



Bachelorette still at 'Peace' in big city

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You can take the girl out of the Peace country, but you can't take the Peace country out of the girl!

Jillian Harris, known to millions of TV viewers as the Bachelorette whose heart was stolen by Ed Swiderski, says she will "most definitely" always be a Peace River girl, the "same ol' Jillian" remembered by her friends and family.

In spite of doing two TV shows and making countless public appearances, Harris, who now lives with Swiderski in Chicago, insists she and her fiancé haven't let 'celebrity' go to their heads.

"We don't feel like celebrities at all. In fact, famous is the 'F' word in our house," she said. "Our life is actually very normal, aside from the fact that now 15 million plus people know who we are, we haven't changed a bit. We go through regular ups and downs as a couple, we talk about how to save money in our household, he gets fed up with my lack of rinsing before the dishwasher."

Swiderski added, "I've definitely never felt like a celebrity. I just get noticed at the grocery store more than usual (which was never!)"

Harris said the biggest difference in her life these days is her relationship with Swiderski and she can't wait to "show him her roots."

"Ed hasn't been up north yet and you have no idea how excited I am," Harris said. "I have been talking about the Peace to him for almost a year now."

Swiderski said he, too, is looking forward to exploring the land where his fiancé grew up.

"I have never been above the 49th parallel, so this is a whole new frontier for me. Can't wait!" he said.

"I get a little misty-eyed thinking about how proud I am of my roots and my memories back home," Harris added. "I still refer to Peace River as home. Some of my fondest memories are quadding with my (family) ... going on little picnics up in the hills ... tobogganing ... building tree-houses up at the Spiller acreage ... sleepovers at my Aunty Vivian and Uncle Norman's."

Harris also recalls taking Ukrainian dancing lessons and gymnastics as a child and learning to golf from Mighty Peace Golf Club pro Trent Wright and his wife Charlene. She said Mountain Biking is the Summer Games sport that most appeals to her. "Of all the 15 sports, I think I would love to get into mountain biking. I LOVE, LOVE the outdoors and I love being on the edge."

Harris and Swiderski will be in Peace River for the Summer Games Idol Finale. The show goes May 28 at the Sawridge Inn and Conference Centre, where Harris will act as a celebrity judge, along with KIX 106 radio personality Damien Gnass and Megan Curry, known to Peace River residents for her work with Peace Players. Nine finalists will perform, but only the three groups that earned the most votes online will be eligible for the grand prize of \$1,000 and the chance to sing for the athletes during the 2010 Alberta Summer Games July 19 – 25.

Harris is pretty jazzed about judging the contest, though she isn't sure how she's going to choose just one winner from this talented group of young people.

"I have been online and watched all the contestants. Although I am floored at all the talent - and worried about how we will judge! - I am not surprised," she said. "All us Peace folk know it, there is something in the water. Talented, beautiful people are abundant in Peace River."

Though she never had the opportunity to enter a Summer Games Idol contest herself ("Let's just say my little raspy Canadian voice isn't quite as smooth as I'd like it to be for a singing career ..."), Harris does have a few tips for the finalists as they prepare for their big night:

"Don't stress! As cliché as it sounds, just be yourself. Make sure you are really hydrated ... get some rest. No matter how you rate at this competition, I am telling you now, you guys have some incredible talent. (Wayne Gretzky) once said, you miss 100 per cent of the shots you don't take. So after this is over, reach for the stars, you just never know, your big record deal could be just around the corner."

"Don't worry about what everyone else thinks about you," Swiderski added. "They are too busy worrying about what everyone else thinks about them. Be yourself and you will shine."

And just in case their fans are wondering, Harris and Swiderski are planning a wedding for sometime in the future, but they are in no rush to make that walk down the aisle.

"Ed and I are doing fantastic," Harris said. "The wedding plans are coming along slowly. Both of us don't really understand the need to spend a life savings on a party ... to be perfectly honest, we are still a bit tempted by this idea of a 'paid for' televised wedding. So, for now, we are just enjoying being a 'real' couple and the wedding will come when the time is right."

“Yes, we are not in any hurry,” Swiderski said. “We did enough ‘hurrying’ last year. We are planning the wedding, though, and it will happen when the time is right. Until then, we are enjoying our lives and having fun!”

Tickets for the Idol finale show are \$50 and are available at the Game office, north of Peace River High School in the Phimester building. Call 780-624-1009 for information or to reserve your tickets.

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ABOUT THE 2010 ALBERTA SUMMER GAMES

On July 19 – 25, 2010, the Peace Country is hosting the 2010 Alberta Summer Games. Over 3,000 athletes, coaches and officials will be visiting the Peace region to participate in Alberta’s premier youth sporting event. The communities of Falher, Grimshaw, Manning, Peace River, Berwyn and Nampa, the MDs of Peace No. 135 and Smoky River No. 130, the County of Northern Lights and Northern Sunrise County are playing host to this multi-sport, multi-cultural extravaganza. Let’s show these future Olympians some good old-fashioned Peace Country hospitality, in the spirit of the Games—good sportsmanship, competitiveness and camaraderie. For more information on the 2010 Alberta Summer Games, please visit www.2010albertasummernames.ca

Peace, Sport, Spirit