The Bergen News

Bringing Bergen Together

June 2023

Birds, Beasts and Botany in Bergen

by Sandy Easterbrook, photos by Sandy Easterbrook

Heart-Leafed Arnica (Arnica cordifolia)

I am always surprised by what grows in the forest on my friends' properties in and around Bergen, compared to what grows here at Kettle Crossing Farm. Sally Banks sees Calypso Orchids in the spring. We have five or six varieties of orchids in our bush—spotted, white and purple Oval Leafs being the most common—but I have never encountered a Calypso. Another neighbour has plenty of white Western Canada Violets, whereas our violets are purple. And while hiking the Highland Ridge a month or so ago, I was delighted to see colonies of Heart-Leaved Arnica, which I didn't know grew in this area. They looked like glimmering, miniature sunflowers against the dark boreal floor.

Arnica is part of the *Asteraceae* family, a genus which comprises about 40 species. The Heart-Leafed variety has bright yellow, daisy-like flowers which are lined with white-haired bracts. The blossom centres contain golden-coloured florets. The plant normally blooms from April to June, but sometimes as late as September. The two to four pairs of heart-or arrowhead-shaped leaves are finely toothed at the edges, with long stalks. In height the plant maxes out at about two feet (60 cm). It spreads via rhizomes. This root system allows it to survive wildfires by resprouting, and individual plants can live up to 12 years. The *achenes* (seed-like nutlets) are fluffy white or tawny parachutes which are dispersed by the wind.

Heart-leafed Arnica prefers to grow in moist foothill or sub-alpine sites from the Yukon and Northwest territories to New Mexico, but it can be found as far east as Ontario and Michigan. It occupies the same territory as its close relative, Leafy Arnica (*A. chammisonis)* which is taller with branched flower stalks.

The most well-known species, however, is *Arnica montana* which is native to Europe. Its flowers and rootstocks have been used for centuries in liniments, washes, salves and poultices to treat bruises, sprains, chilblains, arthritis, swollen feet and the stimulation of hair growth. In Germany alone, there are 843 registered medical products listing arnica as an active ingredient, of which 360 of these are homeopathic. Arnica is also used commercially in shampoos, cosmetics, hair and anti-dandruff products, bath products and perfume. Most *Arnica montana* grows wild, but it is now being cultivated as well. Half of the wild plants are obtained from the Apuseni Mountains of Transylvania, Romania. This country and Bavaria now have a species protection programme to safeguard the remaining populations.

Many studies have examined the medical effectiveness of the plant. A 2005 study using a Swiss arnica gel (Rheumagel AtroMed) had 124 women and 80 men with rheumatoid disorders apply a thin layer of gel twice daily. Pain intensity was reduced by almost 50%. In a 2002 investigation of patients with osteo-arthritis, their pain, and stiffness decreased and function improved to the point that the authors concluded that the gel was comparable to Diclofenac, an anti-inflammatory drug commonly used to treat arthritis. A double-blind study in 2010 compared the efficacy of a

Continued on page 2

Heart-Leafed Arnica, continued from page 1

20% arnica ointment with three other popular ointments for reducing laser-induced bruising, a common side effect of dermatological procedures. Arnica proved second best after a 5% Vitamin K ointment.

Our native populations used local species for their similar healing capabilities. BC natives drank an infusion for tuberculosis and used poultices for cuts, bruises, swellings and sore eyes. The Okanagan tribe used the roots as a love potion. They were pounded along with a robin's heart and tongue, and ochre paint. The mixture was then dried and powdered. The user waded into water, faced the east, recited certain words including his loved one's name, and marked his face with the powder. If you plan on trying this technique, however, be sure not to apply it to broken skin where toxins could enter the bloodstream. Ingesting it can be dangerous as well, since arnica can cause severe upset and blistering of the digestive tract. Moreover, a few people develop severe skin reactions from the plant because of an allergenic chemical it contains, called helenalin.

Beverly Gray is the author of "The Boreal Herbal: Wild Food & Medicine Plants of the North", which has become my natural bible. She recommends this recipe for "the bumps and bruises of life". It would make a handy addition to a first aid kit or gym bag. Happy potion making!

Arnica Ointment

1 cup arnica flowers, wilted just enough to allow moisture to evaporate
1 1/2 cups (375 ml) sunflower oil
½ cup (125 ml) olive oil
1 tsp (5 ml) vitamin E
1 oz (30 ml) beeswax

Place flowers and oils in a double boiler. Warm slowly on medium heat. Let simmer 20-40 minutes, stirring often. Strain out flowers and wipe the pot, so there are no petals left. Add beeswax to pot and let melt. Add strained oil and stir. Once blended, pour into a jar. Cap jar only after the ointment has cooled down and solidified.

WRITING WORKSHOP

"Writing Your Mother"

Led by Sandy Easterbrook.
Sundre Museum, July 22, 1-4.
Registration required. Bring a photo of your mother.
For more information, call Museum, 403-638-3233 or Sandy, 403-638-1985 or 403-638-1283.

EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY

by Jessie

Dear readers: My topic for the month of June is Birds. You may have noticed that there are a lot of them around: scratching, flapping. cheeping, singing, squawking Now don't get me wrong. I like birds fine—in the winter when there aren't so many of them around. The chickadees are nice, friendly little birds with one reliable little recitation. But I do feel it necessary to chase them out of the lilac bush by the house whenever my person drives in. How else would she know that I was on duty?

But in June there is a cacophony (isn't that a great word, coming from a dog?) of bird noises, even before daylight in the morning. This makes it hard for those of us trying to grab a little sleep after night duty with the coyotes.

I do have to admit some of the songs are very pretty, like that of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. But music doesn't necessarily run in the grosbeak family. The Evening Grosbeak has a terrible voice, It is so shrill that I have to cover my ears with my paws. I think whoever invented those horrible dog whistles copied that yellow grosbeak. Then we have the Blue Jay who has obviously never had a singing lesson in his life. SCRAWK! Here's a hint for you BJ. Being a nice colour is *not* enough to win you friends.

I could go on forever but since you didn't elect me premier there is no need for me to behave like a politician.

See you later, Alligator.

Now you're supposed to say "In a while, Crocodile."

A DAD WHO LOVED SPORTS

by Pat Gibbs

There were many times while I was growing up that I watched my dad play games of one kind or another. He enjoyed life and being active was second nature to him. Baseball was his favourite as a young boy and, in his teen years, he and his good friends played on a Bergen team that competed against Didsbury and any other small community that was interested. He and one of his team mates often walked to their games. I was amazed when he told me they actually walked to Didsbury on occasion! They went cross country but still....and returned that evening. They loved the game. His favourite position was shortstop but he did some pitching as well. He had a glove that looked like a big flat pancake with little to no shape. However, he caught many a flying ball with it and used it at every ballgame. When our son started playing the game years later, Dad loved to come and see his games whenever he could and was most pleased to see him playing the same two positions he had played as a young man.

Dad also liked to run. He could beat my brother and me and laugh the whole time he was running.

The best day of the summer for most of us Bergen families was the July 1st community picnic. We all brought food for the potluck and, after we ate, it was outside to run races with or against our neighbours. Children first and then any brave adults! Well, Dad was ready! He and his good friend, Rev Cheesmuir, would race each other then tie a leg together for the three legged race and follow that up with a sack race! Good grief, there were times I was afraid Dad would break something but he never did. The day ended with, you guessed it, a ballgame! He hit the ball and ran like the dickens. The younger folks, both guys and gals and, yes, brother Terry and I were playing our best as well. It was the funnest (all teachers will cringe at this word) day of the summer!

In Dad's much later years he enjoyed playing volleyball with a group of folks, mainly ladies, which lasted until he was 80 years old. It was a game he had never played before but was game (no pun intended) to give it a go.

At our family reunion, and 93 years old, with walker by his side, Dad was trying very hard to convince me to let him just stand at the plate and carefully hit the ball. Now as many of you know, my dad could get me to do most anything for him, but I could not oblige him. My fear of him breaking something overrode my wish to let him try. It was a tough call. Dad, you were a great sport always. I still miss you.

Happy Father's Day .....please know how important you are to your sons and daughters. Til next time...

Musings: Happy Dad Day!

by Phyllis Cormack

It's the month of June. Some things are ending—school—and some things are starting—summer holidays. In a way, some things don't change. Every year school ends and holidays begin. Father's Day rolls around this month every year too. It's a special day to spend with our dad, if he is still with us, and if not, to reminisce about days gone by.

When I was a kid my dad was one I could depend upon. He was always there every day doing the chores around the farm which varied greatly as any mixed farmer would know. I learned practical things from him like driving a tractor, straightening nails with a hammer, feeding pigs, milking cows, cleaning the barn, carrying wood, stomping the hay into the corners on the hay rack to make the load even, picking rocks and roots, and knowing where to look to find the new batch of kittens hidden in the barn. I learned the real names of screwdrivers like Phillips and Robertson and about crescent wrenches and sockets. I learned how to change a flat tire, making sure to tighten opposing nuts on the wheel. Dad also taught me how to play cribbage and he beat me so many times I learned that I didn't care for the game. Dad served in WWII and saw a lot of brutality while overseas. Because of that he feared for the safety of my sister and me so we weren't allowed to do much mechanic stuff.

On Saturday mornings my sister and I liked to sleep in. However, when Dad hollered up the stairs, "Day time in the swamp!" we knew we better get up. There were, after all, jobs that we needed to attend to that couldn't be done whilst we lingered in bed.

Dad never liked owing anyone money and instilled that quality in us. He never seemed disappointed in having had two daughters and no sons. He never let on if he was. Dad wasn't perfect—no one is—but he did the best he could with what he had. He made sure we had what was needed. He supported and encouraged us throughout our ups and downs, helping us along as we made choices even some he thought were absurd. But we lived to tell and he loved us anyway.

My Dad lives on in my memory and, fortunately, my memories are good ones. As my earthly father I couldn't have had a better one. God provided the one I needed.

Happy Father's Day to all you guys out there who are fathers or who step in taking on a fatherly role. May God grant you wisdom as you teach and encourage those young lives.

Love Is…

by Shari Peyerl

When I was four, I received a book called *Happiness is a Warm Puppy*, by Charles M. Schulz. This 1970 Scholastic edition paperback containing simple black cartoons on inexpensive orange paper still inspires me, and its message is particularly appropriate now.

In this little book, the characters illustrate various definitions of happiness. On the cover, Lucy hugs Snoopy, demonstrating the title phrase, which is especially relevant in our era when so many isolated people turned to animal companions for solace. For insecure Linus, "Happiness is a thumb and a blanket," highlighting the importance of simple self-care rituals. And, Charlie Brown's expression "Happiness is a pile of leaves" shows the joy that the precious natural world can provide. The point of the book is that there are many sources of happiness and "Happiness is one thing to one person and another thing to another person."

This is a handy concept to remember in our culture, which is preoccupied with the search for happiness and its associated emotion, love. Like happiness, love is also varied. There is the respectful and loyal love for one's parents, the fiercely protective love for one's children, and the passionate and devoted love for one's spouse.

While February has Valentine's Day, June has a whole month of days focussed on love. Named after Juno, Roman goddess of love and marriage, June is traditionally an auspicious month in which to wed. I think the most common Biblical reading given at a wedding is St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. I have read it at several ceremonies myself. In it, St. Paul describes a divine love so perfect that it is not humanly possible, but is instead a goal to strive for:

Continued on page 5

Love is..., continued from page 4

Love is patient. Love is kind. It is not envious, boastful, arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice in wrongdoings but rejoices in the truth. It hears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

I have also read Shakespeare's Sonnet #116 at wedding celebrations:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

The preoccupation of our popular culture with love is evident across musical styles, with innumerable love songs to suit any taste. Literary examinations of love abound, from classic literature to the whole genre of romance novels. Likewise, Hollywood produces films every year on the topic, from dramas to romantic comedies.

For all humanity's obsession with love, the world at large seems to be bereft of this emotion; wars rage, lack of empathy is rife, and rudeness and selfishness abound. However, you can do your part to make the world a better place with the simple act of spreading love.

So, as the lush onset of new growth at this time of year stirs feelings of happiness, optimism, and love, embrace the fundamental truth of the human condition best articulated by the Beatles: *All You Need Is Love*. Celebrate love in all its forms. Love may look different to different people, but Love Is Love and the world needs more of it.

The Bergen News is very grateful for the rural community grant received from Mountain View County to assist in our operating costs. Thank you for your continued support.

THE GAME FENCE

by Noreen Olson

Ralph's folks came to this farm in 1925 and one of the first things they did was clear and plow a place for a garden. The garden was not for recreation or relaxation or to make the place more attractive. The garden was necessary for their survival. They had four little kids, which soon became six, and they needed a lot of carrots and potatoes to feed the family through the winters. Using horsepower, Dad hauled in enormous stones and built a good sized cellar under the kitchen, every fall it was filled with vegetables; bins of potatoes and carrots and cabbage, jars of peas and beans and beets. There was chicken and beef and pork too, of course, and jars of fruit and pickles, jams and jellies.

When we built this house we saved Dad's cellar and incorporated it into our landscape. The Virginia Creeper that was on the corner of the old house has pretty well taken it over and California poppies grow from some of the earth filled spaces in the stones.

The first gardens were part of an open field, and I suppose the odd porcupine or gopher took samples but there were no deer. The first deer Ralph saw was in the Calgary Zoo, and when we came here in 1963 it was still a treat to see a deer and an absolute joy to see a fawn. By then the huge garden was part of the yard and it was surrounded by enormous spruce and crab apple trees and flower beds and hedges and lawns. We maintained all this and added more flower beds, a raspberry patch, rose beds, more apple and spruce trees, rows of peonies, more hedges. We were young and strong in those days and leaned toward enthusiasm and stupidity. The garden fed us and the extended family. We gave away a lot, filled our freezer and Dad's carrot and potato bins too.

And then the deer started to come. First we noticed them in the fields, then we were thrilled to see the beautiful little things daintily picking crab apples under our trees, then the peas were severely pruned, carrots were pulled and cabbage and lettuce left with only ragged outside leaves. The geraniums on the deck lost their flowers. They especially like white ones. The new apple tree that looked so promising became a naked broom handle, and, maybe most hurtful to me, was the rose bed. On every bush, where fat promising buds had been, were now naked stems. Deer love rosebuds.

We bought wire panels and enclosed the vegetable garden, a huge unwieldy project that had to be taken down in the fall and put back every spring. We fenced the raspberries and inadvertently gave asylum to a million little aspens. We fenced the roses and now, with the wire fence and the posts and the prickly plants, I couldn't get in there to do a decent job of weeding and pruning and the edges grew up into the wire and I hate deer.

We put up more panels to keep them from eating the cedars and a sort of cone around the Amur maple that might have been a tree but was now a shrub. We bought a new apple and fenced it along with the poor mangled thing from the year before and the cherry that had been eaten down so many times that we referred to it as the “bonsai.”

The deer proliferated and became more bold, and now moose began to join them. Moose make an even bigger mess than deer. We became old, much less strong and very tired.

Last fall I started making inquiries about game fencing. I talked to friends, answered some ads, got some quotes. We went with Nick Warner—AUSTECH CUSTOM FENCING from near Madden. This spring as soon as the frost was out, Nick's crew sprang into action. They were fast and efficient. The fence is steel mesh, six feet high and lovely.

Now if only it would rain.

Subscription Renewals

To our loyal Bergen News subscribers: Please check your mail labels for your expiry date. You may mail your renewal to The Bergen News c/o Marilyn Walker, Box 21, Site 9, RR 2, Sundre, T0M 1X0. Renewals by e-transfer can be sent to editor@thebergennews.ca ***Subscriptions are $20 annually or $15 for an email subscription. First time subscribers may use the same addresses to set up a subscription. For additional information call Marilyn at 403-638-2156. Thanks for your support.***

Bergen Church News

by Phyllis Cormack

The Bergen Church is located on the Bergen Road one mile west of the Highway 760 intersection. For Sunday morning services online, please go to our website http:/bergenmissionarychurch.ca/ then click on the Facebook page where services will be listed.

Bergen Church services are every Sunday starting at 10:30 am.

Sunday School will not be held through the summer months.

A Sunday School wind up BBQ was planned for the Fathers Day weekend.

The fellowship time after the service has been well received, however with the busyness of summer we will not be having this “picnic” time for the next two months.

The youth went on a camp out and had a great time at Eagle Lake. Thanks to Alanna Waines and Scott Anderson for taking the eager campers out for the weekend.

Youth group events are put on hold until September unless a spur of the moment plan develops.

“The Den SYC” or Sundre Youth Center provides various activities for our youth between grades 7—12 who are looking for a place to “hang out”. Throughout the summer there will be field trips and various activities planned. Those interested can contact the Den by googling “The Den SYC”, Greenwood Neighborhood Place, or on Facebook.

The Sundre Ministerial is a team of churches in the Sundre area which is available to help, whether the need is physical or emotional. Please feel free to contact this number where someone will be able to direct you to an appropriate resource: 403-636-0554.

You can also go to the Sundre Ministerial web page — sundreministerial.blogspot.com — if you'd like to contact a church directly. Click on 'Church Listings and Links'.

Food donations to the Plus 1 food bank at McDougal Chapel are gratefully accepted and appreciated as there are many who benefit from this program. A phone call will let you know if there is someone at the church to open the door for you. The number is 403-638-3503. You can also donate by e-transfer. Contact McDougal Chapel or check their website for information.

If you have prayer needs, please call or email Leila Schwartzenberger at 403-638-4175 or leila@processworks.ca Thank you to those who faithfully lift these requests to God.

Pastor Rob Holland's number is 403-672-0020.

Olwyn, our Church secretary, is in the Church office Tuesdays and Fridays, 10:00 – 4:00 p.m. The Church's number is 403-638-4010 and the fax number is 403-638-4004.

The email address for Bergen Church is office@bergenchurch.ca

The website is http://bergenmissionarychurch.ca/

The Bergen Farmers' Market

Our very own farmers' market opened for its 13th season on June 24th. The market runs every Saturday from 10:00 to 1:00 at the Bergen Hall

Enjoy a stimulating shop with friendly vendors and stay for coffee, music, and a visit with friends.

See you there.

Bergen Ladies Aid Report

by Phyllis Cormack

It was a beautiful day at the end of May when we wound our way through Bergen Springs to gather at Evelyn Sadlowski's lovely home.

Shelley Ingeveld read Psalm 100 then we prayed the Lord's Prayer to get our meeting started.

Thirteen ladies read prayer cards for roll call; then we decided we would respond at our meeting in June with a favourite food we usually eat only in summer.

Betty Josephson read the April meeting minutes followed by Maureen Worobetz giving our financial report. Our bank account is looking good now that most of our donation cheques have cleared. We were informed of how much more it costs for funeral groceries and are very appreciative of the generous donations we receive.

Our correspondence consisted of thank you cards and letters for the above mentioned donations.

Shelley had nothing to report as she hadn't made any visits this past month.

President Lynn Whittle reminded us of the cemetery clean up on Saturday June 3rd. Patricia Ball will bring coffee to the cemetery for the workers who are encouraged to bring various gardening tools, a bag lunch, and a chair.

We have been asked to serve lunch at the funeral of Bill Lovelace who passed away recently. His service will be August 19th at 3:30 p.m. at the Bergen Hall. Bill and wife Joyce—who passed away several years ago—owned and operated the Bergen Store for many years and were great community-minded people. He came up with the idea of having the signs “Beautiful Downtown Bergen” made and placed along the road informing drivers they were entering a special community. The store became quite famous for its friendly service and the beef jerky Bill made. Sympathy is extended to his family who grew up while living at the store.

We discussed getting together in the summer for a lunch since we won't be having meetings during the months of July and August. It was decided we would meet at Original Ts in Sundre. Date and time will be determined at our June meeting.

Betty was asked to read scripture at that meeting. Sue Vollmin offered her home and Donelda Way will join her providing lunch.

We sang our theme song then enjoyed the lunch served by Evelyn and Donna McGregor as well as a good time of visiting and sharing humorous stories.

Much of That Was Very Good

by Jamie Syer

Every spring for a month or two I adjudicate music festivals. From Stettler to Salmon Arm, Fort McMurray to Moose Jaw, Nelson to Nanaimo, Yellowknife to Yorkton, and everywhere in between, I listen to earnest young piano players doing their best to perform a piece they've practised for months: on an unfamiliar piano, in front of a crowd of parents and piano teachers—and me, the adjudicator.

As my biography says, read out many many times during every festival, I've been a professional pianist for over 50 years. Occasionally (though not often enough) the person reading my bio will then say "he must have started when he was very young."

When I was playing in music festivals, competition was fierce. My piano teacher took tranquilizers. He posted a running list of the marks his students received. The ultimate shame was to be 'pulled' from the festival because you weren't ready.

The newspaper listed the results of every festival class, including names of winners and their marks. Once I heard the parent of another competitor say, undoubtedly in jest, "There's Jamie Syer. Let's go break all his fingers." I sometimes wondered if the world would go on turning after the festival was over. Happily, I can report that music festivals have changed since then.

Adjudicators in those days were among the top piano teachers in the country, and I try to model my own adjudicating on theirs. Some were well-known for giving adjudications that were as entertaining as they were instructive. Parents, teachers and performers would crowd into the room when it was adjudication time to enjoy the show, even if they hadn't heard the class.

I enjoy adjudicating because, though only for a few days, I come to feel part of the musical communities I visit. Many of the festivals were founded, and are still supported, by a local service club. Sometimes, the adjudicator's secretary will be a venerable Rotarian who may not be sure how to pronounce "Beethoven" but knows the names of all the kids, their families, and what their parents do for a living. Other festivals are run by the local music teachers' association. In that case, I have to try to ignore the fact that I'm adjudicating the students of the person sitting beside me, helping to keep me organized.

Some festivals are reassuringly informal. When I couldn't find the church where I was supposed to adjudicate (because it was mis-located in Google Maps) no-one seemed worried that I didn't arrive until well after the class was supposed to begin. "Oh, is Google *still* saying the church is in the McDonald's parking lot?" Other organizers are justly proud of how efficient they are, and my secretary might tell me "You're running a little late, and you have 13 minutes left for your adjudication."

The highlight of every festival, of course, is not the adjudicator, but the performers. Though I've probably heard the piece they're playing many times, there are always new things to say: something good to start (there is always something good), a few suggestions for improvements, a couple of my tired jokes, something good to end with. With the youngest kids, I might talk about why we bow after we play, or I'll do something ridiculously wrong at the piano and get them to correct me. With reserved, self-conscious teenagers I tease them about not answering my easy questions ("my students never answer the adjudicator's questions either").

There are talented kids everywhere, and I'm rejuvenated and excited when someone plays with passion, energy and commitment, even if they're still searching for the right notes. And if someone is obviously floundering, I remind myself that I've never heard them before; perhaps that's the best they've ever played, and they deserve to be complimented, even if only for surviving.

Some of my friends say that adjudicating is just my excuse to check out the local food and coffee scene: fish and chips in Yellowknife! Caramel cannoli in Lacombe! Local-roast macchiato in Penticton! I enjoy exploring other aspects of the towns I visit, beyond the festival. Sometimes I'm able to work a local news item into my adjudication, or tell a young performer that I liked the Super Mario poster she drew, that was on display at the local movie theatre.

We don't announce marks any more, or even first place. Instead, we give out gold, silver and (rarely) bronze certificates, and sometimes a special pin or seal for anyone who achieves the magic mark of 90. At many festivals,

Continued on page 13

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE SUNDRE LIBRARY

Sundre Library Hours

Monday	**Closed**
Tuesday	9:00—5:00 PM
Wednesday	noon—8:00 PM
Thursday	noon—5:00 PM
Friday	noon—5:00 PM
Saturday	11:00—3:00 PM

Sundre Library (403) 638-4000, www.sundre.prl.ab.ca

Shari Peyerl
Program Coordinator (she/her)
Sundre Municipal Library
403-638-4000

For program details please call (403) 638-4000, or visit www.sundre.prl.ab.ca

Reading Beyond Print
Thursday, August 10, 1:00 – 2:00 PM
Learn about non-print options for reading.

Summer Reading Club for Kids
July 4 – August 25
Programs for 4-7 on Tues; 8-11 year olds on Thurs
Wild Wednesdays for the whole family!

Ride With Me

by Donelda Way

May Long Weekend: the colourful balloons attached to both of the entrance gate posts indicated a “family gathering” was happening here. A young mom with babe in arms was standing next to one cluster of balloons.

As we headed toward Sundre, the wild fire smoke was like fog. The smoke, mixed with the gravel dust, made the vehicle ahead almost invisible.

Davidson Park: A group had set up a dining(?) tent and spread blankets out on the creek bank. It looked so inviting!

The man had his coat tied around his waist. He and the two dogs were warming themselves in the sunshine.

From Airdrie: Yankee Valley Boulevard leads into Hwy 587. A blue and white highway sign registers Dewitt’s Pond. Google states: “*This is a Conservation Site with Enhanced Fish Stocking”.* Pond photos are also displayed.

QEII: A classy, bright blue semi-trailer unit passed us. The rear of the trailer had capitalized lettering TEX INTERNATIONAL. Smaller lettering underneath read: Specialized Vehicle Transport.

Westcott Road: “That looks like a candy cane.” As we got closer, we realized horse shoes had been welded together to make a unique support for a rural mailbox.

Canadian flags at numerous farms and acreages were flapping in the south wind.

Deerfoot Tr: Traffic had slowed. Joining other vehicles, we merged into the right lane. We passed by a road kill deer. We surmise a man walking along the shoulder, using a cellphone, was calling police or animal control to dispose of it.

In town: I was waiting in the vehicle when I heard what sounded like a post pounder. Looking around, I was stunned to see a man using a sledge hammer physically pounding a beam in place to support the corner of his home’s front stair case.

For a few days now we have passed by a red tractor making circles in a field. Gradually, this farmer was succeeding in turning over the soil. The five bulls and one llama had methodically moved away from the tractor’s progress until today when one bull chose the dark dirt to rest in.

Hwy 760: My husband said “There is another impressive gate at one of these entrances”. There were no vehicles behind us so he slowed until the metal gate appeared. The black cutaway sections made a grouping of various widths and heights of evergreen trees. The trees were all black, giving the impression of silhouette.

Wording has changed to *FIRE RESTRICTIONS*. These signs are visible on wooden posts at rural intersections and on electronic trailer signs near highway junctions. Wild fires are still a provincial concern.

“WOW, they are all peeled and numbered”. The cabin or log house timbers filled the trailer.

Wild roses are popping open into full bloom on Hwy 27 in the town of Sundre. Some stretches of ditches and fence lines present an abundance of their beautiful floral display.

I chuckled and said, “They look like burly motorcycle guys”. Two bearded gentlemen had parked their bikes on the shoulder of the road. With helmets removed, they were standing nearby, smiling and chatting. Two contented friends (or relatives).

Travelling on QEII we noticed a Mercedes Unity Leisure Travel Camperized Van. I commented, “Very nice”. When I googled it later, the site illustrated what ‘very nice’ means and costs.

“You should use something damp to get that spot off the windshield”. The dried, bloody bug splat took some effort to moisten and pry off the glass. Improved visibility.

A tall, straight lady was walking along Hwy 760. The empty white grocery bag was flapping against her leg. Was she just starting to collect bottles and cans from the ditch?

Sundre Touchless Carwash uses a blowup man to draw in customers. This day the bright red/orange man went full height then faltered toward the ground. It was then both arms filled and he gained height again. His spiked, blonde haircut and broad, white smile added to the customer draw.

At the Bergen Road/760 intersection: A trio of vehicles passed by: A pickup towing a stock trailer; a semi-tractor pulling a long, tall cattle liner; a second pickup towing a cattle chute. We followed this trio onto Fallen Timber Trail. At the S-Curve we commented, “The semi will have to back up a few times to make that switchback corner”. We stood in awe of the unit’s driver. With slow, precise maneuvering the corner was made in one attempt.

Two power line crews were in attendance. I’m unsure how many hauling units were there. A very nice modular home had been positioned during my trip to town.

COWBOY UP

(a mostly true story by Ron Olsen as told to Marilyn Halvorson)

PART TWO

I moved my head, trying to figure out what was going on. It felt like somebody was blowing warm air in my ear. If this was a dream...

But then suddenly the warm breeze was replaced by a loud, nose-clearing snort and a cool shower of horse snot descended on my face. I woke up fast and threw back my covers. “Midget! You brainless jackass, get your head out of my house!” My horse jumped back giving me a startled look, as if I had hurt his feelings. Obviously, I didn’t need an alarm clock as long as I had my horse. Still muttering to myself, I got some water, washed my hands and face, necessary or not, and got my breakfast bacon cooking. Despite his bad behavior, I gave Midget a good feed of oats. I planned on a big ride today.

A few minutes later I was saddled up and we hit the trail. Jim had given me just a basic idea of the size of his grazing lease but, with no fences out here, I was going to have to figure out its boundaries. First I headed south, keeping my eye on a distant ridge that Jim had said was the southern boundary.

After about three hours of riding the ridge still looked fairly distant but it was at about that time that I heard the first sounds of combat. I don’t mean the roar of guns. This was more the roar of angry bulls with loud banging of bone on bone in between. Uh-oh, we must have company. Sure enough, just over a little rise a sizable herd of cows and calves were bedded down in the shade while, a short distance away, two bulls were having a scrap that raised quite a cloud of dust. Well, this wouldn’t do. If this fighting went on long enough one of the bulls could get hurt or, at the very least, they would be too tired to breed any cows.

I nudged Midget, “Want to have some fun, boy?” Midget loved chasing cows. I put him into a lope and charged down to the bulls. They ignored us until we were practically on top of them. Then Midget laid his ears back and snapped his big, yellow teeth into the backside of Jim’s bull. At the same time I unfurled my lariat and gave the rear of the intruder a resounding whack with the loop end. Both bulls stopped dead for a second and that was all it took to maneuver the horse in between them and turn the stranger toward his home pasture.

Almost instantly the Hereford realized his mistake and tried to turn back but he was too late. My horse was right on his heels and was not about to take no for an answer. For nearly an hour Midget played cutting horse as that critter kept taking off to the left or right. He was one determined bull but Midge was a more determined horse. He began to sweat and the bull was breathing hard and slowing down when, just topping a little rise, we saw a herd of Herefords. The bull gave one strangled bawl, found another gear and took off to see his ladies.

I pulled the horse to a stop and, for once, he didn’t argue. He heaved a big sigh, shook himself all over, and willingly turned back the way we had come. So much for finding out how far our range extended. It felt like nearly supper time and our little game with Mr. Hereford had left us hours from camp. I sighed too and turned my tired horse back along the trail.

After some time of plodding we found ourselves back where, on the way out, I had made a big detour around one arm of the muskeg that spread over several acres of the pasture. I reined Midget toward the detour but the horse was

Continued on page 13

Cowboy Up, continued from page 12

reluctant. He knew his oats and a long drink of water lay straight ahead. “No, Midge! We can’t cross that swamp,” I told him, but he shook his head and fought the bridle.

Or could we cross it? It wasn’t that far across and it would save a good hour of riding but the story I’d heard from one of Dad’s friends echoed in my mind. He had tried to ride across a muskeg and his horse had bogged so bad that the guy finally had to shoot him. Shoot Midget? I’d sooner shoot myself.

But next thing I knew I was off my horse and taking an experimental step onto that unstable ground. It felt awful. Yes it was holding me up but mud and water oozed up all around my boot and the whole area seemed to shudder a little. I shuddered too, but I took another step and Midget was right behind me, showing no reluctance at all. For once, I was grateful for his big round feet—a gift from some draft horse ancestor. He was sinking only a few inches into the slop. If he had been a small-hoofed thoroughbred I don’t know what would have happened.

Although my feet didn’t seem to be sinking any more, the water was rising. When I was wet above the knees I decided it was time to ride. I cautiously climbed aboard and gave my horse his head. Still unperturbed, Midget occasionally lowered his head and sniffed at the water, and continued plodding carefully onward.

I was studying what was under the horse’s feet with so much concentration that his lunge onto dry land could have shaken me out of the saddle. We were across!

If anyone was looking I wouldn’t have kissed my horse—but no one was looking!

An hour later I was gratefully dismounting in front of my lean-to. I peeled the saddle off and the horse immediately folded up—to roll and scratch his sweaty back in the dirt. Then he scrambled up, shook all over, and began eating grass. He looked so cool and comfortable that I peeled off my clothes and jumped into the creek. Yes! That did cool you off, I thought, my teeth chattering as I climbed back into my clothes and hurried to make a fire and get some grub going. I made lots of pancakes ‘cause I was starving. Midget ate all his oats and one of my pancakes but I still had left-overs ready for breakfast.

It was getting dark by the time I was done eating, so I put my spare pancakes in a sack and stashed them under my saddle before I laid down with my head on it for a pillow.

Tired as I was, I drifted off to sleep fast, never dreaming that this was the night I would meet my bear.

Much of That Was Very Good, continued from page 9

performers don’t receive marks at all; though I remember one festival where marks were still important, whose organizers prohibited me from giving a mark of 89 because they knew they’d receive complaints from parents saying “it should have been 90.”

Parents and teachers are not supposed to speak to the adjudicator until the festival is over. Sometimes I see a teacher I know in the audience, and we scrupulously avoid glancing in each other’s direction. But when everything’s finished, if someone says to me, “Thanks for treating our children so well,” I feel I’m managing to carry on the tradition of all the encouraging and sympathetic adjudicators I remember who were at least able to say: “Much of that was very good.”

Another version of this article first appeared in the Globe & Mail*: June 8, 2023.*

The Poison Squad

by Shirley Huchcroft

I recently learned about a very important person whom I feel I should have known about ages ago, and the way I learned about him was pure serendipity. Not long after thoroughly enjoying the Bailey-Syer production of *Camp Spartan* in Sundre, I took in more musical theatre also composed and directed by a friend, Kristin Eveleigh. This musical, entitled *The Poison Squad*, was produced by Calgary Young People's Theatre (CYPT).

The storyline, set in the US in the early 1900's, was about a doctor/scientist (Dr. Harvey Wiley) who enlisted volunteers to assess the effects of various chemicals added to foods. The program notes did not disclose the plot and only said that Dr. Wiley was "an ambitious man who stopped at nothing to realize his vision". Shortly into the show I began to suspect that the musical was not pure fiction, but rather, based on a true story. Two clues led me to this realization: first, Fanny Farmer was the doctor/scientist's assistant, and secondly, President Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt was a character in the musical (portrayed by a humungous teddy bear). Fanny Farmer is a name familiar to some who might associate her with *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*. I had a vague recollection that Laurie Syer had a copy of it and, indeed, she does.

Once home, I did some delving. The internet revealed to me that Harvey Washington Wiley (1844-1930) is considered to be the "father of pure food". Born in Indiana and raised on a farm, he obtained a medical degree in the state and then a degree in chemistry from Harvard. His primary interest was food science, and he was greatly concerned about the quality of food that Americans were eating. With the increase in population in the late 1800s, most of which was in urban areas far from where food was raised or grown, the food industry devised ways to preserve food for transport and storage, without much study or thought and with a keen eye for the profit margin. For example, unbeknownst to consumers, borax and formaldehyde were commonly used to preserve food, and copper sulphate was used to turn vegetables green when canned.

The total absence of regulations about food additives or about divulging ingredients on food labels made the US unique among industrialized nations at that time. Some foods and beverages produced in the US were up to 100% adulterated and contained little or none of what they were purported to be. Other countries, particularly in Europe and the UK, had food safety laws. By the end of the 19th century, the American food supply was so rife with chemicals and fakes that there were many restrictions on American food imports into Europe, and the absence of any US regulations meant that Europe could export poor quality food to the US.

Because food analysis was nonexistent in the US at the time, Wiley travelled to Europe to study food chemistry and testing. Upon his return to the US, he worked at Purdue University and for the Indiana State Board of Health. In 1884 he was offered the position of chief chemist at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). He and the Department developed tests to assess the purity of commercially available foods. They unearthed impurities and toxins in American food products and uncovered deceptive and fake practices. For example, a pint of water was added to every quart of milk. To cover up the resulting bluish tint, producers would add whitening agents such as plaster of Paris or chalk. For cream on top, they might add something yellowish, such as a dollop of pureed calf brains.

In 1902 with $5000.00 in funding from the Department of Agriculture, Wiley organized the first of a series of volunteer groups of healthy young men to be test subjects for impurities in food. The press labelled the group 'The Poison Squad'. The men were given free food and $5.00 per month. All the food was provided by Wiley and cooked by his chef. The food was laced with borax. The volunteers were carefully studied and had to collect and provide samples of their urine and stool. He called these studies 'hygienic table trials'. Half the men dropped out because the borax made them sick. It is highly unlikely that such a study could take place these days thanks to modern day ethics committees and informed consent. The term 'informed consent' was first used in the mid 20th century.

As a result of his work, Wiley advocated for the passage of pure food bills, but he was fighting a prolonged uphill battle. Food manufacturers were outraged. The food industry was in thick with politicians in Congress and Wiley was often maligned. Wiley knew he had to get the American public engaged with his cause. He believed that scientists should not just talk to scientists, and he realized that likely his strongest advocates were women who bought and prepared food and worked to keep their families safe and healthy. Women were natural allies for him. He spoke to women's groups across the country.

Enter Fanny Farmer. In the CYPT musical, Fanny was Dr. Wiley's cook for the Poison Squad plus ebullient cheerleader for his work. In real life, there is no evidence that Miss Farmer and Dr. Wiley ever met, corresponded or collaborated. This is an example of artistic/dramatic licence where, in historical fiction, characters and facts can be moved around to enhance the plot. The real Fannie Farmer (1857-1915) was the country's most prominent cookbook

Continued on page 15

The Poisson Squad, continued from page 14

author and a powerful voice in the emerging area of domestic science. In many ways, she and Wiley were working in parallel universes in that Farmer was also deeply concerned about food additives, specifically borax, salicylic acid and potassium chromate. Wikipedia states that Wiley's campaign "gained weight when Fannie Farmer joined and paralleled his call for 'pure food'".

A second powerful ally was Henry J. Heinz (1844-1919), the condiment magnate referred to as the 'pickle king', especially famous for ketchup. Going against the current in the food processing industry, Heinz decided to align with the pure food movement. For starters, in 1902 his company replaced chemical preservatives in ketchup with vinegar and introduced stringent hygienic practices in the factories.

Finally, after decades of struggle, four converging events and movements helped to propel Wiley across the finish line. The first was a book entitled *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, describing horrific conditions in the meat and dairy industries. The second was the suffragette movement demanding a voice for women in the running of the country. The third was the labour movement seeking better working conditions and the fourth was the consumer movement demanding honesty in marketing. For the first time, the nation was talking about food safety. President Roosevelt, who had spent two decades bowing to the powerful, wealthy men in the food industry, recognized that the tide was turning and signed the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, largely written by Wiley. This was the first consumer protection law in American history.

Six years later, perhaps prompted by weariness from the struggles of enforcing the Act and a cadre of enemies who wanted him dismissed, Wiley resigned from the Chemistry Bureau (successor to the USDA Division of Chemistry) and took over the laboratories of *Good Housekeeping* magazine, the most respected source of information for women, where he remained for 18 years. His name is associated with the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. Dr. Wiley died in 1930 on the 24th anniversary of the signing of the Pure Food and Drug Act and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Returning to *The Poison Squad* musical, it ended to the enthusiastic applause of friends, family and other theatregoers. The umpteen beaming kids in the performance looked like they had been having the time of their lives. So had Kristin, the director/composer and connoisseur of kid humour. In her own words, the icing on the cake was the song about poop.

Further Information:

The history of food safety is a complex, convoluted and often gory story. If you are interested in pursuing it further, I highly recommend the full-length documentary, *The Poison Squad*, produced by PBS and available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gT5RYgsVQG8

A book by the same name by science writer Deborah Blum is an engrossing read. And then there's The Fannie Farmer Cookbook.

If you have comments on anything that you read in the Bergen News, send your response to The Bergen News, editor@thebergennews.ca or the Bergen News c/o Marilyn Walker, Box 21, Site 9, RR2, Sundre, T0M 1X0.

From Our Office Window

by Brian and Kim Allan

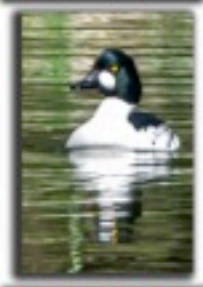
Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan is a long drive but worth a visit. Lots of wildlife, next to no people but too many bugs at this time of year; mosquito net required. The only real negative was the condition of Sask. Hwy #3, terrible!

It was our first visit since 1971 so kind of a return to our Saskatchewan roots holiday.


Beautiful sunsets over the breakwater


Bears in various colors


Bog attire




Squirrel


Goldeneye duck and family


Momma Elk with twins


Sunset beach, note the crowds


Mallard pair


Lots of Geese!