

PARK WARDEN SERVICE ALUMNI SOCIETY
BOX 1611, TURNER VALLEY, ALBERTA, T0L-2A0
E-mail: parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com

Fall/ Winter 2017 Newsletter



Our Mission Statement

“Maintaining the culture and tradition of the National Park Warden Service by fostering good will and assistance through mentoring, volunteerism, historical commemoration, advocacy, and social activities.”

Season’s Greetings from your Alumni Executive!

Yes, its that time of the year but its hard to tell; where’s the snow?

The executive wishes all its members a very Merry Christmas with plenty of good cheer. It has been a successful year for our society, the highlight being the celebration of the Ya-Ha-Tinda’s Centennial, of course (see article & photos inside). That wasn’t all, as you will read. The executive is considering a number of projects for the upcoming year. The Oral History Project is a priority that will be continued. Another proposal has been for us to review our direction and consider taking a stronger political stand. We are well aware that a change of this sort comes with challenges (to put it mildly). Your suggestions on future activities and on this particular issue are welcome. Do I need to remind you too that members can attend executive meetings (held at the Stockmen’s Memorial Foundation in Cochrane) and make presentations? Another unavoidable issue is the ageing of us all: will younger members step forward? How long can the society last?

We want to thank Gord Antoniuk, Rod Wallace, Gord Anderson and Larry Gilmar, who stepped down from the board, for their hard work and support of the society’s endeavours. As a result of the election of officers at the A.G.M. David Reynolds became Vice-President and Jim Murphy was elected as a director - both welcome additions. The executive wants to especially thank again those members who have donated generously. The contributions, early Christmas presents, helped make the centennial such a success. Thank you!

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Turner Valley,
Alberta, T0L 2A0

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This newsletter is published 3 or more times yearly for members of the society. Articles, membership enquiries and other matters may be sent to the society at the above postal & e-mail address.

Executive:

President – Dale Portman
Vice-President – Dave Reynolds
Secretary-Treasurer – Marie Nylund

Directors: (2 & 3 year terms)

Don Mickle
Kathy Calvert – membership chairman
Mac Elder
Perry Davis – Newsletter editor
Scott Ward
Bob Haney
Perry Jacobson
Cliff White
Jim Murphy

Regional Representatives

Mountains – Gord Anderson
West Coast – vacant
North & Yukon – Tom Elliot
Prairies – vacant
Ontario – John Taylor
Eastern Canada – Bev Hunter

Newsletter Editor: Perry Davis

ADJUST YOUR ADDRESS BOOKS!

With the Nylunds moving the Society's mailing address has changed - the new address is given opposite. The e-mail address and the web page address remain the same.

CPAWS also has a new address. Their offices are located on the 2nd floor of the Bob Niven Training Centre at C.O.P.

CPAWS Southern Alberta Chapter
88 Canada Olympic Road S.W.
Calgary, AB T3B 5R5

Bits of News

1. "The Wardens" were featured in the Dec./Jan. edition of *Cowboy Country Magazine*. The article written by Cat Nantel is posted on the PWAS website.

It has been a busy summer for 'the band' with engagements throughout W. Canada and the northwest states and generally good turnouts.

2. Matthew Hood, a Canadian wildlife and documentary filmmaker is interested in making a short film about a park warden close to retirement or already retired. The film is intended to recognize the work of those who protect our wild spaces and the creatures that live in it. It would also be a call to action for the next generation to continue where the past has left off.

Let Matthew know your suggestions and thoughts. He is open to filming anywhere in Canada but ideally would be in Alberta or B.C. Matthew may be contacted at matthew@hoodvisuals.com>

3. The N.A.F.R. (National Association of Federal Retirees) took the federal gov't to court over its decision to change retiree's contributions to the Public Service Health Care Plan from 25% to 50%. The court ruled in the government's favour. After consulting their legal counsel the N.A.F.R. has decided it has grounds to appeal that decision. The N.A.F.R. is also throwing its support behind the Senate Finance committee's report *Getting Ready for a New Generation of Active Seniors* which was released this June. One of the recommendations is for the development of a national seniors' strategy, which the N.A.F.R. has long argued for.

4. Dave McDonough wrote a long letter in answer to Perry Jacobson's letter about the re-routing of the road on the Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch lands. Contact the executive if you wish to see it.

5. We are all saddened by the recent passing of two of our members – Jack Holroyd and Max Winkler. They will be missed.



6. PWAS Celebrated One Hundred Years of the YHT: the Gov't of Canada's One and Only Horse Ranch.

We came 'home' to the ranch on Sept. 13th. Young and old, former ranch hands, and just plain folks, retired wardens with spouses and children, people who had been there often and others only a few times. Attendance revealed that definitely over 130 and maybe as many as 150 were present at the event. Retired wardens including Dave Norcross, Will Devlin, Al

Bjorn and John Niddrie, showed the spirit by riding to the ranch from Lake Louise, their wives trailering around. It wasn't a political gathering but a heartfelt one: marked by a widespread spirit of 'homecoming' and 'fellowship.' For some it could be their last visit but for others the start of many.



The threatening weather turned sunny and cheerful as the ceremony started. More primitive people than us would have seen that as a sign that the gods favoured our event! Perhaps so. Our ceremony started with Marie Nylund and Kathy Calvert pulling the canvas tarp covering the dedication plaque while a saddle horse was held nearby. The watching crowd stood in a semi-circle around them. They were followed by a number of old-timers sharing their experiences including Frank Coggins & Mac Elder. Unforgettable were Peggy and Ann Dixon, with Peggy telling about what it was like to be at the ranch as a growing child. The brief and fitting ceremony ended with Perry Jacobson performing "Ya-Ha-Tinda Bound." Larry Frischke entertained the crowd with a surprise presentation of "Skoal" a 35 year old retired national park patrol horse who has been in the Frischke family since his retirement. John Nylund says that "Skoal" had a direct connection with the Dixon family as Fred Dixon had originally trained Skoal and had sold him. Banff Park later acquired Skoal as a patrol/pack horse back in the late 1980s.

Then it was the social and gawking time. There was the souvenir tent. Rod Wallace had made quite an effort to get ball-caps and T-shirts designed and on hand for this event. If you didn't get one some are still available - contact the executive! A Tony Klettl carving was raffled off and carted home by Perry Jacobson. The museum may be small but it is packed with warden history. Kathy and Dale were doing a brisk business selling copies and signing the book, *The Ya-Ha-Tinda: A Home Place*. Consider getting some for those on your Christmas List. It is the only book on the ranch's history and has a larger purpose - bringing the ranch and its important role to the general public. Working in its favour is its readability and magnificent illustrations.

Ninety-one year old Ann Dixon-Bruder sold copies of her book *Silent Partners, Wives of National Park Wardens* published in 1985 as part of the National Parks of Canada centennial. Ann Dixon joined her husband Fred at the Ya Ha Tinda in the 1950s and had many interesting experiences during the years they lived there.

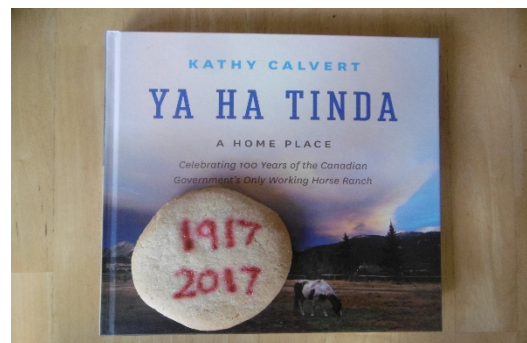
After the ceremony, cookies decorated with "1917 – 2017" were distributed to the crowd. Then, it was off to the Bighorn Campground where the Friends of the Eastern Slopes extended considerable hospitality. They had erected a marquee tent and provided a commercial barbecue, stoves and fuel for all guests to cook on. Of course, the socializing carried on! Some folks camped there for the night. Others stayed in Sundre or at nearby campgrounds. A memorable time was had!

Special thanks goes out to Larry Frischke, President of The Friends of the Eastern Slopes and other members of FOESA, and to the ranch boss Rick Smith and his wife Jean. They went above and beyond in helping the PWAS organize and hold this event. Their unstinting support and hospitality added greatly to our success.

Behind the Scenes.

What went on 'behind the scenes' by members of the PWAS executive to bring the celebration about deserves some mention. As we know, events like these don't happen by rubbing a magic lantern. Planning started well in advance - fortunately - and meant that frequent meetings were held with full participation of all executive members. There was genuine concern that we might not be able to pull it off or that it would be a flop but nonetheless we forged ahead meeting after meeting.

The idea of a book on the ranch was favoured especially as it would be a work that would carry the ranch's story well beyond the property. There were substantial obstacles but Rocky Mountain Books/Heritage House's enthusiasm about the book carried us forward and Kathy, worn out from the June Mickle book, took on the research and writing without hesitation. Dave Reynolds had put his expertise to work on writing a grant submission and interpreting government legalese. The submission eventually succeeded: the Government of Alberta approved monies for a part of the book's expenses. Marie, of course, put her heart into helping with the book by providing photographs and digging up interesting stories for Kathy. This meant efficient secretarial work including the successful plea to the membership for donations. Brad White also offered the use of his photos for the book. Rod, his work on souvenirs has been mentioned, also put himself out as transport driver along with his wife Sharon. They ensured that some of the elderly members made it to and from the event. The band "The Wardens" offered to play and provided the sound



equipment (which proved its worth) but other obligations meant that Perry Jacobson ended up filling in for them by bringing his guitar and singing “Ya Ha Tinda Bound” – written by Scott Ward. The lyrics to this beautiful song can be found on Page 181 of the book Ya Ha Tinda A Home Place.

Don Mickle took on the ordering of an historic plaque for the ranch yard. Yes, we ordered and paid for it all on our own. Parks Canada approved the text and provided the French translation, as it had to meet federal standards. Bob Haney was the driving force behind the plaque installation including finding a suitable rock, having it brought to site and set up. The results speak for themselves.

We tried but were unable to hold a joint event with Parks Canada so they chose to hold a celebration of their own on Parks Day. It was well attended and they had their unveiling of the plaque, a trial run - the real dedication came later.

That’s an overview of who did what behind the scenes to make the event a reality.

Some Christmas Cheer: Working for the Cause of Conservation. (It was one of the primary activities of the old warden service and still is for the new conservation section.) This is a great time of year to recognize “outsiders” who have worked and are working towards the same goal as April Overall does in a recent bulletin of CPAWS.

Let us know of any wardens or those they have worked with whom you feel deserve a short biography in these pages by way of recognition. It might turn into a regular column! We have numerous Canadian role models in the field to look up to and to learn from. What do they all have in common? Heart. Let’s look at four conservationists who have stood the test of time and made a great difference to Canada’s wild species and spaces:

Native Plants: Catharine Parr Traill (Jan. 9, 1802 - Oct.29, 1899)

Catharine Parr Traill came to Canada with her husband, Thomas Traill, in the early 1800’s. When she arrived, she found that while she could identify some of the blossoms, like the sweet peas and wild roses, there were others she’d never laid eyes on. So she made notes of their appearance, life cycle, medicinal and food value and how they related to other plants. She also collected flowers – often pressing specimens using her husband’s book collection. Her botanical reference, Frederick Pursh’s 1814 book *North American Flora*. did not contain all of North America’s plant species so she was often forced to name species herself. “I consider myself free to become their floral godmother and give them names of my own choosing,” she wrote. You may also want to check out the book, Sisters in the Wilderness, The Lives of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill by Charlotte Gray. Both women were middle class British women who faced incredible hardship surviving and raising their families in the new land but found the time to write about their experiences and their appreciation for native plants in their new home.

The Canada Goose - Jack Miner (April 10, 1865 - Nov. 3, 1944)

The Canada Goose was on the brink of extinction at the start of the 20th C. when Jack Miner stepped in. During the course of his career he banded over 40,000 Canada Geese to help learn about their migratory patterns. In 1908, one of the first bird sanctuaries in North America, now known as the Jack Miner Migratory Bird Sanctuary was founded in Kingsville, Ontario. Miner also travelled the country to encourage his fellow Canadians to support conservation movements. Captive Canada Geese were reintroduced to their southern range (an area that they’d all but disappeared from) during the early 1900s. As we know it was successful.

The Humpback Whale - Jon Lien (-1939 - April 14, 2010)

While working at Memorial University Jon Lien found a new purpose – disentangling whales. After releasing one Humpback which had been tangled for over a month, Lien began receiving calls from numerous fishermen to help distressed whales. This led to his creation of the Entrapment Assistance Program through the Whale Research Group. His understanding of animal behavior and his savoir-faire enabled him to assist in reducing incidental catches in fishing gear, evaluate marine mammal disturbance, reduce losses to predatory birds on aquaculture farms, and develop fishing techniques for long-term exploitation of marine resources.

Nature Observation - Robert Bateman (May 24, 1930 -)

As a child, Robert Bateman loved watching the wild creatures around his home. By the age of 16, Robert Bateman had painted every hawk and owl in North America! He didn't stop there. This boy blossomed into an iconic wildlife artist. People from around the world have acquired his paintings and he has shown his work across North America, Japan and Europe. His realistic paintings inspire viewers to 'get out,' to observe animals in the natural world and learn about them and how and where they live.

Summer Memories



The Crew in Skoki - ca. 1972 Photo supplied by Don Mickle

L-R: June Mickle, Glen Sather, Joe Halstenson, Linda Slack, Bert Mickle, Lennie Slack, Bobby Orr, Ruth Oldman, 2 friends of Bobby Orr?

Books that will make Good Christmas Presents

Ya-Ha-Tinda: A Home Place – mentioned above with photo

Wild Arctic - Halle Flygare, Dr. Valerius Geist, Geoffrey Holroyd & Wayne Lynch.

This is a lavishly illustrated book that focuses on the behavior, habitat and life-cycles of many Arctic wildlife species that the general public, the nature lover, and the specialist can use and enjoy. It has up-to-date biological accounts of 119 mammals from lemmings to polar bears, 113 bird species and 23 wildflowers. Included are rare species such as the spoon-billed sandpiper and Steller's sea eagle along with Val Geist's line drawings of prehistoric Arctic mammals.

The four authors are all well-known biologists and naturalists: Mr. Flygare has selected some 270 full-colour photographs of the Arctic's plants and animals that are of such quality and clarity that they can be used to identify species. There is also a section "The Melting Arctic," with dramatic photographs of the effects of climate change

The book is available in e-book format for only \$19.95 from the website <www.natureinwildplaces.com>



THE GREEN HORSE - Dale Portman: An inspiring, humorous and adventure-packed mountain memoir (publisher's comment)

The author spent most of his time in the saddle while working for outfitter Bert Mickle, based out of Skoki Lodge near Lake Louise. Jobs in the local tourist industry and at a couple of ski hills followed. Eventually Dale was drawn to the warden service, doing avalanche control and forecasting in Rogers Pass. The backcountry of northern Jasper, Yoho National Park and Field, BC, became the stage for many memorable, humorous, tragic and life-affirming moments.

All this and more comes out in his memoir.



The Green Horse takes the reader on a journey through a time when there was space in our mountain national parks for everyone to enjoy them without having to line up and there was a sense of freedom and adventure in the air.

FULL CURL, A Jenny Wilson Mystery – by Dave Butler

The park warden service has made it into novels - a murder mystery in fact if you consider poaching 'murder.' Ms. Wilson is a 'kick-ass' Banff National Park warden - hard-headed & caustic who consider poachers as well as ladder-climbing bureaucrats equally repulsive. This mystery concerns the complex investigation with a growing list of animal and human victims with the action criss-crossing the US - Canada border. It is the first in a trilogy so if the ending leaves you hanging you know what to do.

While the material is definitely marketable the plot should be absorbing and the details are likely to be spot-on. The author is an ex-Mountie and an ex-Warden as well as a forester and biologist



Looking For a Good Home this Christmas!

This is Lexi, an 8-week-old German Shepherd. I bought Lexi as a surprise for my husband but it turns out he is allergic to long-haired dogs so we are now looking to find him a new home. He is 65 years old, an attractive and caring man who drives, is a great cook, loves to shop for groceries, does laundry, cleans windows, vacuums, and keeps a clean house.

Found a Good Home - *the bison are back in Banff!*

