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## SAVE THESE DATES

**Community Council Meetings**, starting at 7:00 PM at the Community Center.

**September 27** — Speaker from the Port

**October 25** — Fire Commissioners on an upcoming Levy.

**December 6th** — Elections for 2013 Community Council Board.

Also at the Community Center:

**September 28** — Fall Potluck and Music, starting at 6 p.m.

**September 29** — Homesteading Fair, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

**December 14th** — 2nd annual Holiday Celebration meal and Santa

**Saturday morning** fitness, starting at 10 a.m.

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

**3rd Tuesdays** of the month — Fire Commissioner meeting at 7 p.m.

Visit the community website ([www.highprairie.us](http://www.highprairie.us)) for additional scheduled events and meetings.

## COMMUNITY CENTER EVENTS

The High Prairie Community Council meets monthly and schedules presentations of interest to the community (see sidebar for upcoming dates and programs). All meetings are held at the Community Center (701 Struck Road) starting at 7:00 p.m., with refreshments and socializing at the end of the meeting. Everyone is encouraged to attend. Here's information on the monthly meetings (and a party) through the end of the year. Watch your email for additional details.

If you're not receiving emails from Barb Parrish, Council Secretary, and you'd like to, email her at [bbparrish@embarqmail.com](mailto:bbparrish@embarqmail.com). She only sends pertinent community information (you won't be overwhelmed) and you'll be in the loop on community events.

## Fall Potluck And Music...

...for listening/dancing by the Strawberry Mountain Band!

Audrey Bentz

Mark Friday, September 28 on your calendar, and come to the Community Center with a hot dish, a salad or dessert to share at 6:00 p.m. The music will begin around 7:00 and can be a background for talking to your neighbors and friends, or shaking a leg on the dance floor! This band played at our Center last winter, and was enjoyed by many. So invite your friends or neighbors to join you and prepare for a fun evening!

## Have You Heard About The Homesteading Fair?

Fern Johnson

Local High Prairie residents, Fern Johnson and Amanda Richards, will be hosting the first annual NW Homesteading Fair in Lyle on Saturday, September 29th.

"There is a real interest in learning self-sufficiency skills right now and we thought it was the perfect time to bring the community together and offer workshops and demonstrations on old-fashioned practical skills" explains Amanda.

The fair is a free family event and is being put on entirely by volunteers.

Another High Prairian, Debbie McDonald, is volunteering with the fair as a workshop leader. Debbie will be sharing her knowledge of canning with fair visitors at 9am at the Lions Community Center Kitchen.

Even the musicians, like Jamba Marimba from 4 p.m. - 6 p.m., are donating their time to this great community event!

The fair opens at 9 a.m. with a Goat Milking demonstration and continues until 6 p.m., offering spinning and blacksmithing demonstrations, workshops including cheesemaking and solar power, free kids' activities, fun music, and fabulous local food.

All workshops, music, demonstrations, and kids' activities are free! But bring plenty of cash because the fair will also host wonderful vendors with antiques, canning and homesteading supplies, plants from Briar Rose right here on High Prairie, and much more.

There will also be a raffle to cover the costs of putting on the fair, so make sure you stop by the info booth and buy tickets! Prizes include a reversible handmade apron, a lavender gift basket from High Prairie Homestead Soaps, books, heirloom seeds, canned pears, jams, and other local treats!

The fair is still looking for volunteers to direct parking and help fair guests find their way to workshops. If you would like to help out, call Fern at 509 637-5465.

For more information, visit the fair website: <https://nwhomesteadingfair.wordpress.com/>

Our local community "Garden of Weedin" is featured on page 56 of Gorge Magazine's September 2012 issue. Pick up a copy or read it at <http://gorge.journalgraphicsdigital.com/current/>

## HPCC GIVES MONEY TO FIRE DISTRICT 14

Gwen Berry

At the August HPCC meeting Community Council members voted to give \$7,300 to Fire District 14.

For the last year and a half the HPCC Board of Directors has been compiling information on how much money it needs to run the Community Center and its other programs. That information has now been distilled into a one-page document listing both HPCC's funds on hand and their projected expenses for the next year.

At the August HPCC general meeting, the Board of Directors passed around copies of the expenses document. They pointed out that subtracting the projected expenses from the funds on hand left a large balance, and they recommended that members approve a substantial payment to the Fire District.

The group discussed the expenses document and asked questions about the figures. After clarification of some items on the list, a lively discussion ensued about the payment to the Fire District. What would be the exact amount? When should it be paid out? and so forth. Although there were many points of view expressed, support for the proposal was never in question.

Members eventually settled on the figure of \$7,300 and voted to give it to the Fire District immediately. \$7,300 is half of the profits from the 2012 Firehouse Sale and 13-Mile Sale.

The Fire District reports that the entire amount has gone into the Schilling Road Fire Hall fund.

*Ed. - Just my thoughts, but that \$7,300 figure impresses me. It's really an accomplishment for our community to be able to support both HPCC and Fire District #14 in such a substantial way. Nice work!*

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## SCHILLING ROAD FIRE HALL UPDATE

Fred Neth

As most of the community is aware, the northeastern region of Fire District 14 is more than five road miles from the Struck Road fire house; consequently, that area is considered by the State to be without fire protection. Insurance rates are higher. There are at least 36 homes in this region, with two more about to be constructed. The higher elevation of this area slows the response time from Struck Road.

The Fire Commissioners have made the Schilling Road fire hall their top priority. The fire district already owns the property. It is three miles north of Centerville Highway across from the natural gas sub-station. To date the District has already spent \$6,000 on site preparation engineered to county specs. The commissioners have set aside \$20,000 in a reserve account for this project. \$7,300 was donated to Fire District 14 by the High Prairie Community Council from the proceeds of this year's fire sale. The commissioners added this to the reserve account bringing the total to about \$27,500 toward an estimated cost of \$154,000. The fire district already has the three fire trucks that will be housed in the new fire hall.

Three things need to happen for this project to become a reality. One, Fire District 14 will need a levy lid lift for the operation and maintenance of a new fire hall. An increase of about 0.2198 per \$1,000 will be proposed to the community at a forthcoming special election, possibly in February, 2013. Without this levy lid lift the new hall cannot be operational. Two, the fire district will need five more volunteers who live within five road miles of the new hall. This is mandated by the State. Three, the district will need to secure grants for the cost of construction. Efforts are being made to identify both private and public sources for these grants. Several private companies and foundations have already been identified. The commissioners are working on drawings and line-item cost projections in preparation for applying for these funding sources.

This update carries with it a deep appreciation from the community to the commissioners, the chief, the medical first responders, and the firefighters who volunteer an enormous amount of their time, energy, training and experience to protect us 24/7. They do all of this in face of the fact that Fire District 14 gets the least of the tax dollar distribution. Thanks to them we are getting a huge bang for our bucks.



Did you know there are recycling bins at the old firehouse on Centerville Highway? The recycled cans and bottles help support the Home At Last Humane Society spay/neuter certification program. Take a look at [http://homeatlasths.org/?page\\_id=60](http://homeatlasths.org/?page_id=60)

### SAD NEWS:

We are sorry to hear of the deaths of two long-time High Prairie residents:

**Dorothy Kemp**, after a long illness attended by her loving husband Earl at their 1139 Centerville Hwy home.

**Wayne Weldon**, who lived with his wife Jackie on 600 Centerville Hwy. We send our sympathy to his wife and son who also lives in High Prairie.

### GOOD NEWS:

It has been exciting for many of us to welcome Kelly and Geoff Blanchard and their two young sons Henry and Jackson. They are living on Struck Road. Kelly is a licensed masseuse. (Check her article elsewhere for details on her availability.)

Tatiana Taylor, granddaughter of High Prairian grandparents (Tom/Gail Amery and Doug/Dona Taylor) and former resident of High Prairie, competed in the Klickitat County Fair with these honors: She won Top Senior beef showman, and also the Senior Round Robin showman, Senior Division, which covered six categories: the horse, the beef, the sheep, the swine and the dairy and meat goats. She returned home with a Round Robin ribbon, a silverplate and a belt buckle. We are proud of Tatiana now as she is a high school senior, and also president of the FFA Hood River chapter.

Twenty young singers and instrumentalists (mostly from High Prairie) presented the musical "Trio of Heroes" directed by Audrey Bentz, at the community center on Sunday, September 16. We thank all those who attended, as you can believe they enjoyed all the musical talent and energy by these young people, ages 4 to 16!

## COMMUNITY CENTER GETS EVEN BETTER

Sharon Aleckson

I remember when the idea of a community center was just a line-item on High Prairie's Ten Year Plan. Now it's a reality, and what a beautiful building it is!!!

Over the years since the center was built, the HPCC Board has faced a myriad of tasks that needed to be done. First order of business: get an Occupancy Permit. A To-Do List was made. With a great deal of community support, those tasks were completed.

Then the Board focused all efforts on the things that would make our building more marketable for rental - a commercial kitchen, a new projection system, and coverings for the windows and storage areas. Another To-Do List was generated. With the support of the community and a grant from Northwest Farm Credit Services, the commercial kitchen gradually became a reality. A second grant from Northwest Farm Credit provided funds for a new projection system, recently installed.

The last item was to get coverings for the windows and storage areas. There were really two issues. The sun coming through the west windows made it very difficult to see, and poor acoustics made it very hard to hear. The right window coverings would help to solve both these problems. Ideally, storage area coverings would also be acoustically friendly, and they needed to be attractive and durable.

The Board researched various options, but finally decided they needed help from someone with more experience. They contacted Oren Johnson of Lyle. He had worked throughout the U.S. on projects related to building/interior design and had worked closely with the Lyle Lions Club in helping to solve their building's acoustical issues. He had been at meetings in our community center and experienced the acoustical issues first hand. Plus he had family ties in High Prairie.

Oren presented his recommendations and price information at the July Board meeting, and repeated his presentation at the August Community Council meeting. He recommended fabric coverings for both the windows and the storage areas. Fabric would absorb the sound bouncing off all the hard surfaces in the center, and using matching materials for the window and storage area coverings would provide an

attractive, coordinated interior décor. The fabric for the closet storage areas would be fire-rated, antibacterial, weighted, and washable. The fabric for windows would be of the same material but it would be opaque for room darkening.

Community members at the August meeting liked the project recommendations and voted to approve the money for it. Oren will oversee the project and has promised to have the coverings installed by September 30.

The new window and storage area coverings will make the community center a much nicer space. We hope that all of you will take your next opportunity to come down and see it for yourself, and while you're there, give yourself a big pat on the back for all the ways your work and support has made this possible. It takes a community to build a community center.

## CONTAINER/ COMMUNITY CENTER STORAGE UPDATE

Ted McKercher

To refresh community members' memories: About a year ago the community purchased a used 20' container. It was needed for storage of various items to be used by the center but not necessarily for the function of the center on a daily or even a monthly basis. For example, the many donations we receive for the annual Firehouse Sale. In the past the community has taken advantage

### WATCH OUT FOR SCHOOL BUSES

Kids are back in school, and that means school buses are running. What do you do if you meet one? Find out everything you need to know in school bus driver James Amery's excellent article originally from the March 2012 High Prairian ([http://www.highprairie.us/oldSite/high\\_prairian/v12n1/v12n1.pdf](http://www.highprairie.us/oldSite/high_prairian/v12n1/v12n1.pdf)).

of Doug and Dona Taylor by using their old church for those donations.

The container spent last winter waiting for good weather to be painted (it was UGLY) and for county requirements to be taken care of, like installing four corner reinforced pads.

Those two things done, M & K Well Drilling used their crane to place the container on the pads and the unit was then welded to plates that were mounted to the pads. We now probably have one of the few legal, county approved placements of a container.

To date the roof has been sealed against possible weather related problems. We're closer to being able to use the container, but there are still some things to be done. These include, but aren't limited to: building shelving, backfilling some of the excavation, rocking a path/drive to the doors and the planting of trees on the east side to minimize the disruption of the view for the neighbors higher up the hill.

So, there we are for now. No rest for the retired





## EXERCISE FITNESS PROGRAM AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER

Audrey Bentz

All who want to tone up their bodies, improve balance, protect heart, muscle and lung functions, slow brain cell aging process, and just have fun together, are encouraged to come Saturday mornings for either or both of the following:

**Qi Gong** (related to Tai Chi) and/or Yoga, both with good DVD leadership – 10 a.m.

**Zumba** (dancercise to Latin American music) led by Audrey – 10:30 a.m.

If the response is large enough, we may decide to split the two and have one on a mid-week morning. We would appreciate any input when you come!

No charge – just a little contribution for use of the Community Center. Questions? Call Audrey 365-3600.

## PROFESSIONAL MASSAGE ON HIGH PRAIRIE

Kelly Blanchard

My name is Kelly Blanchard, and I'm new to the High Prairie neighborhood. My husband, two boys and I are very happy to be here in the Columbia River Gorge, especially in High Prairie! I am a Licensed Massage Practitioner, and I'd like to offer massage services to my new neighbors. I've arranged for studio space at Morning Song Acres, or I'd be happy to come to individual homes.

I have been practicing massage for about ten years now. After receiving my BA in Community Psychology from Central Washington University in 1992, I traveled and lived in the Virgin Islands, Hawaii, Wyoming and Boston before returning to Seattle. After working in hospitality for nearly fifteen years, I found I wanted a deeper connection with people, so I started studying massage in 1998 while living in Maui.

I worked in wine marketing and event planning while I built up my massage client base in Seattle, but I've enjoyed being able to sustain a livable income with just my massage career for the last four years, most recently working with the Gene Juarez Salon

and Spa in downtown Seattle. I have worked in spas, people's homes and in my own home studios over the years.

The massage modalities I have studied include: Ayurveda, Aroma therapy, Reflexology, Hot stone, Maternity massage, chair massage, sports massage, hydrotherapy and Reiki. I love integrating different aspects of these modalities when appropriate. I very much enjoy the continuing education part of the work.

As far as my approach to massage therapy goes, I think it's important to establish clear communication with my client and listen to what they hope to gain from the session, be it deep relaxation or injury treatment, general health or increased flexibility. I find people typically like a combination of Swedish relaxation and deep tissue. I am happy to do therapeutic deep tissue and injury treatment as well.

In my opinion, stress to our systems is an underestimated illness. I enjoy practicing firm-pressure full body relaxation massage and treating my clients to massage on the hands, feet, scalp and face, as I think those areas do much to calm the nervous system and deeply relax the body and soul.

I do 60-minute and 90-minute sessions. In addition to my regular High Prairie rates, I offer a discount if you come on a weekly basis; and I have special rates for children or young adults. (Massage is a wonderful thing to teach children to do for their health!) And if you refer three new clients to me I'll give you a 60-minute massage for free.

Please check out my website at <https://sites.google.com/site/bonsantelpw/about> for information and rates. To make an appointment, or if I can answer any questions, please email me at [bonsantelpw@gmail.com](mailto:bonsantelpw@gmail.com) or call me at 425-319-1072. I look forward to meeting you! Bon Sante!

## STARS IN OUR EYES

Audrey Bentz

LIGHT POLLUTION has been a concern for those of us who celebrate the amazing show of stars, planets, meteors and Northern Lights here on High Prairie. But now we thank the many residents who have been more cautious about overhead lighting during the night, so that we can continue to let the sky make its awesome show, especially this time of year. (How many meteors did you count in August?!)

## NEEDLERS SWEEP KLICKITAT COUNTY FAIR

Gwen Berry

That hotbed of culinary and fabric artists—the High Prairie Needlers—displayed their talent, skill and industry at the 2012 Klickitat County Fair in August. Several members entered their handiwork in the Still Life section of the fair, which encompasses everything from sewing, needlework and other fiber arts, to food and gardening, arts and crafts, and photography. They did High Prairie proud!

**Terry Chabbert** – 15 blue ribbons, 12 red ribbons

**Carol Shuster** – 3 blue ribbons

**Susan Sattem** – one blue ribbon (she entered the Needlers' raffle quilt from this year)

**Pat Kent** – 3 blue ribbons, 1 Reserve Champion, 1 Lot Champion and 1 Top of Show

**Judi Strait** – 15 blue ribbons, 1 red ribbon, McCredy gift certificate (\$20.00) and Red Star Award

## BEHIND THE GARDEN GATE

Rachael Carlson

A group of twenty-seven High Prairians greeted the first day of summer by unearthing sunhats (at last) and joining their neighbors going behind the garden gates of four High Prairie gardens. The yards that were visited had been self-selected and turned out to provide a perfect cross-section of the gardening experience on High Prairie.

The day started at Rachael and Rick Carlson's intimate landscape garden, tucked into a grove of old oaks and brimming with flowering perennials and herbs. An oasis in the dry landscape, it is watered entirely with captured rainwater. The second stop was Suzy and Bill Krieg's hilltop nursery with its extravagant orchard of fruit and nut trees, a greenhouse and shade house and a large, fully enclosed (read wind-free) landscaped courtyard. Suzy, a Master Gardener, was a wonderful resource, fielding gardeners' questions. At Helen and Billy Kearns' gorgeous property at the foot of the Columbia Hills, visitors spread sack lunches beside the

spring fed pond in the shade of massive Ponderosa pines, and then explored the plantings, oak grove and waterfall surrounding the house. The final stop was at Myrtie and Ted McKercher's dry landscape garden, a brilliant demonstration of what can be accomplished with a lot of creativity and very little water. Part of the fun was watching other visitors grinning in delight at the visual surprises tucked into a dry streambed that loops around the house.

The tour offered the opportunity to learn from other experienced gardeners who are working with High Prairie's very particular, and often challenging, environmental conditions. Even more, it provided an invitation to explore four lovely and very different private outdoor spaces. Many participants expressed their desire to make this an annual event, and it is hoped that another group of gardeners will be inspired to open their yards next summer.

## ALL ABOUT OAKS

Paul Grim



High Prairie is more than just awesome views of Mt. Adams and wonderful people. High Prairie is home to one of the most biologically rich habitats in the Western United States. In fact, over 200 animal species are associated with oak woodlands in Washington, including a couple dozen species of migratory birds like the rufous hummingbird. The foundation of this habitat is anchored by the incredible Oregon white oak which forms our oak woodlands or "pine/oak savannah."

Our "scrubby" oaks are literally super trees when it comes to providing habitat for insects and animals. And the older the trees get, the more valuable they are in this regard. When you see one of those rare super fat oaks, realize that you are looking at a tree 400-800 years old. There is an old saying that the "Oregon white oak spends 400 years growing and 400 years dying." When the tree has dead wood or the whole tree is dead the insects go to town. That is why we have such a plethora of woodpeckers. In fact the primary food of pileated woodpeckers and downy woodpeckers is carpenter ants and powder post beetles which thrive in dead oak. While feeding, pileated woodpeckers dig out great gouges in the side of the tree and then animals like owls and flying squirrels (yes we have flying squirrels on High Prairie!) move in and raise their young. On my property alone, I have counted over half a dozen different owl species.

The oak tree also produces abundant crops of acorns which provide feed for many critters. Some studies show that at certain times of year, 90% of a deer's diet will be acorns. Interestingly, the introduced wild turkey also thrives in this environment, which creates great hunting opportunities.

Klickitat County actually has more oak woodland than any other place in the northwest. The habitat is so rich that the state of Washington and conservation groups have made many land purchases in the High Prairie area that are then open to hunting, hiking, and other activities. However, most oak habitat is privately owned, therefore it is up to private land-owners to be good stewards of this diminishing habitat.

Fortunately, these oaks are not good for commercial lumber. However, they are cut down for housing development, fire protection, agriculture, and firewood. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends the following for white oak woodlands: Do not cut oak trees except for habitat enhancement; retain large dominant oaks and standing dead or dying trees; leave fallen trees, limbs and leaf litter for foraging, nesting and denning sites; and retain continuous aerial pathways. Also, WDFW encourages planting oak trees, using alternatives to oak firewood, and thinning encroaching conifers (pine and fir) since they are no longer naturally thinned by fire suppression. Of course these recommendations are for good habitat. Please also make sure to maintain a good firebreak around your home.

## MY FAVORITE COOK BOOKS

Debbie McDonald

I love cook books! They reflect the history of food, the culture at the time they were written, various techniques, and exposure to new ingredients. I grew up when Home Economics was still a required course in high school. That's where I learned how to cook, about kitchen equipment, budgeting, how to balance a check book and how to read a sale flyer.

One year an Amana representative brought a huge home microwave to class, one of the first to go on the market. TV dinners were very popular and cooking skills were on the decline. I got excited about cooking the year I was assigned a Home Ec teacher who presented ingredients as science projects, chemicals that worked together to create lift or sauces or preservation. The mystery of cooking and baking went out and I understood why ingredients were important.

My mom was a great cook but I didn't pay attention, so when I first got married I just wanted books on the basics of cooking. My dad said I knew 365 ways to cook hamburger, but that's what my husband and I could afford to eat. In our household, food is love and I wanted to spoil him with variety.

Through the years I've collected cook books on various themes - recipes with stories, ethnic cooking that reflect dishes brought to America, recipes for specific appliances and recipes for specific ingredients. America's Test Kitchen cook books are a favorite because they tell me why ingredients or techniques work or didn't work as does Shirley O. Corriher in the text "CookWise." A few books on Polish cooking reflect the culture of my dad's side of my family heritage. Other cook books are from our travels in Europe when my then-military husband and I lived in Germany. Of course I still have a few old standards - Better Homes and Gardens New Cook Book, McCall's Cook Book, and The Fanny Farmer Cook Book. Julia, Jacques and Ina are also classic teachers whose books I intend to try recipe by recipe.

Currently I'm focused on ways to preserve food by making hard and soft cheeses; fermenting food including beer and wine; using mothers or SCOBY's (Symbiotic Colony of Bacteria and Yeast) for starters; canning and

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dehydrating for future use. I want to learn to make bacon and salumi (nope, not salami, salumi but that includes salami.) Books on preserving fruit and vegetables from my garden and orchard are also plentiful on those book shelves, and all things garlic are an important part of my collection. I also want to learn to use the whole animal when I raise livestock for meat so I consult the River Cottage series.

I am so thankful that my husband is an adventurous eater and gives me honest feedback. If he doesn't like something, he'll tell me but he's always a good sport about trying new foods. Let me know what cook books are your go-to favorites. Is anybody interested in a foodie club? How are the kids in your life learning to cook? I'd love to know.

## AN EXCERPT FROM MOTHER EARTH'S GARDEN JOURNAL

Bonnie Long

It happens every year, about this time. When afternoon shadows lengthen and it's no surprise to find a dusting of frost covering me in the morning, I can't help but reminisce. I look back and have to chuckle at how naïve I am in April. So over-the-top eager and confident. I see summer stretching endlessly before me and I can do-no-wrong. Toss me those radish seeds. Dig-in those Yellow Finns. I'm all over them!

Some of my reckless optimism in Spring rubs-off on me from my human helpmate. Her footfall is light but sure, and her spirit gentle. She spends a lot of time with me in those emergent weeks, and I can feel her joy. First she wakes me up with a wonderful deep massage. That noisy machine she pushes in switchbacks across my surface works its long strong fingers into me. Cracks my winter crust and loosens the knots. Then she rakes and combs me, and carves the paths and furrows that will be our blueprint for the season. I'm wide awake by then, and I can hardly contain myself. I giggle and squirm when she finally starts poking new seeds into me and feeds me that delicious compost she's been cooking all winter. I itch with possibilities.

Thinking back, I especially relish early June nights. Alive and aware of all that's

kicking and moving within me, I stretch out under the stars and contemplate the exciting months to come. Little slugs inch out from under the weeds along my edges. They tickle, and distract me from my thoughts. I know their footprints will glisten in the morning dew like glass beads strung across my chest. They're not the swiftest critters, but they mean no harm. Wouldn't try to tell that to the young lettuce leaves in my up-start salad section, though.

By July I'm settling down—getting a grip. The glow is wearing off. It's a routine, nose-to-the-grindstone time. I sense my helpmate's impatience under her feet. She's more critical of me and clucks at me for letting a few weeds gain footholds here and there. Don't make me take drastic measures, she warns. I hate the foul-smelling junk she sometimes douses me with in a fit of frustration, so I try harder to discourage the riff-raff. I root for the tomatoes and squash, even though neither of them show much interest in their own success yet. They notice, as do I, that she favors the corn. I must admit it's pretty amazing how those dried-up, tooth-shaped yellow seeds she buries in me manage to explode so joyfully into life. Their flat graceful leaves reach almost to her knees this month, and they brush her legs when she strolls past them.

Time passes. We all languish under the hot August sun. I watch tiny white moths flutter from cabbage to cabbage, stealing kisses. My helpmate's not amused when she sees they've dropped by. . . but oh well. We're both feeling lazy. No breeze. Hasn't rained in days, and I'm always thirsty. The cucumber and pumpkin plants are thick and they sprawl arrogantly in all directions. They're trying to smother me. The tomatoes, of course, claim these warm lusty nights are just what they need to become ripe and luscious, but I've learned not to trust them. I seldom see them live up to the names they flaunt, like Beefsteak and Brandywine. And that slew of potatoes on my southeast corner? They're really getting under my skin. A few four-footed guests usually wander by during the night, now. They wear black masks across their faces, but I know who they are. Sometimes their stealthy rustling in the corn patch causes a light to flick on in my helpmate's upstairs bedroom, where she sleeps near her open window.

September brings a last-minute rush of energy—the now-or-never tension that

marks a shift of tempo in summer's parade. Bees are busier. Moles run rampant. The crickets' glee club chants its "get-er-done, get-er-done" refrain, as each day comes to an earlier close. At night, a huge harvest moon hangs over me, reminding me of the next day's work. I feel the seasonal stress in my helpmate's hands as she plucks beans and gathers tomatoes and peppers by the armload. Sure, we share some disappointments. Plenty so-called Beefsteaks are still green, and the zucchini—of all things—basically fizzled this year. Still, she works frantically reaping from me what she's sown. And I must admit—she sometimes forgets to thank me for my diligence and dedication.

So here it is October. The party's over, and I'm ready to wrap it up. In the inevitable face of things withering and dying, I feel foolish recalling my unbridled April self. . . so care-free and can-do. I'm older, now— and maybe a little wiser. But I'm also exhausted. Once again, life's intricate, demanding dance has taken its toll on me. "Impending doom" is too strong of a term, but there's undeniable decline and decay on the wind. I just want to cover my head and wait it out. If memory serves, I'll feel better in the Spring.



## CUTE NEW FACES AT HIGH PRAIRIE ALPACAS

Elke Neubauer

Our little alpaca farm on the High Prairie is growing.

We didn't expect to have our first cria (baby alpaca) in the evening. Most crias are born after 340 days, between 6 a.m. and 2 p.m. so their curly fur has time to dry. The mothers don't lick their crias dry.

Briana was 345 days pregnant and didn't show any signs for an imminent birth. In passing, I looked in the shade and said to Frank, Briana is



standing strangely—oh my god she is pushing!

Then everything went fast. Frank called our friend Pat from Golden Pine Alpacas in Gollendale. He and his wife Barbara raised our alpacas. We wanted to have somebody experienced by our side for our first cria. But it's a 40-minute drive from his home to ours. Briana was faster, because it was late! I was pretty nervous. Pat drove through the gate just when the cria was born. That was on Wednesday.

On Friday, Ginger had been pregnant for 328 days and we didn't expect to have our second cria soon. But in the morning Ginger showed the typical signs for an imminent birth: humming, rolling on the ground, and no appetite (which was unusual for her).

So we knew it was coming soon. We had breakfast while we were watching her from the kitchen. Then we saw the cria's nose, and breakfast was over. I talked to Pat on the phone. He said, "Do you want me to come over?" I said, "I see the nose, it is in the right position. I think everything is going well." And so it did. The day was just perfect. It was warm, blue sky, no wind, a gorgeous view of Mt. Adams. Our dogs were watching from the fence. The cria was born 30 minutes later.

It is incredible how fast these little guys are up on their long legs.

We are happy to have two healthy cria girls, Malia and Michelle. They are so cute with their big eyes, long legs and the curly fur. And we think they can be glad to have each other for playing and running around. Briana and Ginger are good mothers.

Next year all 6 alpacas will give us fabulous fleece for yarn. I like knitting. Knitting with alpaca yarn is really special. It's buttery soft, warm and comes from nature.

If you are interested in seeing the alpacas, come on over to High Prairie Alpacas at 85 Schilling Road.



# Fire Lines

## HIGH PRAIRIE FIRE DISTRICT 14

Jake Jakabosky

High Prairie firefighters and first responders have had a busy summer so far. Some recent fires include one in late August called in around midnight. It was just east of the old firehall and would have threatened homes in the Mt. Budmore Road area had a passerby not reported it early on. The fire almost got into the trees before our volunteers and two crews from Lyle pounced on it. High Prairie and other crews also assisted Lyle Fire District on an Old Highway 8 fire that threatened structures and a home and, then later, a much larger fire at Fisher Hill Bridge.

Your volunteers also spent some long nights assisting with the recent, much more serious fires north of White Salmon. Fortunately, hardworking crews contained and backfired (burned out) the lines on those fires before strong winds hit the area on September 9. The crew then spent additional hours cleaning and hanging hose to dry and cleaning and restocking engines.

Our firefighters welcome the opportunity to work these fires, as they gain valuable experience to apply on High Prairie fires. In addition, other districts are happy to reciprocate when we ask for help.

High Prairie landowners may be wondering just what kind of fire and aid apparatus the District has tucked away in the two fire halls. The Fire Chief has a command vehicle that is invaluable for getting him to the fire or other incident quickly to assess the situation, plan suppression efforts, direct incoming apparatus, track the location of firefighters, etc. Since he is a highly experienced paramedic, our chief responds quickly and directly to the scene of medical incidents.

The District has two structure fire engines carrying 650 and 750 gallons of water each. Our two wildfire brush rigs carry 300 and 500 gallons. The 4,000 gallon tender must move at a slower speed to be safe, but it usually arrives on scene in time to supply water to the other apparatus before they exhaust their water supply. We also have a 1,000 gallon former military 8x8 tender/brush rig available that is capable of going almost anywhere. Lastly, our aid unit is fully outfitted for medical and rescue response and is capable of patient transport when authorized by the County Medical Officer.

We recently acquired two new portable, expanding water tanks that are carried on the tender. These can hold more, be deployed more quickly and are more stable on uneven ground (do we have any of that on High Prairie?) than the old "donut" tanks. The tender can fill these within two minutes and rush off for another load of water. We also have a venturi device that can rapidly move water from one tank to the other. The two new chainsaws, with carbide tipped teeth, are capable of cutting through walls and roofs. Our new gas-powered circular saw is capable of cutting through metal roofing and car bodies. Also, Engine 1411 is equipped with the "jaws of life," a tool used to free people from mangled vehicles.

High Prairie needs more volunteer firefighters and first responders. The fire district provides the training, and you don't have to be a firefighter to be an aid person. Contact Jake at 365-0025.

*Editor's note: When you meet any of the volunteers be sure to slap them on the back and say "Thank you" for all that they do. High Prairie firefighters will be profiled in future articles.*

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## FIRE DANGER CONTINUES

The Klickitat County burn ban continues in effect at least through the 1st of October and may be extended if dry weather prevails. As a gentle reminder, everyone please be extra careful as we go into Fall. Fire danger doesn't end just because the burn ban is lifted. The grass and brush are still tinder-dry and can quickly dry out again after a rain, and Gorge winds can make a fire very difficult to control.