

The Municipal Connection

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M.D. BURSARY RECIPIENTS

Congratulations to Cheyenne Porter, recipient of the Agricultural Service Board (ASB) Bursary, and Charleah Stafford, recipient of the Education Bursary for 2023! Cheyenne is pursuing a Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan and Charleah is pursuing concurrent degrees in Education and Kinesiology through the University of Calgary. We wish them, and all students of the M.D. of Wainwright, the very best in their pursuits of post secondary education.

WHO'S YOUR COUNCILLOR?

Division 1: Oscar Buck
Division 2: Mike Wildeboer
Division 3: Richard (Bill) Waddell
Division 4: Robin Leighton
Division 5: Bruce Cummins
Division 6: Bill Lawson
Division 7: Reeve Bob Barss

Check out the M.D. map with the divisional breakdown online at mdwainwright.ca

RAT NEWS

If you have watched the news lately, you have likely heard the headline that Alberta's longstanding 'Rat Free' status is in jeopardy. While there are currently a couple of active infestations within the Province, this does not mean a loss of status. Rats can, and do, enter Alberta in a number of ways, such as hitching a ride on vehicles or aircraft. In fact there are hundreds of reports of rat sightings every year across the province. In 2022 alone, there were 408 reports, with 27 of those beings confirmed as rats. Therefore, it is no surprise that infestations occur on occasion. The distinction being that no resident population is allowed to establish itself permanently, as authorities respond swiftly and effectively to reports using proven monitoring, baiting and trapping methods.

Reporting by the public is crucial to the success of the program, as the appropriate actions to contain, control and prevent further spread can be undertaken immediately. Alberta's history with rats, or lack thereof, is a feat that hasn't been replicated anywhere else in the world and it is important that does not become something we take for granted. Rats have the potential to cause millions of dollars worth of damage annually to the agricultural industry alone should they become established in the province.

The continued efforts of the public, province, and private industry can keep that from becoming a reality.

If you have any suspicions of rat activity, do not hesitate to contact Shelby at the M.D. office at 780-842-4454.



The Poles and Alberta - the only rat free places on the globe

The Norway Rat

WINTER IS THE SEASON FOR EVERYTHING HYGGE

Hygge (pronounced "hoo-gah") is a Danish word that encompasses a feeling of coziness, contentment, and well-being. It is often associated with creating a warm and inviting atmosphere, embracing simple pleasures, and finding joy in the present moment.

Implementing hygge in your daily life can help you cultivate a sense of comfort and happiness. Here are some ways you can incorporate hygge into your lifestyle.

Create a cozy environment: think soft blankets, warm lighting, and comfortable furniture. In short, a soothing ambiance.

Embrace simplicity: Focus on the little things that bring you joy. Enjoy a cup of hot tea or coffee, delicious home-cooked meals, or indulge in your favorite book.

Prioritize self-care: Take time to relax and unwind.

Connect with loved ones: Hygge encourages spending quality time with friends and family. Engage in meaningful conversations, play board games together, or simply enjoy each other's company.

Appreciate nature: Spend time outdoors and connect with nature's beauty. Go for walks in parks or forests, or stargaze on clear nights.

Unplug from technology: Disconnect from screens and immerse yourself in the present moment without distractions.

Remember that hygge is not just about physical surroundings but also about cultivating an inner sense of comfort and well-being. By incorporating these practices into your life, you can experience the cozy charm of hygge and enhance your overall happiness and contentment.

FEEDING BIRDS IN WINTER

Nothing brightens up a yard like a flock of cheerful birds going about their day. And nothing draws them in quite like a free meal! Alberta is home to many bird species that brave the harsh conditions and overwinter in the Province. Many people enjoy feeding these tenacious creatures throughout the winter, however there are a few considerations to keep in mind. Though providing additional high energy food sources helps to fuel birds through the coldest of days, they can also unwittingly pose some hazards for them. Hanging a feeder in the wrong spot can leave birds vulnerable to attack by predators, such as the ferocious house cat. Feeders placed



close to a window also greatly increases the likelihood of potentially deadly collisions with the glass. Of course these are easily mitigated with thoughtful placement of feeders. Either place feeders seven to 10m away from any windows, or do the opposite and hang the feeder right up against the house at an angled line of sight, so a bird won't see a natural flight path through the house. Placing feeders in the yard, as opposed to near the house, is the best way to keep birds safe. Using species specific feeders, as well as researching the preferred food choices of said species, is a great way to attract the birds you want and to help deter food pilfering by other species, such as squirrels. A final consideration is cleaning your feeder. It is recommended to empty feeders monthly and wash them with hot water and soap, and allow them to dry completely before refilling them. This not only reduces the risk of spreading disease at a high traffic feeder from any infected birds, but also helps avoid food spoilage in a dirty feeder. By keeping these things in mind, you can help out your local bird population and enjoy their company in your yard!

USED OIL & FILTER RECYCLING

The Wainwright Landfill is now able to accept non-commercial oil, filters and oil containers for recycling. Pails may be up to 20L in size, to a maximum of 100L per customer per visit. All oil material must be taken across the scale for inspection prior to disposal. This service is offered free of cost to the public. For further details or clarifications, contact Carol at the Landfill at 780-842-4051.

GRAIN BAG & TWINE RECYCLING

Recycle used grain bags and plastic twine for free at the Wainwright Regional Landfill. Grain bags must be reasonably clear of debris and contained in some fashion (rolled and tied) so they are able to be moved by staff. Silage plastics are not accepted. Collection bags for plastic twine recycling are provided at the landfill. Plastic twine is the only type currently accepted (no net, or plastic stretch wrap), and it must be reasonably clear of debris. Both types of product can be returned to the landfill for pickup by Cleanfarms. Contact Carol at the Landfill at 780-842-4051 for any clarifications, or read more about the program on the Cleanfarms website.

CHEMICAL CONTAINER SITES

REMINDER: As of January 1, 2024 the Municipal empty chemical collection sites at Irma, Wainwright, Edgerton and Chauvin will be permanently closed. At this time, collection of these materials becomes the responsibility of retailers. Visit cleanfarms.ca to read about this transition and the other programs available through the organization.





The Wainwright Wildlife Society (WWS) is a local not for profit organization that was formed in 1987 by a group of passionate volunteers from Wainwright and surrounding area. Dedicated to the preservation and conservation of our precious wildlife and natural spaces, the WWS is on a mission to raise awareness, educate, and encourage people to enjoy the wonders of nature in their own backyards.



The WWS is very much an active group within our community. Its 35 passionate members meet on a monthly basis, where educational guest speakers are regularly brought in throughout the year. Public events are also hosted by the Society, such as wildlife photography workshops or presentations by variety of speakers such as bluebird specialists or even Nobel Peace Prize recipient Dr. Russell Schnell. Members are often busy working on the Society's various projects, such as the construction of bluebird boxes and winter bird feeders, or sharing their knowledge on a variety of topics with local scouts or 4-H groups, or in a classroom. The WWS encourages people to connect with nature by providing opportunities for outdoor exploration in the form of field trips and excursions for members and the public. From mud flats to the Parkland Sand Dunes, or viewing snake hibernaculum or heron rookeries, there is always something exciting to experience and gain appreciation for in nature. Another activity the group takes part in is the annual, nation wide Great Canadian Bird Count, as well as owl surveys every winter. These volunteer powered citizen science projects are some of the longest running in North America and have been taking place for over 20 years. Additionally, the Society produces a yearly calendar promoting local wildlife, captured by local photographers. An annual banquet held in March is also a staple of the WWS's activities, and features a silent auction and guest speaker.



A key area of interest that sparked the formation of the WWS and continues to be a foundational element is the desire to showcase the local Sharp Tailed Grouse population (pictured in the logo above). These magnificent ground nesters create quite the spectacle as they dance to attract mates every spring in April and May. The Society guides folks from near and far to witness the display from the comfort of specially designed blinds. In fact, bird enthusiasts have travelled from as far as Victoria, Toronto and even internationally specifically to witness the activity. Something especially thrilling that the Society is looking forward to in the new year is the release of a new nature documentary to be aired on Netflix, featuring fauna from around the world. Wainwright's very own Sharp Tail Grouse will be one of the featured species. An international film crew spent ten days in blinds this past spring capturing the footage and sounds for the segment. These feathered locals have also been a feature of the virtual International Grouse Symposium held the past three years, in a partnership with the Association for Life-wide Living.



Now if that all isn't enough, the WWS has one more particularly big feather in their cap; the development and maintenance of a 15km nature trail system nestled in the beautiful Battle River Valley. Approximately 10km east of Riverdale Mini Park, near the scenic Mistahiya Lodge, this free network is open 24/7, 365 days a year to the public for all manner of activities. Whether you enjoy hiking, trail running or biking, snowshoeing, birding, photography or just sitting quietly and taking in the sights and sounds of nature, there are endless ways to enjoy this accessible wilderness in our backyard. It took no small amount of dedication to bring this project to fruition. Aside from countless volunteer hours during construction, as well as ongoing maintenance, it has also taken financial contributions from the community to see the project come to reality. The M.D., Enerplus and Vision Credit Union, as well as private donors, have contributed to the project. Aside from the trails themselves, visitors also enjoy a wildlife viewing tower overlooking the Battle River, various resting benches, a miniature free library, two picnic areas, an on site porta potty, a beautiful valley lookout, and plenty of native flora and fauna. Trail cameras are utilized to monitor what sort of wildlife moves through the area. Aside from a plethora of bird species, a wide range of mammals have been spotted on the trails including moose, deer, weasels, mink, fishers, bear, coyotes and more. Looking forward, the group hopes to continue to expand the trail system as well as work toward some more accessible trails.



The Society faces challenges common to all small organizations, namely steady and stable funding, but also comes up against some unique ones. As an example, over the past year three of the signs at the walking trails have needed to be replaced following vandalism... by local black bears. The group will be facing a particularly large challenge in the coming year as they are losing the shop they had previously been using for their building projects (bird houses/feeders and blinds) which also served as their storage space. If you have a passion for wildlife or places, there are many ways to support the WWS in a variety of capacities. Volunteers and new members are always appreciated, and with annual membership fees of only \$10 a year getting the whole family involved is very affordable. The WWS held their first online 50/50 fundraiser this year and plans to do more in the future, or you could purchase a hand made bird box or feeder at Petro Canada in Wainwright, the Fabyan Trading Post or at a local craft fair where the WWS regularly has a booth. Take in a spring Grouse Tour, a guest speaker, or join in on an excursion and enjoy the beauty of the natural world around us!



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A special thank you to current WWS President Sheldon Frissell for taking the time to be interviewed for this article!

PRAIRIE STAPLES Highbush Cranberry - *Viburnum opulus*

Found in open woodlands, river valleys, and thickets, highbush cranberry is a member of the Honeysuckle Family and is a common prairie species. From May to June, one may notice their attractively distinct flower clusters. The outer flowers are large, white and showy. These alluring blooms are sterile, but they serve the important function of attracting pollinators to the inner fertile flowers. Interestingly, the flowers are also hermaphroditic, meaning an individual plants flowers can pollinate each other, allowing even a lone specimen on the landscape to thrive. The berries, or 'drupes', formed through the season are a flashy reddish orange, complimenting the attractive colors the foliage dons in the fall. Drupes contain a large stony seed, and can be quite tart and acidic to the palate. However, these prairie fruits were still heavily utilized throughout history, and are known as an excellent source of vitamins C and K. Nowadays they are typically used in jams, jellies, or beverages. High bush cranberry may grow up to 4m tall with smooth grey bark, which evidently is also edible. Bark is known to have medicinal properties including being an antispasmodic, astringent, diuretic, nervine, and sedative, and may be prepared as a decoction, compress, poultice, cream, oil, salve, or tea tincture.



PODCAST FAN? Saskatchewan Agriculture Today: Jim Smalley is one of Saskatchewan's most trusted names in Agriculture.

Listen for the latest news and developments impacting the provincial agri-business industry, market and commodity prices and more.

CowBytes is an easy-to-use ration balancing software that can assist cattle producers in developing rations and improving herd nutrition. The program allows producers to select the type and breeds of cattle that they want to feed, then select the productivity levels of cattle based on body weight, average daily gain, body condition score and the stage of gestation or milk production in cows. Producers can also adjust for climatic conditions such as wind or temperature, which affect nutritional requirements. Visit the Beef Cattle Research Council website to learn more about CowBytes and the other programs and resources available!



Why did the police arrest the turkey?
They suspected it of fowl play.

Why did the cow jump over the moon?
The farmer had cold hands.

Farmer John is so interested in conserving energy, he built a pig-powered car.
He has to get rid of it, though. Every time he turns a corner, the tires squeal.

WINTER IS A GREAT TIME TO COMPLETE YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN (EFP)! EFP's are free, online self assessment workbooks designed to help producers identify their environmental risks, and develop strategies to mitigate them. They are entirely confidential, valid for a period of ten years, and allow holders access to some cost share funding programs. Visit albertaefp.com to learn more and sign up today.

MUNICIPAL TAXES



The deadline for tax payment was **November 30th**. A penalty of 12% will be added to all outstanding taxes effective December 1. Call 780-842-4454 with any questions regarding tax payment.

Ever wonder why we put up Christmas trees? Evergreen fir trees are universal winter decorations: Pagans displayed the branches as a reminder that spring would come again. Romans placed them around temples to honor Saturn, the god of agriculture. But the first time the evergreen was used as a Christmas tree was either in Tallinn, Estonia, or Riga, Latvia. (Each city says it is the true home of the first Christmas tree.) In the 16th century, German Christians brought the trees inside their homes as a symbol of everlasting life. When news spread that Queen Victoria had her German husband, Prince Albert, set up a Christmas tree in their palace, the practice suddenly became the height of Christmas symbolism in England and America.