



CHINOOK COUNTRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2006

Reader Rock Garden Officially Opens

The Calgary and District
Chapter
of the Historical Society
of Alberta

Office:
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The Vision of the Society:
"to promote a greater
understanding of Canadian
and Alberta history in
Chinook Country for people of
all ages."

Chinook boundaries
are from Olds to Nanton,
from the B.C. to the
Saskatchewan borders.

Located on the edge of the inner city at MacLeod Trail and 25th Avenue S.E., the Reader Rock Heritage Garden Site is a tribute to one man's passion for plants and beauty. William Roland Reader was the Superintendent for Calgary Parks from 1913-1942. He transformed a bare hillside into an internationally-acclaimed garden around his City-supplied home on the north slopes of Union Cemetery. He trialed over 4,000 plants in his 30-year career, keeping meticulous records of the 30 plant beds around his home recording plant characteristics and viability for Calgary's climate. If he deemed a plant hardy and attractive, it was sent "down the hill" to the Parks greenhouses for propagation and planting out in the City parks.

Rehabilitated according to Reader's original drawings and diaries, this three-acre garden will bloom from mid-March to mid-November. The structure of the garden, circulation, cobble gutters, pathways, view sheds, landforms, ponds, garden beds and woody materials were all found to be essentially intact. While the groundwork has been laid and replanting begun, establishment of the garden will continue over the next three or four years in order to fully restore the site. Site furnishings have been reconstructed from photographic materials and the reconstructed Arts-and-Crafts-style home has been built based on the original architectural drawings. The house will host new uses; providing an educational classroom, washroom amenities for the public as well as feature a café on the main floor with corporate rental space available on the second floor.

The site is open to the public seven days a week from 5am to 11pm, and is currently in review by the Province of Alberta for designation as a Provincial Historic Site. -CCHS

—City of Calgary Media Info Package



Overlooking the yard of the rebuilt Reader Home during the official opening May 29. Photo: Kate Reeves



Joan Laurence, designer of the Interpretive Panels Photo: Kate Reeves



Kate Reeves, Sheila Johnston, Ruth Manning Photo: Kate Reeves

Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park Set to Open in 2007

The Alberta Government this summer announced the creation of a new provincial park which, at 1,314 hectares, is roughly the size of Fish Creek Provincial Park.

The Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park will lie along the banks of both sides of the Bow River between Calgary and Cochrane. The park will include trails that wander through natural grasslands and wooded areas, and encompass stunning views of the Rocky Mountains.

The Alberta government acquired the land from the Neil Harvie family who sold the land for \$40 million, about half the land's estimated market value.

But the sale of this land and creation of the provincial park benefits many more Albertans than those in the Calgary/Cochrane area. According to the *Edmonton Journal*, the Harvie family will make a \$6 million donation to the Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park near Edmonton. The Harvie Conservancy Foundation will split the funds between the province's two newest provincial parks.

"Our late father Neil Harvie shared Lois Hole's passion for conservation," Tim Harvie told the *Journal*. "We are pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to this park that is an outdoor classroom and wetland sanctuary for our northern neighbors."

Harvie ranched on the land from the 1950s until his death in the late 1990s. -CCHS

From the President

The "buzz" in Calgary's historical community this summer was the successful Historic Calgary Week that began at Lougheed House with an address by former Premier Peter Lougheed and ended at Mewata Armouries with reminiscences of Calgary Stampeder George Hanson, who played football at Mewata Stadium in the 1950s. In between, Calgarians were treated to a history extravaganza with walks, talks, songs, stories, hikes, and tours of art galleries, cemeteries and museums. Thanks to the *Calgary Herald*, which printed the day's program, word spread quickly and each event was better attended than the previous one.

Historic Calgary Week Chair, Walter DeBoni, is to be congratulated for undertaking many projects and for providing leadership for a group of willing volunteers to successfully plan and organize the events of the ten-day week. I would be remiss if I did not mention Irene DeBoni, Chinook Country Historical Society secretary, and the other half of the DeBoni team, for her help in making Historic Calgary Week a success. Thanks to Walter and Irene.

Thanks also to the many sponsors of Historic Calgary Week: ARC Energy Trust, Husky Energy Inc, Masters Gallery Ltd, Spolumbo's Fine Food and Deli, Ted Godwin, and the *Calgary Herald*. Others who made valuable contributions were the Calgary Real Estate Board, Central United Church, City of Calgary Parks - Outdoor Resource Centre, Memorial Park Library, Prints Charming, and the Southern Alberta Pioneers and their Descendants. Thanks to all.

Planning for next year's Historic Calgary Week will begin in October. If you are interested in history and like meeting other history aficionados, why don't you join the committee? Call 261-4667 and leave a message.

Included with this newsletter is the program for 2006-2007. I look forward to seeing you at Fort Calgary at these wonderful presentations. -CCHS

—Carrol Jaques



Who, Me? A Historian?

One of the amazing things I've discovered about members of the Chinook Country Historical Society is the number of stories you have about Alberta history. Some of you have fascinating tales about the petroleum industry in the 1950s; others have done extensive research on the history of Calgary or surrounding areas; and some of you have families who were pioneers in the province.

Perhaps it's time you shared some of these stories.

We're always looking for newsletter submissions. (Note: submissions will be edited for length and/or content - we like articles around 600-800 words.) While we do our best to fit all submissions in an issue, we can't make any promises. However, we'll do our best to print your article as soon and as timely as we can.

So if you think your research/stories/family history may not be terribly interesting, think again. In fact, why not jot it down now and email it to me at rakerr2@telus.net?

The deadline for the next newsletter is October 15. -CCHS

—Ruth Kerr

Solutions to Crossword (Crossword on page 4)

Across: 1. Hillhurst; 6. Rozsa; 9. AMA; 10. LDS; 11. Rockets; 12. Two; 13. Cuddy; 14. Young; 16. Ilk; 17. Southam; 20. Gainsaid; 22. MacKay; 25. Ernie; 27. Sauternes; 29. Ovation; 31. Dot; 32. EMI; 33. Dinny; 34. Scene; 35. Dit

Down: 1. Hyatt; 2. Leacock; 3. Holy Cross; 4. Reside; 5. Terry Fox; 6. Rocky; 7. Zee; 8. Assign; 15. UFA; 16. Inglewood; 18. Tea kettle; 19. Oilsands; 21. Ian; 23. Ken Read; 24. Rundle; 26. Emily; 28. Swift; 30. Ann -CCHS

In Remembrance: Prisoners of Castle Mountain

The escapes happened time and time again: While prisoners walked to or from work sites; while the work stopped for lunch or supper; while a guard's head was turned the other way.

The Castle Mountain internment camp (1915-17) had an enormous amount of escapes. During a two-week period in October of 1915, for example, there were 13 escapes, six of them on the same day. Less than half of the escapees were recaptured. Fleeing from a work camp was deceptively easy in a place like Banff National Park.

Many of the 24 internment camps across Canada during World War I were in national parks. The potential free labour of these camps provided the cash-strapped federal government the means to develop the parks, with an eye to enticing tourists and their wallets. The prisoners at Castle Mountain literally paved the way for tourism: They cleared park trails, worked on the Banff Springs golf course extension and built a road to Lake Louise.

The government's ploy to lure tourists worked. Visitors, anxious to see mountains previously inaccessible by car, eagerly travelled these new roads. Many drove right to the internment camp where they were greeted by the wife of the commanding officer, who treated them to tea. It was not uncommon for prisoners to be stared at by curiosity-seekers on the other side of the barbed wire fence.

Of the 8,517 people who were interned across Canada during World War I, less than half (3,138) were prisoners of war. The rest of the internees were Canadian residents and citizens, a large percentage of whom were Ukrainian. Most of the prisoners at the Castle Mountain camp were Ukrainians – “slouching, bovine-faced foreigners,” the *Crag and Canyon* called them.

(During World War I, Ukrainians, Germans and people from other nations at war with Canada were termed “enemy aliens,” and were treated as such, similar to the interment of Japanese during World War II.)

The camp was not without whispered reports of brutality. Prisoners who said they were too sick to work were allegedly beaten by guards. One prisoner who refused to work was locked up in a tiny cell for two weeks. When he emerged, he was so crippled with rheumatism he could barely walk. It is little wonder that so many prisoners would rather take their chances fleeing into the wilderness – even in the dead of winter – than face life in the camp.

Government policy dictated that prisoners work eight hours per day. But prisoners were also required to *walk* to and from the work site. This meant the prisoners usually worked a 12- or 13-hour day.

They worked in appalling conditions. When Major Duncan Stuart ran the camp, he complained in a private letter that he asked for new clothing 10 different times without success. “In the face of this lack of clothing and boots there is five inches of snow on the ground,” he wrote. “Some prisoners have boots with their soles half off...” Prisoners also slept in tents without heat.

The winter of 1915 was a cold one. Camp officials decided to temporarily move the prisoners to a warmer locale, the Cave and Basin, much to the chagrin of local residents. “The bunch comprised 145 aliens,” declared the *Crag & Canyon* when it announced the move. “The total number of enemies of our country now interned here is 180...”

By the middle of 1916, prisoners were regularly being “lent out” as day labourers to private companies such as the CPR. The Canmore Coal Company specifically requested five prisoners by name. Before the war, these men had been employees of the mine.

The camp was shut down and dismantled by the fall of 1917. In total, over 600 prisoners worked on various projects in Banff National Park. Today a monument stands near the base of Castle Mountain, a silent tribute to her prisoners. -CHS

—submitted by Ruth Kerr

1960s Mural Temporarily Housed in North Mt. Pleasant

The large ceramic mural by Ed Drahančuk, that was located on a building at 209-16 Avenue N.E., is being saved thanks to the collaborative efforts of a number of City of Calgary departments.

This mural was commissioned by the Municipal District of Rockyview in the early 1960s. Created by well-respected artist and ceramist Ed Drahančuk, who lived and worked in the Calgary area for many years, it depicts a vibrant Alberta landscape with an inventive use of stoneware, glazes and cement. The efforts being made to save the mural, embedded into a building slated for demolition as a result of the 16th Avenue North Urban Corridor expansion project, are indicative of the City's commitment to preserve our cultural and historical resources while working to meet the needs of the future.

This complex undertaking presents a number of challenges. A significant one is to identify a new, permanent home for the mural. A consultation involving community stakeholders is being planned for this fall.

Once removed, the mural will be hosted temporarily at North Mount Pleasant Arts Centre (523-27 Avenue N.W.). This interim location ensures that the mural will be safe, secure and in a position to be viewed, enjoyed and thoughtfully considered in the consultation process. The Arts Centre is pleased to host the mural and welcomes everyone to come and take a look.

For more information log onto www.calgary.ca/publicart. -CHS

Local History Crossword

(Solution on page 2)

Across

1. A district in NW Calgary
6. Ted and Lola -----, Calgary philanthropists
9. Alberta Motor Assn., (abbr.)
10. The Mormon church (abbr.)
11. Projectiles
12. A pair; --- of a kind
13. Calgary police chief, 1912-19, Alfred -----
14. J.J. -----, the last local owner of the *Calgary Herald*
16. Kind or type
17. Now part of the Canwest Global Communications Corp, ----- Press
20. Contradicted or denied
22. Former Mayor of Calgary, 1949-59, Don -----
25. Former police chief, 1984-89, ----- Riemer
27. French white wines
29. Praise; applause
31. An image on a radar screen
32. A multi-national recording company
33. ----- the dinosaur
34. A setting, or place
35. Morse signal

Down

1. Downtown hotel
2. Canadian humorist, Stephen -----
3. The birthplace of many Calgarians, this SW Calgary hospital closed in 1996 (2 wds.)
4. To live or dwell
5. A Canadian hero who has raised millions for cancer research (2 wds.)
6. The MD of ----- View
7. The last letter of the alphabet, south of the 49th parallel
8. To delegate, or credit with
15. United Farmers of Alberta (abbr.)
16. Calgary's first neighbourhood
18. A once-popular restaurant on 7th Ave. SW, the ----- Inn (2 wds.)
19. Alberta's -----, have become the "Klondike" of the 21st Century
21. --- Bazalgette, DFC, WWII hero
23. Calgary's crazy Canuck (2 wds.)
24. Banff's Mt. -----
26. One of the Famous Five, ----- Murphy
28. An endangered species, the ----- fox, found on the prairies
30. Former Chancellor of the University of Calgary, --- McCaig

—Jennifer Prest



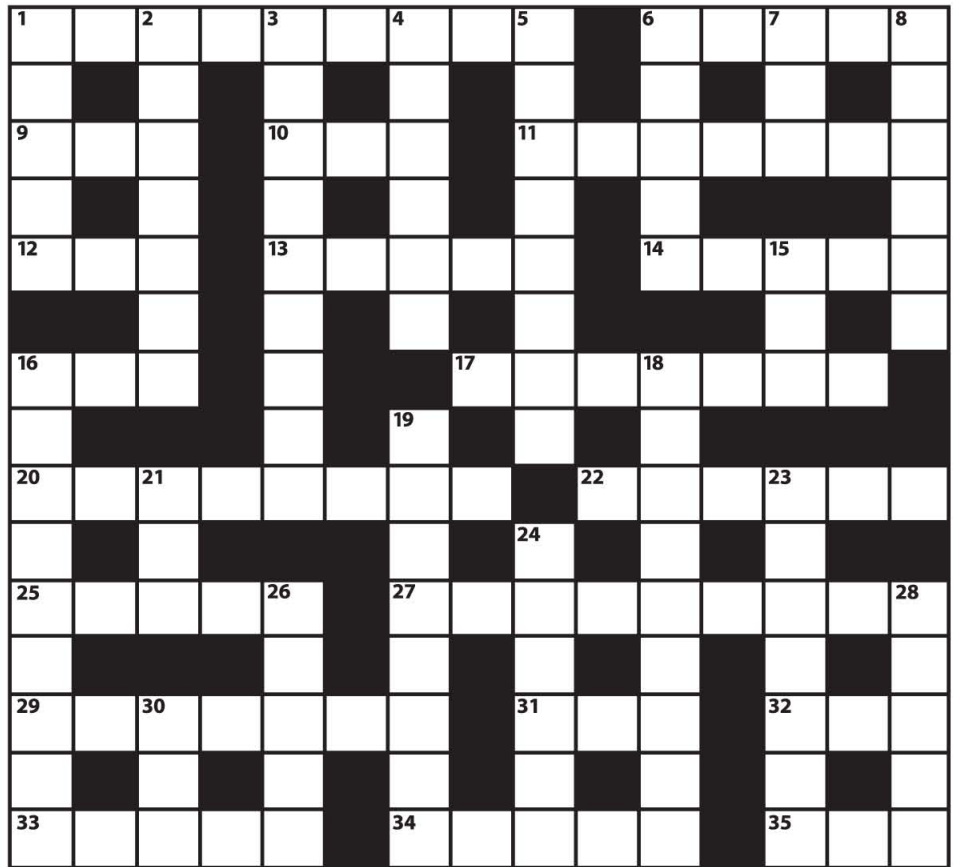
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Annual subscription	\$25.00
Total	\$40.00
Purchased together	\$35.00

Family membership	\$25.00
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Newsletter Submissions: The deadline for the Winter issue is **October 15, 2006**. Please send your article to Ruth Kerr at rakerr2@telus.net.