

PARK WARDEN SERVICE ALUMNI SOCIETY

## Spring 2021 Newsletter

BOX 1611, TURNER VALLEY, ALBERTA, T0L-2A0

E-mail: [parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com](mailto:parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com) Website: <[parkwardenalumni.com](http://parkwardenalumni.com)>

Memberships are open to former park wardens as well as all others supportive of the Alumni Society and its work.



## 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."

## The New Warden Cabin - as Pictured

It's in Heritage Park, not hard to find as it is just below the Dingman Well. It was formerly a trapper's cabin located in the Canmore area that Heritage Park has restored as a Warden patrol cabin of the 1920's. The Park Warden Service Alumni Society has helped with advice and by supplying furnishings and equipment.



Heritage Park is asking if any retired wardens would like to voluntarily 'man' the site from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends. If you are interested, even for one day of the summer, please let our president know. Dave is our liaison with the park. He also has a list of items the park is looking for putting in the cabin only some of which have been supplied so far.

The site will 'open' this summer but not the cabin itself. The hitching rail is missing

because the only horses on site are heavy draft horses and the park doesn't want horses brought in from outside for reasons we are well aware of! This cabin will certainly raise the 'Good Old Park Warden' profile higher with the general public especially if one of us is there to thrill them with stories of the good old warden life! That amphitheatre would make an attractive site for crowd-pleasing performances by "The Wardens."

## Park Warden Service Alumni Society Annual General Meeting

The executive is planning to hold the AGM in the fall and hoping that the pandemic will be under control by then so we can do it in person and have a long-awaited get-together afterwards - as was “normal” once upon a time!

### Social News

#### **Abe and Iona Loewen have moved to Cranbrook**

Unit # 42, 1401 - 30th Ave., N.,  
Cranbrook, B.C. V1C-OC4.  
Ph. (250) 420-4795.

#### **Perry and Elaine Jacobson have moved to Airdrie**

Unit # 18, 12 Woodside Rise, N.W.  
Airdrie, AB. T4B-2L3  
Ph. (403) 980-2701

**Bill Hunt** has retired as Chief Resource Conservation Officer in Banff National Park. Before that he had worked as an aquatic specialist in the park with the late Charlie Pacas.

**Ann Bruder-Dixon** celebrated her 95th birthday in April.  
Keep going strong Ann!

**Rob Hermanrude** asks if any of us know where his dad's “Ice Cream Tunic” (ca. 1950's - '60's) is. Apparently the tunic was donated/lent for the 100th Celebration in Banff after which it went missing.

#### **Karsten Heuer**

I just wanted to let you know we have released a 1.5-minute video about the Banff Bison's first 2.5 years of freedom. Please feel free to circulate if you feel it would be of interest to alumni. It can be found on YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKOYscL09s4>

**From Dan Graham**, Manager of Policy, Training & Standards Headquarters.

Here's a useful link for retired park wardens to catch up on the activities of their successors: <https://www.facebook.com/NPWardenAssoc/>

#### **George Mercer's new book.**

This was seen on a book table at the front of an Indigo Book store display of Canadian books. We hope it is selling well.



to a warden cabin, fag in mouth.

## PARK WARDEN SERVICE ALUMNI SOCIETY

Box 1611, Turner Valley,  
Alberta, T0L - 2A0.  
e-mail address:

[parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com](mailto:parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com)

Website: <[parkwardenalumni.com](http://parkwardenalumni.com)>

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 addresses.

### Executive:

President - Dave Reynolds  
Vice-President - Cliff White  
Secretary-Treasurer - Marie Nylund  
Directors: (2 & 3 year terms)

Dale Portman  
Don Mickle  
Kathy Calvert - membership  
Gordon Anderson  
Perry Davis  
Bob Haney  
Colleen Reynolds  
Dennis Herman  
Jim Murphy

### Regional Representatives

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



“**The Wardens**” have released their latest CD “Sold Out at the Ironwood.” It includes the song ‘*Thousand Rescues*’ about Tim Auger which got the album and the band covered in a recent issue of “Gripped,” the Canadian climbing magazine. The band has also released a single ‘*Coming Home*’ along with video footage of park warden Frank Burstrom making his way

## OBITUARIES

Otto Moritz Hammer, Feb. 11, 1936 Oberhausen, Germany - Jan. 5, 2021, Calgary, Canada.

Otto left his mark mainly on the restoration of vegetation in the Western Region's parks. He started work as a journeyman gardener in Europe working in Germany and Switzerland where he hiked and skied in his free time. Rather romantically he met his wife-to-be, Hendrika, on the boat to Canada! Married in December, 1965 they went on to have three daughters.

In Calgary Otto worked on the landscaping of the University of Calgary campus before joining Parks Canada and working as a landscape architect out of the Regional Office. Most of his work in his 25 years there was in Banff and Jasper, including the re-building of the Johnston Canyon trail which work included installation of those catwalks and outlooks that so delight the thousands that visit the canyon yearly. He also developed the plant designs for the park's wildlife overpasses. Several times the Hammer's home won the city's best vegetable garden. When you are born in war-torn Germany home-grown vegetables are important.

Keith Stewart Brady, May 25, 1938, Lethbridge - Feb. 3, 2021

Keith was hired on as a park warden in Banff in July 1966. He and his family started off living in the Minnewanka Warden Cabin (long gone now). In January 1972 Keith and family were transferred to Waterton where he worked for the next 23 years. In the early fall, the whole family spent special times together on camping trips in the mountains there.

As Keith recalled, "It is difficult to describe the thoughts and emotions that one feels in the wilderness and solitude of the backcountry...what it's like to ride [on horseback] out of the timber to the beginning of long open meadows of dwarf birch, willow and other vegetation associated with alpine tundra. It is times like this when silence is truly deafening as creation and nature speak without words."

A feature article on Keith entitled "Enjoy Them in Safety" appeared in the June 8, 1989 issue of "Awake!" It includes a small collection of his many stories as a national park warden and also covers the myriad duties of the warden of those days. Back Tracking Reflections of a Park Warden 2004 by Keith Brady can be found on our website.

Tim Sookocheff

Tim was a long time Parks Canada staffer who served in Parks Canada's field, regional and national offices over his career. While an undergraduate he spent two summers helping with glaciology studies on Baffin Island. His early work was with National Historic Sites where he contributed to the preservation of the Chilkoot Trail and Dawson City as well as York Factory and Fort Battleford.

He was involved in Park Management Planning for most of the National Historic Sites and National Parks in Prairie and Northern Region as well as the establishment of Wapusk and other northern national parks. His last major responsibility was working closely with Tom Lee helping to draft and then shepherd the Parks Canada Agency Act through Parliament in the late 1990s.

Tim was a trusted friend to many in Parks Canada and also known for his sense of humour, which showed itself every April Fool's Day. His wife Laura, his two children, Luke and Carey, and many of his work colleagues will miss him

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### **The Johnny Nylund Memorial Bench**

Johnny in his unpretentious way must have been an inspiration to his grandson Clayton. Clayton asked his Uncle Frank (Burstrom) to build a bench in memory of his Granddad. Frank was proud and honoured to make this beautiful fir bench in memory of Johnny. That's Marie and her daughter Nancy keeping it warm. The bench was installed on the Ballachey family's Chinook Ranch with their permission. Johnny worked for that family for many years. Also on the ranch is the former North Fork Ranger Station Cabin. Half a century ago it was located west of the ranch in what is now Kananaskis Country. The bench sits outside the restored cabin - a good match.





## **The N.A.F.R. - Standing up for Federal Retirees**

That acronym stands for the National Association of Federal Retirees. "Sage" is its member's magazine and <[www.federalretirees.ca](http://www.federalretirees.ca)> is its website. The Association lobbies the federal government on behalf of its members. If you don't belong it's well worth the price. You can bet your boots the feds are eyeing federal pension plans and with no intention of boosting them! Where do provincial and federal governments stand on care for their elderly members? Something of concern for all PWSAS members and their extended families.

The N.A.F.R. has fought and is fighting on several fronts for better treatment of retirees. When you hear of homeless veterans you know they need someone to stand up for them and the N.A.F.R. did. The post of Veteran Ombudsman, who advises the Liberals, is now occupied by Ms. Nishika Jardine a retired deputy commander of the Cd'n. Forces College. Her basic philosophy, gained from years in the military "My people, my mission, myself". If only that was the current political mantra and not "Me, my party, my country."

Currently the N.A.F.R. is pushing for Senior Advocates in the provinces to fight for better deals for seniors; very much needed in view of the

despicable conditions now revealed in many long term home care centres and of our ageing population. Over one-quarter of N.A.F.R. members are 75 or older. Currently B.C., New Brunswick and Newfoundland/Labrador have senior advocates; Ontario and Manitoba are considering them, but Alberta has eliminated theirs!

One of the N.A.F.R. initiatives being advanced is "A Push Toward Home Care. . .," the title article in the Winter 2020 issue. See also "Long Term Care in Crisis" in the same issue and "Health Check" in the Fall 2020 issue. Clinical assessments have shown that people with the same degree of frailty as those in a long term care facility can, with proper help, live longer at home. Isobel Mackenzie, B.C.'s senior advocate is working hard to bring about measures (in B.C.) so that those who want to remain in their homes have every possible support available. Currently the costs of a nursing home are paid by the person and government subsidies. That same level of financial support could help keep elderly living happier lives in their homes with better outcomes. Long term care facilities will still be needed but they clearly need to be held to higher standards in the future.

## **The Warden Alumni Website**

The Park Warden Service Alumni Society has invested in upgrades to our website in order to permit the posting of oral histories. Four recent ones are of Brian Wallace, Bill Walburger, Diane Volkers (she must have a fan club to judge by the number of hits this interview has got) and Al Stendie. With the permission of the Whyte Museum there are also links to the museum's 'Fireside Chats'. The one with Don Mickle is presently featured. These are an hour long so pour yourself a good drink and settle in.

Edwin Knox of the Waterton area has also conducted oral histories. Three such are posted: Martin Visser, Marvin Howard and Ed Christiansen.

Performance statistics on our website are being kept and show our site as like "The Little Engine That Could" chugging strongly on. The number of views for the two month period of May 23 - April 21 varied from a high of 250 on April 9 to less than 25 for only three days.

## **Oral Histories**

We have no word yet on whether or not our grant application will be approved but remain optimistic. Donations may help us carry on for a bit when the existing funds are used up. The Oral History Committee is also looking into mailing out the questionnaire. This is, on the one hand, a desperation measure but, should money become available again, could help expedite future interviews.

Our Oral Histories, including the audio recordings, are being kept in the Whyte Museum under a gift agreement. This makes them available to the public and also explains why we credit the museum for the links to them on our website. Through the museum the Park Warden Service Alumni Society also meets one of the conditions of our provincial grants - that they be publicly available.

### “Unsung Heroes” - Sage, Summer 2020

The “Unsung Heroes” of this article are former federal employees who in retirement continue contributing to the welfare of Canadians. A lot of the credit for the speedy start to Canadian Emergency Response Benefit has to go to retired federal employees who returned to work. The program was up and running in three and a half weeks providing economic benefits to millions of Canadians who had lost their jobs. Those unsung heroes are paid (not what they were formerly making though) and some, such as Barbara Cretzman who is featured in this article, would have come back to work for free.

This article resulted in a “Sage” reader sending a letter to the Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough about the Phoenix System asking her “to apply the same principles of speed to my pay . . .” That person’s pay is two years in arrears!

### “Shelter from the Storm” - Sage, Fall 2020

Severe weather events are having impacts on house insurance - as we are well aware. Severe hailstorms, tornadoes, flooding, wildfires and sea level rises in coastal communities are all more common than before and insurers are modifying their policies accordingly. **Basic** home insurance no longer covers ‘overland flooding,’ ‘above-ground water damage,’ ‘water damage from lack of maintenance’ (could mean a cracked basement cement wall, an old water heater) or ‘sewer backup.’ Homeowners are well advised to look their policies over thoroughly every time they are renewed - or now if you haven’t done so for a while. Another thing to take into account - does your policy provide adequate coverage for upgrades made to your property or any increase (or decrease) in the value of personal goods held therein!

### **Stayin’ Healthy - Physically & Mentally - in Old Age and during Covid**

Old age ain’t for the faint of heart. Covid isn’t helping either. A healthy heart and a positive outlook are needed. The website <[mcmasteroptimalaging.org](http://mcmasteroptimalaging.org)> is a source of a large amount healthy aging information. It is supported by McMaster University and the LaBarge Optimal Aging Institute and has a wealth of information including on exercise, nutrition, mental health, consumer protection. It’s well worth checking out.

Covid restrictions have meant many of us are living in isolation or with the same people day after day and these situations can cause unwelcome stress.

Who better to give advice about living in close quarters with others but Canadian astronaut Bob Thirsk? Bob spent six months in the International Space Station with the same people. His advice is to modify your behaviour as necessary to make the living environment pleasant for all, yourself included. Also try to keep things as normal as possible. It may help to create a “to-do” list daily and work through it. Consider it an opportunity to catch up on your reading or to undertake something new. Also exercise daily to stay in shape and burn off calories (a challenge in space). Thirsk recommends activities that strengthen muscles and build aerobic fitness. They should be just strenuous enough that you know you are benefitting - working around the house or yard, taking the dog for a walk, or biking and so on will do the trick.

A bit of background on Thirsk. He is a Powell River boy whose interest in space started when his Grade Three teacher brought a radio to class so her class could listen to a live broadcast from John Glenn as he circled the earth. Thirsk went on to become one of ten Canadians who have gone into space. That included a six-month flight in the International Space Station. Big doings from small beginnings from a Federal employee to boot!

On September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 the Calgary Board of Education opened the Robert Thirsk High School in his honour.



The executive urges Park Warden Service Alumni members to keep an eye out for and stay in touch with each other. We know many of you are doing that already. The Canmore A&W breakfast group, as one example, continues to get together weekly but on Zoom. It picks up the spirit and lets us know how and what one another are doing. Lots of B.S still. We look forward to when the bacon and eggs will be back!

### **Some Thoughts On Old Age**

Have you noticed - people your age are so much older than you?

Growing old should have taken longer!

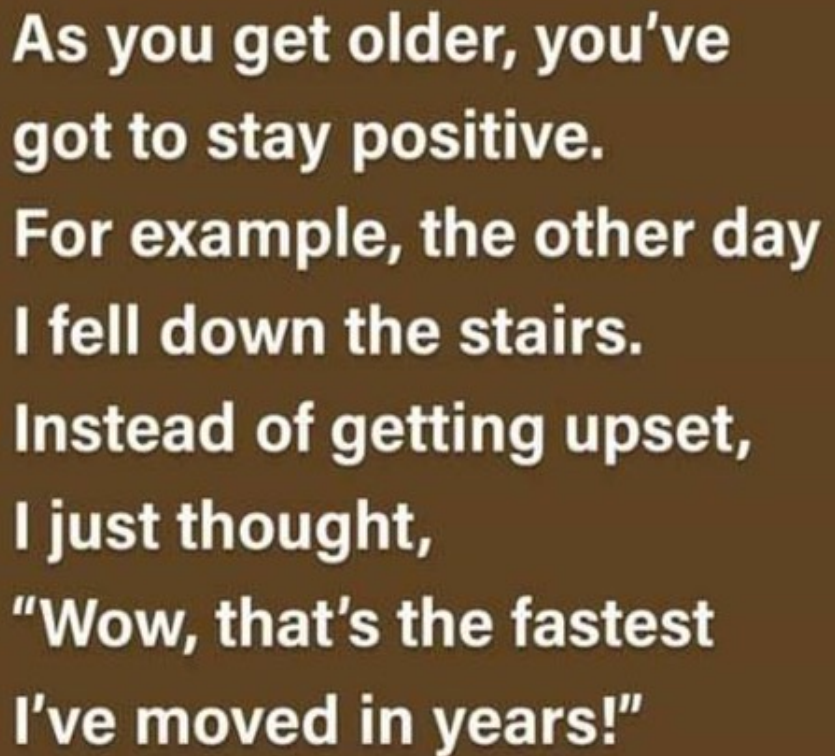
Talk to yourself; there are times when you need expert advice.

“One for the Road” now means going to the bathroom before you leave the house.

### **A CLOSING REMINDER**

IF YOU HAVEN'T YET  
RENEWED YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP PLEASE DO SO!

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE  
WHO MIGHT LIKE TO JOIN  
PLEASE ENCOURAGE THEM  
TO TAKE OUT A MEMBERSHIP!



**As you get older, you've  
got to stay positive.  
For example, the other day  
I fell down the stairs.  
Instead of getting upset,  
I just thought,  
"Wow, that's the fastest  
I've moved in years!"**

### **WARDEN JOURNALS**

We are still accepting stories for the Warden Journals section of the Website. If anyone has stories to submit please send them via email to [parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com](mailto:parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com).