedroom modular home and mixed farming operation into wreckage.

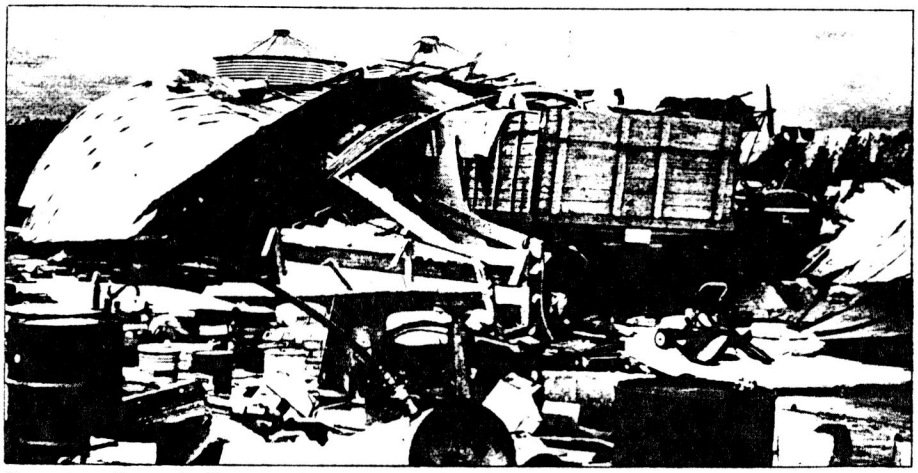
David L. Waugh, severe weather forecaster for Environment Canada in Edmonton, hasn't counted up the number of tornadoes this year, but says this one was less destructive than some. Last year's count was 13; on average one in five causes more than superficial damage. A worse one hit a strip of farmland west of Lloydminster last year, causing even more destruction. This one exerted its worst fury upon bushland. Nonetheless, he says, it was certainly in the same league.

Leslie Morris, Ken Whyte and Link Byfield

PHOTOS BY DAYLE SOROKA







From top: Deren in the wreckage; toppled graineries; the Schwartz farmyard
Travelling northeast for over an hour, the twister levelled everything.