

**PARK WARDEN SERVICE ALUMNI SOCIETY
SOCIÉTÉ des ANCIENS des GARDES de PARC**

Spring 2024 Newsletter

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**Membership: Open to all former park wardens and all those supportive of
the Alumni Society and its work**



I really don't
mind getting
older, but my
body is taking
it badly.

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Grand Opening

It's Spring (you can tell from the chaotic weather) and the flowers are coming out and so is this news letter. Gratitude is pouring out of the PWSAS for the generous donations we received in the past year from our members. They were definitely big "shots in the arm" and enabled us to advance a number of our projects – doing more with more!

Thanks also goes to the Stockmen's Memorial Foundation for providing a meeting space for our executive meetings. Holding a meeting surrounded by ranching paraphernalia is stimulating! We also want to welcome Bradley Bischoff to the executive table and thank him for joining.

The **Oral History Project** is looking at casting a wider net (and that with a smaller budget!) We are hoping there will be more "self – completed interviews" filled out and submitted. They require filling out a questionnaire and sending it in. The PWSAS has made some sallies into the other regions first to inform them of the Park Warden Oral History program and then invite/encourage them to participate. Retired or working members could also start the process by letting us know they would like to submit their stories. In the meantime, the personal interviews are continuing but reduced in number to match reduced funding. So please let us know if you want to be interviewed, if you know someone who should be and hasn't yet been interviewed or just pass the word around and encourage others!

The PWSAS has as busy a year ahead as in the past and likely to be as productive too. The **Salmon Arm Mini Re-union** is going to be a welcome kick-off: see poster on back page. There will be a sales table where you can purchase warden memorabilia or a PWSAS crest which are still available at \$5.00 each at the re-union or by mail (postage included in the \$5).

Public Interest in the Old Time Warden Service

Adam Snez completed his goal of hiking to all 38 Warden cabins in Banff National Park this summer. Judging from some of his very positive comments he very much enjoyed his trips and liked what he saw. His feat made the t.v. news.

Ben Nearingbury did the same for the Jasper Warden cabins. This took him several years and he estimated he hiked a total of 1500 kms. Wolverine was the last cabin he visited. His feat also made the news. Ben (and probably Adam too) was captivated by what he describes as the romance of those days when wardens patrolled the backcountry, lived out there sometimes with their families. His trip helped him connect with that past, that part of National Parks life and history.



The Freshfield Warden Cabin

The Ya-ha-Tinda Ranch was brought to greater public attention from January 26th to April 7th when it was featured through the Whyte Museum's Winter 2024 exhibit of Arto Djerdjarian's photos. Arto was a New York street photographer and he apparently brought the same approach to his work at the ranch – waiting patiently for the right moment. The photos were from his visits over six years and captured many scenes of the ranch and its work. At first glance the photos look typical, commonplace - until you look closer.

This warms the cockles of the PWSAS' heart! We are succeeding in our Mission. This strong interest in the wider public shows that. Our Facebook page is active too. Let's hope the trend continues to get stronger still. We'll work at making that so.

Obituaries

Lou Comin

Born in Blairmore in 1947, the family moved to Canmore where Lou started grade seven. He sat beside Cheryl dePencier; they became best friends, went together ten years and then were married in 1970!

Lou got his Forestry diploma from NAIT with Honours. He first joined the Alberta Forest Service but became a National Park Warden taking a seasonal position at Pochontas Jasper, then moving to a full time position in Riding Mountain National Park. The next move was to Nahanni National Park as the youngest Chief Park Warden. Then back to Riding Mountain as Area Manager, a short time in Grasslands National Park in Sask and then on to Wood Buffalo National Park in Fort Smith, NT where he retired. The Warden Family were a big part of their lives

Lou received the Governor General's Award for his contribution to Parks. He and Cheryl retired to an acreage in Canyon, BC in 2002. They rode and camped as much as they could, took their horses south to Arizona for the winters. Lou hung up his saddle in 2021 and had it in the basement so he could sit and reminisce with family and friends.

Lou was a family man, loved his sons Wade

and Ryan, daughter in law Nicole and grandsons Kole, Kaine and Darien. Rest in Peace Lou and may you ride those trails in the sky with your friends, until we meet again.

Don Macmillan (1932 – 2024)

Born in Montreal he was raised in Montreal, Orillia and Dartmouth. After meeting and marrying Jeanne (nee Fiset), they began raising a family. Dad began his career with Parks Canada, first in Ottawa and then in Point Pelee, Riding Mountain, Elk Island and Yoho National Parks. Then to Parks Canada's Prairie and Northern Regional Office in Winnipeg where the boys pursued their education, after which Mom and Dad moved to Calgary in 1985. Dad retired in 1991 after a long and rewarding career. He loved being in the parks and "out in the field", and especially enjoyed the after work down-time spent with his park warden and biologist friends at remote patrol cabins.

Don and Jeanne travelled abroad several times and they toured Canada and beyond in their bright red camper van post-retirement. Hiking and skiing in the mountains with their Calgary friends were favourite past-times and kept them both hale and hearty. Mom and Dad always looked forward to time spent with the kids, grandkids and great-

grandkids. Dad made Christmas visits particularly special for the young ones by ensuring that Santa made a personal visit.

His family remember Dad for his gentle and

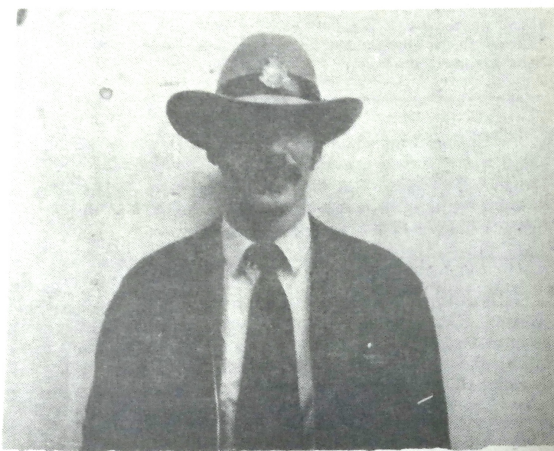
caring nature, the smell of pipe tobacco (before he wisely gave that up!), his love of a good scotch and his signature laugh.

Member Update

John Wackerle's daughter reports that her dad is doing great. He walks about 2 hours around town every day when the weather is good and loves running into the locals who stop for a chat. He wasn't able to ski this year - he broke his back falling on Mystic last spring and doesn't want to go through the healing process again. That was a hard one for him to get over but he did and now he reminisces about the good ski days he's had. Dad's currently reading Ed and Dorothy: Rocky Mountain Romance. He reads a lot, does word searches, plays chess on his iPad and keeps an eye on the neighborhood birds to see who's new in town. If anyone is in Banff and has time to visit with him, he has a Keurig coffee maker and always has a tin full of his home baked famous chocolate chip cookies.

The Rogues Gallery – from Jasper Booster, Spring 1973

Who's Who in the Jasper Warden Service

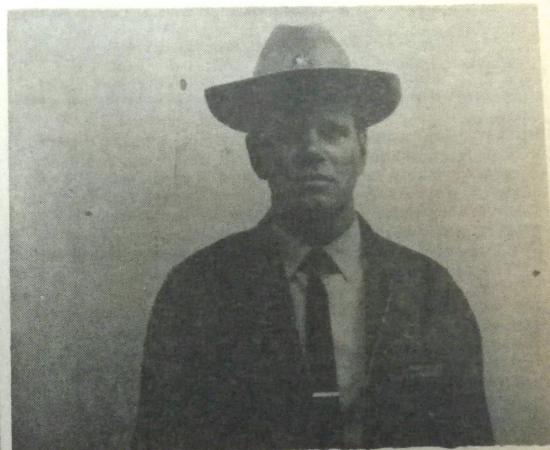


DALE PORTMAN

Dale Portman hails from Kamloops, B.C. via many centres in Canada, as his father was in the armed forces and the family moved around quite a bit.

Dale worked in Banff and Glacier National Parks before coming to Jasper in 1970. Since that time he has worked in several locations including Tonquin, Marmot Basin and Blue Creek. He has attended various inservice Training Courses, is a top skier and mountaineer and is interested in all aspects of the Warden Service work.

Dale lists photography and geography and most outdoor activities as his hobbies.



ROBERT HANEY

Robert Haney spent his early life and received his education in and around Millerville in southern Alberta.

Bob worked in Banff, Waterton and Glacier National parks before coming to Jasper in the fall of 1969. Since that time he has been posted at Rocky River and Athabasca Falls.

He has attended a variety of training programs and is interested in all aspects of the Warden Service, is an enthusiastic outdoorsman. Bob took part in the Mount Logan Mountaineering expedition last May.

Robert and his wife Patricia enjoy skiing, hiking, and outdoor sports.

Coffee Table Chit-Chat

Some of the horsey crowd in the warden service were dragging their feet about attending a climbing school. “Why do you climb anyways?” they asked one of the instructors who came back with the classic European line, “Because they’re there.” “Humph” was the retort. “That’s why we ride around them!”

Don Mickle remembers a Ya-Ha-Tinda moment. Johnny Nylund and others had been shoeing horses and afterwards were having supper. The park radio was on and Hervé and Marc were chatting away in French. Johnny, a few sheets to the wind, came on and speaking in a voice of authority said: “This is an English Channel. Not a French one so speak English!”

He cringed when he learned the next morning what he had done and hoped his voice had not been recognized.

Womans’ Work

From a hand-written (not easy to read) June 2021 letter from Smokey Guttman to the PWSAS:

“Helped my wife [past August] with her hip operation which she waited for a long time and is now doing fine...So I drove, cooked, vacuumed, dusted and we got through this.

I’m convelesting [convalescing] after my right groin [hernia operation] and she is back doing all the work. Ha. I didn’t know how much work you ladies do. Thanks (I do make soup).

Flying into Indian Head Cabin with Jim Davies (from the same Smoky Gutman letter)

‘B. Hobbs mentioned there was a book on Jim Davies as a helicopter pilot. I knew Jim well. In 1959 I had Jim fly myself to Indianhead [in winter in a plane]. We landed on a large meadow west of the Indianhead Cabin about 1 ½ miles. It was a scary few minutes as he was taking off and he almost couldn’t stop at the lip of the Clearwater River. He got turned around and went far back and made it okay. He flew back to Banff and picked up my wife . . . and German Shepherd Dusty. By the time they got back I had snow shoed out a whole airstrip. Hours later he arrived and dropped them off no trouble. The snow was so deep it was taking (two hours ?) breaking snow to get back to the house the dog was breaking through our snow shoe tracks. If I had not had Jim Davies to fly me in the trip from the Ya-Ha-Tinda would have taken about 4 days to get back. All it cost me was for his gas he used.”

What Did You Say? - Canadian Hearing Loss Statistics

According to a recent study approximately *60% of Canadians aged 19 to 79 have a hearing problem: hearing loss (23%), tinnitus (22%), or both conditions (14%).*

Hearing loss is more common at older ages BUT many Canadians aged 40 to 79 are unaware that they have hearing loss. It often grows gradually as part of the aging process but may also **be caused by loud noise** (emphasis added), trauma, medications, and disease (Statistics Canada Website, October 20, 2021).

Park wardens worked in a variety of noisy settings such as operating snowmobiles, quads, chainsaws, fire pumps, outboard motors, jet boats, exposure to snoring in confined spaces, and generators; flying in fixed and rotary winged aircraft; and participating in yearly firearms training or avalanche control duties. Hearing protection wasn’t much used in the 70s, 80s and 90s, the era in which many of us worked. These activities likely contributed to work related hearing loss among wardens. In short you might be dealing with hearing challenges today that you are not aware of or trying to ignore.

Tom Elliot with input from George Mercer and Todd Golumbia, has prepared an article containing a variety of information for any of you dealing with hearing loss challenges. It includes new hearing technology, devices, courses, books, and websites available to help you live better with hearing loss. It also includes information on the process for pursuing a work-related hearing loss claim through WCB. The article can be found on the Park Warden Alumni site.

You Can't Please Everybody!

8:00 am: I made a snowman.

8:10 - A feminist passed by and asked me why I didn't make a snow woman.

8:15 - I made a snow woman.

8:17 - My feminist neighbour complained about the snow woman's voluptuous chest saying it objectified women.

8:20 - The gay couple living nearby threw a hissy fit and moaned it could have been two snow men instead.

8:22 - The transgender man..women...person asked why I didn't just make one snow person with detachable parts.

8:28 - I was called a racist because the snow couple is white.

8:31 - The Muslim gent across the road demanded the snow woman wear a burqa.

8:40 - The Police arrived saying someone had been offended.

8:42 - The feminist neighbor complained again that the broomstick of the snow woman needed to be removed because it depicted women in a domestic role.

8:45 - TV news crew from CNN showed up.

I was asked if I knew the difference between snowmen and snow-women? I replied "Snowballs."



The Alberta Advantage

There is no danger of Alberta running out of sources of energy. There are many areas to drive wind turbines; plenty of sunshine year round to power solar panels; large rivers and their mountain tributaries already supplying hydroelectric power; massive forests to supply firewood; and oil and gas pools and tar sands (not to mention off!). However they can be problematic too

Hope for Going Green

Doyne Farmer and Rupert Way of the Institute for New Economic Thinking at the Univ. of Oxford and two of their colleagues examined several global energy models and found that their predicted costs of 'going green' did not agree with actual figures. According to them innovation and ingenuity have driven down the costs of solar and wind energy and battery storage for decades. They found that the costs of these technologies have all dropped by more than 90 percent since they were commercialized in the 1980's and 1990's.

Using updated estimates based on their research they calculated that transforming the global economy (the scale they were working at) into a carbon neutral one by 2050 would not only be economically achievable but would likely produce trillions of dollars of net economic savings compared with continuing a fossil fuel based system. "If governments pursue smart policies, going green quickly is likely to be cheaper than [taking] a slower approach . . ."

R. Way. "Modeling A Greener Future." *American Scientist* – July-Aug. 2023.

Second "not-so" Annual Park Warden Alumni Society Camping Mini-Reunion



Salmon Arm, BC· Elks Campground

Tuesday May· 7th - Thurs May· 9th, 2024

Cost: \$40·00 per night (21 full service); \$20·00 (35 un-serviced)

Tuesday:	Evening take-out pizza	} social in XXL picnic shelter
Wednesday:	Potluck supper & Concert*	
Thursday:	Pancake breakfast (provided)	

Bring photos, stories, dishes, and a coffee mug for around the campfire!

*Live Music by: Brad Bischoff + Scott Duncan; 7 - 8:30pm) Cowboy songs, classic country, fiddle tunes and lots of stories!

Please contact alan.westhaver@shaw.ca to reserve a campsite, or for further information· "First come - first served" on serviced sites·

Need a Hotel Room? Salmon Arm Fairfield Inn and the Comfort Inn are nearby·

Looking forward to seeing you there!