

SAVE THESE DATES

Community Council Meetings, 4th Thursday of the month, starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center.

Needlers Mondays, at 10:30 a.m. Call 365-5288 for more information.

Fire Volunteers, 1st, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 7 p.m.

Fire Commissioner Meeting, 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 7 p.m.

Visit the community website (www.highprairie.us) for additional scheduled events and meetings.



STAY IN THE LOOP!

EMAIL:

Put your name on the HP info list by emailing bbparrish@embarqmail.com

WEBSITE:

Check us out at www.highprairie.us
Calendar, blog, High Prairian, history, and lots more!

FACEBOOK:

Stay up to date with community happenings and join the discussion:

www.facebook.com/groups/180735785338230/

Don't forget to *like* the page.

HP DIRECTORY:

Trade contact info just with friends and neighbors. Add or update at:
www.highprairie.us/general-information/community-directory/

(We can't invite you if we don't know how to reach you!)

RILEY PERRY WINS AWARD

High Prairian Riley Perry was honored recently with KPUD's 2015 Power of Youth Award. Klickitat PUD presents the Power of Youth award each year to a member of a Klickitat County 4-H program. The award is based on the young person's community involvement, volunteer activities and leadership skills. For anyone who missed the write-up of Riley's accomplishments in the November Ruralite, here is the story in her own words:

"It is an honor to receive the Power of Youth Award from Klickitat PUD. For three years I have watched other 4-Hers receive this award and never thought that I would receive it one day. My name is Riley Perry, I am 16 years old and this was my 4th year in 4-H. I had four projects: Market Goat, Archery, Gardening and Leadership.

I've been showing market goats for two years. Both of my market goats were class champions and I also received the goat barn merit award for growth, depth and quality of project.

This has been my third year in archery. Last year I was disappointed with myself for being the second to last shooter in the county competition. That's when I decided that I was going to work hard and earn my way to state next year. Hard work pays off! I was fifth in our county competition this year and thirteenth out of twenty one kids at state. Next year, I'm going to try to be one of the top four shooters at state.

This was my first year in a gardening project and it didn't go quite as planned. I planted carrots, peas, beets, onions, lettuce, tomatoes and potatoes. The chickens ate my lettuce and beet sprouts, and my potatoes withered from the sun. I did however, get a good crop of peas, carrots and tomatoes.

This was also my first year doing a leadership project, and I found that a lot of the things I do can be counted as leadership. Every Monday from January to April, I helped teach a preschool class of five kids at our home school co-op. I also manned the sign-in table at my uncle's wedding, and I helped decorate, cook and get attendees signed in for the Relay for Life Fundraising Fiesta held at my church.

My club leaders have encouraged me to hold office positions. The first office I held was last year as secretary of the Muttonheads 4-H club. At first I was dreading the task, but as I did it and became more comfortable with it, I found I actually enjoyed it and didn't mind doing it for a second year—I received a Gold Certificate for my secretary record books both years. I was also vice president of our Sharpshooters Archery club.

I enjoy community service, its fun to work with neighbors and get to know them while working together to accomplish a goal! This year I helped at the volunteer firefighter's appreciation dinner, I helped to cook and clean up after this event. My archery club volunteered to help clean up DLNR land by rolling up old barbed wire and picking up stray T-posts. I also helped to mix, stuff, and smoke 180 lbs. of bratwurst for our annual High Prairie Firehouse Sale that raises funds for our community fire service. My church had a booth at the Relay for Life fundraiser and sold lap beads to raise money for cancer patients and research. During this event I walked 15-¾ miles.

I would like to thank my parents, Mrs. Enderby my club leader, Mrs. Morris my project leader, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. and Mrs. Tallman, my archery club leaders, and the congregation of the Christ the King Lutheran Church for supporting and encouraging me in my projects."



THE HIGH PRAIRIAN

"All the news that's print to fit"

Publisher: High Prairie Community Council

News Editor: Gwen Berry

Layout/Typesetting: Cindy Henschell, Cascadia Graphics & Publishing

Serving the Community of High Prairie Klickitat County, Washington

Published 4 times a year (or as often as needed)

The High Prairian can be viewed or downloaded for free on the High Prairie website: <http://www.highprairie.us>

Subscriptions for printed and mailed copies are available for \$5 per year.

Contact the editor with news or comments:

Gwen Berry: pgwenberry@hotmail.com or 509-365-0025

Subscription Information

One-year subscriptions to *The High Prairian* (four printed issues mailed to your address) are available for \$5.00.

Send your name, mailing address, email address & phone number, with a check or money order for \$5.00, to

HP Subscription
PO Box 592
Lyle, WA 98635

Please make all payments payable to: **HPCC**

REPORT ON SCHILLING ROAD PAVING PROJECT

Chris Sattlem

An informal meeting took place on Thursday, December 3rd at the High Prairie Community Center to discuss the upcoming Schilling Road paving project. Ten to twelve people were in attendance.

Amongst those present were Gordon Kelsey, Klickitat County Public Works director, and Seth Scarola, Klickitat County Public Works Project Engineer. Both individuals informally discussed the timelines for the paving project.

The timeline of the project is as follows:

1. March, 2016 — The project will go out to bid for the road bed construction piece.

2. May/June, 2016 — The bid will have been awarded and road bed construction will soon follow. This piece of the project is expected to last three months. It should be completed by late summer or early fall of 2016. The result of this construction piece will be a high quality gravel road with an additional depth of one foot of compacted materials. Additional earthwork will be performed to help modify some of the curves currently in existence.

3. June/July, 2017 — Paving will begin. It will be performed by Klickitat County. The completion of paving is expected to be no later than late summer or early fall of 2017.

Comments:

There appears to have been some confusion as to the actual length of the road construction project amongst those attending the meeting. The new paving will begin where current paving ends on Schilling Road and continue north to the new Fire Hall location. It will NOT continue to Horseshoe Bend road. The new road is being designed to have a sight distance of 45 miles per hour. A follow-up meeting will occur in May of 2016.



Eagle on frosted phone pole and wires. Photo: Peg Callendo

For more winter photos see the online version at <http://www.highprairie.us/high-prairian/vol-15-no-4>



Merry Christmas

Jedi, snowy trees and road. Photo: Peg Callendo

High Prairie Community Council

President Mike Richards

As I write this we've had not one, but two days of snow and freezing rain in a row! For all intents and purposes, we are stuck in our home out here at the end of High Prairie Road. (All in all, a good situation!)

I want to take a moment to encourage all High Prairie residents, if you've not already done so, to please take stock of your level of preparedness for weather related events such as this. Many of you already are well prepared to take on these situations. In that case, make sure to reach out to your neighbors and lend them a hand, if needed.

So, with all that being said, it's a perfect day to write an update for the High Prairian on the latest happenings from the community council.

Recently, we finalized our budget for the 2015-2016 year. Of course, it's somewhat similar to last year's budget in the sense of the routine expenses, however we have some new one-time expenditures coming up.

For instance, we again donated \$4,000 to the High Prairie Fire Department this year. Now more than ever, they need some cash to help cover some of the miscellaneous costs of the new firehouse to be built on Schilling Road, north of High Prairie Road. Planning for it is still moving forward.

This year, the community council discussed the opportunity to purchase a very large outdoor tent from the Goldendale Chamber of Commerce. They are in possession of a twenty by forty foot tent for sale, and we thought it would be a good use of a thousand dollars to snatch it up for use during our annual firehouse sales. The sale coordinator, Deborah Fenwick, is particularly excited about the potential purchase. It will cover a lot of sale items and keep them out of the rain.

Another item of importance for the community is that the council recently applied for "community kitchen" status for the community center. Working closely with the health department, we leaped over the necessary hurdles to obtain this classification. What this means is that we no longer have to apply for event permits for the center for functions such as the annual Christmas Dinner and Fireman Appreciation Dinner. (It also means the community center water tested safe, so drink up!)

It also means that residents in the community can use the kitchen for their own commercial purposes, such as starting a cottage industry. If you have an idea for selling baked goods or other prepared food items, you can rent the community center's kitchen to bake or produce your goods, so fire up those thinking caps and consider starting a High Prairie original business!

We've been busy rounding up interesting speakers for the next few months' meetings, and we hope you'll come and enjoy them. Watch for more information as the dates get closer. Our meetings are on the 4th Thursday of every month, at 7 p.m., at the community center.

It was good to see so many of you at the December 5 Christmas Dinner celebration. The food was excellent, the community center had been transformed into a very festive space and, as usual, we couldn't have found better company! Thank you to the many people who made it happen. Look for more photos are on the website: <http://www.highprairie.us/high-prairian/vol-15-no-4>.



OUR WINTER/SPRING TRIPS

Neil Shuster

We went on two great trips this year—Argentina and 10,000 miles across the U.S. On the 6th of February, Carol and I left for a 10-day volunteer missions trip with the Nazarene Church to Buenos Aires, Argentina. We were there to help build an indoor soccer field for the church and hold evening children's church in local homes. We would drive 2 hours from where we were staying to where we laid brick and another 2 hours in the evening to where the services were held and then the long drive back to where we were staying. This made for very long days and short nights.

After that we took a sightseeing tour of the city of Buenos Aires, which is like our Washington DC, and then a 2-hour plane flight to their largest National Park in north central Argentina (see map online). Our tour took us into Iguazu Falls (pronounced



Iguazu Falls, Argentina

E-wa-sue), which is twice as big as Niagara Falls. We went on a small train out to the falls and walked a mile on grating over the river to look down the drop of 270' in the Devils Throat. Then back again and down a quarter-mile staircase to the river below and an air boat which took us under a portion of the falls and then downriver where the climb out was much shorter. Our hotel was also about a quarter-mile flat walk to a position that looked from Argentina into Brazil and Paraguay. Then a series of flights and a couple of long waits later, we were back in Portland.

Three weeks later our daughter Ida joined us for our cross-country trip. As you can see from the maps (online) of our route, we started in High Prairie and drove through Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Okla-

continued p. 4

TRIPS from p. 3

homa, Arizona, Nevada, California, Oregon and home. We did lots of sightseeing along the way, and at many of our stops we visited relatives. We went to an Indian museum in Taos, NM. We saw the H.W. Bush museum and the site of President Kennedy's assassination in Dallas. We saw four excellent shows in Branson, MO. We saw the historic North Carolina capitol building in Raleigh and the home of Andrew Jackson outside of Nashville, TN. We visited a historic theater on Route 66 and drove on a section of the original roadway. We enjoyed the Painted Desert and Petrified Forest National Parks. We drove through the Grand Canyon National Park, where it was very cold and snowing (it was May), then Bryce and Zion National Parks. Then to Reno, NV, with a visit to the National Automobile Museum.

We attended Easter services at my nephew's church in Plano, TX, where he is the associate pastor. From there to Carol's aunt in Granbury, TX, and on to a former Portland friend in Houston. A week later we were in Sylacauga, AL, to visit Carol's uncle and aunt and cousins. Then on to Raleigh, NC, where we visited my cousin who is the head of the civil division of the U.S. Attorney General's office. His son is an attorney in the criminal division in the same building. While spending a week in Fairfield Glade, TN, we were ready to move there. Last but not least, when we arrived in California we visited with my brother and attended an unusual wedding of my nephew at Whiskey Town Lake outside of Redding. A final night in Redmond and home.

See the online version for more photos: <http://www.highprairie.us/high-prairian/vol-15-no-4>.

PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS: STAIRCASE DESIGN BY NANCE CARTER

Gwen Berry

An elegant, custom staircase designed by our own Nance Carter has won three prestigious design awards since it was installed in early 2014. According to Nance, the staircase is one of many beautiful design elements in a luxurious new home built on the water in West Seattle. The house took two years to build at a cost of 5 million dollars. Nance was the interior designer for the entire house. She also selected the exterior colors and assisted with the exterior patio layout.

The three-story staircase was fabricated from Nance's design by artisan staircase builder, Seattle Stair & Design. It was installed in three sections, because the doors to the house were not large enough to accommodate the new stairs in one piece. The staircase features "a delightful, hand carved wreathed soffit in quartersawn white oak. The detailing echoes the maritime history of the region and client."

In recognition of the unusual beauty of the staircase and its place as a focus of the home's interior design, the judges at The Seattle Design Center's 2014 Northwest Design Competition awarded it second place in the Most Innovative Design Component category.

It won again when Seattle Stair & Design was honored with two Staircraft Awards during the 2015 Annual Conference of the Stairbuilders and Manufacturers Association in Las Vegas. The staircase was awarded First Place for Best Curved Stairway (peer vote) and People's Choice - Best Curved Stairway (public vote) for 2015. This was a national competition, so Nance can be justifiably proud of her work.

For more pictures of Nance's beautiful staircase, go to <http://www.houzz.com/projects/240087/the-paneled-soffit>.



DARK SKY

Audrey Bentz

Many High Prairians count the amazing night sky as one of the reasons to live here instead of the city. Do you enjoy gazing at the summer Milky Way, or locating the outstanding planets of the month? How much fun is pointing out the Andromeda Galaxy or the Big/Little Dipper constellations—or maybe even a view of the orbiting space station—to your visiting grandchildren?

On Thursday, January 28, we will be excited to have James Day do the program at our monthly HPCC meeting, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Community Center. James is a resident of High Prairie, and works for Washington State Parks as the Interpretive Assistant at the Goldendale Observatory.

If the weather cooperates, he will bring his telescope to point out what's easily evident in the sky at that time. He will also give us insights as to why and how we can protect the sky for viewing so our sky won't end up like that of Troutdale's grossly overlit Exit 17 or downtown Portland! There will be instruction on the type of outdoor lighting that preserves sky viewing, plus other helpful information. This is a program that should be essential for every High Prairie resident. Invite your neighbor to join you. Refreshments, too!

P.S. Go to <http://www.danzigergallery.com/artists/thierry-cohen> to see the incredible star show that New York, Paris, and other major cities are missing because of their lights.



The sky as it's seen normally compared with what it looked like during the 2003 Northeast blackout, a massive power outage affecting 55 million people.

A LOOK BACK AT BIGGS CANYON IN THE LATE 1950'S

John Parr

As a young man back in the late 50's, I came whipping into The Dalles, Oregon, looking for work. I was hired by the Union Pacific Railroad and placed on a bridge crew working on the railroad spur line from Biggs Junction up the canyon to Wasco. We maintained about 24 little timbered railroad bridges that crisscrossed the streambed. Our crew lived in boxcars at Biggs (coal for heat and ice for our food). Competition was fierce as to who took the first shower after work! Pulling high card out of a deck got you first shower. After many cold showers, I learned that polished Aces, Kings, and Queens came out easier than the lower cards.

We would ride to and from work on a little Fairbanks Morse Model 40B rail car with an air cooled motor. It had two windows in front and was open in back. It could carry approximately 8 to 10 workers. During wheat harvest time, the carbon sparks emitting from our locomotives would set the Biggs hillsides



on fire. Needless to say the wheat ranchers up on top were livid with rage about it! One incident I remember well, at the top of our run near Wasco approximately 20 wheat ranchers were lined up across the railroad tracks to stop the train. We were ordered to stand out of the way and the engineer just idled the train right through the middle of the ranchers.

We, however, always had to fight the darn canyon fires. One day, myself and some of our crew got trapped on a sagebrush bench above the tracks. A raging fire and thick smoke just ripped right through the middle of us, burning one member really bad. Super-heated smoke and fire blinded us and we could not breathe! Most of us blindly ran downhill jumping through the live fire! I hit a barbed wire fence, flipping me down an embankment and onto the railroad tracks. I could hear Al Emel (an old ex-prizefighter from Portland) hollering for help. Three of us got back up there and packed Al off the bench to the truck and raced into The Dalles hospital. Flesh burns are ugly and very, very painful!



The train tracks are gone now, along with the old-timers that we worked with. Biggs Canyon, before the advent of the new US Highway 97, was actually quite rugged and beautiful. A few rattlesnakes—but for us it was the possibility of finding those beautiful “picture rocks” (Biggs Jasper) and agates in the stream bed. The Canyon is famous for the gorgeous picture rocks that it contains. They come in sepia colors with a wide variety of scenes!

A MERRY CHRISTMAS & THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY

Deborah Fenwick

Firehouse Sale
Volunteer Social
Hour Scheduled for
January 21 at 6 p.m.

Everyone is focused on the Holidays right now and May seems a long way off, but planning for next year's Firehouse Sale has already begun. Scheduled for May 13–15, 2016, the 17th annual event is our main fundraiser to keep the community center in

operation and provide support for our local fire department. Last year, the three-day sale netted a profit of about \$15,000. That's an impressive sum considering it was all made possible by the outpouring of High Prairie volunteers.

Along with the old familiar features, here are some things to make note of for 2017:

- The acquisition of a tent from the Goldendale Chamber of Commerce that should make the shopping experience much more enjoyable.
- The success and popularity of the quilt and rifle raffles will be continued—plus the addition of a bicycle raffle.
- The classic car show-and-tell was another popular event to be repeated.
- In an effort to spotlight the importance of the volunteer fire department, we're going to pick a specific fundraising goal from a wish list Fire District 14 has provided, then use that as a focus for our efforts.
- Another addition, to encourage local youth to get involved, will be a volunteerism scholarship based on hours donated and an essay.

A big thank you to all who responded to the initial request for feedback and offering to volunteer. With a new chairperson at the helm (me), planning will begin in earnest in January, and it is hoped that more of the community will get involved behind the scenes early on. Big projects like the silent auction require extensive advance planning and footwork.

If you are new to the community, have taken a break from participating the last couple years, or haven't known how you could help out, please don't hesitate to step forward—it supports your community center and helps ensure that your emergency responders have needed equipment. Plus, it's a great way to get to know your neighbors. A few great volunteers are needed to assist with the Silent Auction donations, and we need people—or teams of people—willing to take charge of the Big Tent, Clothing, and donations or to help out in myriad ways. Interested? FirehouseSaleHPCC@gmail.com or call Deborah at (541) 980-1330.

Any and all that are curious and eager to help out—or just want an hour to socialize and eat free cookies—are invited to the **High Prairie Community Center on January 21, 2016 at 6 p.m.** for an informal planning session. Consider staying after for the HPCC meeting to listen to the guest speaker. Cannot save the date and attend? Ask for a volunteer information form to be emailed to you.





High Prairie Fire District #14 Audited by Rating Bureau

The Washington Survey and Rating Board (WSRB) audits fire districts every five years to determine whether or not they are maintaining their insurance rating. In anticipation of this audit in early November, High Prairie volunteers spiffed up the fire hall and got things organized. They had the structure firefighting hoses pressure-tested and the pumps on both structure engines, #1411 and #1421, tested for pressure and continuous water flow. They also went over #1411 stem-to-stern to make sure all the appropriate equipment was on board, in its proper place and in good working order.

The District's training program and records and the attendance records for individual volunteers were organized on spreadsheets for inspection. In the process the District Standards Operating Guidelines were upgraded and improved.

The audit was held November 6 and Fire District #14 passed with flying colors! We maintained our qualifications as a Class 8 rated fire district. We can't rate any lower (better) unless we have hydrants or a fire district supplied water source that can put out 250 gallons per minute for 2 hours (30,000 gallons). Striving for a Class 7 rating would also require a lot more record keeping and training, but it's something to plan for in the future.

A big thank-you to our volunteers for their commitment and hard work in preparing for the audit and participating in the Departmental training and responses to emergencies.

Your Fire District Needs You

High Prairie and Lyle Fire Districts are looking for volunteers. There is always attrition as members retire or move away. Winter is a great time to join up as this is when first aid and other classes are held. Mostly though, High Prairie training is OTJ – On The Job. In other words, at two-hour drills held every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 7 to 9 pm. (Apparatus maintenance is performed on the first Tuesday.) Join now so you can be equipped and trained-up in time for wildfire season next summer.

This is not strictly a "guy thing." Women can be a just as great

an asset as men in any emergency, from structure and wildland fires to medical incidents and vehicle accidents. Just ask some of the women on the Lyle Fire Department; we can put you in touch with them if you want to hear their experiences and understand better what they do.

This is an opportunity to be part of a great team made up of your friends and neighbors. You could be instrumental in saving the property or lives of other High Prairians, or of those you love. So drop by the hall on a drill night or call Chief Tim Darland at 509-209-4381 for more information. This could be the beginning of the greatest, most rewarding adventure of your life.

Time To Give Fire The Finger!

Just to remind you once again – If you haven't tested your smoke detectors for a while, now is the time to put a finger on that little button and see if the thing still works. It's best to test smoke detectors monthly and replace the battery annually. It also helps to vacuum the dust out occasionally with the brush attachment on your vacuum cleaner. Some folks put in a new battery on their birthday. Others do it on New Year's day. Be sure to put your preferred test/replacement dates on the calendar; and you might write the date on a piece of tape inside the smoke detector when you change the battery.

Smoke detectors definitely save a lot of lives, but they have to be functioning well to do their job – so give fire the finger.

Update – Shilling Road Fire Hall

Our fire commissioners are still diligently exploring alternatives to get construction of the Shilling Road hall underway. Of the sealed bids recently received, only one qualified and it exceeded the budget. Some of the other bids only offered to do a portion of the job, like the electrical.

The commissioners are now looking into the potential for a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to make up the difference in the costs from what was budgeted (including a USDA Loan and money the department has committed to the project) while still keeping all the options, like a bathroom, to end up with a complete building. The hope is to obtain other grants later, for items like a well and water reservoir, and anything that could help pay off the loan earlier.

AMANDA'S HINTS AND TIPS

CANDIED CINNAMON & SUGAR ALMONDS

Recipe adapted from Mel's Kitchen Cafe; provided by Amanda Richards.

Yield: Makes about 2 cups

INGREDIENTS

- 1 egg white
- 1 teaspoon cold water
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups unsalted almonds
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon



DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Line a large rimmed cookie sheet with foil and lightly spray with cooking spray. In a large bowl, beat the egg whites, add the water and vanilla and beat until stiff. Add the almonds to the mixture and stir gently to coat the almonds with the egg white mixture. In a small bowl, mix the brown sugar, salt and cinnamon. Add this mixture to the almonds and stir gently to mix well. Pour the almonds out onto the prepared baking sheet and carefully spread them out into a somewhat even layer. Place the baking sheet in the oven and bake for about an hour, stirring/flipping every 15 minutes, until the almonds look and feel dry. The coating on the almond should feel hard and crunchy. Cool completely before serving or packaging.

LIVING WITH WILDLIFE IN THE WINTER

Bill Weiler, Wildlife Biologist

It is a balmy 20 degrees as I write here in "Low Prairie". A herd of deer have been by and they seem healthy due to a bumper crop of white oak acorns. In addition to deer, turkeys, bears, and splendid-colored Lewis's woodpeckers, all dine on acorns. In winter, the acorn is the top food of the forest ecosystem—easy to find and nicely packaged.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife discourages citizens from feeding deer and other wildlife species. The digestive systems of deer are not able to use artificial feed efficiently. Fruit and grains are not a normal part of a deer's diet and are extremely difficult to digest. Their rumens need time to adjust to a high carbohydrate diet, and they can die from rumen acidosis when experiencing a rapid transition from normal forage to fruit or grain.

Corn and apples are hard for them to digest because the gut microbes needed to break them down are different than those that break down their more fibrous natural foods. This mismatch in gut microbes can result in starvation. Feeding these alternative foods is similar to feeding your children nothing but candy bars.

Deer and other animals have developed adaptations that allow them to survive harsh winter conditions without human intervention. These adaptations include building fat and muscle during the summer growing season, lowering metabolic rates during the winter season, and restricting movements during severe winter conditions to conserve energy.

The best way to help wild animals survive a severe winter is to promote year-round quality habitat. If animals go into the winter in good condition, most are able to survive persistent deep snow, ice and cold temperatures. Another way to help wild animals in winter is to avoid disturbing them. Animals must conserve their energy to survive winter conditions, and human disturbance causes them to move about. Keep dogs confined, and slow down when traveling on the Lyle-Centerville Road.

Winter Bird Feeding



Towhee. Photo: Peg Callendo

Unlike feeding of wild mammals, bird feeders in winter are encouraged, especially if one uses appropriate foods. Seeds are the most common food provided at feeding stations. They are rich in carbohydrates and calories and supply valuable energy during cold weather. The black oil-type sunflower seed is a favorite at feeders. It is high in energy and

easy to crack. Thistle seed, also called nyjer, is highly favored by siskins and goldfinches. Consider buying seed varieties separately. You can put each seed type in different feeders so the birds can choose their favorite and experiment with your own seed mixes.

Bird feed can be initially set out when temperatures go below freezing. Continue feeding through February and March when food supplies are lowest. Be aware that if our winter season is mild, bears may help themselves to the bird food! Multiple feeders should be placed 20 feet apart so the birds can spot cats. Our friendly felines should be indoors during the winter months.

TIPS ON WINTER DRIVING

Deborah Fenwick

Years ago, I remember traveling across southern Idaho and the weather turned unexpectedly. In a matter of miles, the roads were a sheet of ice and visibility was almost non-existent. Why this instance sticks in my mind is because I came within three feet of t-boning a station wagon that had slid sideways in the road to avoid the pileup ahead. This was not just luck, but training for when to slow down and watch ahead.

While you may be confident in knowing how to handle adverse driving conditions, don't presume that others on the road are as well equipped. Here are a few quick tips to think about when roads are wet, slick or snow covered and visibility is limited by fog, rain, or snow:

- 1) Check the weather forecast and road reports; then, determine if travel is absolutely necessary when conditions are expected to be bad.
- 2) Turn off cruise control. Expect road conditions to change rapidly. Utilize 511 by phone, app, or computer.
- 3) Still need to go? Then be prepared by having an emergency kit that – at the bare minimum – includes warning flares/beacons, a flashlight with extra batteries, warm clothing/blankets, water, and non-perishable food such as nuts, granola bars, peanut butter and crackers, jerky, etc.
- 4) Check your tire inflation, lights and windshield wipers before hitting the road.
- 5) Double check that your headlights are on even when it is light enough to drive. This is so others can see you in low visibility.
- 6) Keep your gas tank full and cell phone charged.
- 7) Traction tires, 4-wheel drive, and chains may help but will not keep you from crashing.
- 8) Don't bunch up. Maintain longer than normal distances between vehicles so you have time to react.
- 9) DO NOT slam on your brakes if your vehicle starts to lose traction. Let off the gas and carefully steer into the skid.
- 10) SLOW DOWN! Being late is better than not getting there. Allow extra time.

These seem like common sense tips. Too often crashes happen when people fail to alter their driving habits when conditions aren't optimal. After logging close to three million miles (we are long-haul truckers), I can honestly say being nervous when travel conditions are dangerous can be a good thing. Be cautious and not over-confident.

For more information, check out AAA's website: <http://exchange.aaa.com/safety/roadway-safety/winter-driving-tips/#.VmX-U7mFPY8>

Oregon Road Conditions: <https://tripcheck.com/Pages/RCMap.asp> (This state has a great app!)

Washington Road Conditions: <http://www.wsdot.com/traffic/>



THOUGHTS ON HIGH PRAIRIE

Rebecca Sonniksen

High Prairie is not a "retiring place." If you're looking for an "easy" kick-back life style with daily trips to the shopping mall, this probably is not your place. Low maintenance condos with a 18 hole golf course and manicured landscaping are not High Prairie amenities.

Yet, there are a number of us, including my husband Scott and myself, who have chosen to retire here. So that made me wonder; what is it about life in High Prairie that attracts us retirees?

We've certainly haven't simplified our lives by reducing time spent working in the "yard," or trekking to the store. Rattlesnakes, coyotes, cougars, bears and the ever-present danger of wild fire aren't exactly the stuff of Serenity Village advertisement for a place to spend your Golden Years."

What brings us here? Is it the challenge of doing something different? After all, who wants to be an older version of their former selves? In our past lives, my husband and I pursued professional careers; Scott as a college professor, designer and artist and I working in commercial real estate development at the Port of Portland.

High Prairie is definitely a place where you discover new things about yourself and your family. Maybe you didn't know you could organize a presentation and speak at a council meeting, or bake brussels sprouts for 100 people. Or how about canning tomatoes, sewing a quilt, or chopping and stacking wood?

You learn how this rural community works. Unlike our homogeneous urban neighborhood, here we are a mix of people with different backgrounds and beliefs. There are, however no walls between us- those who've moved here, those who grew up here and those who left and returned.

You only need to ask a neighbor to learn who does what, and how and when things happen or don't. When you don't have that special impossibly hard to find but absolutely necessary nut and bolt, you quickly learn who to call.

When emergencies and crises arise you learn you can count on your neighbors. And, at the same time you learn to be self-sufficient and flexible (how long do you say we'd have no phone service) and be well prepared (it takes that many jugs to flush the toilet?).

Living here is never boring. Maybe we're all thrill seekers of a sort-or maybe just seekers? There is something to be said for seeking out the unfamiliar. It keeps us on our toes and fully engaged in our environment. I didn't know that there could be so many stars in the heavens, so much joy in the flight of birds, or that the wind could bend all the oaks in one direction.

I read that when scientists at Biosphere 2 in Arizona, were asked why wires held tree branches to the frame above, they explained that because there was no wind in the Biosphere, the trees had nothing to resist. As a result, they had grown weak and needed to be held up.

Maybe like the trees, we need something to resist to make us stronger. Maybe it's because at this point in our lives we realize our time is limited, and it is here where we can fully engage with this amazing planet.

What brought you here? What captured your imagination? Let us know.



Eagle looking for dinner. Photo: Peg Callendo

SUBSCRIPTION TO THE HIGH PRAIRIAN

One-year subscriptions to The High Prairian are available for \$5.00 (four printed issues mailed to your address).

Fill out this form or write the information on a separate piece of paper. Mail it, with a \$5.00 check or money order made payable to HPCC, to:

HP Subscription, PO Box 592, Lyle, WA 98635

YES! I want to receive printed copies of the High Prairian in the mail. Please sign me up for a 1-year subscription (four issues). Enclosed is my check or money order for \$5.00.

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

Please make all payments payable to: **HPCC**

Mail this form and your check or money order to:

HP Subscription, PO Box 592, Lyle, WA 98635