

PARK WARDEN SERVICE ALUMNI SOCIETY

Fall 2024 Newsletter

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Membership: Open to all former park wardens and all those 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 2024 PWSAS Annual General Meeting

The meeting was held this year in Canmore in Elevation Place. Turnout was modest, as expected. Three members used Zoom. President, Dave did his best to set up a portable Zoom apparatus: the pictures were good but there were problems with the sound.

The Society's finances are in the black so we will be heading into another year with money in the bank - though more would be good and we are working on that. *Membership* is stable at 150 and again - more would be good. In his report Dave said he had found the application process for grants from the British Columbia government made it unfeasible for the PWSAS at this time. Alan Westhaver, a B.C. resident may have a second go. Dave also mentioned that *PWSAS business cards* are available for member's asking. Good to have to hand out to increase interest in the Society and perhaps membership too. On this matter he noted that steps have been taken to draw in retirees from all the other regions to make the PWSAS more a national than a western region organization. This has so far met with very limited success.

New Business. Perry Davis reported that the Smokey Guttman model warden cabin is in his care. He will contact Heritage Park early next summer about the Society loaning them the model for use at their Warden Cabin. If anyone is interested in volunteering even one day a summer at the warden cabin to tell visitors what warden life was like please contact Perry.

Heritage Park had almost every building in it staffed with volunteers this summer. Four volunteers were assigned to the warden cabin which is part of the Park's Discovery Ridge but the way to it is poorly signed and it was hit or miss whether a volunteer was at the cabin; yet the building is well-furnished and interesting and a volunteer could liven it up. P. Davis tried to arrange to meet with the cabin volunteers to tell them about the

warden service and answer their questions but his offer was not taken up probably because staff already had their hands full. He will try again next year with an earlier start. He found among Mac Elder's papers a "Reader's Digest" article that essentially described the post-war warden service. It would make good reading for the volunteers.

Election of Officers. Our bylaws allow for a maximum of thirteen board members. Of the current board members whose terms are ending Cliff White, Perry Davis, Colleen Reynolds, Jim Murphy and Perry Jacobson let their names stand for re-election although Perry J. said only for one more year. Don Mickle decided to step down. He has been one of the Society's original members from day one and his input and volunteer work will be missed. Dave asked if anyone present would stand for election and Brian Speadbury said he would. Motions were made and passed to elect the current members and Brian to the board. Members' terms will be decided at the executive meeting in November. The A.G.M. was formally adjourned and some attendees headed to the Canmore Golf Course Clubhouse for lunch and friendly chatter.



Bob Haney, Marie Nylund, Don Mickle, Perry Davis, Scott Ward, Heather Davis, Chris Worobets, Cliff White, Jim Murphy, Colleen Reynolds & Dave Reynolds. Photo by Tom Elliott.

Don Mickle Retires from the Park Warden Service Alumni Society Board

Well, it is a sad day that I announce that a stalwart member of the PWSAS Board is stepping down from being an active Board member and hanging up his spurs. After many years, even pre-dating incorporation of the Alumni, Don Mickle has decided he prefers to watch the goings on rather than being a voice of reason and second sober thought as well as humour that has helped to guide the Alumni Society through its many challenges. Don, I am certain the membership and your many colleagues thank you for the time and energy you have provided to the Board and the Alumni Society. You have earned a well-deserved retirement. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and voice of wisdom in the years ahead.

On behalf of the membership, we say cheers to you from all of us at the Park Warden Service Alumni Society.

David Reynolds, President

The Oral History Project

There were ups and downs in our Oral History project in the year ending. We are no longer getting funding from the Alberta Community program - the biggest 'down' but we did receive a number of generous donations from members specifically for this project so it will carry on! Both of our interviewers, Monique Hunkeler and Susan Hairsine will be stepping down. They have done stellar work in this project which is greatly appreciated. Lise Gautron has been offered a contract. The interview process done by these gals, for your information, is not straightforward. You might think its more or less done once the interview is done. Not so, first of all arranging a suitable time can be problematic. Once that is resolved and the interview is recorded, it must be transcribed and reviewed by the interviewee and a volunteer copy editor. Edits are made and the final copy sent back to the interviewee for approval by way of a signed Release Form.

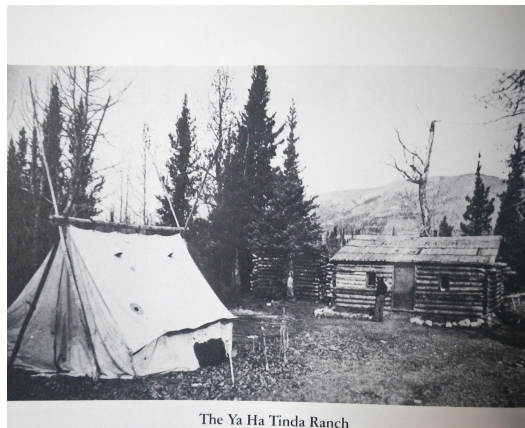
Jim Murphy reported that there are still 50+ names of people on the list to be asked to be interviewed. The Oral History sub-committee is taking steps to reach out to retired Indigenous Wardens. Names are invited. Self generated interviews are available. They certainly aren't hard to complete. While a fair number of retirees have offered to complete them very few actually have been. The board can assure you - they won't be used as evidence against you! The oral histories are posted on our website and are attracting attention there. The website address is in the masthead of this newsletter. Trail Blazer Web Services is doing an excellent job for us in maintaining the site. PWSAS' Facebook account is also popular and has 276 members. Check it out and consider joining too.

The President's Urgent Request for Members to Use the Self-Completing Questionnaire. The PWSAS has been actively gathering warden's life stories. Your society is determined to continue this worthwhile project. The cost for our historical researchers to complete a face-to-face or phone interview is quite steep - about \$600 per interview. Some members have used the "self-completing" questionnaire. The cost here is just your time and the reviewers' time. You can see the economic benefit to your society of adopting this approach but we will not be abandoning the in-person interview. We ask those members who want to have their Park Warden stories told to please access the Oral History Questionnaire on the Park Warden Service Alumni Society website (parkwardenalumni.com). There are a few completed questionnaires already posted on the website that you can use as models (Edwin Knox, David Reynolds and Dave Downing).

David Reynolds, President

Flash from the Past!

1917



The Ya Ha Tinda Ranch

The P.W.S.A.S. 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 addresses top of page one.

Executive:

President – Dave Reynolds
Vice-President – Cliff White
Secretary-Treasurer – Marie Nylund
Membership – Marie Nylund

Directors: (2 & 3 year terms)

Perry Jacobson
Dale Portman
Kathy Calvert
Jim Murphy
Colleen Reynolds
Alan Westhaver
Bradley Bischoff
Brian Spreadbury
Eric Langshaw
Perry Davis – Newsletter Editor

Regional Representatives

Mountains – Gord Anderson
Central B.C. – Alan Westhaver
Vancouver Island – Peter Clarkson
North & Yukon – Tom Elliot
Prairies – vacant
Central Ontario – Alan Gibbs
Southern Ontario – Dan Rieve
Eastern Canada –

Anyone interested in serving as a Regional Rep. please contact the society.

Book News

Kathy and Dale are back working on their 'lively history' of the warden service.

Halle Flygare had donated copies of his "MacKenzie's Second Voyage of Discovery 1792-1793" to the PWSAS. We have two copies of this book left - \$34.95. Halle has offered to donate 6 copies of his new book, "Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail: a Hiking Guide." It includes 2 new trails: the 30 km Blackwater Canyon Trail from Fraser River to Blackwater Road and the interesting 26 km Sluq'alhta Trail (Nuxalk name) from the Rainbow Mountains to Bella Coola River - used by Mackenzie in July 1793. It was Mackenzie's final leg of the 347 km native Grease Trail from the Fraser River. The retail price of this book is \$29.95. These will be offered to sale once we receive them.

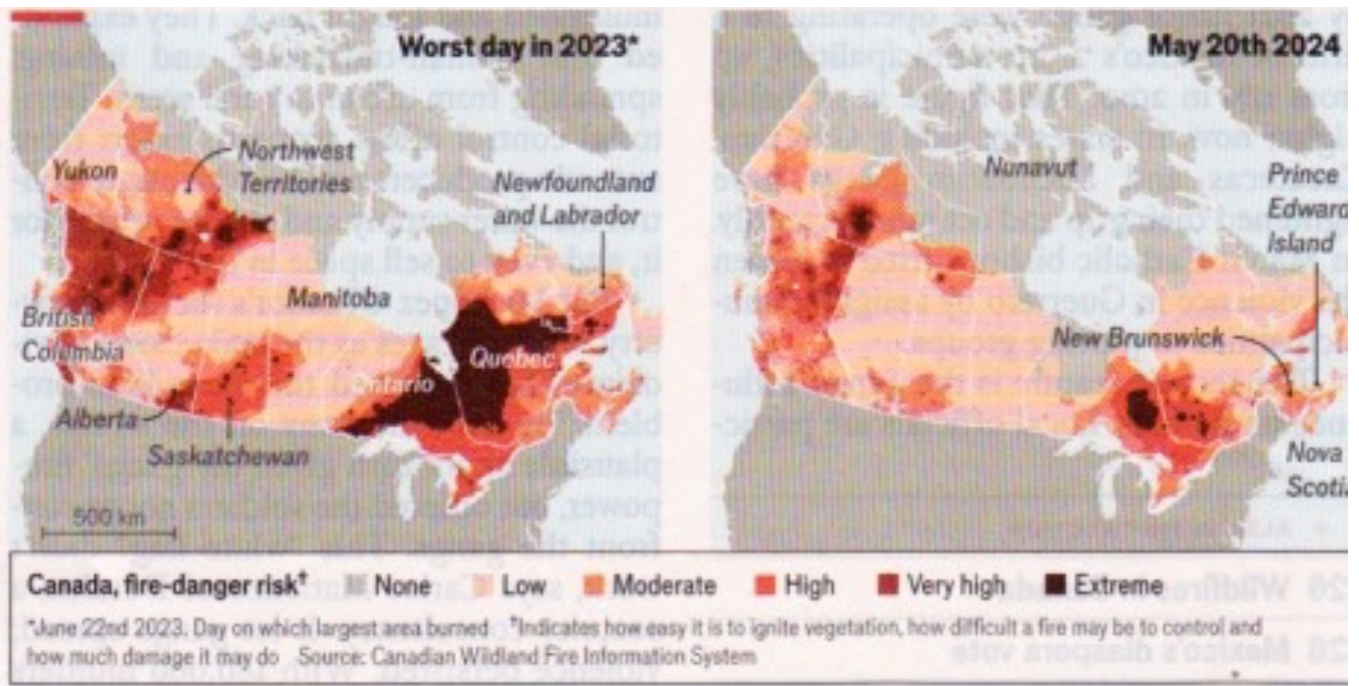
Jasper Wildfire

It was an intense fire whipped up by high winds. One fire boss said she knew it was beyond control and her priority was to get her crew out safely. Much more information is needed about this wildfire.

Several retired wardens have lost their homes and some will not be rebuilding but re-locating elsewhere - a loss to the community. The Palisades heavily damaged - probably not to be restored. The Maligne Range was also damaged - we hope it will be restored.

The 2023 Cd'n. Wildfire Season or how Canada made international news according to the "Economist," (May 25, 2024).

"Wild fires scorched 185,000 sq. km of Canada in 2023 aided by bone dry ground conditions after a season of scant rainfall and spring drought. That's an area bigger than Florida. These fires also pumped 1,800 megatonnes of CO₂ equivalent into the atmosphere and smoke from them reached as far Baltimore, Barcelona, Berlin and beyond! Canada made itself felt. Many fear that these diabolic Frankenstein fires are Canada's new normal. The



two largest fires in the northern regions of Quebec and B.C. could not have been fought by any means!

OBITS

Barb Bertch (1949-2024)

Born in Youngstown, Ohio she left home for New York City where she worked as a bicycle courier and joined the anti-Vietnam war protests along with studying music at NYU! San Francisco was her next destination and then it was on - on a bike - to Banff where she arrived in 1978 and knew she “had found home.” She became a Canadian citizen and joined the Banff Warden Service - one of that early cohort of women wardens.

Physically active (she was a dynamo) she competed in foot and ski races and went on wilderness canoe trips, mountaineering expeditions and powder skiing. Her partner on many of these outings was life-long husband Reg Bunyan, also a park warden who had trouble keeping up. As a warden she became involved in wildlife research where she could use her travel skills to the fullest. The wolverine became a particular interest: skiing to one of its lure sites with a beaver on her back was mostly pure joy!

Life can be cruel and in 2014 she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Her excellent physical and mental constitution stood her well and so did husband Reg who stood by her even after she no longer recognized him!

Muriel Woledge

Muriel Woledge, wife of park warden Jack Woledge passed away on June 12th. She had led a long life, passing away two months after celebrating her 99th Birthday! Muriel was one of the warden service 'Silent Partners' having lived at several backcountry cabins including Stoney Creek, Eight Mile Spray, Bryant Creek and Bow Summit in Banff with her young family while Jack was in charge of these districts.

Susan Peyto

While Susan was not a member of the Warden Service but her husband Paul was a park warden in the 1960s. That's not Paul she's hugging). As a packer, trail guide and someone familiar with the backcountry of the mountain parks he was often called upon for assistance by the warden service. Susan was his de-facto “silent partner.” This is a double blow for Paul having earlier lost his younger brother Gord.

Caron Kozachenko 1957 - 2024.

Caron was born in Elrose, SK. When she was older she helped her father, Peter Riglin, with the farm work along with other family members. She graduated with a degree in recreation technology from Kelsey College, Saskatoon. It was while in Saskatoon that she met Brent, her husband to be. Her and Brent's career were typical of many warden careers of those years. Brent started part time in Prince Albert National Park and in 1980 was transferred to a full time warden position in Wood Buffalo and then five years in Nahanni. Caron found clerical jobs in these parks: with her schooling and background it was a good fit along with being a mother!.

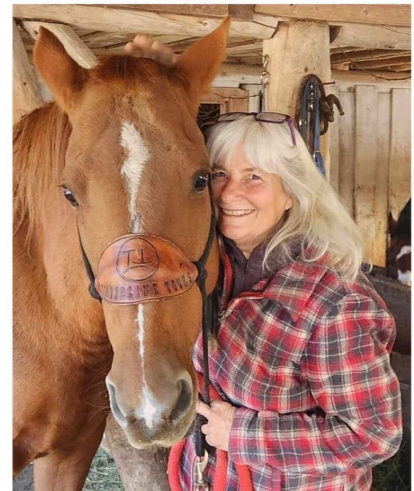
While up north she and Brent has two sons, Adam and Matt, both born in Fort Simpson. In 1985 they moved to Waterton where Brent spent the rest of his career in public safety until retiring in 2010. It was in the south they stayed and had their third son, Sean. She did her best to pass on to others her love of nature and the wilderness.

A celebration of her life was held in the Pincher Creek United Church on Oct. 5.

The Political Corner

1. An election is called. Promises, promises are made. A new government is elected. Promises are watered down or forgotten. The next election is called. Money is flung at one thing and another.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF *Susan Peyto* 1958-2024



SEPTEMBER 26, 2024 AT 1:00PM
GAZEBO AT THE LAKE LOUISE INN

2. Have you heard this before? if not you are likely to soon: “Steps will be taken to to ensure that this (disaster, accident, crime etc.) does not happen again.”

3. From *Crich Tales*, England (widely applicable though): Sir Herbert, the sitting M.P. had addressed a meeting at the ‘Top School.’ Beatty had been there and was asked how it had gone.

“That man!! ay can mek ‘is maerth say ennithin.”

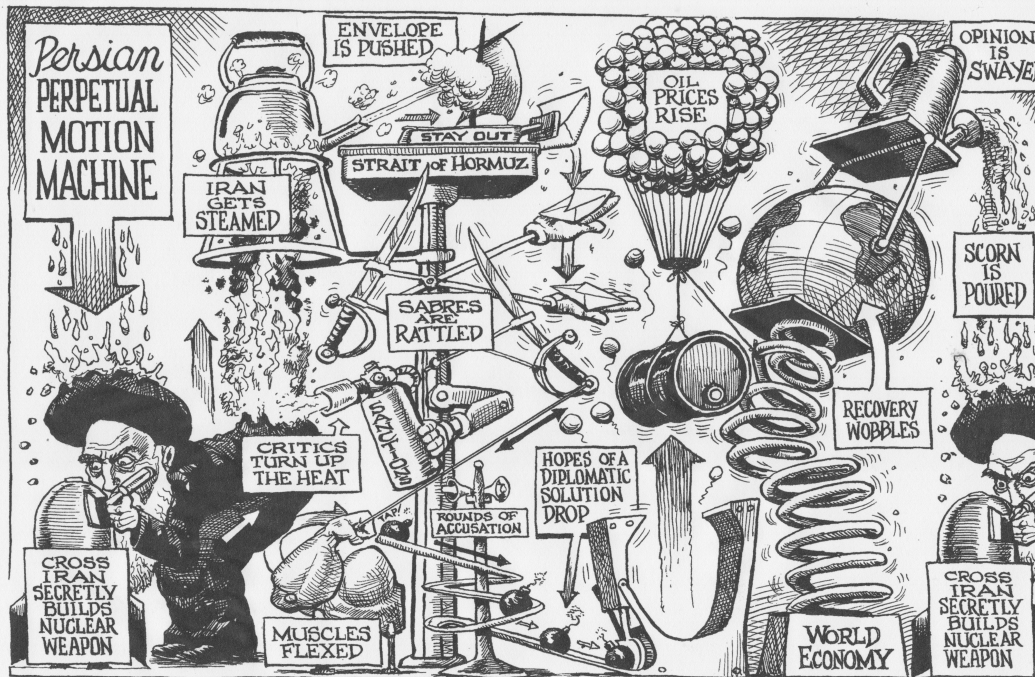
Mini Re-Unions This Spring’s Mini Warden Re-Union in Salmon Arm was a success on all fronts - location, food, companionship, entertainment, a successful silent auction and displays and, oh yes - weather. A lot of credit for organizing it goes to Al Westhaver, a lot of credit to the gals (mostly) who served up a belt-loosening



breakfast on the final morning and cudos to Bradley Bischoff and Scott Duncan for their roof-raising music on the last evening!

Al is back at it - planning next Spring’s Mini Reunion. Once the location is determined we will let you know!

Your cartoon guide to political jargon (from the “Economist”)



Our regular illustrator, KAL, is away this week. We have chosen to re-run this poignant cartoon from 2012

The "Economist" - Aug 31, 2014