



March 2022

Official Newsletter for Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation

Our New Signature Picture

Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation decided to create our own signature picture. We had been using a photo by Todd Klassy but it costs us to use it.

So one fine spring day, when the local coulees were still green, the crew set out for Jen's daughter's acreage east of Medicine Hat.

It was the perfect setting and a lovely day. Her coulee is deep and if one pays attention, it is filled with various plants that bring subtle colour.

Horse, Cash and his owner, Penella Zollner wandered back and forth through the coulee, while our photographer took over 300 pictures, battling steep terrain and sitting on stealthy cacti!

We had discussions about the non-traditional cowboy look: the helmet and the fact that the rider is a woman. Then we realized this is the look of many modern ranchers. It's not uncommon for women to be running the ranch. And it's smart to wear a helmet when you're riding a green horse in uncertain terrain!

When you see this image, you'll know it's a Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation event.

Photo by Cheryl Dust, Duster Video.

What's New at MHCowboyLife.com?

We posted our final video in our Country Stories series. Learn about local rural history from people who lived it.

Darrel (Doc) Florence's poem, "Ode to the Rancher's Wife" tells it like it is.

Veteran George Hope, 96-years-old, shares some of his WWII stories while Harold Fieldberg shares his memories of the Lone Wolf of Bindloss.

Learn about Henry Cavan, Raymond Dubeau and Happy Campbell, no longer with us, but each made their mark on local history.

There are barn stories from Buddy Gale and Carol Eisenbarth.

Meet Harry Forbes, who'll be 104 in April 2022, author of many books.

Other stories include: A Tornado of a Wedding, Rattlesnake Stories, Quarantined in a Tent, What's in a Name, a one-armed auctioneer and a polio survivor. The Country Stories book will be published this month.

Other Web News:

We publish new stories monthly in our Harry Forbes series and our I-Alice series. Sadly we lost Alice recently but we are thrilled to continue to share more of her stories. We also have copies of **I-Alice** for sale.

We have added Empty Saddles to our site, with links to obituaries.

In this issue: Schuler, AB. The Beautiful Jim Key

www.MHCowboyLife.com



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

From My Perch on the Corral: President's Message



Jen Zollner, President, Medicine Hat
Cowboy Poetry Foundation

Sometimes disbelief prompts a person to prove it can't be true. Jim Key was just a horse; a horse can't possibly spell and read and write. Horses aren't that smart. But after reading Rivas' book about Beautiful Jim Key, I'm convinced his performances were not just well-rehearsed tricks. More than that, this horse was said to have the academic ability of someone in Grade 6 and the IQ of a 12-year-old. He appeared to think like a human. Was it because Jim Key was raised by a human from the time he was a newborn colt? How much did imprinting have to do with this?

Gone was my "Clever Hans Effect" theory, (see Page 7) that Jim Key was responding to the cues of Dr Key, be it planned or unintentional. Jim Key performed just as well when Dr. Key wasn't in the room. It did prove how intelligent horses are at reading subtle body signals (and the emotions) of those around them. The powerful connection between horse and trainer was taken to a whole new level with Dr. Key and Jim Key.

We acknowledge the obvious ways horses communicate, not just with their telling tails, but with their mobile ears and expressive eyes. I wanted to know more about horse whisperers, so I watched the Robert Redford movie by that name. Then by randomly browsing at the library, I came across the author, Monty Roberts, a man who listens to horses. Like Dr. Key it is also about using patience and kindness, but the teaching he did (and still does at age 86) is practical, to ready (not break) a horse for riding and racing and doing things more natural for a horse (in 30 minutes not 30 days). After spending a great deal of time observing wild mustang herds, he saw how they communicate with each other and thus learned the subtle language of horses. He uses that Equus language to 'have a conversation' with them.

Monty Roberts (and William Key) give the world models on how to treat (and train) horses and all animals humanely. At the end of his book he invites us to learn how to converse with horses; the appendix title is "Join Up: A Step-by-Step Guide".

Goggle "Monty Roberts, the Real Horses Whisperer", a series of four YouTube videos. Tour his amazing 'Flag Is Up' Learning Centre in Santa Ynez Valley, California.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fi22vFXTEzg>



Photo of Jim Key's Tombstone:
Beautiful Jim Key
1889-1912



I AM JIM KEY THE BEAUTIFUL



(This is the true story of a hero, who in his short 23 years of life changed people's thinking. What made him different from any other great men or women is that he was a horse, an educated horse. It was his patient teacher, Dr. William Key that proved what power kindness to animals has.)

My life in 1889 started as a colt with nobility blood and the hope I'd be a champion race horse, the finest bred horse in the country. Instead I was a mishap scrub with a scrawny coat and I walked somewhat like the town's drunk. I heard them say I'd never make it and that I should be put down. My mom was too sick to care for me, so William Key had to do it. He had several noble names in mind for me, but when he saw how homely I was, he decided on a simple name, Jim, then he gave me his last name. I was Jim Key and William Key would not only be my parent and doctor (Doc), he would be my teacher and my constant companion.

As Doc massaged my crooked spindly legs, he willed the impossible and it gave me the will to live. It was obvious why I had so much time to observe; galloping around like most colts wasn't for me. I recognized the names of all the farm animals and realized that each looked and acted differently. When we went to the yard I felt safe because Doc was the head of the herd. Every morning I wobbled weakly when Doc exercised me in the yard. I felt strange there, felt like I was too weak to stand up for myself, so I became the barnyard jester to distract the bullies and snobs. Even when I was stronger, I still pretended to be lame and wobble because I loved getting the animals' attention and loved it when humans laughed.

I got jealous when Doc rewarded his dogs with generous scratching around the head and ears after they'd sit, lie down and roll over, so I did those tricks, too. I even brought a stick for Doc to throw, and when I brought it back, I lowered my head and bobbed it, hoping he'd praise me with the same soft words and scratching. After the first stick-fetching, Doc spent all day teaching me dog tricks, and praising me.

That night he tried to put me in the barn, but I was determined to live and sleep in the house like the dogs and that's what I did for almost a year. I followed Doc everywhere and so it was handy for him to teach me the names of all the objects around the house, always stroking, praising and giving me pieces of apple, my favourite treat. I knew to seek privacy in toileting habits as I watched my fellow humans use the outdoor privy and I observed the dogs. *Continued on page 4*



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

(Jim Key) I had a pampered life. My warm bedroom had a pile of straw covered with a blanket to sleep on. I ate the best oats and hay, drank purified mineral water and was treated with Doc's Keystone tonics and liniment. By my first birthday my illnesses were cured, my crooked legs were straight and my sparse dingy-coloured coat grew glossy and sleek. But I realized I had outgrown the house when my hoof went through the flooring and I accidentally broke the door jam.

When I was put in a stall in the barn to sleep alone that night, I put up such a ruckus that Doc finally brought his cot out to sleep beside me. That's how it came that he slept with me for almost 365 nights a year, every year for the remainder of my life. Doc would explain how sorry he was the odd night he had to be away and made an attendant promise to sleep on the cot near me. (Little wonder Dr Key didn't produce any heirs.)

One day Doc moved his desk into the corner of our stall and that's where he did his bookkeeping. He explained to me what he was doing and why it was important to keep a record of money earned and spent. We played a game in which he showed me a penny, a nickel, a dime, a quarter and a silver dollar. I got an apple each time I showed him the coin he asked for.

Life was full of games; laughter was the best reward when I did something goofy. I got to travel with Doc to local fairs and our comic acts helped sell his patent liniment. The best part was hearing the crowd chuckle at my antics, the bigger the crowd, the better. During those seven years as travelling salesmen, I had school every day. I learned the letters and numerals. After the basics, it was adding and subtracting, then it was spelling, multiplication and writing. Doc was a kindly professor and I was eager to learn.

In 1897 a guy named Albert Rogers saw me perform at a Tennessee Fair with Monk, the stray dog that had become my body guard and part of the show. Rogers was successful in

making me and Doc the star attractions at fairs and theatres all around the US including the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. They named me Beautiful Jim Key. Doc proved what miraculous learning can happen if patience and kindness are used. They started a club in which millions of kids signed a document promising to be kind to animals.



Beautiful Jim Key, The Educated Horse

(lyrics and melody by Annie Mott Whitman, one of the few living relatives of Dr. William Key)

I can read and I can write.
I'm a horse but I don't bite.
I can even spell my name.
Do many amazing feats of fame.

Ch:
Just call me Beautiful Jim Key, the Educated Horse.
The wonder of the equine world.
No one thought it possible but my friend who held the key
The man who taught me long ago from dear old Tennessee,
And they call him Dr. Key.

I can count and I can add.
Know my alphabet and that's not bad,
I can even give you change.
For a horse that seems strange.



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

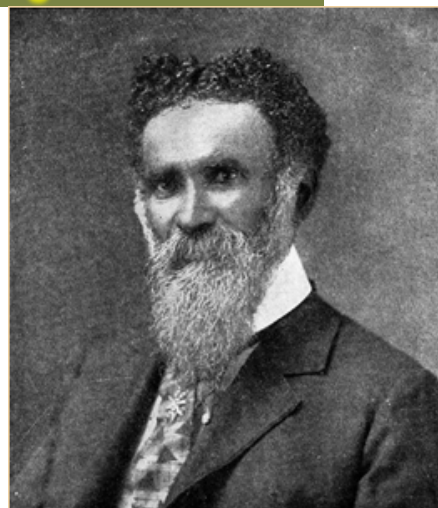
William (Bill) Key

In the later part of his life, Dr. William Key was the man who educated Beautiful Jim Key. This horse showed the world he could read, write, do math and much more and as such, they were groundbreaking characters in history. He started a movement that was radical in those days: the Humane Society, all because of the astounding results from using patience and kindness with animals. It was common at the time for animals to be treated and trained cruelly.

As his story unfolds in the book, it is most interesting how Bill Key seemed to have a magical presence on people as well as horses. He was a negro slave boy and because of his 'calming' effect on the hard-to-handle grandfather, he wasn't sent to labor in the fields; he ended up being educated in the household as if he were a son of the plantation owner and then was given uncommon freedom to train their horses.

As a self-taught doctor, he made many valuable connections when he was sought after to heal humans and animals. He managed to evade jail punishment by being the cook they badly needed. He was sentenced to hang when he was caught helping slaves access the Underground Railroad, but thanks to his poker-playing genius, he managed to be freed. Thanks to his ingenuity, he became a wealthy businessman.

You might enjoy reading about Dr. Jim Key's life in: "Beautiful Jim Key: Lost History of the World's Smartest Horse" by Mim Eichler Rivas. Or use the link for the full length book on line: <https://silo.pub/beautiful-jim-key-the-lost-history-of-the-worlds-smartest-horse.html>



Dr. William Key

Jim Key, the Horse Actor:

"Just then a man in the crowd called out, 'How much you want for the horse?'

"Dr. Key paused and puzzled over the question. 'Well Jim,' he asked at last, 'how much should we sell you for?'

"Jim Key snorted in surprise. His expression was almost mocking: Sell me? You'd never sell ME!"

"Now Jim' -Doc played along, putting on his countrified airs -'You is a fine, healthy horse and can fetch a fair price.' He turned to the crowd and began to entertain offers, encouraging his handsome bay stallion to parade back and forth....

"Ascending dollar amounts were called out from the crowd starting at 10 and rapidly reaching 500. 'Sold'....

"Suddenly with all the melodrama of a dying opera diva, Jim Key crumpled to the ground.... Dr. William Key masked his smile. Jim was pretending to go lame, the same trick he often performed but now in a new context....

"With a wink, Doc turned his back to Jim and in a pronounced stage whisper declared the sale was off, at which point a gleeful Jim Key bounded to his feet and pranced back and forth in emphatic relief."

Excerpts from "Beautiful Jim Key: The Lost History of the World's Smartest Horse" by Mim Eichler Rivas



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

The Library Corral: The Medicine Hat Public Library

The Medicine Hat Public Library serves as a community hub, providing equitable and convenient access to books, media, information, and programs that help to educate, enrich, entertain, and inform. Anyone can use the library and its resources. During library opening hours, you are welcome to read, listen to music, access your e-mail and search the library's online magazines and newspapers. If you become a library member, your library card allows you to take home books, e-books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, and audio books. **Current Library Hours Monday to Friday: 10am-6pm.** <https://mhpl.shortgrass.ca>

Who Ever Heard of a Horse in the House?

By Tresi Jacqueline, Non Fiction, 636.10887 TRE

At first I questioned if it really was non-fiction. It is. It's about Tresi and her first-hand experience of buying a horse, a sickly colt that's initially brought into the house. It is house broken, and remained a resident there, a full grown quarter horse. It's a true story that exemplifies the strong bond that can form between humans and horses.

The Horse Whisperer

starring Robert Redford and Kristin Scott Thomas, a DVD, 2.8 hour movie

Teenage Grace is traumatized by a riding accident that also injures her horse, Pilgrim. Her mother Annie sacrifices her editor career and takes Grace and Pilgrim from New York to Montana to a legendary "horse whisperer".

The Man Who Listens to Horses

by Monty Roberts, Non Fiction, NF 636.1 ROB

As I read the autobiography/memoir of this remarkable man, I thought every horse lover should know how he tames horses with gentleness and compassion. He describes how he can persuade an unschooled horse to accept bridle, saddle and rider in under thirty minutes. We also see his father's brutal practice of horse-breaking that has been (and all too often still is) the accepted practice. Tour of Monty Roberts' Flag Is Up Farm'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fi22vFXTZg>

Wonder Horse: The True Story of the World's Smartest Horse

by Emily Arnold McCully, EMCC

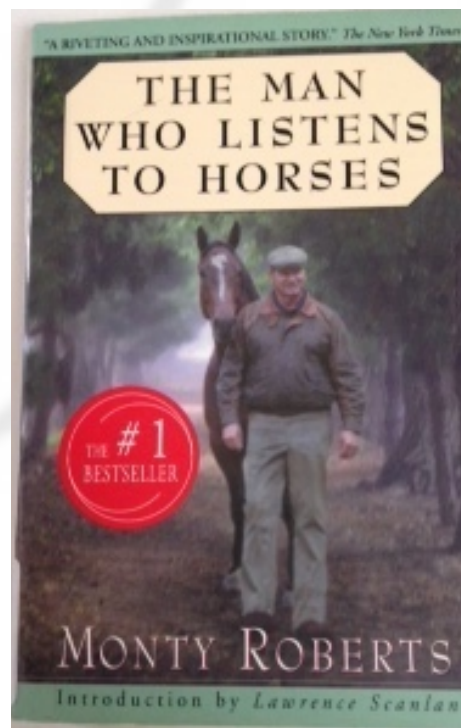
This children's book summarizes the fascinating Jim Key/Doc Key story. Emily McCully makes it come alive with her informative text and her striking illustrations that capture the human emotion.

Step Right Up: How Doc and Jim Key Taught the World About Kindness

by Donna Bosman, Read it on line:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Hxltjt7Xlk>

Or borrow the book from the MH Library, J179.3, KEYB





Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

OTHER FAMOUS INTELLIGENT HORSES

Lucas, the Rejected Racehorse With a Head for Numbers

In 2010 Lucas earned a place in the Guinness World Records for identifying 19 numbers in 60 seconds. With the help of owner Karen Murdock, they proved that horses are intelligent.

Clever Hans, The Smart Horse

Hans was a performing horse in the early 20th century. He was thought to demonstrate remarkable intelligence. The feats were eventually explained as simple responses to subtle cues (perhaps unintentional) by his handler. Since that, researchers refer to this as the "Clever Hans Effect".

Stories from Seniors

Our Stories From Seniors books are still available for purchase with all proceeds to the Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation. In this book you will read biographies of rural seniors and poems based on their stories. You can also see our mini-documentary videos on our web site at www.MHCowboyLife.com. See Stories from Seniors Videos. Our 2022 edition, Country Stories will be available for purchase next month.



COWBOY LINGO

Smart or Not so Smart

- sharp as a prairie thistle
 - dumb as a fence post
 - boy, you got your stupid head on today
 - he's so stupid that if you moved his plate 5 inches to the left, he'd starve to death
 - his/her biscuits ain't all baked
 - some village is missing their idiot
 - you know more than a Philadelphia lawyer
 - duller than dishwater
 - half-wit / butt head / half-baked
- he don't know enough to ache

COWBOY WISDOM

- when you give a lesson in meanness to a critter, don't be surprised if they learn their lesson
- the length of the conversation don't tell nothin' about the intellect
- a few sweet words and a little bit of kindness can coax the hottest iron outta the fire
- doin' things the smart way don't cost half as much as doing 'em the stupid way

Medicine Hat Cowboy Life is the official newsletter of the Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation, (a registered Society in the Province of Alberta), published four times per year by Shelley Goldbeck, DTM, Vice President and Webmaster of MHCP. Our mandate is to preserve, promote and celebrate cowboy traditions and country living. If you wish to submit articles or information of interest to our readers, please email jzollner10@gmail.com subject: Newsletter.



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

Empty Saddles

We are saddened to report that a number of our friends and contributors (to our web site, videos and books) have passed on. Here is a list of Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry supporters who have passed. You can see their biographies and poems on our web site: www.MHCowboyLife.com. Select Empty Saddles.

Allan Jensen, 1941- 2020, Cook Southland, MH
Bio in our December 2020 Newsletter

Evelyn Trieber, 1932-2021, Saamis Memorial, MH
Poem in our 2020 Stories From Seniors book

Herb Krause, 1936-2021, Grace Memorial, MH
Two poems are in our 2020 Stories from Seniors book

Joyce Clary, 1929-2021, Binkley's Funeral home, MC
Poem is in our 2021 Country Stories book

Harvey Beck, 1929-2022, Saamis Memorial, MH
Poem in our 2020 Stories from Seniors book.
See video in Stories from Seniors videos

Alice Kanewischer, 1927-2022, Pattison Chapel, MH
Poem in our 2020 Stories from Seniors book and
we publish one of her stories every month. See I-Alice

Robert "Bob" Eisenbarth, 1938-2022, Pattison Chapel
Husband of Carol, MHCP Treasurer



'Round Medicine Hat

Our featured community this issue is Schuler, AB, which is north of Medicine Hat. Jen Zollner compiled some interesting information about Schuler, much of it in the words of the pioneers.

See:

<https://mhcowboylife.com/cowboy-stories/round-medicine-hat/schuler-history/>

Read about:

Schuler's Postal Service Through the Years
First Churches and

Customs That Were Different

Entertainment in Schuler's Early Days

Getting Fuel in Schuler's Settler Days

What the 1930's Were Like

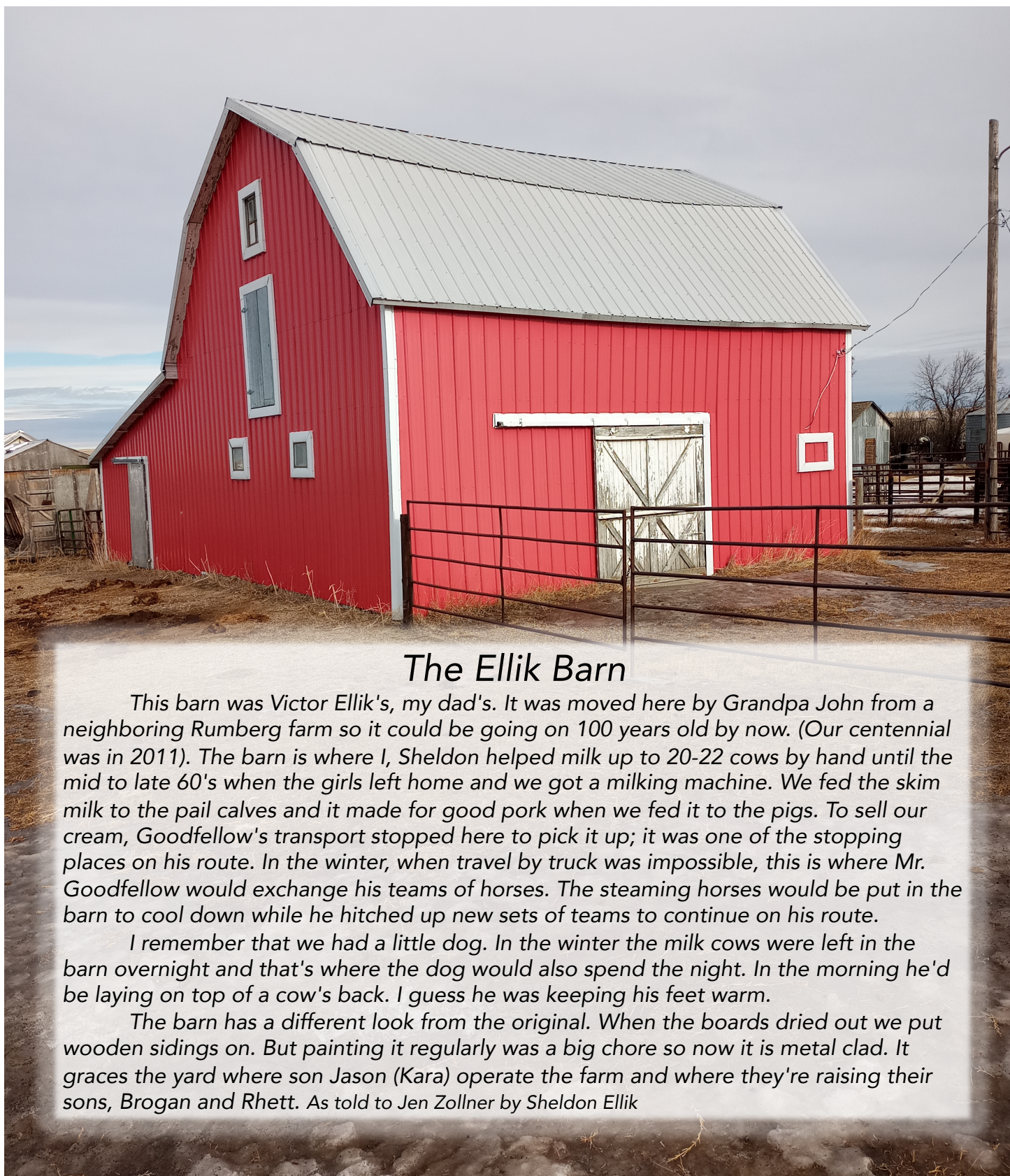
Schuler is celebrating their centennial on July 1, 2nd and 3rd, 2023, and the arrival of the railroad there.

Photo: Trains bring relief to the west in the Dirty Thirties.





Medicine Hat Cowboy Life



The Ellik Barn

This barn was Victor Ellik's, my dad's. It was moved here by Grandpa John from a neighboring Rumberg farm so it could be going on 100 years old by now. (Our centennial was in 2011). The barn is where I, Sheldon helped milk up to 20-22 cows by hand until the mid to late 60's when the girls left home and we got a milking machine. We fed the skim milk to the pail calves and it made for good pork when we fed it to the pigs. To sell our cream, Goodfellow's transport stopped here to pick it up; it was one of the stopping places on his route. In the winter, when travel by truck was impossible, this is where Mr. Goodfellow would exchange his teams of horses. The steaming horses would be put in the barn to cool down while he hitched up new sets of teams to continue on his route.

I remember that we had a little dog. In the winter the milk cows were left in the barn overnight and that's where the dog would also spend the night. In the morning he'd be laying on top of a cow's back. I guess he was keeping his feet warm.

The barn has a different look from the original. When the boards dried out we put wooden sidings on. But painting it regularly was a big chore so now it is metal clad. It graces the yard where son Jason (Kara) operate the farm and where they're raising their sons, Brogan and Rhett. As told to Jen Zollner by Sheldon Ellik



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

Horses communicate with their tails. Match what is said with the tail position.

HORSE TALK		
A 	B 	C
D 	E 	F
G 	H 	J

1. _____ I'm startled
2. _____ I'm galloping
3. _____ I'm afraid
4. _____ I'm content
5. _____ I'm annoyed

6. _____ I'm about to bite
7. _____ I'm of low rank in the herd
8. _____ I'm about to strike
9. _____ I'm excited

Answers on page 5