

THE FIREHOUSE SALE DILEMMA

Gwen Berry

SAVE THESE DATES

**FIREWISE meeting, March 18,
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

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@embaramail.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!)

Every spring for 17 years now, High Prairie has held a sale to raise money for Fire District 14 and other community purposes. The event has grown and grown over the years. Last year, in addition to a big rummage sale, the event included the Food Booth, a first-class Silent Auction, Quilt Raffle, Sportsman's & Rifle Raffle, Youth Bike Raffle, expanded Car Show, Saturday Pancake Breakfast, and activities for kids.



What an event! The Firehouse Sale draws people from all over the Columbia Gorge and beyond and it's a great money-maker, providing ample funds to help support the Fire District as well as finish and maintain the Community Center. A great success all around!

So what's the dilemma? First, as everyone knows, putting on a successful event like this takes a lot of organization and effort. Unfortunately, the number of people willing to help has been dwindling over the last few years; and significantly, some of the mainstays of the operation are burning out and are no longer able or willing to take on the heavy load they've carried in past years. The reality is, for the show to go on, more people are needed now at all levels. Without them, it may not be possible to continue putting on the Firehouse Sale.

But here's the second part of the dilemma: There are costs that will continue, whether or not the sale happens. A big portion of the sales' proceeds goes to the Fire District for things like new turnouts and radios. Without that contribution, the Fire District would have to move money away from other important things in their budget to purchase the needed equipment.

In addition, there are costs associated with maintaining and using the Community Center. The High Prairie Community Council has covered those costs as part of managing the Community Center ever since it was built. Without the Firehouse Sale, HPCC would no longer be able to cover Community Center expenses. This would end up putting another burden on the Fire District, since the Fire District actually owns the building. These expenses have never been part of the Fire District's budget. How would they come up with the needed funds? If they had to close the Community Center to reduce those expenses, it would be a serious loss to the community, which has enjoyed having it for meetings, classes, dinners and other social events, memorial services, and more.

What is the answer? There has been talk about abandoning the Firehouse Sale, or taking a break from it, since everyone seems exhausted by it. It's tempting, but there are some problems with it. People with experience advise that after a break it's unlikely the sale would ever get started again. And what would replace it? The sale has netted over \$12,000 in all but one of the last several years. Smaller fundraisers spaced throughout the year have been suggested, but what would they be? They'd have to bring in high returns to come close to Firehouse Sale profits. It's possible that they would be just as much work—and it would be multiple efforts throughout the year instead of one major project over a limited time. It would also waste the many years of building up the Firehouse Sale in the public eye. Getting comparable crowds at multiple alternative fundraisers would require a lot more promotion and advertising, which means more volunteer hours and higher costs.

An option being discussed is to go ahead and put on a Firehouse Sale this year, but scale it back so it could be done at lower cost and with a smaller load on volunteers. It could work, if people will jump in and help—if it's going to happen it has to start immediately. Usually, planning would be well underway by now. Consider what the Firehouse Sale provides to the community and make a commitment to helping it happen. Please call Sharon Aleckson now, at 365-4429.

A slimmed-down sale this spring would solve the financial issue temporarily, but there are still some questions. Why is it harder and harder to get volunteers? What would make people feel more like taking part? How could a stronger sense of community be fostered? What would make the Firehouse Sale seem important enough or rewarding enough that more people would say yes to getting involved? What is it worth to have a top-notch Fire District and a Community Council that actively works on the community's behalf?

THE HIGH PRAIRIAN

"All the news that's print to fit"

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IN MEMORIAM—DONA TAYLOR

Audrey Bentz



On December 17, 2016, Dona Taylor left this life, and High Prairie lost a very special person whose place was at the heart of our community. A memorial service honoring Dona was held on December 23. We are pleased to reprint here an article written by Audrey Bentz for the *White Salmon Enterprise* at that time. To learn more about Dona's life and what she gave to the community, go to <http://www.whitesalmonenterprise.com/obituaries/2016/dec/29/dona-taylor/>.



Probably 95% of High Prairie residents have "immigrated" here from other Northwest areas over the past years. But one couple, Doug and Dona Taylor, likely hold the record for being "original" to this area.

Romance solidified their Lyle High School friendship and their marriage lasted over 60 years. No one knew most everybody that moved to High Prairie like they did. And they helped make High Prairie a welcoming place for so many over all these decades.

On December 23, a memorial service was held for Dona at the High Prairie Community Center, and was attended by over 150 people. We celebrated her life watching pictures of her and family from birth and on. There was music by the "High Prairie Larks" (of which Dona had been a key singer) doing four of Dona's favorite songs that she sang almost up to the day that she passed on. Rev. Myrin Bentz spoke of Dona's life and what "place" is that God has for her now, including, as one listener suggested, "a place where no weeds grow!".

A wonderful meal for all those who attended was provided by the family with help from Beneventi's and many volunteers.

Doug now has some assistance with his daughter from Alaska, and many High Prairians as he adjusts to a life with special memories of his beloved Dona.

IMMERSED IN A DREAM

Rebecca Sonniksen

Over time I've come to realize one's dreams often exceed one's talents. Like the one about writing the great American novel or climbing Mr. Rainier. Mine was to play my viola with a symphony orchestra.

My only experience of playing with others was in a string group. Given the limitations of our abilities as well as instrumentation, the music we played was "arranged." I yearned to play the "real" stuff immersed in the symphonic sounds of strings, brass, woodwinds, and percussion. I wanted to be part of something greater than the sum of its parts.

Thanks to the Columbia Gorge Sinfonietta my unlikely dream has become a reality. The Sinfonietta is one of several performing ensembles sponsored by the non-profit Columbia Gorge Orchestra Association, based in Hood River.

Current ensembles include the Sinfonietta Orchestra, Voci Choir, Gorge Jazz Collective, Stages Repertory Theatre, The Hood River String Quartet, and the Gorge Youth Chorus. Founded nearly 40 years ago, these groups have performed hundreds of concerts to thousands of local audience members. Last season the choir combined with the

Sinfonietta for several performances of Mozart's Requiem.

This is a great time to become involved in any of these performing ensembles. As the Orchestra Association expands in its levels of performance and collaborations they are looking for new members at all levels of experience.

This was my chance to play "real" music with other people, and for other people. I took the plunge. I sit behind two very good violists. They are very kind. They turn around in their chairs and give me the high-five.

Sometimes I can't play all the fast notes, of which there are many. And sometimes when their bows are going up, mine is going down; but it's one of the most fun and thrilling things I've done. From my vantage point, between the lead violists and the french horn section, I've got the best seat in the house.

Like they say, you can only get there from here. And, here is High Prairie. You never know where dreams may lead.

Find out more about the Columbia Gorge Orchestra Association at <https://www.gorgeorchestra.org>.

TALES OF THE BROWN HORDE: Some Sage (Bug) Observations

Gwen Berry

It's like something out of a Hitchcock movie. On a warm autumn afternoon, you turn the corner of your house, and suddenly you're confronted by hundreds of crawling insects. Yaaaaaa! They blanket your wall, seeking to infiltrate your home. Some fly up as you approach. You brush them out of your hair and clothes, but you know you won't find them all and they'll ride into your house with you. One by one the whole persistent mass will find the weak spots in your home's defenses. They'll be inside before winter.

Then, all is quiet, you don't see them anymore. You breathe a sigh of relief.

Until spring. Until one day, one warm spring day, you'll see a few on your windows. Now you know you haven't escaped the horde after all. They've been silently waiting, hidden in holes and crevices, waiting to emerge en masse to blacken your windows and drop from lamps into your food, and they smell terrible! Once again they're massing for movement—this time on the inside trying to get out so they can mate and come back even stronger. They are the brown menace known locally as SAGE BUGS.

Or grass bugs, or grey bugs. Entomologists call them "Over-Wintering True Bugs," of the Hemiptera order of insects/suborder Heteroptera/infraorder Cimicomorpha/superfamily Miroidea/family Miridae/possibly of the genera *Irbisia* or *Ahyrissa*—which clearly explains why entomologists also call them Plant Bugs.

Entomologists have a lot to say about them. They love bugs! Take these items, for example:

- * Many Hemipterous true bugs over-winter as adults in shelters. *Duh!*
- * Although many insects are referred to as "bugs," only the insects in the order Hemiptera are "True Bugs." *I guess the others are just faux bugs or wanna-bees. . .*
- * The Miridae are the most species rich family-level grouping of true bugs, with approximately 10,000 described species recognized as of 2000. *I'll skip the family reunion, thanks.*
- * True Bugs undergo incomplete metamorphosis, with their young looking much like adults, but without wings. *This is probably important...*

What makes a bug a True Bug? First, the wings. If it's a True Bug, the outer pair of its two sets of wings have leathery sections at the base and thin, membranous ends. Plus, there's almost always an obvious triangular structure at their base. You can easily see these features on our beloved Sage Bugs. (Use a magnifying glass if you're old enough to remember the Viet Nam war.)

Second, True Bugs have little piercing-and-sucking mouthparts, which work like a straw. The clever design of the proboscis allows it to be conveniently folded under the body of the bug when not in

use. While most True Bugs use their drinking straws to suck the juice out of plants, a few use them on other animals, including (uncommonly) mammals. *Think bed bug.* Fortunately for us, Sage Bugs are strictly of the plant juice persuasion.

If you went looking for True Bugs you'd find them everywhere, with an amazing range of appearances and life habits. The ranks of True Bugs are filled with sage bugs, stink bugs, assassin bugs, cicadas, aphids, planthoppers, leafhoppers, shield bugs, bed bugs, giant water bugs, and lots of other unusual insects. There are tiny ground-dwelling True Bugs less than 1mm (1/32 inch) long and huge 110 mm (4 3/8 inch) water bugs!

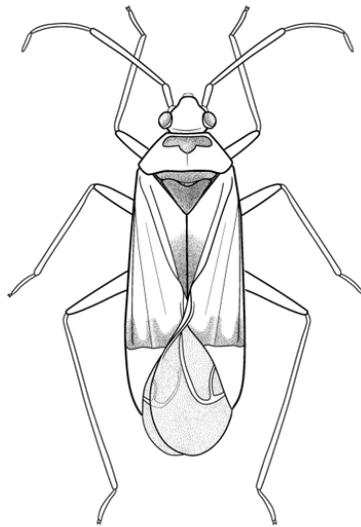
Sage Bugs are one variety of Plant Bugs, which are one variety of True Bugs. Plant Bugs are special because they only have one pair

of bug eyes, the faceted kind; while many bugs have two. A couple of closed wing cells also set them apart. And Plant Bugs are small, less than 1 cm (3/8 inch). The University of Kentucky Entomology Department adds, significantly, ". . . plant bugs are able to secrete foul-smelling, foul-tasting fluids from pores on the sides of their bodies." *No kidding!* "These secretions help to protect plant bugs from predators. Plus, many species are camouflaged with brown, green, and gray markings. Even with these defenses, plant bugs are often eaten by birds, spiders, assassin bugs, and other predators." *This is good to know.* Think of Sage Bug population numbers if the predators were more fastidious. Heroic local birds have actually been seen gorging on them.

And, finally, WSU offers these observations: "[Sage Bugs] seek layered places such as shingles, newspapers, firewood, folded fabric, etc.

They are social and like to be together. Individual grass bugs emerge on warm, sunny, winter days to seek water droplets or house plants to obtain moisture. They do not feed while hibernating, but live off of their body fat." *Bugs have body fat?*

All this information may make Sage Bugs marginally more interesting as individuals, but it still doesn't tell us what to do when they're mobbing our homes. Local wisdom says you can put a pan of water on the ground below the wall where they are massing and bunches of them will dive in and drown (knock them off and they fall straight down). A suggestion gleaned from an online forum is to spray them with a solution of detergent and water. It's supposed to kill them. Bug spray works, too. One technique is to set off a bug bomb in your house after they've all come inside in the fall, and then again in six weeks. Should result in a bug-free home next spring. But the experts at WSU Entomology warn, "They are easy to kill with products labeled for use in dwellings. However their little smelly bodies are still there! Our WSU suggestion? Vacuum them up in your home! Change vacuum bags because they stink after being filled with bugs." Experienced bug-snuffers insist you should seal up the bags or burn them. They're taking no chances! *Sage advice.*



WINTER 2017 SCENES By High Prairie Photographers

See more Winter 2017 Scenes at <http://www.highprairie.us/high-prairian/vol-17-no-1/>



< *Nine Degree Sundown,*
2017, Virgil Harper



^ *Sunset on the Prairie, Hartland Rd*
1-2017, Eric Shrum

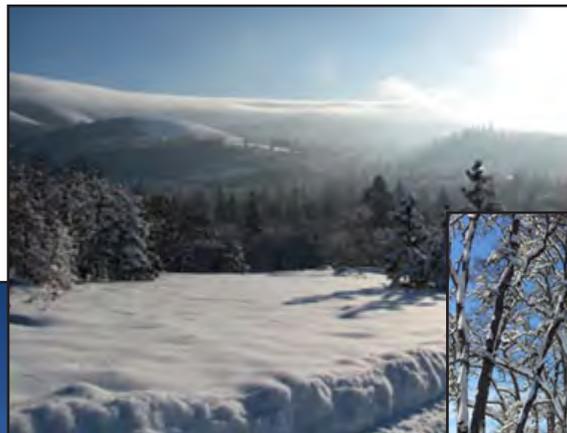
Winter Day Tableau, 2017, Virgil Harper >



Icy Drama, Gwen Berry v

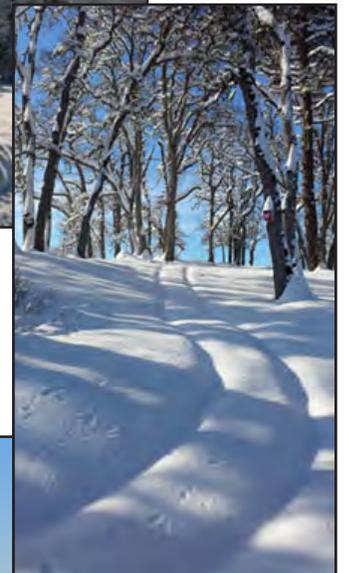


From our House, Oak in Winter, 2017,
Nance Carter v



< *Winter Wonder,*
Gwen Berry

From Our House -
Snowy Track, 2017,
Nance Carter v



< *Winter Oak by Full Moon,*
Struck Road 2-2017, Eric
Shrum

Stellar's Jay - snow-ringed heated birabath,
Peg Callendo v



Mt. Adams, Mt.
Rainier & Goat
Rocks in Snow, Peg
Callendo >





THE IMPORTANCE OF FIREWISE

Jake Jakobosky



Elsewhere in this issue is an article about the Firewise Program by Tom McMackin. I highly recommend your attendance at the meeting titled "Living with Fire" on March 18. Learning and applying what you learn there can make a big difference in your local fire department's ability to protect your home when our nasty Gorge winds whip some small fire out of control.

Just how serious can it be? Just look at the raging fire that swept through Alberta, Canada's towns last summer. Or, more recently, this month's multiple fires in Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma. As of March 9, at least six people have been killed, over 1.2 million acres burned and thousands evacuated. The number of homes and other structures burned has yet to be tallied.

Every summer our Klickitat County volunteer firefighters witness the forces of nature that blacken large acreages. There are areas of this county that have seen devastating wildfire and there are those that have yet to see and feel its effects. High Prairie is one of the latter. The fuel loads have been building for decades and all the moisture we have seen this winter will spur the heavy growth of dry grass and weeds that will carry a fire rapidly through that fuel, up the ladder fuels and into the tree tops. It might not happen this year, but what about next year or the next? Why not get prepared now?

I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of managing that fuel load in a manner that reduces the impact of inevitable fire sweeping through your home and property. Some of our neighbors have already cleared their fire hazard and serve as an example of what can be done. Please find the few hours necessary to become informed by attending the meeting on Saturday, March 18, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the High Prairie Community Center on Struck Road. If you really cannot attend, please go to the links at the end of Tom's article soon and seriously consider a plan of action to start managing the threat to your home.

2016 VALUE OF SERVICE

Tim Darland, Fire Chief

As the Fire Chief, I have the privilege and honor of leading a highly trained and competent crew who serve as volunteers on the High Prairie Fire Department (HPFD). In compiling 2016 run reports and training rosters, I am always amazed at how many hours our firefighters provide to the community. In addition to firefighters volunteering in our commu-

nity, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the High Prairie Community Council members and how they have provided service to the fire department over the last year.

To recap 2016 HPFD activities: Members responded to a total of 91 emergency calls this last year. Medical emergencies were the majority of our responses, totaling 41. Vegetation fires were second at 19 responses, followed by 13 motor vehicle accidents and 5 structure fires. There were a number of "good intent calls" in which our firefighters were asked to stand down as other departments maintained control of their emergency scene.

To calculate the value of service we take the number of hours spent on emergency responses and training/maintenance activities and multiply it by the total personnel time on each activity. HPFD MEMBERS VOLUNTEERED A TOTAL OF 1,954 HOURS! Then we multiply the number of volunteer hours by \$23.00, the average emergency services hourly wage (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013) THE VALUE OF SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY IN 2016 TOTALED \$45,000. Our collected tax revenue for HPFD in 2016 was approximately \$38,000. Money well spent! What is not represented in this total value of service is the time spent by our Fire Commissioners. Each year they sign a waiver not to get paid for their time serving in their elected positions which keeps more dollars in the budget for gear and safety equipment. Thank you, Commissioners, for your support to the department and the community.

HPFD has gone through some changes this last year. Here are some highlights. HPCC received a Legends casino grant for \$4,000 which went to purchase portable radios for the department. Glenna Scott has joined the HPFD in June as our department secretary. Great to have her on-board! We received a \$4,800 grant from Washington DNR to put a foam injection system on Brush Truck 1422. We had corrected a three year backlog of annual audits. HPCC had donated \$5,000 to purchase new turnouts for 2 firefighters with the proceeds from the annual High Prairie Firehouse Sale. I personally want to thank HPCC for the time and commitment it took by community members to ensure the Firehouse Sale happens. Two new officers (Lieutenants) were nominated to the Fire Chief by department members. Congratulations to Tom McMackin and Dave Thom! And, not that this is a highlight as he will be missed: Firefighter Rob Taylor is retiring from the department with 10 years of service! Please help celebrate Rob's retirement at the annual fire department awards dinner on Saturday April 29. Time yet to be determined.

Currently we have a roster of 14 members. Please consider joining our department or Lyle's as a volunteer. Both could use more personnel on the roster, men and women. We will train individuals through local on-the-job training and/or through other training opportunities with local fire departments. You can be part of this dedicated group committed to helping their neighbors when called.

MYSTERY CRITTER

What has six legs, but is not an insect; moves around by flipping itself from place to place with a forked "tail;" lives with hundreds of thousands of its neighbors in a square meter of soil; and appears with millions of its buddies on late winter snow looking like a sprinkling of pepper or a stripe of soot?

Answer at the bottom of page 7.

WHO'S READY FOR SPRING?

Photos by Peg Callendo

Look for more spring wildflower photos at <http://www.highprairie.us/high-prairian/vol-17-no-1/>



< Fairyslipper Orchid



^ Spring Beauty



< Yellow Violets

NOTES FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD

New Neighbors? Audrey Bentz

If you know of anyone who has recently moved to High Prairie, please send information to Audrey Bentz, amsong@gorge.net or 509-365-3600. We'd like to send an official welcome to them.

Heard Through the Grapevine

Thank you, thank you, thank you! to the intrepid local snow plow operators who spent long hours opening up roads and driveways this winter. Everyone on the receiving end of their services is extremely grateful. It may inspire even greater appreciation when you realize that the operators' costs can push \$1000 or more for fuel, maintenance and repairs.

Animal Care Needed Carole Garner

We are looking for someone to come to our place on Centerville Highway when we are gone, to feed our animals. We do not need someone to house sit; rather, just come over once a day in the afternoon to feed 3 horses, a dog and 2 cats, and some chickens. The horses have on demand water so it's a pretty easy tasks to come over once a day. We pay \$15. Interested parties can email me garner.carole@gmail.com.

Attracting Pollinators Debbie McDonald

Hello, neighbors. I can't wait to find my garden under the snow. If you're in a planning stage like me, you might find this publication interesting and educational on attracting pollinators to your garden from the Forest Service. Can't have too many pollinators and their free labor working in our yards. Enjoy! <https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/documents/AttractingPollinatorsV5.pdf>

Oda Knight Road Party/Meeting On March 19 Audrey Bentz

All Oda Knight residents (full time or weekenders) are invited to Morning Song Acres [6 Oda Knight Road, Myrin and Audrey Bentz residence] on Sunday, March 19, for an evening get-together. There will be a "happy hour" between 5 and 6 to get better acquainted, especially with the newer residents, followed at 6 pm by a potluck meal. Afterward we'll discuss our horrendous road, due to the snow! It will also be a way to thank Dan Hartford for his road work a year ago, and to Ray Lindsey for his continual snow removal for all. For RSVP or questions, call 509-365-3600.

Good Neighbor Lighting Audrey Bentz

From Time magazine, May 30, 2016: "For centuries, people gazing at the sky after sunset could see thousands of vibrant, sparkling stars... In the U.S. so-called light pollution has gotten so bad that, by one estimate, 8 out of 10 children born today will never encounter a sky dark enough for them to see the Milky Way."

Here on High Prairie we are privileged to see the Milky Way most summer nights, UNLESS we have an outdoor light nearby that shines its light upward to the sky. If you need to have an outdoor light during nighttime hours, please be sure it is the newer variety that simply (and more effectively) lights only toward your ground and/or your building. Home Depot and other such stores have a good choice of "Good Neighbor Lights." Thus you will save on your PUD bill by being conservative on outdoor lighting, and keep our amazing sky show available for all.

Toilet Ring? Here's What Works Deb Hansen (and Karen, too!)

Hello, neighbors! My husband, Ken, and I moved to High Prairie from Alaska a year and a half ago. We LOVE the area and the people. Only two things have really frustrated me... the bugs that seem to invade our home twice a year (sometimes more frequently) AND the mineral rings in our toilets. I haven't found a way to keep the bugs out, but I HAVE found the miracle "cure" for the toilet ring dilemma! I wish I could take credit for this discovery, but the kudos (and my undying admiration) go to Karen, who resides in Goldendale and is a friend of Judi Strait.

The "miracle," non-chemical cure is... wait for it... drywall sanding screen!!! Who knew???? (Besides my hero, Karen!) This product comes in sheets that can be cut to any size. It is a water proof silicon carbide material that won't damage porcelain, plastic, metal, wood or painted surfaces. You can find it in any hardware store.

Here's to sparkling toilets! Happy house cleaning, my friends!

HIGH PRAIRIE A RECOGNIZED FIREWISE USA COMMUNITY IN 2016!

Tom McMackin

We live in a quite unique and beautiful place, with the benefit of being part of an extraordinary and diverse community of folks! High Prairie has a wildness and solitude that are long lost in the growing metropolitan environments many of us have moved away from over the years. Fire is a critical aspect of that wild nature. It is a force that has sculpted this place in much the same way as the multiple flows of basalt and colossal Lake Missoula floods in the scheme of this Gorgeous creation. Most of us have only scant bits of information or understanding of wildfire from news broadcasts and the concerned conversations those news stories stir up during Summer's eruption of forest or grass fires.

Firewise is a wildfire educational and community support organization started in 1986 and is part of the National Fire Protection Association. The NFPA was established in 1886 to work toward reducing the burden of fire related loss to individuals, communities and governing agencies in the US. Firewise concepts and principles were introduced

to us through grant work that Scott Brewer, Lyle's Fire Chief at the time, started in 2012/13. His work was carried forward with due diligence by Fred Henschell from that beginning and continues with the help of James Day and more recently with a core group of other High Prairie residents. Their dedication to the importance of safely living together as a community with the potential of wildland fire has been key to High Prairie's national recognition in 2016.

The High Prairie Community Council has supported this effort and made initial work possible by providing matching funds for a Firewise grant. Two projects, improved road signage to aid emergency responders on Oda Knight Road and installation of a Firewise bulletin board at HPCC, are near completion. These are the kinds of activities that will improve the safety of our community in the event of any emergency.

An informational meeting, 'Living with Fire,' will take place at the

HP Community Center on Saturday, March 18, 2017, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The program will start with a talk about wildland fire to broaden understanding of this force of Nature. There will be a forum of ideas for current residents of considerations or actions they can use to live safely in this dynamic ecosystem. Attendees will also be pointed to resources and assistance available to them, both within our Firewise community and from supporting agencies.

Our community's efforts to be wildfire-smarter and actively use

Firewise principles to create fire defensible spaces bring two big benefits: The program calculates all our efforts as a significant dollar value which then balances grants or material support from the Firewise program for further fire safety activities; and the real improvements that the time and work performed will provide individually and to the community of High Prairie.

Our hope and our efforts are directed at again being a Firewise USA community early in 2017, with goals

to be 'recognized' for being a safer, stronger, fantastic place to live in the High Prairie community! If you are interested helping to accomplish those goals... Please contact us!

And please, everyone, come to the meeting on March 18 to learn more about wildfire and what can be done to lessen its impact.

Contacts and Links:

Contact email ~ firewise.onhighprairie@gmail.com

June 2016 HP summary of Firewise program (progress through the steps has not been updated) ~ <http://www.highprairie.us/high-prairie-fire-safety-firewise-communities-program/>

Firewise website ~ <http://www.firewise.org>

Firewise history ~ <http://www.firewise.org/about/history.aspx?ss0=0>

Firewise tool kits ~ <http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/firewise-toolkit.aspx>



Firewise Information board at the Community Center

MYSTERY CRITTER ANSWER

Barb Parrish wrote: "Did you know that there is such a thing as "Snow Fleas"? Our snow was covered with these little critters—they are so small that you almost miss them. For some reason I asked Google if there is such a thing and it popped right up—they reminded me of sand fleas so I thought it was worth asking the question. The description says that they are like a herd of Bison, eating the algae from the snow. In all my 71 years, I have never heard of such a thing. It is interesting to see the blown-up picture of them on Google—they have a forked tail and use it to flip from place to place. We had, and still have, millions of them on the snow. Thought you might want to put this in the next *High Prairian* and ask the community if they have noticed these on their snow. Straaaaaange!"

For more information on these weird but harmless critters (a species of Springtails), go to <http://www.esa.org/esablog/research/snow-fleas-helpful-winter-critters-2/> or Google 'Hypogastrura'.



Swarming, they look like soot on the snow. v



HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY TO PAUL STRAIT

David Strait

On January 19, 2017, High Prairian Paul Strait celebrated his 100th birthday! How's that for a milestone! Although a small birthday party was planned, it had to be canceled due to winter weather (and son David's broken ankle); but people came up when they could to wish him a happy birthday, and friends and neighbors mailed him cards with birthday wishes. Below, David Strait shares a little bit of his dad's amazing life:

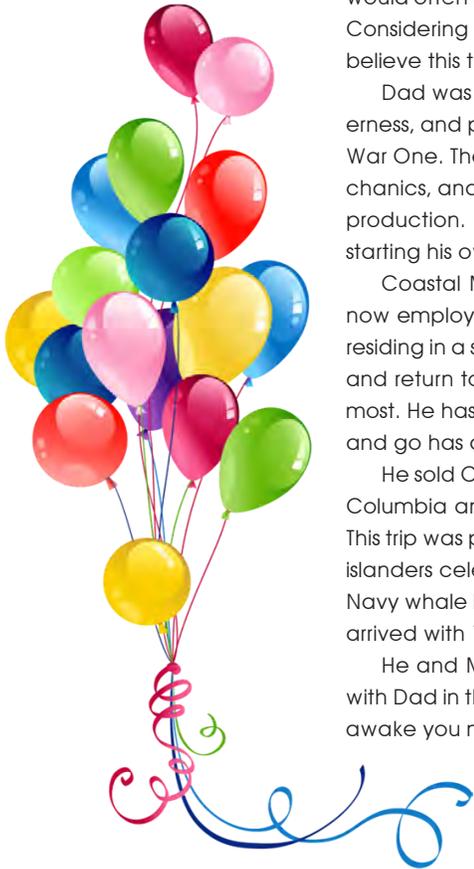
Dad was born in Newberg, Oregon, in January 1917. He had four brothers and one sister. His brothers would often take him along for good luck because they could always count on him to get everyone home. Considering some of the adventures that he took his family on—there were five of us kids, plus Mom—I believe this to be true.

Dad was never big, but anything lacking in size was more than compensated for in agility, speed, cleverness, and personability. His father was a teacher and his mother immigrated from Germany before World War One. They had a small farm and first commuted by horse and wagon. He studied welding, diesel mechanics, and machining after high school. He built several saw mills, and designed machinery for plywood production. I remember watching him build his own ham radio station, telescope, and sailboats. Before starting his own business he had worked for 17 to 19 different outfits.

Coastal Machine Works in Tillamook led to Climax Portable Machine Tools in Newberg, Oregon, that now employs around 150 worldwide. They build all kinds of machine tools that go to work sites instead of residing in a shop. Things like big turbines, submarines, and large equipment are very difficult to disassemble and return to a shop for repairs so Dad, with several clever ideas and hard work, retired a bit earlier than most. He has just in the last several years stopped working every day in his shop. He tells me that his get up and go has departed.

He sold Climax to his son-in-law in the early 70's; then he built a 32 foot sailboat, which he sailed to British Columbia and to Pitcairn Island in the South Pacific in 1989–1990. He taught himself celestial navigation. This trip was pre-GPS. He returned home without the boat but returned to Pitcairn ten years later to help the islanders celebrate the bicentennial of the burning of the HMS Bounty. For this trip he converted a 26 foot Navy whale boat with an 8 horsepower diesel and a 320 gallon tank. My son Jason went with him and they arrived with 15 gallons to spare.

He and Mom were married 74 years. I have many fond memories of family vacations and time spent with Dad in the machine shop. I've only mentioned a few of his many adventures, but if you can catch him awake you might ask for details.



Winter Birds on a Branch, Peg Callendo