



Happy Holidays!

The High Prairiean

"All the news that's print to fit."

Volume Five, Number Four

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December, 2005

NOTICES

Hanukah/Christmas party at Morning Song Acres (6 Oda Knight Road), Friday evening, December 16. Come anytime from 7:00 to 10:00 PM.

Fire Volunteers meet the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Fire Hall for equipment maintenance and the 2nd and 4th Tuesday for training.

Fire Commissioners meet the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM at the Fire Hall.

High Prairie Community Council meets the 4th Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at Taylor's church. There will be no meeting in November. The December meeting will be held on December 1st.

High Prairie Historical Society meetings are held quarterly on the 4th Sunday of March, June, and September and the 1st Sunday of December beginning at 2:00 PM. The September meeting will be held at the home of Tom and Gail Amery.

Lyle School Board meets the next to last Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Boardroom, Lyle High School.

When requesting medical assistance or reporting a fire CALL 911

HIGH PRAIRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Dona Taylor with Audrey Bentz

WHO are they? HOW do they contribute to High Prairie? WHY do they do it?

A volunteer group of men and women, who are willing to (1) help meet the needs of our local Fire and Rescue department, (2) improve community resources including services and facilities and (3) collaborate with federal, state and local agencies.

You have heard "from the small acorn a mighty oak will grow". Well, that describes the above! In 1983 the Fire District #14 was formed. Then in 1984, a booster club was formed of local women whose purpose was to raise money for fire equipment, sponsor a spaghetti feed at the Lyle School cafeteria, raffle tickets on homemade quilts, and host a concession stand at a local farm and equipment sale. The first newsletter was also printed and distributed throughout the community.

In 1992 – 1994, this group sponsored a HARVEST FEST for the children of this area. A recently renovated church and the Firehall were used to hold these events. The children and adults enjoyed homemade cider (made at the fest), popcorn, treats and two large piñatas filled with candy, bobbing for apples, pumpkin carving and a Halloween costume contest.

In January 2000, a new volunteer group of both men and women heard that the Fire District and community needed a helping hand so the High Prairie Neighborhood Association (HPNA) came into being. Local members offered their homes for monthly meetings. We brainstormed ideas for fundraisers and put together a five-year plan for our community's betterment. The first Fire House sale was held in June at the Firehall. With community

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GET WELL WISHES

Dona Taylor

Romona Searle was a recent hospital resident. Your High Prairie friends wish you all the best.

P.S. If we have missed any of our High Prairie neighbors we apologize.

After the deadline for this paper, Dona was also in for a brief hospital stay. We hope she is feeling better and will stick to reporting.

—Ed.



HIGH PRAIRIE NEEDLERS

Lozetta Doll

A group of High Prairie women have been getting together weekly for a few hours of sewing, crocheting, knitting, and chatting. They have been making items for people undergoing radiation treatment at the Celilo Center in The Dalles— prayer shawls and hats for the women and lap robes for the men. They are also making helmet liners for our troops in Iraq and baby blankets for the Pregnancy Resource Center. If anyone has leftover yarn they would like to donate to a good cause, please call Judi Strait at (509) 637-0663, Terry Chabbert at 365-2443 or Lozetta Doll at (365-0010).



HIGH PRAIRIE SONGSTERS

Audrey Bentz

If you enjoy singing, come rehearse for our holiday party on Monday, December 19 at Morning Song Acres. We will practice from 7:00 – 8:00 PM, and if you have any special number you'd like us to perform, bring multiple copies along. Questions? Call Audrey Bentz 365-3600.



CHRISTMAS GIFT

Consider buying a blue reflective address sign to give as a Christmas gift this year. Your Fire Department is selling them for \$20 if you provide the post. Call 365-3563 to place your orders. They are very helpful when emergency services, or anyone else is trying to find your driveway, especially at night.

The High Prairian

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COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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support, we surpassed all expectations for a great success. In the fall, we had a "Holliday Happenings" sale at the Lyle Lions Club, where we sold homemade crafts and rented out tables to other vendors. Homemade chili, pies, breads and bratwurst were sold. With a \$700 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans, our revenue for that year totaled over \$5,000.00.

HPNA applied for and received a Tax ID number and are now 501(c)(3) status. By-laws were drawn up and approved.

A large portion of money from past six-yard sales and fundraising activities has gone toward upgrading our fire district. \$1,600.00 went toward wiring the new addition of the Firehouse, plus lights, metal siding, drywall, nails, trim, lumber, concrete for the sidewalk and buttress work. Community volunteers worked two days putting it up and making a passage inside. Later, we paid for tires, batteries, radio repair, and a fan for dispersing smoke, defibrillator, oxygen tanks, rock and gravel, plus money for other necessities. We also contributed to other needs — a 4-H trip to nationals, a local youth group, house fire victims, Lions Club Christmas baskets, etc.

In the fall of 2002, we sponsored an old-fashioned "Hoedown". Children went on a hayride accompanied by "Chicken Little", and her co-host described the area they were in and the wildlife they might see. Attendees could play Bingo, have faces painted, do a beanbag toss, dance to live music, and enjoy pastry, popcorn, pie, cake and chili while visiting with neighbors. Everyone participated in the "cake walk" and buy homemade desserts and breads. People came from Lyle, Goldendale, The Dalles, and White Salmon. We had a blast!

Over 50 Welcome Baskets have been delivered to new residents. They include large information packets, homemade goodies, and other useful items. Several local residents constructed well over fifty bluebird houses, which now cover most of High Prairie, and the rare Western Bluebird population has really grown! We acquired a porta-potty and which is now secured on a mobile trailer. A major accomplishment was the construction of an all-steel large barbeque grill. Four picnic tables and benches were constructed and donated by a member and painted by other volunteers. We are blessed with much talent, folks!

Community clean-up days are held annually with Rabanco landfill providing two large dumpsters. We also had a litter day cleanup along Centerville Highway and side roads. The County's Volunteer Litter Patrol Program furnished us with signs, flags, vests and garbage bags and allowed us to dump them free at the Dallesport Transfer Station.

In conjunction with the Klickitat County Economic Department, we publish a quarterly newsletter. The front page lists upcoming events, regularly scheduled meetings and 911 information.

Often we have guest speakers at our monthly meetings, such as County Commissioners, Assessor, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, Economic Development Office, Lyle Postmaster, Skyline Hospital Administrator, General Manager of Klickitat PUD, local attorney knowledgeable in "Range Land Laws", Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife personnel, a fire extinguisher specialist, Washington Department of Natural Resources mapping specialist on roads and water resources, plus others.

A future project is the development of a Community Center on our Struck Road property, but it is postponed until a Fire District satellite station is completed on Schilling Road.

HPNA was changed to High Prairie Community Council, because the term "neighborhood association" would limit our ability to attract future grant money.

One of our members spent many hours in securing the new signs announcing arrival into our High Prairie community, both located where our Fire District #14 signs are seen. They read "WELCOME TO HIGH PRAIRIE, A RURAL COMMUNITY".

Many thousand of volunteer hours and countless donations of money, food, yard sale items, gas and brainpower have gone into helping us to achieve some of our goals. We look forward to more of the same for the betterment of this community. All High Prairie residents owe these many dedicated community leaders/workers a big PAT on the back!



HIGH PRAIRIE "STATE OF THE ART" HOUSES

Audrey Bentz

High Prairie residents run the whole spectrum of housing! But have you noticed some of the more creative and environmentally sensitive construction up here? For example, the yurts, with totally "off the grid" design built and occupied by Tom and Ondine Moore (Oda Knight Road) are worth a magazine article all of their own (maybe Ruralite!). Ramona Searle and Mary Orcutt (on Schilling Road) put up the first "straw bale house" several years ago — it's a creative answer to the increased heating/cooling rates. And now Heidi and Simon Fisher, also near Schilling Road, having enjoyed tipi dwelling this summer, are constructing another straw bale house. (Let's just keep the wolves away!)

HOLIDAY PARTY TIME AGAIN!

Audrey Bentz

Whether you celebrate Hanukah, Christmas, or whatever, do come join your High Prairie neighbors for our 8th annual holiday party at Morning Song Acres (6 Oda Knight Road), Friday evening, December 16. Come anytime from 7:00 to 10:00 PM. There will be holiday food and beverages, live music, singing of carols, stories/songs for children, LOTS of conversation, and hopefully a special visit from Santa on the fire truck!

If you want to bring a small contribution to the food table, great. But mainly, just come and celebrate the good neighborly spirit high on the prairie! Questions? Call Audrey or Myrin Bentz 365-3600.

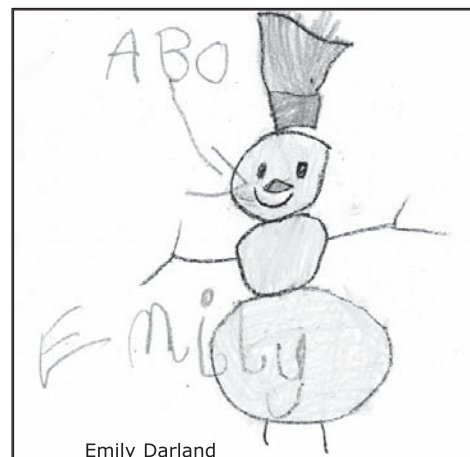
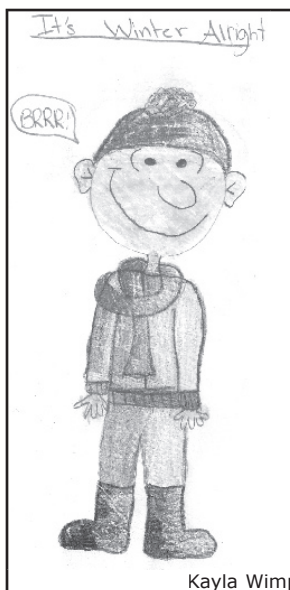
2005 CHILI COOK-OFF

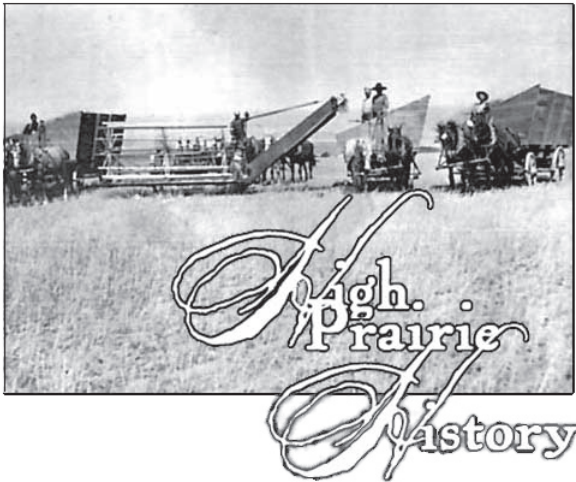
Cal Edwards

Your High Prairie Fire Department thanks everyone who supported our efforts in the 2005 Chili Cook-off. Our Chili won the Best Traditional while the Gourmet award went to Appleton and Husum won the Firehouse Chili award. A newcomer to the event, Skyline Ambulance, won the coveted People's Choice award. We thank Myrin and Audrey Bentz for making the Chili and to Phil Haner for donating the High Prairie Angus Beef.

It was great to have so many High Prairie people attend the event and cheer for our fire fighters as they competed in the Fireman's Muster Events. Phil Haner, Lesley Hayrynen, James Amery, and Nayland Wilkins won the Overall Muster Award again for High Prairie. The pressure to beat High Prairie was very evident and the competition was very tough this year. Appleton won the Bucket Brigade contest and a team from Bingen/Husum won the Make and Break event. We promise the community and all other Fire Districts that we will continue our schedule of heavy training this next year because we hope to win for the 4th year in a row next fall.

Our Fire Department is losing some fire fighters again this year to retirement. Any one interested in serving the community as a fire fighter or medical first responder should come to a fire meeting on the 2nd or 4th Tuesday at 7:00 PM at the Fire Hall. The District provides or pays for all of the required training. In addition to supporting your community you will be a member of Klickitat Counties premier Fire Department, be better trained to protect your home and family, and you will learn how to drive a shiny red truck with flashing lights and a siren.





THE START OF WILD TURKEYS

Douglas Taylor

I had been thinking back how and when the wild turkey population started on the Prairie and then took off. My wife Dona and I we recalled getting our first turkey hens from Heinz Klein (a colorful German neighbor who lived east of Stacker Canyon) whose turkeys had some wild blood. He had purchased some of the wild birds from the southern states. Our turkey purchase from Heinie (as he was called) consisted of three hens, which we crossed with a broad breasted tom around 1955.

Apparently he had also crossed them (as I have) with domestic breeds. Many of his turkey's offspring were red and white colored or the "Bourbon red" variety. I had used both the broad breasted bronze and Narragansett variety of toms.

These first hatches were very prolific with each hen producing 10 or more poults. In a couple years we were overrun with turkeys and sold many hens to the neighbors. (Ernie Struck bought 16 hens from me.) Several of the local farmers including my father Ben Taylor, Carl Parrish, Wilbur Johnson, and others also purchased and raised this variety of turkeys and had upwards of a couple hundred turkeys in each of their flocks.

Along about this time the State game department noticed these terrific results and planted some wild turkeys in the Wahkiacus area.

I do not recall if a season had been declared back then but have been told by several farmer/ranchers that when the domestic turkeys were along the road many were shot by opportunists and this contributed to scattering turkeys into the wild. Road hunting then (as now) was illegal but was done by "meat

hunters" or poachers. Many neighbors had their whole flock disappear and return to the wild.

For many years these turkeys would almost invariably produce at least one bourbon red or a red turkey with white wings from one or more broods. These red turkeys were always a problem to the game department; they were selling state tags for wild turkeys and these did not quite fit the bill.

Most of the turkeys have now reverted to the wild state. They do accept handouts of a little grain, but one finds that even when fed large quantities that they do not gorge and will leave feed. They have tremendous flying ability and also a unique ability of covering a large amount of ground when walking. They apparently have not been able to determine the speed of oncoming traffic when crossing the highway, and many have succumbed to poor judgment

I have always found it amazing how intelligent and wary these birds can be and at other times so utterly stupid. We have a woven wire fence behind our house a couple hundred yards or so away. This fence is open on both ends and maybe a hundred yards long. I have seen these birds come to the fence and seeing they can not get through start walking to one end and before getting to the opening, then turn and run back. I've watched them day after day constantly running back and forth, sometimes till dark. Maybe they are just exercising to keep trim but I think they simply lack intelligence. Whatever the reason for their inability to get through the fence, the turkeys certainly are survivors.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HIGH PRAIRIE HISTORY?

Everyone is invited to join the High Prairie Historical Society. Meetings are held quarterly and feature presentations of local historical interest. The HPHS maintains a library and a collection of artifacts, maps, photographs, and records of the High Prairie area.

Annual dues are only \$5.00 per individual or \$8.00 per family.

*Join now and help us keep
High Prairie history alive!*



TIM O'NEILL SPEAKS TO HIGH PRAIRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Lozetta Doll

Klickitat County Prosecuting Attorney Tim O'Neill spoke to the High Prairie Community Council on October 27, 2005. He covered some very interesting topics, such as the Western gray squirrel, dog control ordinances, nuisance ordinances, and easement issues.

Western Gray Squirrel: Klickitat County has 80% of the State's population, 75% of the squirrel population is on land owned by timber companies. Washington State, desirous of increasing numbers statewide, has submitted a plan to Klickitat County and the county has until November 15 to reply.

Stray Dogs: There is no dog control ordinance for rural Klickitat County. If a dog strays onto your property, you should call the sheriff. You should not shoot a dog unless they are endangering you or your livestock.

Nuisance Ordinance: Klickitat County enacted a nuisance abatement law in 2000 — Klickitat County Code Title 15.38. You can go on line to read all about it or call Klickitat County for a copy.

Easements: An easement conflict is not a criminal matter—the conflict should be brought before the circuit court, or have the dispute mediated or arbitrated.

The Klickitat County Prosecuting Attorney's Office has prosecuted approximately 200 felonies this year alone, compared to approximately 100 in Skamania County.

SIGNS OF STROKE/HEART ATTACK

Stroke?

This might be a lifesaver if we can remember the three questions! Is it a Stroke? Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby

fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say any bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

- * Ask the individual to smile.
- * Ask him or her to raise both arms.
- * Ask the person to speak a simple sentence.

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

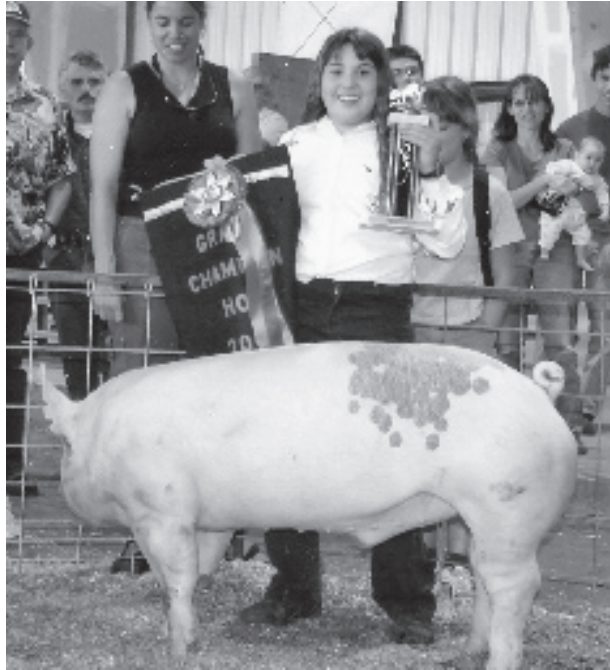
After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness and speech problems, researchers urged the general public to learn the three questions. They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting last February. Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and prevent brain damage.

HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK WHEN ALONE.

Since many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack, without help, the person whose heart is beating improperly and who begins to feel faint, has only about 10 seconds left before becoming unconscious. However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest.

A breath and a cough must be repeated about every two seconds without let-up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a hospital.



NEWS BITS

Dona Taylor

Congratulations to Tatiana Taylor who raised the "Grand Champion" market hog at this year's 2005 Klickitat County Fair, August 25–28. Her hog "Brian" weighed a hefty 285 pounds. Tatiana has been in 4-H for three years.

Phil Haner was elected on November 8, 2005 as the newest commissioner for Fire District #14 (High Prairie). Phil will serve a six year term.

Tim Darland also elected to a four-year position as Lyle School District board member representing our area. Congratulations to both.

Peter and Molly Strait announced the birth of their newest daughter Elaine Cristina on October 26 at home. She tipped the scales at 7 pounds 14 ounces and was 20 inches long. She joins four siblings at home. This is their second daughter born at home on High Prairie. Congratulations to the entire Strait family.

Also congratulations to Paul and Sherilyn Holman on the birth of their Son, Joseph Ethan, on November 12, who weighted 8 pounds 11 ounces and was 20 inches long. He was born at home on South Prairie Road and joins five siblings.

Remember, everyone invited to the Christmas program featuring the youngsters on December 4 at 2:00 PM at the Taylor church. The program is presented by the Historical Society.

IN MEMORIUM

Dona Taylor

Alice Parrish Parker, 60, of Wapato Washington passed away September 18, 2005. She moved to High Prairie as a teenager with her parents, Bill and Dorothy Parish and brother Bill in the late 1950's. After graduation she moved away for a time, but returned in the late 1970's with her three children and stayed for three years. She was a retired florist and had a MBA in social work. Alice was laid to rest in the High Prairie Lone Pine Cemetery September 23, 2005.

Patrick (Pat) Marx, 96, of White Salmon passed away November 3, 2005. He and Janet, his wife of 64 years, and six children moved to High Prairie in 1952. They farmed here and raised hay, grain and sheep. As a young man Pat learned the art of sheep shearing and did so till he was 82. They sold the ranch in 1974 and moved to White Salmon. In his retirement he enjoyed many activities, including hunting which many of the family enjoyed with him. Pat was laid to rest November 15, 2005 at High Prairie Lone Pine Cemetery.

We extend condolences to both families.

RAFFLE TICKET

Douglas Taylor

At the Lyle Lion's community building on Tuesday noon of each week a Senior Meal is prepared by volunteers headed by head cook Betty Tuthill. As all Senior citizens are welcome, it is a very good place to meet your friends and have a very reasonable meal. Generally entertainment is programmed and announcements are made.

One such announcement was for the White Salmon Senior Center and tickets for a quilt were sold as afund-raiser. Several persons contributed by purchasing tickets. Dona purchased some and being generous signed my name to an equal number. We received a call today from the White Salmon Senior Center requesting Douglas Taylor, was informed by the caller, Jill, that I had the lucky number and won the quilt.

I probably will never be so fortunate again unless I purchase my own tickets.

RECOGNIZING COMMUNITY SERVICE ROB AND MADELON TAYLOR

Lozetta Doll

Rob and Madelon Taylor, High Prairie residents since only 2004, have found their niche in this part of Klickitat County. Madelon, an ardent bird watcher, is thrilled with the diversity and abundance of sightings. She keeps her feeders full and her binoculars handy. Rob has been awed by how handily the deer have eaten up every plant he brought from the valley. Nevertheless, despite deer and draught, their yard reveals Rob's expertise at gardening and landscaping.

Rob, born in Spokane, was reared and educated in the Boise area. He spent four years in the Navy, stationed at San Diego. He received his Bachelors Degree in Criminology at Boise State and his Masters Degree in Criminal Justice at Long Beach, California. He worked for 20 plus years in the criminal justice system, and taught Law Enforcement and Corrections at Boise State for 10 years.

Madelon, born in Lincoln, Nebraska, lived in Arlington, Virginia until, at the age of 10, she spent three years in Guatemala where she fell in love with the Spanish language. She spent a number of her formative years in South Dakota, and still retains an affinity to the state and its friendly people.

Rob and Madelon met in 1976 at Portland State University where Madelon was a full-time student.



Both were attending a summer session Spanish class where they told each other "Hola" and forgot about "Adios!" Rob became a Master Gardener and established his landscaping business in King City and Tigard. His avocation became his vocation and landscaping allowed them to spend

their winters in Mexico, which they have for 25 of the last 26 years. They are at present building a vacation home about 14 kilometers north of Los Barriles (south of La Paz.) Their home overlooks the Sea of Cortez and they fall asleep at night to the sounds of the surf, whales sounding, and sea lions barking. They have many Mexican friends, having worked with them in the landscaping business, interpreting for them, and living among them every winter.

Rob joined the Fire District 14 volunteers last year, went through all the training and enjoys working with the High Prairie firefighters. He appreciates the dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism displayed by the group. He and Madelon are happy to be away from the traffic and bustle of the Portland metropolitan area. As with many recent newcomers to this community, Rob and Madelon are gracious about contributing their time and efforts towards making High Prairie such a great place to live.



RATS

Martha M. Hamil

North America has three kinds of rats, Kangaroo rats, New World rats and Old World rats. All belong to the same order, Order Rodentia. The Kangaroo rats together with pocket mice are in the Family Heteromyidae and are not mice or rats nor are they closely related to any other rodents. New World rats and Old World rats belong to the Family Muridae. Biologists divide the Muridae into three sub-families: the Sigmodontinae (New World rats and mice), the Arvicolinae (voles and lemmings), and Murinae (Old World imports to North America). Biologists regard the Muridae rodents as forming the largest, most successful, and most adaptable group of mammals in the world.

The Old World rats and mice (the Norway rats, the Black rats, and the house mouse) carry diseases such as plague, typhus, and bacteria that cause food poisoning among others. Whitaker considers them among the major scourges of mankind having cost more lives in the past 1000 years than all the wars and battles ever fought. In addition to the diseases, they damage billions of dollars worth of goods every year. Norway rats will also kill chickens and eat eggs. Generally, they abound near humans and are very uncommon in undisturbed areas. Their only positive contribution is that the white rats and white mice bred from them for medical research¹. These old world rats and mice have tails that are almost hairless and are generally exhibit the same color all over but shading to a lighter hue on the

underparts. The most diagnostic difference is that their teeth have three cusps instead of the two of the New World genera. Feel free to examine teeth if you dare.

On the other hand, the New World Muridae are cute little buggers mainly eating vegetable matter and invertebrates such as grubs and bugs. Primarily, when they cause damage, it is in the field rather than after harvest or in storage. Deer mice are the only ones associated with serious diseases, Lyme disease and the Hanta virus.

All woodrats have hairy tails and all will collect and hoard objects, especially shiny ones. Both traits are most pronounced in the Bushy-tailed Woodrat, also known as the Mountain Pack Rat. Several woodrats will drum with their hind feet when alarmed. The Mountain Pack Rat will also drum when undisturbed, producing a slow, low, tapping sound.

¹In past centuries, folklore recommended cooked mouse meat to remedy colds, coughs, fits, and fever. During the siege of Vicksburg in the Civil War, the populace and Confederate soldiers survived on cooked Norway and Black rats.

Reference: Whittaker, John O. Jr., 1996, *National Audubon Society Field Guide to Mammals*.



Neotoma cinerea vs *Homo sapiens*

or

BUSHY-TAILED WOODRAT vs HUMAN

or

ABLE PACKRAT vs MARTHA M. HAMIL

Martha M. Hamil



Who wins? Of course, it's humans with their thinking brain and opposable thumb. Or do they? Perhaps packrats with their agility and survival instincts can prevail.

What does one do when a packrat, now named Able, moves into one's space? Simple, several friends advised: "Shoot it!" But my attached garage did not allow that option. Others swore poison would work. One can't with dogs and cats around; neither could catch it. Besides poisoning is a horrid death and undoubtedly, Able would have found a nice niche and perfumed the garage for months. Trap it? Of course! So, where to find a humane trap.

Fortunately, Doug and Dona Taylor had one that they graciously loaned and demonstrated how to set and bait it. S I M P L E.

And, the trap works beautifully first try. The next morning I have the problem of disposal. Doug and Dona didn't say anything about that but it's obvious. Take the trap filled with packrat someplace else. Open the trap and packrat runs away.

Not so! Able will not budge from the trap. So, I tilt and shake the trap; Able clings to the bottom. So I bang it on the ground while shaking it several more times. With my arms wearying, finally Able drops out and runs off. Into the brush?

Of course not. Able streaks back to the Suburban leaping into the undercarriage. Humans (or at least Martha) being what they are decide that driving a mile and a half or so to the mailbox and returning will dislodge Able. But, just in case Able managed to cling to the undercarriage, I parked a quarter mile from home (and anywhere else) near some brush and trees. There, Able can have shelter for escape if he/she is still there. Needless to say, Able and I now have a relationship. So, I close all the windows tightly and walk home.

Seven hours later, I return fully confident, or almost so, that Able is no longer a problem. This time I carry a length of bamboo to poke Able out if he/she hasn't left. But why would Able stay?

Why, indeed? I crept up and knelt in the grass and weeds peering into all the nooks and crannies underneath. After creeping all around the entire vehicle with no sign of Able, only one place is left to examine-the engine compartment. Surprise, Able stares at me from turbocharger cowling. I yelled and flailed with the bamboo pole. Able scooted back into the undercarriage. Why me?

For a lack of ideas, I drive back home but park further from the garage and again tightly close all the windows. Of course, I reset the trap just in case. Able either learns slowly or Baker has appeared.

This time I drive almost three miles again selecting an area with brush and trees. Having learned something of a lesson, I take the trap about 20 yards from my vehicle before dumping Baker. Whereupon, Able/Baker scrambles into the brush and I sigh with relief. And I catch no more packrats. Now, I am contending with a field mouse! More on that saga later.

HIGH PRAIRIE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fred Henschell

2005 has been a very active year for our department. We are likely to end the year with over 100 calls. Many have been medical calls. We have also gone on a lot of mutual assistance and automatic aid calls to help our neighboring departments. Fortunately High Prairie made it through the wildfire season without any serious incidents in our district, but we assisted Lyle, Rural 7, Centerville and Dallesport several times on large wildfires. Several of our members also traveled to the Spokane area during a period of statewide mobilization to provide assistance.

Our volunteers may well be the biggest donors of community service. In addition to the time spent responding to calls, we regularly meet three times a month. One meeting is devoted to equipment maintenance and two meetings are for training. We have also had several special weekend maintenance sessions to work on vehicles. This year we also completed a one-day wildfire safety training session and a two-day emergency vehicle operator training session. We also continually train on topics such as wildland firefighting, structural/residential fire fighting, self-contained breathing apparatus, extrication and rescue, hazardous materials, operation of trucks, pumps, equipment, CPR and First-aid. In addition, our emergency medical personnel participate in ongoing skills training to meet state requirements. It's pretty easy for most of us to tally up several hundred hours spent helping our community. Speaking personally- "It's the most rewarding thing I do for my community."

The community of High Prairie is growing and developing fast; the need for emergency services is likely to continue to increase. However our Fire District budget is "capped" as a result of statewide voter approved tax-limiting measures passed several years ago. Our total annual budget (money received from Klickitat County) is under \$20,000, and only increases by a few hundred dollars per year. Unfortunately the cost of vehicle fuel, maintenance, utilities and insurance continue to increase at a much higher percentage. This problem affects more than just fire districts, so eventually a political solution will be required. So far we have survived and grown by working hard to get grants through our local Economic Development Agency and state and federal programs.

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Season's Greetings

from

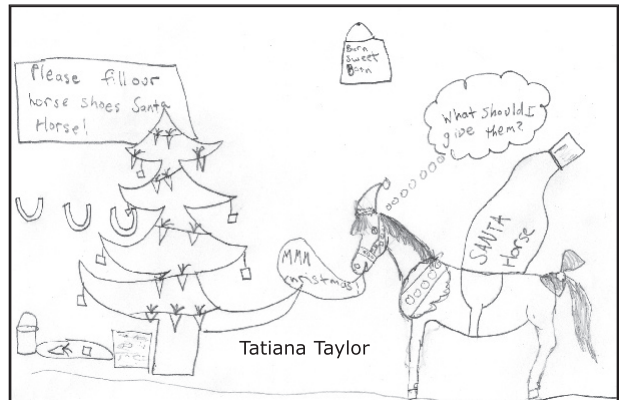
High Prairie Young Artists



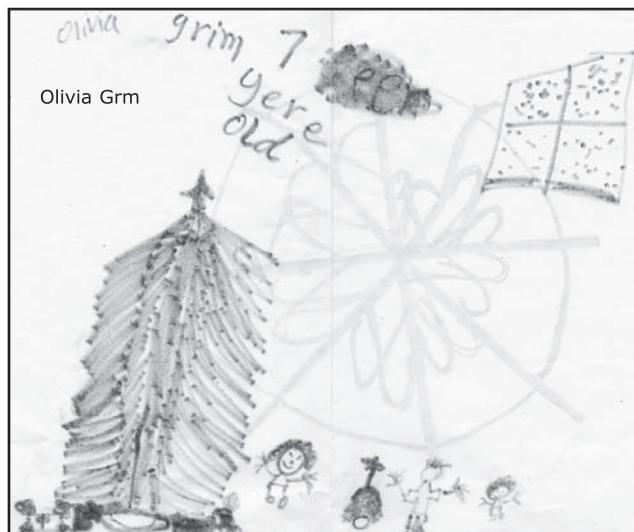
Gregory Haner



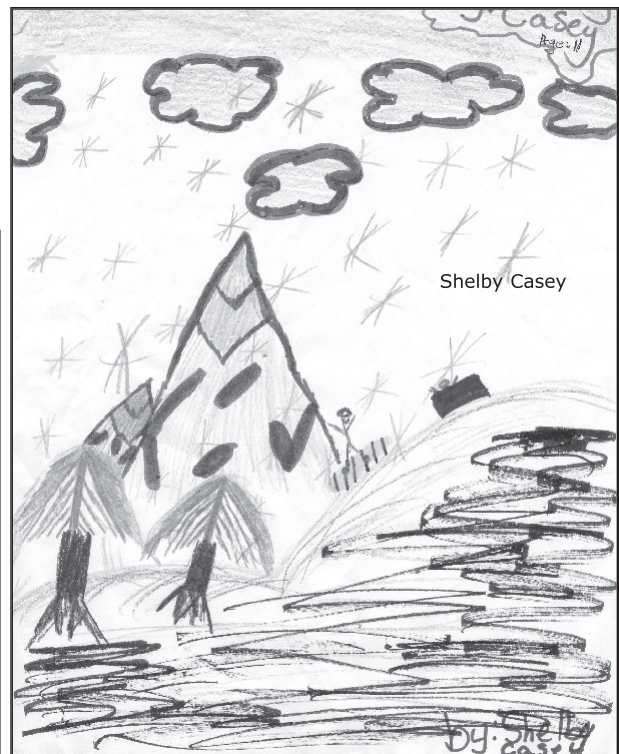
Savannah Moe



Tatiana Taylor

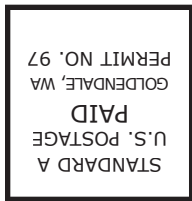


Olivia Grm



Shelby Casey

POSTAL PATRON



The High Prairies
P.O. Box 592
Lyle, WA 98635

SAY, WHAT?

Madelon Taylor

I find myself repeating myself,
It irks one very sore;
It seems I'm always saying
"Have I told you this before?"

People are mostly too polite
To tell me right out plain;
But sometimes on their faces I see
A look of patient pain.

But it doesn't really matter, for
If I want to tell it — why then
I don't care if I've told you before
I'm going to tell it again!

FIRE DEPARTMENT

from page 10

Probably our biggest problem right now is the need for more volunteers. This year we have lost several members due to "retirement" and relocation to other communities. Currently our department has less than 10 active firefighters. Ideally we would like to have 12 – 15 active members. Because it's a volunteer department, more members help spread the workload and increase the probability of individuals available to respond at any given time. A diverse force composed of all ages, sexes and occupations also increases the odds of folks being able to respond. So think about adding some excitement to your life by becoming a volunteer firefighter! Contact our Chief Doug Hutchison or any department member. Or stop by the fire hall during one of our Tuesday evening volunteer meetings: first, second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:00 PM.