

The Bergen News

Bringing Bergen Together

August 2022

Birds, Beasts and Botany in Bergen

by Bob Griebel

Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*):

Several weeks ago a neighbour kindly sent me photos of this handsome pair of Baltimore Orioles snacking on oranges at her bird feeder. The bright orange coat of the male Oriole certainly looks more suited to the brilliant colours one associates with tropical birds, as opposed to the dowdier browns, blacks and greys found on the majority of our avian friends here in the temperate zone. Ornithologists theorize that male birds require more brightly coloured feathers in the thick forests of the tropics in order to attract the eye of females. Moreover, extra energy is required by the cellular structures that generate bright colours, and tropical birds, generally speaking, have more access to food, especially fruits rich in carotenoids, the organic pigments necessary for yellow, orange and red feather production. Hence, the Orioles' penchant for oranges.

I'm sure the Baltimore Oriole is oblivious to the fact that it was so named because its orange and black colours matched those of the coat of arms of the 17th century Lord Baltimore. Lord Baltimore was the British baron who sought a charter to colonize the area which later became the state of Maryland and after whom the city of Baltimore is named. New World orioles were named "oriole" because of the similarity of their appearance to the Old World bird family *Oriolidae*. Despite superficial appearances, however, North American orioles belong to a totally different family, the *Icteridae*, with blackbirds, bobolinks and meadowlarks being their closest kin.

Baltimore Orioles spend their summers in the southern Canadian provinces (with the exception of British Columbia and Newfoundland) as well as throughout the Midwestern and Eastern states of the USA. They spend most of their time high in the canopy of deciduous trees and are partial to the cottonwoods in riparian zones as well as to elms. Their decline in recent years has been at least partially attributed to the loss of elm habitat due to Dutch Elm disease.

Unlike many other birds, orioles do not defend a large feeding territory and only become defensive when the space near their nest is approached. During the summer mating and brood rearing season, the birds consume a wide variety of insects and caterpillars, including many pest species such as tent caterpillars. In fall, prior to migration, a wide variety of ripe fruits are eaten which provide much of the energy needed for the flight south to Florida or Central America.

One cannot write about Baltimore Orioles without mentioning their nests. These hang like a sock from the slender upper branches of a deciduous tree and are a marvel of weaving. The female birds take charge of the nest making and are the exclusive weavers, although the males sometimes pitch in by gathering fine grasses, horsehair, bark strips and even plastic for the female, who patiently weaves the fibres into a suspended basket. Building the nest is a three step process beginning with a large outer supporting structure, then an inner bowl of springy fibres which maintains the shape of the nest, and, finally, a soft, downy lining of fibers and feathers which encloses the eggs and the young. This construction job usually requires one to two weeks. Three to seven pale grey eggs are deposited in the nest, which hatch within two weeks. Both parents feed the youngsters by regurgitation until they fledge and leave the nest.

Folklore has it that if you see an oriole, you have survived the worst and luckier times lie ahead.

So, take heart, Phyllis, and given the current state of the world, I'm sure all of us could do with a few oriole sightings.



Photo by Phyllis Cormack

On My Bluebird Trail

by Karen Fahrlander, photos by Karen Fahrlander

Notes from July 26

Accompanied by certified bird bander, Dick Stauffer, Jayne Shaw and I set out to learn more about the bird banding process. A tiny band encoded with a number was attached to 30 Mountain Bluebird fledglings and 14 Tree Swallows. This band is also attached to the specific bird box where the birds fledged. If you recall back in June, I recorded 45 boxes with Tree Swallows inside. For whatever



reason, many of these little hatchlings died during the heavy rains we received resulting in only 14 being banded.

Dick shared fascinating information about his experience monitoring birds over the years, including how each bird has a unique personality. I learned that Tree Swallows only nest once per season. There may be a second female who lays eggs in a nest box, but each female has one brood. The Mountain Bluebirds that were banded were from a second clutch.

Wherever found, these birds can be studied to determine where exactly they migrate. It is amazing to think that Bergen Mountain Bluebirds and Tree Swallows will migrate south and return to the same nesting box where they hatched.

In the fall I will be replacing worn out bird boxes with new ones, donated by Dick. I will also be moving a few boxes to new locations because they were empty all season. According to a bird, it's all about location, location, location!

The Boreal Chickadee family faired well with seven youngsters that fledged. The photos show the eggs, ten-day old hatchlings, and a very busy parent with a mouthful to feed all seven youngsters.



Boreal Chickadee eggs



Two to four day old Boreal Chickadees

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EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY

by Jessie

I Go Camping



Summer time is camping time and I love camping. Well, actually, I've never gone camping. Living right in the middle of a beautiful woods with acres to roam, the people don't see much point in packing up and feeding the mosquitoes somewhere else. And, to tell the truth, if they did go I might not get to travel with them, as it has been said that I smell di(stink)tly like a dog.

But you don't have to feel sorry for me because, instead of me going camping, the camping comes to me. For the last few summers my male person's family has been setting up camp right in our woods for a week. It is so neat. They bring some kids for me to play with and I get lots of romps and pets. They also bring some dogs—funny little types that the coyotes would have for brunch if they ran loose here like

I do.

One of the dogs is an old-timer who can't hear when her people yell at her. (Hmm. Not all bad.) The second is a miniature something-or-other with a short tail and a big moustache. But it is the third who is the most entertaining. He is not much bigger than my cat, Tab, but for some reason he absolutely hates me and spends all his time swearing at me and threatening to kill me. I just grin and say, okay, get on with it. Of course, his people won't let him anywhere near me, so he just keeps swearing.

But even more fun than the kids and the dogs are the suppers! The campers cook up the most interesting meals: simmered pork loin, hamburgers, steak, and best of all, tacos in a bag. My people and I have a regular invitation to join the campers for these suppers. Of course, I, being a dog, try to be unobtrusive and not appear on the brink of starvation but it is amazing how many people drop a crumb or two off their plate and, almost always, some child doesn't finish their dinner so someone has to clean the plate. (Fortunately, all those little dogs have delicate digestion and aren't allowed to eat people food, so I try to help where I can.)

I love camping!

Please Note New Rates for 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.



Just A Thought

by Pat Gibbs

At the time of this writing, I truly am waiting for just that.... a thought. Any thought ! My mind is a complete blank. Would it be okay if I blame it on the speed of time? Like how did we get to the end of July and the middle of August so fast? As a rule, I jot down notes for the next Bergen News whenever something occurs to me. But this past month, nothing at all occurred to me.

With my aging memory and long 'to do' list, I have decided I need to get, not only a secretary to do my jotting, but a cleaning person to do my housework. I have not run this idea by my hubby just yet because I certainly don't want him to have any more heart issues. He is doing very well and I try to be considerate and avoid causing more frustrations than I already do. I know he appreciates my honesty here.

There were some enjoyable happenings during July that I recall with laughter and love. One was a BIG birthday celebration for Al. We stayed up 'til midnight the night before the big day, and I asked him why we did that. Well, he informed me, the Bible says we are given three score and ten years to live and, if we have more than that, we are blessed. Soooo..he wanted to make sure he made it to his 70th birthday! Southern folks would say, "Why, bless his heart."

The next great event was the celebration of my big brother, Terry, and his wife, Carol's, 50th wedding anniversary. We had a wonderful time. Four other friends celebrated their 50th as well. God bless them!

The gardens are fairly happy right now, having suffered very little from the hail and heavy rains last month. I was sorry to hear how some gardens were hit hard during that time. One early morning lightning incident was a tad frightening to me. The clouds were very low and heavy during that evening and, when I got up in the early morning, it was like watching a disco show with coloured lights constantly flashing above the clouds. I could hear the ominous rumbling of thunder in the distance. It's never fun to have storms move in at night when a person should be sleeping. I admit my prayer life kicked in pretty fast when lightning, big thunder and very heavy rain began hammering on the roof. It was very loud upstairs where I was sleeping with little Isabell. She didn't even twitch the whole time this racket was going on! Coward that I am, I was very awake and ready to run downstairs and make a cup of coffee. However, I thought better of it and kept praying until the storm passed by. Al never heard anything either. How the dickens does that work? Perhaps I won't need hearing aids for a while yet. Thank the Lord that He hears our every prayer even when it is a whisper.

My last bit of summertime news is about none other than our naughty cat, Tigger. Yes, he did what I was hoping he would not do because we kept him fed and watered very well. The other day he was playing by the lilac bushes with something. I just knew it was a small creature of some sort and, sure enough, it was a little bird. I scolded him and he jumped into the lilac bush and left me muttering awhile before reaching out with one paw and carefully pulling his puff ball of feathers into his hiding place. How sassy was that?

Truly folks, I really did not have a single thought when I started my newsletter. I may be able to hold off mentioning a personal secretary to Al for a bit longer.

Til next time.....

Bergen Hall Garage Sale
Something missing in your life?
Check out the Bergen Hall Garage Sale,
September 24th, 9 am - 2 pm.
20+ tables of amazing treasures!

Musings: And Today Is?

by Phyllis Cormack

Well it's summer time. "That's obvious", you say. And I would agree with you. That's not really a hard thing to figure out. But now tell me what day of the week it is? That can be more difficult. A friend might ask me "What are you doing Tuesday?" I then will stop what I'm doing and ponder what day it is today and then try and remember if I have any plans for Tuesday. It's frustrating and I'm not sure how to fix it.

I don't want a job. That would likely solve the problem. When you work out of the home, you're more apt to remember what day of the week you are on. Although, I was talking to a friend who works various shifts and she said that every day she starts her shift it feels like Monday regardless of what day it really is. So maybe that's not the answer.

Our minds are filled with so much information coming at us that it's difficult sometimes to determine exactly what needs our attention. Prioritizing is wonderful if you can find time to do it.

So I will continue to go blundering through the week until I chance to look at my calendar and discover where I'm supposed to be on a given day. The preference being that I haven't missed an important event. Not much you can do if that's the case.

Our lives are pretty simple—no tight scheduling here. We attend church on Sundays. Then Monday is laundry day in keeping with what I learned from my mom. That gets my week started. Ray gets calls from neighbours requiring mechanical aid. That keeps him busy and fills his days. So from Monday it's all downhill and gathers speed as the days pass. The weeks go by in a flash, hence my confusion as to what day it is.

We are ending August already and I really struggle with the idea that fall is quickly approaching. Another summer in the history books.

Time waits for no man I've heard. I guess it doesn't really matter what day it is as long as we make the most of it and thank God for the time He gives us.

Editor's note: Christmas Concert rehearsals are underway.

Teacher

by Marilyn Halvorson

November was flying by. Every day it seemed that some new complication arose. One cold Monday, as my students and I sat around the stove eating our lunches, someone casually asked, "Teacher, who's going to build the stage for the concert this year?"

I'm sure I literally blinked with surprise. "Stage?" I echoed.

"You know," Mary Cranston explained helpfully, "the high thing we stand on so the audience can see us."

"I know what a stage is," I retorted a little more crisply than I had meant to. "I just hadn't thought about needing to get one built."

"The teacher's husband usually did it before," chimed in Sue Klein.

"But she doesn't have a husband," said little Bessie Wilton.

"Put your lunches away now," said I. "Time for class again." To myself, I said, "I'll think about the stage tomorrow."

And so I did. Because, bright and early, the little Arnesons arrived by team and sleigh, driven by Leif. I stepped out on the porch to see him helping the little ones gather their books and lunches and climb down from the sleigh.

"Hello Miss O'Rourke," he said, gallantly doffing his rabbit fur hat and giving me his killer grin. "Let me know a couple of days before you want me to build the stage, so I can haul home some planks." Without waiting for a yes, no, or maybe, he clucked to the horses and they were off in a cloud of snow.

So much for the stage.

But there were more problems waiting in the wings. The plays and recitations were coming along well. However, for the life of me, I could not understand how a boy whose voice on the playground could be heard halfway to Bergen was reduced to whispering his recitation. I stood at the back of the room shouting "SPEAK UP!" until I, too, was almost reduced to whispering. Still, I felt sure that we would master the speaking parts.

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Garden Quizz

by Noreen Olson

With GUEST COLUMNIST, MARIGOLD MULCH

The gardening season is in full swing and once again Gardening Guru, Miss Marigold Mulch, has consented to answer a few questions sent in by our faithful readers.

Dear Miss Mulch: I have a large rock garden that I would like to plant with annuals but it is full of quack grass, chickweed, thistle and dandelions. Because I am an ardent defender of the environment, I do not use chemicals of any kind. What are my options? Purist

Dear Purist: Well then, get down on your knees and start digging. Be sure to get all the roots. If you leave even a scrap they will grow back bigger and better. When you finish digging the chickweed at one end of the garden go back and start over again because that's how fast it grows. But hey, you are entitled to the courage of your convictions and, when you are finished digging those weeds, jump on your bike, because cars pollute, and peddle to the nearest feedlot for some organic fertilizer. Lawn mower emissions contribute hugely to the loss of air quality but a few sheep will help to keep your lawn neat and if you are planning to grow broccoli, radishes, turnip or cauliflower I understand that soaking them in salt water removes most of the worms. MM

Dear Miss Mulch: What fertilizer do you recommend for Lycopersicon esculentum and can I plant Arrhenatherum elatius subsp. Bulbosum Variegatum under my Betula Pendula? Unsure

Dear Unsure: If Miss Mulch knew that much Latin she would be wearing a white uniform and filling prescriptions in a nice clean Pharmacy, not wearing rubber boots while stirring smelly compost.

MM

Dear Miss Mulch: Several years ago we built a long, curved, raised bed to hide the dead grass and dropped needles under an enormous Spruce Tree. For a couple of years I grew lovely flowers there but now the flowers are stunted looking, droopy and sad. What went wrong? Concerned

Dear Concerned: If you dig into your lovely raised bed you will find that it is filled with an impenetrable network of Spruce roots. These roots will snatch every drop of moisture that enters the soil. In fact, if you pour water on the area in question, then place your ear against the side of the bed, you can hear sounds of slurping and swallowing. Unless you can find plants that require almost no water you are in a hopeless situation. Miss Mulch suggests that you cover the bed with plywood, make a nice long tablecloth and go into the catering business. Think what an impressive buffet table your flowerbed would make. MM

Dear Miss Mulch: My neighbours have two very large dogs that have become frequent visitors to my yard. It was bad enough when they peed on the rose bushes and left filthy deposits on the lawn but now they have begun digging up flower beds to bury dead gophers. I have spoken to the owners several times but the dogs still run free. What do you suggest? Disgusted

Dear Disgusted: Is your gun registered? MM

Miss Mulch regrets that she is unable to answer questions from individual readers and she in no way counsels her friends to actually shoot dogs. Some decisions you have to make for yourselves. MM

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.

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 alternative services will be listed.

The Bergen Church is open for services every Sunday starting at 10:30 am.

It's so good to have those who are visiting or camping in our area drop in for a service or two. Being together to worship and give each other support is what we all need. As we are told in Hebrews 10:25 "Do not stop meeting together ...but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

The Children's Feature presented before the message is entertaining and a good learning experience for all ages. Thank you to those who take the time to prepare and share.

Alanna Waines and Scott Anderson will continue to be involved with the youth program.

"The Den", or Sundre Youth Centre, provides various activities for our youth who are looking for a place to "hang out" after school and in the evening. It is open Monday to Friday. 3-6 p.m. for Grades 7-9 and 6-9 p.m. for Grades 10-12. During these times there are special events happening.

The Family Fun Night went well, although the weather wasn't the best for outdoor activity. There is need for more adult help with the welcoming of attendees as well as with some of the games etc.

Sunday School will be starting up again in September. Anyone interested in helping in the classrooms are welcome to do so .

Sympathy is extended to those who have lost loved ones.

On a happier note, congratulations are extended to Aaron and Bronwen Cunningham on the birth of their little girl, Frankie Irene Nelda. Proud grandparents are Jim and Nola Bowhay and Gordy and Nancy Cunningham.

Betty Josephson is pleased to have another grandson in her family. Heston Henry was born to Suzie and Jordan Thoring living in Saskatchewan.

Connie and Kevin Sheppard are also happy to have a new little grandson, Sam Connor, who was born to Janessa and Jon Suderman.

God takes away but then He gives.

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'.

If you want to donate food to the McDougal Chapel food bank, it can be taken to the Chapel. There is a door bell you can ring to alert them that you are there. A phone call will let you know if there is someone there to open the door for you. Their number is 403-638-3503. You can also donate by e-transfer. Contact McDougal Chapel or check their website for information. Times have been hard for a lot of folks who depend on this food bank.

If you have prayer needs, please call or email Leila Schwardtzenberger 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 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/>

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.

Eight Generations!



Maureen Worobetz of Bergen appears in both of these family photos which each represent five generations of her family. In the left photo Maureen is the youngest member of her family. She is four months old and is held by her 96 year old great great grandmother, Margaret Allan. Sitting beside Margaret is her son, 76 year old David Allan. He is Maureen's great grandfather. Behind David is Maureen's mother, Leola McBeath (Buehler) and next to Leola is Maureen's grandmother, Doris Buehler (Allan).

In the right hand photo the baby is one month old Ruth Leola. She is held by her mother, Alyssa Marie Muters (Worobetz). Standing behind Alyssa on her right is the baby's great great grandmother, Leola Ruth McBeath. Next to Leola is great grandmother, Arla Maureen Worobetz (McBeath). Next to Maureen is grandmother, Sharon Linda Payne (Worobetz).

So that makes a total of eight generations.

Margaret Allan grew up in Ontario before moving to Nanton. David Allan had a grocery store and post office in Parkland. Doris Buehler (Allan) grew up in Parkland and married Merton Buehler who was an elevator agent and later bought a farm near Olds in the dirty thirties. Maureen and her mother both grew up on that farm. Merton's brother married Doris's sister, so the two families were doubly related by marriage.

Family histories are so interesting.

Piano and Music Theory Lessons

Angela Frankowski 403-850-8279 Angela.f4@gmail.com

ARCT RMT ATCL BSC BED

- I am thrilled to call the Bergen area home! Having recently moved here from Calgary, I am opening my studio for:
- Piano & Music Theory & Appreciation Lessons
- Speech Arts & Drama Lessons
- Beginner to advanced, all ages.
- Exam & festival preparation & recitals.
- Over 20 years' experience. Registered music teacher (RMT).
- Speech Adjudicator with award-winning students achieving highest grades in Canada.
- Bergen & Sundre area and beyond.
- Fall classes start September 12th.

There's No Place Like Home

by Shari Peyerl

Some people are adventurers, delighting in new experiences in foreign locales. Other people are homebodies, relishing familiar pleasures in favourite places. Discovering which category you belong to is as simple as taking a short trip to a neighbouring province.

I grew up in Saskatchewan, being frequently uprooted and replanted in numerous small towns, due to my father's occupation. By my teens, we had put down roots in Saskatoon. As a typical middle-class family of the period, travel was limited to visiting nearby relatives for winter holiday celebrations and two-week automotive summer vacations. However, Dad's subscription to *National Geographic* and the eventual acquisition of cable television expanded my exposure to foreign scenes.

I longed for freedom and independence. I spent my teenage years clipping travel columns from my hometown newspaper, and fantasizing about touring romantic exotic destinations. Then, of course, I grew up. Somehow, I did not regularly find myself casually flitting from exploring a market in Fez, to attending a symphony in London, to munching croissants in a Paris café. My childhood self had forgotten to account for the financial requirements of globetrotting.

But, it turns out I'm not suited to that lifestyle anyway, as illustrated by my experiences on a recent get-away to Kelowna, B.C. Zipping along the Trans-Canada and marvelling at the majestic Rockies rising from the roadsides, I felt confined. Visiting Okanagan vineyards and sipping their wines was novel, but I failed to appreciate the differences between their expensive wares. Wave-surfing behind an impressive powerboat necessitated a terrifying proximity to fathomless depths of water and a greater internal equilibrium than I possess.

The return drive through the construction zone at Golden, which placed me on the outside edge of the constricted and winding track carved between a sheer wall of crumbling rocks and the oblivion of precipitous cliffs was my undoing. I didn't regain my breath until we passed the Canmore exit and the horizon began to open to the blue expanse of ranchland sky. The nearer we came to Bergen, the stronger the pull I felt drawing me home.

Despite the travails of the journey itself, the trip did have enjoyable aspects as well. My darling husband and I spent two days in the truck discussing a wide variety of topics. We strolled through an unfamiliar arid landscape, and I sat on the rocky shore of Lake Okanagan. We witnessed beautiful vistas and an awe-inspiring lightning storm. We wandered through shady gardens remarking on the unusual plants. I found quiet moments to read an engaging book. We feasted on delicious cuisine and discovered a fabulous bakery with a variety of delectable treats. And, we had relaxed conversations with friends.

Overall, my recent voyage of discovery highlighted that I don't need the whirlwind of travel to be happy. I am content to be at home in Bergen, because everything I value is here. I enjoy my family and can find friendly faces nearby. Boreal forest and gardens surround me. I have shelves of treasured books to hand. And I need only go as far as the Bergen Hall to explore the local farmers' market for interesting merchandise, to hear artful music, and to taste yummy fresh foods like sourdough croissants. I guess I'll kick off my travelling shoes and put my feet up here in sunny Bergen.

Teacher, continued from page 5

The singing, however, was something different. It is not easy to teach children a song when one, to put it bluntly, can't carry a tune in a bucket. I tried to pick the very simplest of tunes but, by the end of one rehearsal, when even Jingle Bells came out sounding unfamiliar, I was very nearly reduced to tears. Fortunately it was at the end of the day so the children and I were able to escape from our mutual torture.

I could hear sleigh bells as parents drove in to pick up their children, but by now I was too demoralized to do more than sit with my head in my hands. I thought everyone had gone but, suddenly, I heard footsteps coming across the floor. I looked up to find the smiling face of Ida Grayson looking down at me. "Hey there, Katie. You look like you've lost your last friend. What's the matter?"

"Oh, Ida, I will have lost all of my friends when they hear my Christmas concert."

"What? The young'uns tell me it's going to be great. Well, maybe except for the singin'," she added a bit reluctantly. "They did mention you weren't much of a singer."

"That's the understatement of the year," I moaned.

"Well, don't worry. I can sing, play the guitar, whistle, and even yodel if anyone'll let me. Tomorrow morning I'll stay and we'll have those little ones singin' like birdies if it kills them."

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Alberta Towns: an occasional series

by Jamie Syer

Trochu

I grew up in small-town Alberta. It was a time when most towns and villages had a railway station—for both passenger and freight. And if a railway, they also had a local newspaper, a post office, a telephone exchange staffed with an operator, and a whole panoply of stores and services: groceries, drugstore, hardware store, furniture, clothing stores, photography studio, garages and implement dealers, banks, churches (usually full on Sundays), schools, hospital, dentist, doctor (he made house calls), restaurants, grain elevators, hotel and tavern, a noon siren—that was Trochu in the early 1960s, population about 700. Nearby Acme had half that number, but still boasted a thriving local newspaper, a railway station, and a similar collection of businesses.

This summer, we decided to use an occasional day off to visit some of the towns of my childhood, as well as others we could easily get to within a couple of hours of Bergen. Trochu was our first excursion.

The town has an unusual history. It was established even before the railway arrived, by a group of settlers from France, led by Armand Trochu. M. Trochu and his companions formed the St. Anne Ranch Trading Company, which became the nucleus for other homesteaders in the area. Once the Grand Trunk Railway arrived in 1910, the town grew quickly.

One of Trochu's best-loved citizens was Dr. Stewart Hay, who arrived in 1946 and served the community as its only doctor until his death in 1973. His house was just beyond the north edge of town, on a five-acre parcel where he planted dozens of varieties of trees and shrubs—including some that were rarely grown in the area. The story is that he was so well-regarded that when he died, though the population of Trochu was only 900, over 1,000 people attended his funeral. Since the 1980s, one of Trochu's most beautiful attractions has been the Arboretum that the town created on Dr. Hay's property.

As a child, my domain in Trochu was an area about four blocks square, which seemed plenty large enough: school, church, main street, my friend's house, my piano teacher, the wild area along the railway tracks where crocuses grew in the spring, and the field behind our house. I rarely ventured into the 'old' part of town, where the streets went off at an angle (pre-railway) and the sidewalks changed from concrete to wood.

Arriving there on a hot day this summer, and parking in front of the church where my dad had been the minister, I was struck by how small my huge four-block domain actually was: one block from school to home; another from home to 'downtown.' Two blocks down a now-empty main street to the vanished railway station and grain elevators. It seemed a ghost town in some ways: all but one or two of the businesses I remember were long gone. But the streets were paved, instead of gravel. Many of the houses I remembered as 'old' were now carefully restored and impressively landscaped. Henry's Shoe Store is still there; the drugstore is still run by the same family as 60 years ago. And the waste area on the edge of town that in my childhood was a graveyard of derelict farm equipment (where I once sliced open my belly on a piece of rusty iron) was now a bike trail and park.

The Arboretum was cool, peaceful, and colourful with flowers. It was as though the town was asleep: we saw almost no one in the parks or on the streets. Our house (then, among the newest in town) was almost unchanged. The front driveway was grassed over; it would be much harder now to bring in a load of coal for the basement furnace, as my dad and I did several times a year.



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Ride With Me

by Donelda Way

My husband and I rode our quads while checking fences. The strong breeze caused the tall, swaying grasses to fluctuate in colour. Natural hues of green, yellow, rust and silver delighted my eyes. As I maneuvered through the indentations in the field, I understood why my husband's trail was not straight. A deer surprised us as it leapt through the grass and over the barbwire fence.

Sundre Freson's: My friend and I were caught in a dust devil. The blowing grit made our bare skin feel like it was being sandblasted.

QEI Crossfield Rest Stop: We saw an older man in shorts, cotton shirt and wide brimmed hat using his telephoto lens to photograph the gophers.

Deerfoot Trail Electronic Sign: Cutoffs are for denim, not traffic.

Amerada Road: The plane repeatedly tipped its right wing almost straight down. Then it would level off and dip its left wing. Levelling off one last time, the plane descended earthward, gliding ever so slowly, just above the buildings and trees. Instantly it vanished!

Colours: Bales of green and gold. Fields of blue flax and yellow canola.

Day trip to Lethbridge, Carstairs Blind Line Rd: Only when the coyote moved was it visible. Otherwise it blended into the sunflower field perfectly. Hwy 23: Speargrass Golf Course has major road construction happening through the valley, preparing for a new subdivision of homes. Once again, I took photos of the Pioneer Home on the corner near the Arrowood intersection. Today it presented more years of weather deterioration. In Vulcan we ate a delicious Chinese buffet meal at Amy's. Near Carmangay, water was spraying from the bottom of the hanging irrigation pipes. Surprise! There is a traffic circle with exits to the towns of Nobleford, Granam and Lethbridge. Board Sign in a field: "Courage Is Contagious." The town of Barons has so, so many turning windmills extending to the horizon! A radio program had an interview with a woman and her nine year old son. They were out boating when a pregnant Eagle Ray jumped out of the water into their boat. The Eagle Ray injured the woman as it bounced around on board the boat. Then it gave birth to four pups (they all died). The female Eagle Ray was released into the water. The boy's mother is recuperating. She is sure she will go boating/fishing again. The boy is not so confident.

Crows and/or ravens have been gathering along the road by the white gate. Today, we rounded the Twp Rd corner. "It's an eagle! It's an eagle!" erupting into flight.

Day trip to Little Elbow Campground: On both sides of Cochrane there was highway construction (overpass and twinning). Two girls and one guy were running up and down on the rocks below the river bridge. Hwy 66 had signs for cows and horses at large. Forget Me Not Pond was an oasis in this scenic mountain terrain. Scuba divers, paddle boarders and kayakers were enthralled by the calm waters that day. Children walking on the gravelly pathways of the shoreline were barefoot!

While driving through the dip at Fallen Timber Creek bridge, my friend said in a hushed tone "Flat rain drops usually mean hail". Within seconds visibility had lessened. The windshield was being pelted. She looked up and said, "I think it's clearing where we are headed". Minutes later, only rain was pouring out of the sky. About ten minutes further along, she stepped out of the vehicle at her house commenting, "It looks like more to the west". It was starting to hail as I pulled into our yard which was vacant of its usual vehicles. My husband was big arm waving me into the hayshed to park. Observations: The loud sounds of thunder. The hammering of hail stones on the hayshed with its tin roof. The quivering body of Oliver (our dog) as he wedged himself between his humans for protection. The sense of security as we humans huddled together holding hands.

Soft, grayish coloured grasses grew in front of the tall, green, wide blades of grass surrounding the bull rushes (cat tails). Sometimes during the process of cutting, loading and moving three fallen trees off the fence line, we would have to stop and reload or shift some branches and tree sections onto the skidsteer bucket or quad trailer as we moved along the rocky, muddy, uneven trail. I was amazed! High up a healthy-looking spruce branch had snapped off the main tree. This thick limb was folded in half, hanging downward. The weight would have been extreme. The limb was heavily laden with cones.

Less Familiar Bergen Residents

The first four are from a trail camera.



photo from Pat Cummins



photo from Pat Cummins



photo from Pat Cummins

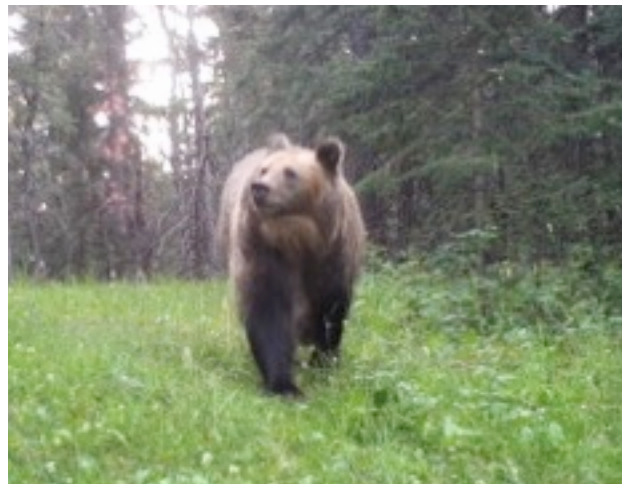
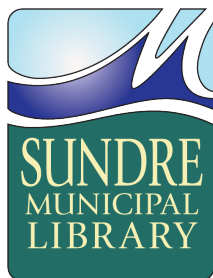


photo from Pat Cummins



Photo by Phyllis Cormack

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE SUNDRE LIBRARY



Sundre Library

The library will be open:

Tuesday 9:00 – 4:30 PM

Wednesday 12:00 – 7:30 PM

Thursday 12:00 – 4:30 PM

Friday 12:00 – 4:30 PM

Saturday 11:00 – 2:30 PM

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



DIY Autumn Centerpieces

Wednesday, Sept 28, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Sundre Library

\$15. All materials supplied. Call to register.



Richard Van Camp Author Talk

Wednesday, Sept 14, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Sundre Library (virtual presentation)

Indigenous author shares from his new book *Gather*.

Genealogy

Tuesday, Sept 20, 9:30 – 11:30 AM

Sundre Library

Research your roots.

Music & Movement

Sept 14- Oct 12, 10:00 – 12:00 PM

Sundre Library

Death & Dying Author Talk

Wednesday, Sept 21, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Sundre Library

Two authors share their books on grief.



The Bergen Farmers' Market

The regular market season ends September 10th

If you miss out, watch for the Thanksgiving Market on October 8th.

All markets run 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.

Teacher, continued from page 9

True to her promise, Ida Grayson appeared at the school almost every day in the following weeks. Strumming her guitar and urging this one to sing out and that one to “sing just a little quieter, darlin’,” she soon had the class whipped into musical shape. Some of her ideas were a bit unorthodox but others were brilliant. One of the best was when she trained two little girls to sing Silent Night accompanied by her guitar. What could be better, since the song’s writer had first composed it playing a guitar?

With the music taken care of, a flash of insight solved my other worrisome problem. While everyone else was practicing recitations and play parts, I watched Tom Claymore, in his own little world as always, drawing and colouring beautiful pictures. Of course! How had I missed it? I had a job in the concert for Tom. In that moment he became our backdrop designer. Soon he was transforming long sheets of brown store paper into Bethlehem’s stable, Santa’s workshop, and any other scene we needed.

We were all enjoying a little free reading just before home time one early December afternoon when whispering started to sift across the room. I looked up to see heads turning toward the windows. I looked out and couldn’t believe my eyes. Minutes ago, the sky had been blue. Now it was an angry grey and wind-whipped snow obscured the barn, just a stone’s throw away. As if the storm could not make its point visually, there was a sudden howl of wind that sent a puff of smoke back down the chimney and out through a tiny crack in the seal of the stove’s door.

Many thoughts raced through my mind at that moment but the strongest was, I cannot let these children leave the school in this. But what should I do? What would the parents think as they waited anxiously for children who didn’t come?

Perhaps it was the ferocity of the storm or perhaps the children felt my own uncertainty. For whatever reason, a couple of the little ones began to cry. I pulled myself together and called out cheerfully, “I think we’ll just stay and play games for a little while till it stops snowing. Come on, push the desks aside and we’ll play Drop the Handkerchief.”

In the next hour we went through my entire repertoire of games and the tears had been dried. Still, as early December darkness began to fall, unease had begun to creep across the room again.

Suddenly, Ruby Cranston shouted, “Listen!” and, sure enough, through the howling wind came the faint jingle of sleigh bells. As one, 20 children surged toward the door, which opened to admit a snowman. He shook himself and turned into Leif Arneson.

“Leif!” I exclaimed, so glad to see him that I almost forgot myself and threw my arms around him. *Almost*. First and foremost I was a teacher and it behoved me to behave like one.

“I knew you’d have sense enough to keep the children here,” he said, relief in his voice. “Bob,” he nodded to my biggest pupil, “come and help me stable the horses and bring in some things.”

The two disappeared into the swirling snow. I caught a glimpse of a pile of oat bundles on the sleigh. Leif would remember that the ponies waiting in the barn, as well as his team, would need to be fed. Moments later, Leif and Bob stamped back in, each carrying several bulging gunny sacks. It was as if Christmas had already come. Out came loaves of fresh brown bread, dishes of butter and jam, jars of milk, and tins of sugar cookies.

Leif grinned. “Mother would be able to find food for an army on short notice.” Then he pulled out a coffee pot and a jar of freshly ground coffee beans.

When I looked askance at the coffee he retorted, “Well, what do you expect? I’m Norwegian, you know.”

I had to admit that, even to an Irish girl, that coffee tasted wonderful.

After supper and more games by kerosene lamplight, it was time to settle the children for the night. We stood by the back door, holding a lantern for a beacon in the night, and watching that each little group of boys and girls safely made the short excursion to their respective privies. Suddenly, a terrible thought struck me. “We can’t stay here together tonight,” I burst out.

“What?”

“Well,” I sputtered, “it’s—it’s not proper.”

Leif laughed out loud. “Katie, we’re going to have 20 little chaperones. I’d say that’s about as proper as it gets.”

I sighed. “I guess you’re right. But I don’t know what Aunt Nettie would say.”

“I hope she’d say she didn’t want you send an innocent man to his death in a blizzard.” He grinned down at me and there, in the semi-darkness he stole a kiss—if you can steal something that is freely given.

On My Bluebird Trail, continued from page 14



Ten day old Boreal Chickadee hatchlings



Parent with a mouthful to feed all seven youngsters

Trochu, continued from page10

It was probably the improved country roads, better automobiles, and the disappearance of the railway that were most responsible for gradually changing the way of life in towns like Trochu. The roads could be pretty awful. I recently saw a poster giving directions to a country dance near Acme in the 1950s, that proudly promised “gravel all the way.” In other words: gravel, not dirt.

When I lived in Trochu, the two-hour car trip to Calgary occupied one whole stress-filled day: leaving early in the morning, getting home well after dark. Highway 27 to Olds was gravel or non-existent, so it was a winding route along Highway 9 (paved!) that eventually took us into Calgary on 16th Avenue. It certainly wasn't a trip to be undertaken on a whim. For a few decades, Trochu and similar towns were self-sufficient for their residents, their farmers, their businesspeople. Now, Three Hills is an easy ten minutes away; Olds, half an hour; Crossiron Mills, barely over an hour.

Nowadays, don't go to Trochu for shopping (except for shoes), or expect to find a double cappuccino. But the Arboretum is well worth a visit, and a stroll along quiet, shaded streets and through unexpected pocket parks. It was a busy place in 1960. It's more peaceful now, and perhaps even prettier.



Gazebo in the Trochu Arboretum



From My Office Window

by Brian and Kim Allan

The Bergen area is great for butterflies and bees (of all sorts), sometimes all at the same time... Enjoy the wildlife!

