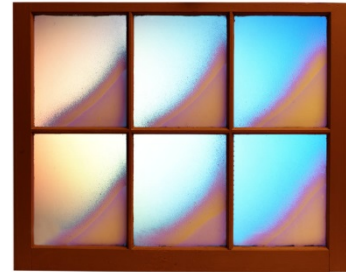


PARK WARDEN SERVICE ALUMNI SOCIETY end of-FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER

BOX 11, SITE 116, R.R. #3, SUNDRE, ALBERTA, TOM 1X0.

E-mail: parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com

Website: www.parkwardenalumni.com



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.”

MEMBERSHIP ALERT

If you have not yet paid your annual membership fee (there are only a few who haven't) please send us your cheque. The association depends heavily on these monies to carry on with its projects such as oral histories and putting on reunions. Membership fees are even more critical now that government grants that were helping to pay the oral history costs have ceased.

And . . . should you know a retired warden or warden office staff member who has not joined please invite him or her to do so. A little arm-twisting never hurt. Each small individual fee adds up and helps to keep the society going. As you don't need to be told, membership numbers are important. A fillable membership form is available on our website www.parkwardenalumni.com. Please send it and a cheque to the address on the form.

Earl Skjonsberg: October 25, 1922 - September 28, 2014

Earl was born and grew up in Red Deer. He completed grade 10 in Red Deer and spent a lot of time on local farms where he enjoyed the outdoor life.

Earl joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and was a gunner on Halifax bombers during W.W. II. He flew in 31 bombing missions over Europe. After the war he returned to Canada. After working at a variety of jobs he spent 12 years in the oil fields where he worked his way up the ladder. It was during this period that he married Betty.

In 1963 he started work in the Healy Creek district as assistant warden to Ole Hermanrude. In 1966 he became a full-time park warden when he accepted a transfer to Riding Mountain National Park. He transferred back to Banff in 1968 and he and his family lived in government quarters at the Buffalo Paddocks. When these houses were removed they moved into Banff. Backcountry patrol by saddle horse and packhorse was Earl's favourite part of his work but centralization of the warden service started in 1969 and the district system was phased out and backcountry patrols reduced.

Earl took up alpine skiing at the age of 40 about the same time he became a warden. Earl & Betty had two sons David and Terry who both moved from park to park and house to house as they did. Both went on to lengthy careers as national park wardens, David in Glacier and Terry in Banff, Kluane and Aulavik. Betty worked at Sunshine Village and became well known in the ticket office for over 30 years.

For the latter part of his warden career Earl was a dog handler. With his second dog Faro he was involved in many winter searches involving ski accidents, avalanche rescues or recoveries. He was the ski area warden at Sunshine assisting with avalanche control. His duties at the ski hill also included ski patrols and providing first-aid. As the dog handler, he and Faro assisted the RCMP on several cases. Faro was trained to locate explosives and drugs as well as people.

When Earl retired in 1982, Faro was at the end of his working life so Earl was able to keep him. Earl bought a quarter section of land near Caroline where he was able to fulfill his dream of farming. He raised horses and a few cows. He eventually moved back to Red Deer to live out his last nine years of life.

Earl lived a good life. He enjoyed his horses, his dog, the outdoor life and made many friends over the years. He was a good neighbor and friend with a wonderful sense of humour. Earl is survived by his two sons, two granddaughters, Nicole and Krista, and two great-grandsons Seth and David. At Earl's request there was no service. He has been cremated and his ashes



will be spread at a special place of his choosing. Earl enjoyed his years as a park warden. His motto on the job was "I will give you an honest 8 hours of work".

PARK WARDEN SERVICE ALUMNI SOCIETY

Box 11, Site 116, R.R. # 3
Sundre, Alberta, T0M 1X0

Email: parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com

This newsletter is published 2 or more times yearly for members of the society. Articles, membership enquiries and other matters may be sent to the society at the above addresses.

WARDEN SOCIETY EXECUTIVE

President – Dale Portman

Vice-President – Gordon Antoniuk

Secretary-Treasurer – Marie Nylund

Directors:

2 year terms expiring May 2015

Don Mickle,

Kathy Calvert

Rod Wallace

Mac Elder

Gordon Anderson

Perry, Davis

Cliff White

Larry Gilmar

3 Year Terms expiring May 2015

Scott Ward

Bob Haney

Perry Jacobson

Regional Representatives

Mountains – Gord Anderson

West Coast – Gord Rutherford

North & Yukon – Tom Elliot

West Coast – Ev Gilmar

Eastern Canada – Bev Hunter

Ontario – John Taylor

Newsletter Editor: Perry Davis

♪ THE WARDENS ♪

The Wardens band, Brad Bischoff, Scott Ward and Ray Schmidt had a successful touring season. Some of the highlights for this year were two performances at the Lethbridge Folk Club, Rocky Mountain Cowboy Music Festival, two

house concerts in Calgary at Harmonies on the Hill and Gallery House, several large conferences, Jasper Legion, Calgary Zoo with Brian Keating, Frank Slide Interpretive Theatre, Elk Island Buffalo Festival, several sell out concerts at rural Alberta halls such as Square Butte, Sheep River, and Bearberry. In all they did 30 gigs over the Spring, Summer and Fall. For the second year in a row the band did a tour of SW Saskatchewan with gigs in Maple Creek at Ghost Town Blues, Cypress Hills for Sask. Parks and the Val Marie Hotel. Their new album Bear 66 was released in the Spring and has

sold well; almost ready for the second printing. It has been getting some radio play on CKUA. The band attended Alberta Showcase in Red Deer in October. Thirty-nine acts and each had 15 minutes in front of a theatre full of festival directors, scouts and music venue folks. The Wardens were the sixth most popular out of the 39 acts for bookings for next year and 2016. Recently they were taped by CTV to be featured on the show Alberta Report. So, they are going full steam ahead and are hoping to get into B.C. Showcase next year in Vancouver. And the group is still having fun!

YOUR EXECUTIVE & Some of its Doings

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The executive decided at its most recent meeting on Oct. 22 to continue this project, although slightly reduced in order to match availability of funds. Christine Crilley-Everts will continue the interviews. There are seven on the roster of those to be interviewed in Phase 6. Christine has typed up transcripts of wardens interviewed in Phase 5 and a copy was circulated at the meeting. Earl Skjonsberg was one of those interviewed in Phase 2. His interview can be found on our website www.parkwardenalumni.com along with some photographs. It is planned to post more of these interviews in the future.

Dale Portman is looking into the feasibility of publishing a condensed version of the Warden Oral Histories. His first step is to make draft versions of a few interviews and present these to the executive.

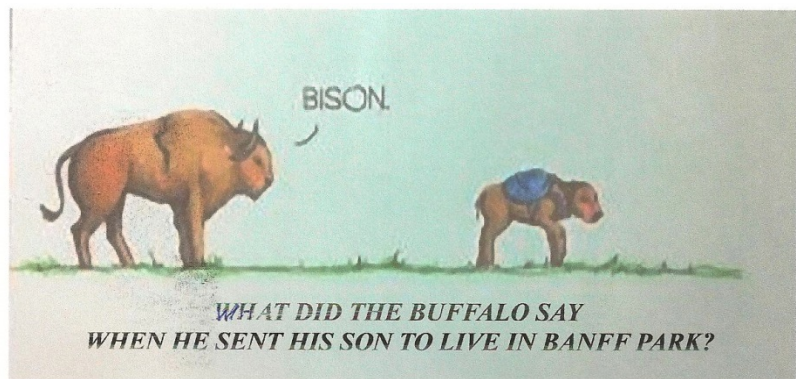
The executive can then evaluate what is involved time-wise and dollar-wise in transforming interviews to a suitable format for a book. Photographs and other illustrations will also be needed.

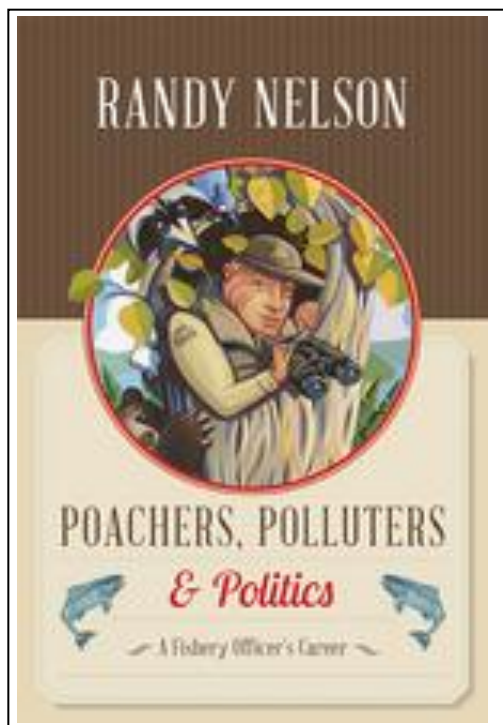
YA-HA TINDA RANCH 100th

The centennial of the Ya-Ha-Tinda is coming up in 2017. The executive is working on planning a celebration. Planning has begun with Bob Haney and Cliff White heading up the steering committee. At present it is entirely a Warden Alumni do but it may turn into a joint Alumni-Parks Canada event. Parks Canada has been informed of our plans and their assistance would be helpful and very much appreciated. Ranch manager Rick Smith is very supportive. It is planned to hold the event on-site to celebrate the people/families who have worked /lived at the ranch in that 100 years. The event will require volunteer help with the planning and on-site activities. If you are ready, willing and able to help please let Bob or Cliff know.

OTHER

1. The AGM was held May 22nd.
We are looking at holding the next one in Jasper in 2015.
2. 2013 Financial statements audited as required by gov't.
3. Website maintained; could be better used by members.
4. Looking at helping with a warden themed display in Luxton Museum
5. Dale & Kathy put on a slide show in Cochrane on their Warden life.
6. Considering putting together a calendar of Park Wardens and Ya-Ha-Tinda scenes.





Some Books of Interest to Members

Here's some information about Randy Nelson's book. Randy would appreciate any support and is donating all his book royalties to NAWEOA's fallen officer fund and/or the Warden Museum. The book is available through any good book store or online at [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca). The publisher says an e-version will be available.

Retired fishery officer Randy Nelson had an obsession with catching poachers. If you were fishing out-of-season, or getting carried away and catching more than your limit, you wouldn't want to meet Nelson. He was firm but also fair, and always innovative. Almost always he earned the (often grudging) respect of the communities and fishermen he encountered. He currently resides in Kamloops. *Poachers, Polluters and Politics* is his first book—unless you count ticket books. It chronicles 2 seasons of work as a Conservation Officer in Northern Saskatchewan and 35 years of his work as a Fishery Officer in British Columbia.

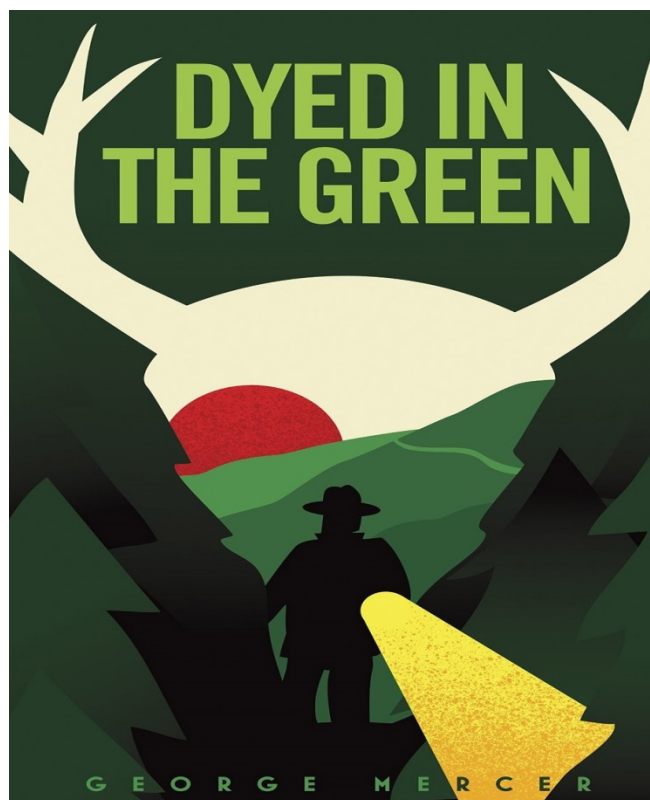
George Mercer, who certainly likes to write, has come out with a novel featuring the warden service. The book is available at many bookstores – they are listed on George's website. It is also available from Amazon.ca and Kobo Books. Check out the website:

www.georgemercer.com/books/dyed-in-the-green

Description

National Park Warden Ben Matthews expected challenges with his new posting at Cape Breton Highlands. But he got more than he bargained for. Facing a notorious poacher with a reputation for letting nothing get in his way, and the local communities who viewed poaching as part of their way of life, Ben and the park wardens are drawn into an intricate game of cat and mouse that takes a turn no one could have imagined.

Set along the world-famous Cabot Trail, *Dyed In The Green* is a powerful story of egos, greed and corruption, pulling readers along on an emotional rollercoaster that weaves bitter rivalries into a gripping story about protecting one of Canada's iconic, special places.



HOLIDAYING IN THE WILD WEST



In the States just south of the 49th on the prairies the history of the wild west endures. If you haven't been there this article about the holiday my wife Heather and I, Perry Davis, took should get your interest up.

We travelled for almost two weeks through Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas. Our first major stop was at the Charlie Russell museum in Great Falls, a very modern facility. On the property are his house and his studio looking like he had just stepped out. I was surprised to learn that he was a real cowboy, a night rider as well as a self-taught artist. Heather and I spent the next day in nearby Fort Benton which used to be the supply hub for southern Alberta. It claims to have had "the bloodiest street in the West: walk in the middle and keep your eyes to yourself." Front Street faces the Missouri and its buildings have survived from the past but are still in use – not always for their original purposes.

Another site we visited was the Little Big Horn battlefield. What impressed me most – something the Ranger pointed out – was the almost intact landscape. With only a bit of imagination and nothing to distract your attention you could recreate the events of the battle as you wandered around. The white crosses dotting the landscape make that much easier. There is a small but excellent museum in the visitor centre and – hallelujah - no concessionaires hawking souvenirs.

Downtown Cody Wyoming was like Banff South. The Buffalo Bill Museum is located here, a modern facility but we spent our time in Old Town West – a Heritage Park like facility preserving many original cabins and artifacts. It includes a museum that in itself is worth the modest price of admission with its select collection of Indian and pioneer artifacts. The Hole in the Wall cabin is there as well as Jeremiah

Johnston's gravesite and those of a few other equally colourful western characters.

We also took in Mount Rushmore. There is definitely a fitting sense of awe and national reverence to the place but I could well imagine the Canadian reaction to any proposal to carve four statesmen's heads into a mountain: "Aw come on; get real!" The dramatic Needles Highway through the Black Hills took us round to Lead (pronounced Leed) and Deadwood where we stumbled on the re-enactment of the gunning down of Wild Bill Hickcock after we had supper in what was the brothel upstairs. Its main streets, too, have survived very much intact from the past. The Homestake Gold Mine, now closed to mining but used by Stanford U as a neutrino observatory, is located in Lead. The museum offers a tour of the mine – in the building's basement - sounds hokey but it isn't.

Heading back to the line we drove through the north and south units of the Theodore Roosevelt

parks. They are a southerly but more vegetated version of our Drumheller Badlands. Buffalo and wild horses roam freely in



these parks. There is a multi-day trail connecting the two units that would be quite something to do on horseback. The north unit was where the Laurentide Glacier stopped many thousand years ago. Before its arrival, the Missouri and Milk Rivers used to flow into the Hudson Bay! Now that would have changed the size of Rupert's Land!

We then drove through a lot of shale gas development – the latest boom - to get back across the Medicine Line.

What to do with those Photos?

You probably have a few, some or many photos pertaining to the warden life? Perhaps they are in albums, or in drawers or stored away in envelopes? Perhaps you are wondering what to do with them? Other non-profit groups ask you to leave money to them in your Will. We haven't got around to that yet. We are asking you to leave those photos with us now or later. But – there is a "but" - have you heard that a picture is worth a thousand words? It may well be **but** without a few words to go with each picture, it really ain't worth much once it gets into other people's hands.

So please give some serious thought to passing on your warden related photos to the society but before

you do you must identify it: so please include the names of the people in the photo, where it was taken and the date (the year if that's the best you can do will be good). Yes, there are some pictures – Lake Louise, mountain goats, Spirit Island – that need no such identification. But then that's not the sort of picture we are requesting. The picture of a man and his horse in front of a hay shed with trees behind them is what might be a possibly significant addition to warden history but only if the "who," "where," and "when."

Talk to any member of the executive to find out more about this proposal. Or you can send pictures to the Secretary-Treasurer of the society at the address on the top of page 1.



THE RESULTS OF THE MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Twenty-one Alumni members completed and returned the questionnaire sent out this summer by the executive to find what activities and projects were important and how important they were to the members. The questionnaire was sent out to all

members so the response rate was just under twenty percent. Five questions asked about five different warden alumni activities. Members were asked to rank their importance on a scale of zero (not important) to four (most important). The sixth

question was open-ended, asking for any other suggested activities.

Of the five stated activities, the one that ranked highest was “to expand our ways and means of keeping members in touch.” It was followed closely by two others: “To continue preserving and helping others preserve the warden heritage” and “To continue to organize reunions and special events.” There was no surprise there but confirmation was welcome. There was slightly more support for the Alumni “acting as environmental advocates” (score of 3.1) than there was for the society “working with national parks to help [them] with projects we support.” This initiative received the lowest ranking (score of 2.5) but, note, it was only midway on the scale.

Seven members had suggestions, some for continuing activities we were already involved in – the oral histories, following our mission statement. Another wanted us to publish warden stories and as you can see from this newsletter the executive is exploring that initiative and others are doing it on their own. Along the same lines was the suggestion

to give public presentations. Some of our members have been doing that, mostly at the request of the Whyte Museum. Of course there is the band The Wardens that has been supported by the alumni and now are off and rising. Another wanted a detailed database of warden service published. We will start by making available on the website the unpublished table that was originally planned to go in *Guardians of the Wild*. And finally there was a weighty suggestion that the executive assemble panels of experts to deal with controversial issues in national parks. Presumably this means publicizing these issues through press releases, town hall discussions or press conferences.

It hardly needs to be said that the members are a large part of achieving these objectives. The executive can take the lead but only with support. The upcoming Ya Ha Tinda Centennial Celebration in the fall of 2017 will require an effort similar to the Warden Centennial. To help keep members in touch we have set up a website but it is meant for members to make use of it.

On The Environmental Front.

Climate Change is a global issue and, as such is affecting and will continue to affect all Canadian National Parks. The effects will be widespread and not targeted to certain species; flora and fauna (terrestrial, aquatic and marine) will all be touched. Predicted effects of climate change are already showing up especially in the Canadian arctic and sub-arctic. Many species of wildlife stand to lose, although some may gain. Impacts are being noticed on migrating birds and migrating herds whose innate instincts are now out of synch with climatic conditions. Polar bears and their dependence on sea ice is one of the well-known examples. Oceans are increasing their acidity as more carbon dioxide is dissolved in them with results being felt by all aquatic species.

The Canadian government’s stand on this issue has earned it international disdain. The Harper government linked Canadian reductions of greenhouse gas emissions to the United States program. Now that the United States and China have agreed on emission reductions it remains to be seen whether Canada will act more responsibly or, simply break its commitment once again. The latest IPCC report on climate change reports increasing greenhouse gas emissions. If this issue concerns you as a former park employee please consider a letter to your MP and the Minister of the Environment. Postage is free and there is an election coming up. Your letter should have extra clout.

THANK YOU's

The alumni has been helped in its activities by a number of individuals and organizations who have volunteered their time and services or who have gone out of their way to help us. We recognize their generosity and are very grateful. We trust and hope such support will continue.

TOBY BURKS PASSES AWAY

Tolar Griggs "Toby" Burks, II, 79 of Lusby, MD passed away on November 10, 2014 in Prince Frederick, MD. He was born on September 26, 1935 in Bedford, VA to the late Vada Joyce Parran and Tolar Griggs Burks, Sr. Toby graduated from high school and joined the Marines. He served from 1952 until 1955 during the Korean War and was honorably discharged. During his time in the Marines, Toby rose to the rank of Corporal and received the National Defense Service Medal, Navy Occupation Service Medal, UN Service Medal, and Korean Service Medal. **Toby went on to become a Federal Game Warden in Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada from 1966 – 1981**, a Royal Canadian Mounted Police plain clothes from 1975 – 1980, and was a Canadian Ski Instructor as well. After retirement, Toby eventually moved to Lusby, MD where he made his home and was a member of both Middleham – St. Peters Episcopal Parish and Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church. Toby is survived by his children, Camilla Vada Burks of Yukon Territory, Canada and Jordan Tolar Burks, III of Alberta, Canada; siblings, A. Douglas Parran, Jr. of Lusby, MD and Jean Callen Egbert of Twin Falls, ID, and several nieces and nephews.

The next scheduled executive meeting will be held in the new year on Thursday, February 5th at the Stockmen's Memorial Foundation Library in Cochrane at 10 am. Members are welcome to attend.

Anyone who is interested in working with Bob Haney and Cliff White on the 2017 Ya Ha Tinda Ranch Centennial celebration are invited to contact Bob or Cliff at:

Bob Haney Email phaney@telusplanet.net

Phone: (403) 762-8310

Cliff White Email: rockiesbison@gmail.com

Phone: (403) 678-4130