



November 2023

Issue 36

## **FALL NEWSLETTER**

Published by The Friends of The Bar U with headquarters at the Bar U Ranch NHS  
Box 82, Longview, Alberta.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**December 2nd, 2023, 10 am to 5 pm – Christmas Market**

**January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – Stockmen's Dinner**

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 – Annual General Meeting**

### **Presidents Report**

**By: Ken Chatel**

2023 was a great year with Bar U open and all events running. Events included the Stockmen's Dinner, Ranch Rodeo, Chore Horse Competition, Canada Day, and a Kids Christmas Party. All were great events with lots of guests coming to enjoy.

I'd like to thank the Board of Directors and all our volunteers for another very successful year. Their constant effort and dedication is why the Bar U events are so much fun to attend. The Chairs of the Committees deserve a special thank you as they helped all of us stay on task and make the events a success. Our committees are – Collections, Cattle, Restoration, Membership, Volunteer, Finance and Gift Shop, Special Events, and Signage and Advertising. In 2022 we had three Board members step down, Marian Anton, Josh Leith, and Lynne Steele, we will miss all the expertise they brought to the Board and thank them for all they have done. We welcomed three new Board members Cody Wensink, Terry Grant and Jean Gallup, who have quickly jumped into roles and helped grow the Board. We still have a couple vacant positions and will see a couple more current Board members completing their terms at the AGM in March. If you have an interest in the Bar U and skills to help us move forward, please consider putting your name forward for the Board. It is an awesome experience.

Of course, we could not operate without a great partnership with Parks Canada. The Bar U Site Manager, Megan Hjørleifson, and her team are a super group to work with. Our relationship continues to get better every day and we have lots of fun managing the events.

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](http://www.friendsofthebaru.ca)

Thank you to all of you that came out and enjoyed our events. I look forward to seeing all of you at future events.

## **Stockmen's Dinner Report**

**By: Karen Ritchie**

The 23rd annual Stockmen's Dinner will be held Saturday January 27, 2024, at the Highwood Centre in High River. This year we will be honoring the Daley, Thomson and Wyatt families. Hansel and Gretel will be serving up a fine prime rib dinner. Tickets will be available online through Eventbrite as well as Sobey's in High River, Sandstone Pharmacy in Black Diamond, and The Hive in Nanton. Last year's dinner was sold out, so be sure to get your tickets early this year. Tickets will be on sale in early December. If you have an item you would like to donate to the silent auction, please contact me at [kritchie@xplornet.ca](mailto:kritchie@xplornet.ca).

## **Signage & Advertising**

**By: Tamara Garstin**

2023 saw us looking into rebuilding our new webpage. A big thank you goes to Barb Poulsen for always assisting us with our web site. You can look forward to a new and updated website in the Spring of 2024, so stay tuned for that.

We ramped up advertising this year through social media and had excellent results with the ranch rodeo. We were so excited by the stories that came through comments on the ranch rodeo. It was great to connect with more people over the love of historic ranching.

We are also ramping up advertising with the local radio stations and newspapers so please support them where you can. They have been great to work with.

And as always, if you're interested in volunteering with Friends, being on a committee or the board, please feel free to reach out to us. We would love to have you!

## Treasurer's Report

**By: Linda MacDonald**

I can't believe another year has gone by. We had a productive year with getting our new office set up in the VOC. A great big thank you to Kathy Nelson for doing most of the heavy lifting on this. We finished our year end late because we needed to get a new accounting system. Thanks to Liz Hergert at Transcend LLP for her patience and advice in getting us up and running. She also presented our year-end financial report at our AGM.

Some financial highlights we received \$12,100 from our Legacy fund at the Calgary Foundation. We have attached a QR code where you can donate directly and receive a tax receipt from the Calgary Foundation. This money is invested, and we receive a percentage back annually in the form of a grant which helps run our programs and events, especially Ranch Rodeo. We are in a good financial position currently thanks to our successful Stockmen's Dinner we held in January.

We bought some event tents for the ranch that were much needed. They have come in handy over the summer.

We had a successful summer student program by hiring 3 students through the federally funded Canada Summer Jobs program. This is a great initiative that provides youth in our community with good employment opportunities and provides the Friends and the Bar U ranch with extra hands to work on projects.

Going forward, we are working on our year end, looking into a new point-of-sale system for the gift shop, and getting ready for our Stockmen's Dinner.

In closing, thanks to all members for your continued support of our organization.

## Volunteer Report

**By: Jean Gallop**

Sincerely, thank you to all of our volunteers. Many events, programs and a multitude of other actions would not be accomplished if it weren't for your dedication and hard work. Whether it was assisting with livestock, repairing artifacts, planning and delivering events, collecting and refurbishing artifacts, assisting with all volunteers and whatever comes up. The Bar U Ranch National Historic Site just wouldn't be the Same. YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.

Looking forward to working with you in 2024. Have a very merry Christmas and a very happy New Year.



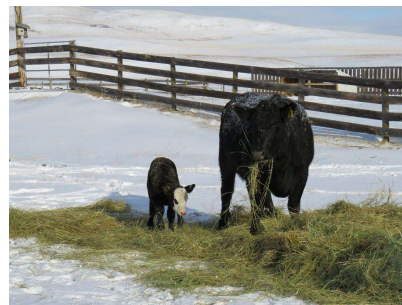
## **Cattle Committee Report**

**By: Steve Fisher**

We started the year with 29 cows, one bull and the star attraction at the Bar U, "Touques". This year's dry weather forced us to make several decisions over the past few months. Based on the dry conditions, preserving our pasture, high hay prices and taking advantage of record prices for calves, cull cows & bulls, we made the decision to sell our 27 calves on September 5th.

For many years the Friends owned the cattle herd at the Bar U and the Parks staff managed the herd. The new License of Occupation (LOC) with Parks Canada places sole management of the herd with the Friends. After considerable discussion with our Board members, we concluded that there was no one on the Board that could properly take care of the herd full-time or even part-time. In discussions with Parks and being respectful to our LOC, we made the difficult decision to sell our remaining herd at fair market value. The Friends will continue to support Parks Canada in any future cattle initiatives.

We would like to thank everyone that was involved over the many years looking after our cattle herd especially Patrick Davis and other Parks staff.



## **Special Events Report**

**By: Ken Chatel**

We hosted a Kids Christmas party in December 2022, with kids doing crafts, sledding, and enjoying a hotdog cook out at Roundup Camp. The weather was cool but nice and we saw many happy faces headed home tired at the end of the day.

Canada Day was our first 2023 event we supported Parks Canada with this year. We helped greet visitors and cooked lunch for all the volunteers. The weather was great, and we had a very good turn-out.

The Ranch Rodeo in August is always our main event of the year. Thank you to everyone that put in so many hours getting everything ready for the event and at the event. It takes a big team to pull it off. Thanks also to Megan and her staff for everything they did for the rodeo.

Megan advised that we had over 700 guests, which was a record attendance for an event this year. We dropped the Broke Horse event and replaced it with a Stray Roping event, and this seemed to go over very well. A big thanks to Charlie Brown who stepped in and did a great job announcing his first Ranch Rodeo. We are looking forward to his return next year. JRRR BBQ attended and cooked up an awesome lunch. We relocated the Marketplace to behind the stands and this proved to be a very good change. We hope a lot more Vendors will attend next year. The Wildies were there again and added some historical flare around the site. Thanks to all the cowgirls and cowboys that attended and competed. They are the stars of the show. In September we helped Parks Canada host the Chore Horse competition. The teams were eager with experienced and rookies working together to put on a good show. We saw another record attendance for the Chore Horse event and are looking forward to increasing those numbers in 2024.

In December 2023, we will be working with Parks Canada to host a Christmas Market at the Visitor Orientation Centre. Be sure to come out and get those last-minute Christmas gifts.

## Site Manager's Report

2023 was a fantastic season here at the Bar U Ranch. Our visitation was up, revenue was up, our volunteer hours were up, and group bookings were up. We welcomed Nevada Benns to our team as Lead Ranch Hand. Patrick Davis is now the Historic Craftsperson for the Bar U, and Lisa Jeffers is now the Visitor Experience Team Lead III and Equine Specialist. Sandra Codd is now the Visitor Experience Product Development Officer. We saw a whole new group of students in maintenance and as student interpreters, along with student visitor services agents.



### Highlights of the Season:

Patrick Davis and his restoration crew are well into the restoration of the Alwood Cabin. The exterior is now complete with a new coat of whitewash; next is to work on the interior for the expected opening to the public for the 2025 season. The Ranch Office also received a new coat of whitewash, and the south and west elevations of the Chophouse windows have been restored and painted.





One of the key projects at the Bar U Ranch is the Visitor Centre rejuvenation project. This will take up to two years to complete. We have been meeting with Parks' Historians and Indigenous Liaisons and are slowly making progress for the new exhibits. We are so excited to be able to tell the stories about the land, the people, and ranching.

The season showed an increase in visitation over last year. We hosted many school groups, tour buses, Extreme Cowboy Challenge, Rocky Mountain Whippet Association of Alberta, Horse Spirit, Canadian Cattle Association, and International Federation of Agriculture Journalists. Travis Jimmy John and Ronine Ryder with Nakota **Itipi** were back to the Bar U Ranch to share the traditional teaching and stories of the Stoney Nakota.

Our special events were a great success with the help of our volunteers and Friends Association; we celebrated Canada Day and participated in the Calgary Stampede Draft Horse Town, Ranch Rodeo, Chore Horse, and National Indigenous People Day. We have one more special event for the year, The Pekisko Creek Western Christmas Market, held on Saturday, December 2, from 10 am – 5 pm.

We want to thank our Friends of the Bar U Historic Ranch Association and volunteers who supported all the special events and worked on many special projects. The volunteer hours were more than



double from last year. Our volunteers built over a dozen wheelchair-accessible picnic tables, restored a wagon, and repaired and restored a wooden washer and a Maytag washer, which was a massive hit with the visitors able to watch demonstrations. Thank you to our volunteer, Wayne Boddy, who helped us in the visitor center before our opening. He helped renovate the Friends' new office area, made two beautiful coffee stands and a barn door that went onto the theater, and put wheels on our display cabinets.

For the winter, we will continue to work on restoration projects, finish the fiber optics into the Piggery, and continue to work on the Visitor Centre Rejuvenation Project.

Thank you to all the Bar U Staff, the Friends of the Bar U, and volunteers for their passion and dedication to keeping the Bar U Ranch a living culture for all to enjoy!



## **Restoration Committee Report**

**By: Cody Wensink**

The Restoration Committee went through some changes in 2023, welcoming two new board members to the committee, Cody Wensink, and Terry Grant. In addition to the new members, the committee worked with Parks Canada to build a new framework for maintaining equipment and completing new restorations. The new structure was put in place to help the Friends budget resources and provide clear definitions to improve how we support Parks Canada. Within this framework we have worked with Parks to complete baseline equipment improvements on the Case LA tractor, Case 930 tractor, '48 Mercury truck, and the TD-14 dozer. These improvements included a fuel tank repairs on the Case LA and 930, brakes and suspension on the Mercury '48, and a complete overhaul of the driveline on the TD-14 dozer. In addition to equipment improvements, we have completed full restorations on two vintage Maytag washing machines and a wagon.

Lastly, the committee would like to recognize all the restoration participants who supported these projects, and others, throughout the year. These restorations would not be possible without their expertise and support; thank you. We look forward to more projects in 2024!

## **Gift Shop Report**

**By: Shelagh Weston**

The 2023 season brought many changes to the gift shop. Early in the year, the decision was made to change the focus of the Shop from a "run of the mill" gift shop, to one that better reflected The Friends of the Bar U, Parks Canada, as well as the local community.

Risa Atkinson, who joined us this year in the role of the Gift Shop Manager, was instrumental in procuring local indigenous and artisans works, locally hand-made treats and goodies, Parks Canada branded items and Friends of Bar U items. She worked with the University of Alberta to secure a reprint of The Bar U book by Simon Evans, as well as bringing in much sought after books by local authors, such as Ranching Under the Arch by Lorraine Andrews.

Risa and her team worked tirelessly to successfully transform the shop into a destination that has received so many compliments from visitors and where local community members stop by to see "what's new".

I would like to personally thank Risa, Laura and the rest of the team for all of their hard work!

If you didn't have a chance to visit us this season, stop by on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, as we will be open during the Christmas Market on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and come by next season to check out the additional changes that we have planned!

## Collections Committee Report

By: Ken Chatel

It has been a quiet year on the donation front but what we did receive were unique artifacts. Our focus continues to be on artifacts that represent the ranching life here on the prairies. The Friends Collection currently has over 3000 items donated by 232 donators. Many have been placed throughout the Bar U property and buildings. These donations help the Bar U tell the story of the ranching history in Alberta.

In 2023 we received – coal oil lamps, 1910 Chicago wt. scale and adding machine, cream separator, English pram, chaps, yokes, 1800's washing machine, draw-down stand, and an Eamor ½ tree, plus many other small items. It has also been a busy year getting all the collection data and records up to date.

The Visitor Orientation Centre had new display cases full of unique items donated over the years. There were antique chairs and tables set up where visitors could sit and have tea or coffee and look out over the Bar U. A play corner for kids was also established and the whole area became a place to relax.

Last year I mentioned we had recorded interviews with families and early pioneers on what their lives were like. These old tapes were digitized with help from the Glenbow Museum and the University of Calgary. We are now in the process of transcribing them so the histories can be accessible to anyone doing research or interested in our pioneers.

We thank all our donators for thinking of the Bar U for their special items. Please contact us if you have items that represent early ranch history, we would love to see if they would help tell the story of ranching at the Bar U.



### 2024 EVENTS

**January 27 – Stockmen's Dinner**

**March 3 – Annual General Meeting**

**May 13 – Opening Day**

**June 21 – National Indigenous Peoples Day**

**July 1 – Canada Day**

**August 17 – Alberta Open Farm Days**

**August 18 – Old Time Ranch Rodeo**

**September 15 – Chore Horse Competition**