



November, 2020 Issue 34

FALL NEWSLETTER

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TOL 1H0*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By: Karen Ritchie

Well, 2020 has certainly been a different year, one we didn't see coming! It was not the way we expected to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Bar U National Historic Site. The site has never looked better though, with many of the out buildings receiving a fresh coat of paint or white wash and the restoration of the work horse barn.

As things were a lot quieter at the ranch due to Covid 19, and most of the events at the Bar U were cancelled, the Friends have focused their energy in a different direction. Many Directors spent time typing up the stories from our collection of Stockmen's Dinner family history presentations from 2002 to 2020. We are excited to announce that we working on a book that will showcase all the pioneer stories. It is nearing completion so, watch for it in the next while. You can follow us on Facebook for news as to when it will be available for sale.

Another new initiative we have undertaken is to form a Restoration Committee. The Friends have a collection of donated artifacts and equipment that are displayed and used on site. The committee will prioritize what items need attention and repair and work on these as funds and time allow.

As our major fundraising event, the Stockmen's Dinner, is not able to happen this year, the Friends are looking at different ways to raise money. If you have a registered cattle or horse brand, for \$100 the Friends will make a Brand Board and permanently display it in the Visitor's Information Center at the Bar U. This may be a good way to honor the memory of a loved one, or perhaps a Christmas gift



for that hard to buy for person, and support the Friends at the same time. A Brand Board application form is enclosed with this Newsletter, and is also available on our website: www.friendsofthebaru.ca

Thank you to all the Directors, Bar U and Friends staff and the wonderful volunteers that keep the Bar U vibrant! Let's hope that 2021 season is a little closer to the normal we once knew!

STOCKMAN'S DINNER REPORT

By: Karen Ritchie

The 22nd annual Stockmen's Dinner has been postponed to January 29, 2022 due to COVID-19. The Highwood Memorial Centre has been great working with us to transfer all our monies paid for the event to 2022 without penalty.



SIGNAGE & ADVERTISING

By: Marian Anton

The Friends of the Bar U Website and Facebook page have proven to be invaluable tools to keep the public informed during this very unusual year. With limited activities and visitation at the actual Site, we have still been able to share with our fans some of the great things that were happening at the ranch this past summer. We have over 30,000 fans following our Facebook page from more than 43 different countries around the world! In October alone, we had nearly 4,000 visits to our page. Our website is updated regularly, to try to ensure that the most current information is available. We are also working on getting an Instagram page up and running, which many folks find more convenient.

Please visit the "Friends of the Bar U" Facebook page for current news, great pictures of the ranch, and special posts from Parks Staff. Check out our website at www.friendsofthebaru.ca to keep up to date with what is happening at the Bar U!

TREASURER'S REPORT

By: Doug Longson



The Friends were fortunate this year in that we held the Stockmen's Dinner, our major fundraiser, in January, prior to the outbreak of Covid-19. Earnings from the Stockmen's Dinner, membership sales, grants, and our calf crop were sufficient to meet our operating costs.

The Casino, slated for spring of 2021, has been delayed, and the timing is uncertain. Casino money was used for equipment repair, refurbishment of an antique hay rake, and purchase of a cultivator. A grant was received from Foothills Community Support Services and was used in support of our volunteer program. FCSS has allowed us to expand the use of this grant to include publishing a book comprised of presentations from past Stockmen's Dinners.

Going forward the income from the Bar U Legacy fund, and the calf crop will see us through the impact of the Covid-19 virus. Special thanks to Kathy Nelson & Carole Hergert – Friends; Rose Dayment – Payroll; Liz Hergert and Steven Muth – accounting (Muth & Company).

Thank you Parks Canada for allowing us to use the Ranch House as our office.

BAR U LEGACY FUND

By: Doug Longson

The Bar U Legacy Fund is an endowment fund managed for us by The Calgary Foundation. The income from this fund is traditionally used to support the Ranch Rodeo – our main event – which showcases historical ranching practices. An endowment fund is a registered fund that never spends the capital contribution but generates income through investments. Annually, a percentage of the income is distributed to the Friends, and the balance is re-invested in the fund. This way the fund continues to grow, and the gift keeps on giving in greater amounts every year. The Bar U Legacy Fund continues to grow. The income from this fund (\$9,500 this year) was used to support our operations. Contributing to the Friends of the Bar U Historic Ranch Legacy Fund now, means you will be a supporter of the Historic Bar U Ranch forever.

For Further information please contact Doug Longson at 395-3336, or write to us at:

P.O. Box 82 Longview AB T0L 1H0.



VOLUNTEER REPORT

By: Lynne Steele

Because of the situation with the pandemic there were not many opportunities to involve volunteers this past season at the Bar U. We did have a few regulars help out with the Chore Horse Competition, which we were so happy to be able to run this year.

I had a meeting with Dylan and Sandra regarding the current volunteer list, and we brainstormed ideas on new and different ways to use volunteers on the site. Many interesting ideas came about. We look forward to implementing some of these new ideas next season.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at the Bar U, please contact the Friends of the Bar U, or the Bar U Ranch administrative office. We would love to see you!

CATTLE COMMITTEE REPORT

By: Stephen Hughes

As the head of the cattle committee I am again pleased to report on the evolution of the Friends' cow herd through 2020, and into 2021.

2020 was another great year for the Friends' cow herd. We had a very successful calving season, with no losses, and we extend our thanks to Patrick Davis for his hard work and care of the herd once again. We sold 31 calves in October, as well as four cull cows. Four new heifers have been purchased from McPherson Ranch; another step in making the herd stronger, younger, and more consistent. This fall the herd is once again going into winter at 31 head.



Our bull seems to be going strong, and should be fine for another year.

Patrick had a Verified Beef Audit take place this year and all is on track with the herd. I want to thank Patrick Davis for his efforts in getting this accomplished, and helping to promote the sustainable practices of the Friends cow herd, and of our industry at large. The vaccination and herd health program continues to be implemented along with the help of Dr. Jordan Holt of Black Diamond.



I trust that I am continuing to fulfill the commitment I made to the Friends to organize the cow program on their behalf. Thank you to the board for their support throughout the last year.

SPECIAL EVENTS REPORT

By: Marian Anton



We didn't have a Ranch Rodeo this year, but we plan to make up for it with a bigger and better edition next summer! Happily, we were able to hold a couple of great events in the arena over the summer and fall. The Extreme Cowboy Challenge group came out in August and held a wonderfully entertaining event in the Arena at the Bar U. We will be glad to welcome them back next year for sure, as well as a weekend with the Mounted Shooters Group from Southern Alberta.

CHORE HORSE COMPETITION

In September, we were so excited to be able to hold our annual Chore Horse Competition! We welcomed 10 competitors – some familiar faces, and some new ones! The day was perfect and we had a very good crowd in the bleachers! Many thanks to the volunteers and Parks staff who worked hard to make the day a success, as well as to our judges, Dwight Beard and Ray VanTighem. A huge thank you to Ralph Nelson of Highwood Valley Ranch, and the Earl Family, for co-sponsoring the Olsen silver buckle which was presented to the winner of the competition – Geoff Hoar from Innisfail – for the third year in a row, with his team of roan Belgians! Second place went to Mike Hopp, third place to Nathan Stone, and our People's Choice Award went to the Percheron team of Bert and Ernie, driven by Floyd Mullaney.



SITE MANAGER'S REPORT

By: Dylan Spencer



I would like to thank all of our staff, the Friends, and those volunteers who gave time and energy to the Bar U this summer. Most of you will have received and read the comprehensive volunteer newsletter that Sandra prepared and which gave a very good overview of the summer and all the creativity and contributions staff, Friends and volunteers have made.

Winston Churchill said "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts." Much has been said about our unprecedented times so I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize initiatives and actions which I believe will continue to contribute positively to the future of the site. This year we celebrated (albeit quietly) our 25th anniversary and we have quite a good foundation to build on. When the Bar U opened 25 years ago that was not a beginning, but the crest of a wave of effort that had been set in motion years before. The effort of community members, Parks staff and many others over the years contributed to the Bar U ranch being chosen and having now served time as a commemorating symbol of the ranching industry in Canada.

Since 1995, when we opened, we have seen computers and the internet rise, smart phones dominate, education and learning transform, Y2K (remember that!), 911, more and more diverse populations of people become our neighbors and co-workers, COVID, space X flights (this weekend!) to name a very few. These have affected most or many of us and some have a very real impact on operations at the Bar U. Nevertheless, as I tell colleagues in Parks Canada, one of the things that sets the Bar U apart from many other sites is that we are not only commemorating the past but also celebrating the reality of a living breathing industry and culture that feeds Canadians, contributes to our economy and is a genuine way of life.



On that note, despite the pandemic and its effect on our operations, events, and planning, we are taking this time to reflect and envision the next 5, 10 and even 25 years. Parks Canada's CEO has made National Historic Sites one of his priorities. We will have a final management plan that lays out strategic direction for the next 10 years ratified by this coming summer. We are having many conversations about

all that has been done to present the ranching industry at the Bar U and how to continue protecting tangible aspects of that culture such as buildings, artefacts and natural landscapes. Physical objects are one thing, but it is also how to preserve and present more intangibles things such as the stories, traditional skills, knowledge of land and animals and the family histories and values that forged a way of life.



Standing on the solid foundation that has been built by those before us we hope to take our modern realities such as computer technology, social media, expanding interconnectedness, and rapid communications and turn them to benefit the Bar U. Examples of these are the introduction of an indigenous node to our site offering, a recent approval for increased social media capacity, multi-media film projects that highlight work being done at the ranch, exploration of workable accommodation options at the Bar U, development of a restoration monitoring APP to better monitor

building conditions and predict costs, the Friends work on the family histories book which is coming together very well, to name just a few. The commitment of all our staff and volunteers in presenting the story of ranching and the creativity in doing so this summer are a testament to the continued living legacy of the Bar U Ranch National Historic Site.

RESTORATION COMMITTEE REPORT (new) by Cam Wendell

The Restoration Committee is new to the Friends' Board, and was deemed to be a very necessary addition to the roster of committees. The Friends have a large collection of equipment and machinery on site, and most will be in need of maintenance, restoration or repair. Since joining the Board in March, I have been going through what assets the Friends have at the Bar U, and what the various repair and restoration issues may be. As of today, the radiator on the Case tractor has been repaired, and the '49 Mercury truck has been given some repair and replacement parts. In the coming months, I will do some engine service work on the 1 ton truck, as well as a differential oil refill. The '49 Mercury requires service and ignition points installed, and I will get the Allis Chalmers diesel generator up and running. The Friends have recently acquired a TD14 crawler tractor. I will be heading up to Water Valley, to pick this up on Dec 1st.



COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

By: Ken Chatel

It has been a quiet year on the donation front with a few artifacts being donated and several paintings. Our focus continues to be on artifacts that represent life in the ranching community, are dated prior to 1950, and are donated with no conditions attached. In May 2020, we approved a new "Donation Agreement" form which outlines more clearly the agreement a donator makes when donating to the Friends. The Friends Collection currently has 2880 items donated by 206 donators. We have placed these donations in 31 different places on the Bar U property. These donations help the Bar U tell the storey of the ranching history in Alberta.

In 2020 we received: a 1907 scythe; 4 NWMP/RCMP Blankets; a four-horse evener; and a "metal shear". In addition, an acrylic painting, by Cliff FAULKNER called – "My First Horse" – a child's picture of western life; an original oil on canvas painting of the Foothills by Robert GISSING; and 3 paintings of the Bar U by Joyce MARSHALL, a previous board member.

******* EXCITING NEWS *******

With the restrictions keeping Bar U activities limited, it has allowed us to dig into completing a Book of the Histories of the Families that were honoured at the yearly Stockmen's Dinners from its start in 2002, all the way through to 2020! The Book, entitled:

FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS OF THE BAR U

PIONEER FAMILY HISTORIES AS PRESENTED AT THE STOCKMEN'S DINNERS

is to be printed before the end of this year and will be available for sale in January, 2021. Watch for information on availability of the book on the Friends of the Bar U Facebook page! A big thank you to everyone who has worked on this project over the past several years.

