

MEDICINE HAT COWBOY POETRY FOUNDATION

**Western Music and
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Altar. Alberta

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Jim and Leonard



Howdy!

Life moves in seasons. September is the end of the growing season; harvest is over and hopefully it's the end of the fire season. For some there are no more seasons. Farewell to Dolly Parton, a self-proclaimed country girl. September also heralds beginnings like a new school year. Students have had a break, a summer holiday. But did those in agriculture experience how hard it is to get away? Ranchers aren't the only ones 'rounding-up' in the Fall. For MHCP, this is the time we 'round-up' performers, donations and volunteers for the annual event. We are blessed to have a new board member, and he has us learning all about his area of Alberta. We appreciate having a talented volunteer share her experience by writing the story to add to our website. I think we even figured out how to have a video in our newsletter. Thanks to all the contributors to the newsletter this month. Every season is a good season to be learning.

Jen

- Western Music - Cowboy Poetry - Rural Lifestyle -
Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation
 - Proudly Presents -

WESTERN MUSIC & POETRY ROUND-UP

OCTOBER 16, 17 & 18

Friday at the Moose
 12:00 Performances, \$15
 7:30 Open Mike, Free

Victory Lutheran Church
Saturday: 12:00 Performances, \$15
 5:30 Supper, \$25, preorder
 7:30 Headliner, \$25
Sunday: 10:30 Cowboy Church

Weekend Pass \$50

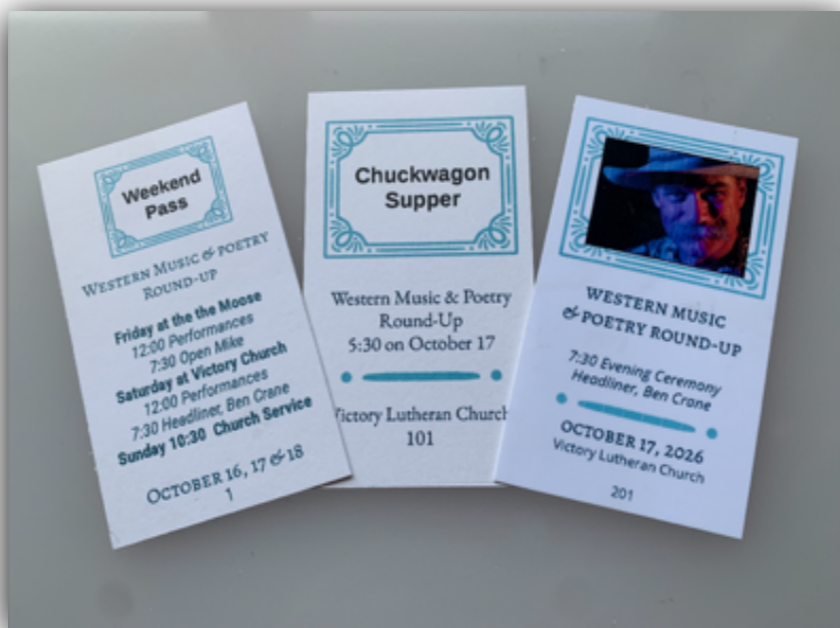
Headliner
Ben Crane

Other Performers
 Bill Skene
 Bryce Burnett
 Del Pratt
 Lorna Williams
 Morley Thorpe
 Poppa Mac
 & seven more

Tickets Available at Hale Hearing or phone 403-529-6384
 E-transfer: MHCowboyLife@gmail.com
 www.MHCowboyLife.com

Western Music and Poetry Round-Up

Planning is well under way for the October event, our 7th year. We have two full afternoons (12:00 to 5:30) with 14 top notch entertainers: one from Manitoba, three from Saskatchewan, three from Calgary way and yes, we have two from Medicine Hat. With Ben Crane's sense of humour and talent, we're in for a treat on Saturday night. He even incorporates the screen into his 'act', the "full meal deal" he calls it. Open Mike gives anyone a chance to give it a try. You can rest assured Sunday's Church service will have a western flair.



Tickets

Thanks again to Jill and Hale Hearing, for selling tickets for us. It's across the hall from the 13th Ave. Co-op. If you're from out of town, just like it says on the poster, phone 403-529-6384 and we'll have them ready for you to pick up. Don't forget to get your supper tickets. On the menu is Beef-on-a-Bun, three salads and homemade pie.

Staying in the Hat

Are you hoteling it when you come to the Round-Up on October 16th to the 18th. There are two hotels that have generously donated one complimentary room for two nights. To help you choose, our Facebook page will be giving their amenities, their rates and so much more.

TownPlace Suites by Marriott

It's the deluxe hotel where Ben Crane is staying.

Address: #7 Stober Bay SE

Book by phoning 1-403-487-5131

Wyndham Garden

Address: 954 7 St. SW

Book by phoning 1-403-487-0250

They give us an unbelievable Discounted Group Rate

Be sure to use the words "Western Music and Poetry Event" when booking rooms in these hotels.



Harvest Wives Wisdom



Getting 'Sew' Much Practice

Bev Biggeman has been Bob's helping hand at their Swift Current farm for some years, running the combine, driving the tractor, doing whatever needs to be done. They have been living in Medicine Hat during the winter and 'gypsy'ing' back and forth to the farm during the summer. They recently rented out the land, and Bev has been adapting to being 'out of a job'.

Among other things, Bev decided to take up sewing. As it happens, Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry could always use articles at their Silent Auction kind-of-raffle. What a good idea to have Bev 'sew up' that bagful of fabric that's been sitting around! It's with diligence that Bev has been practicing her sewing skills: aprons, pot holders, table runners, lined bags and the list goes on. She tells me she stitched up 'sew' many articles, 50 at last count. No, that isn't a typo. In the photo she is modelling a half apron she made.

(Bev does the formatting of our newsletter, and sees it as another learning opportunity.)



Where's There's Smoke, There's Fire

On the news we see harrowing photos of forest fires; we can only imagine how hard it is to be displaced from your home, and how heartbreaking to lose your home, your animals and often your livelihood. Bev Biggeman and her husband Bob have recently had a 'firey' experience that started at their neighbour's farm. Check our website for her story: "Farm Community Rallies to Fight Fire" The photo shows the aftermath of the fire and volunteers fighting the fire.

Link: <https://www.mhcowboylife.com/cowboy-stories/stories-bev-biggeman-series/farm-community-rallies-to-fight-fire/>



Altario, Alberta (far from Lake Ontario)

Delbert Pratt is a poet, the newest member of the MHCP board and a long time resident of Esther. Many little towns had sprung up in the Esther area: Loverna, 11 miles to the east, and to the west it was Brigden and Sedalia 10 and 18 miles away.

A 'town' called Altario, 20 miles north of Esther, has a school that not only survived, it has thrived. Since 2017 it has been developing a unique agricultural program that has revitalized the community. It attracts students from other school districts and from overseas, this semester a student from Brazil.

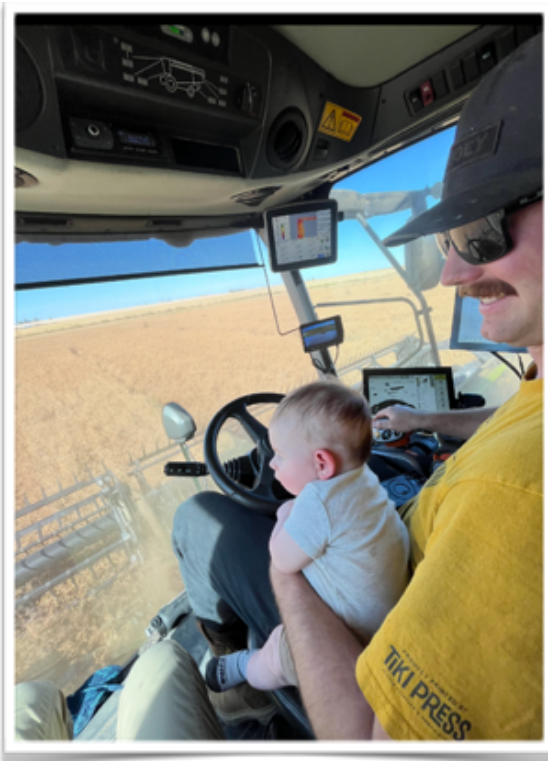
Its unique hands-on model has students growing and raising their own food as part of their studies. They distribute it right from the school so their community enjoys the low prices and appreciates high quality food. This small Grade 1-12 school has a tour or two almost every week with guests from Ontario to British Columbia. Visitors go home inspired to incorporate opportunities and programs such as these. Altario School has demonstrated how being rural and far from a larger centre can be turned into an advantage.

The photo is of a beautiful log building when it was being built (with the help of students). It is the central meeting location, has a kitchen and provides accommodation for their growing agricultural program.



Country Wisdom

This sort of wisdom doesn't come from being born, it's from being raised into it. Long before they can reach the stirrups or the pedals, they're riding along, watching. They learn things like not being able to rush a herd of cows or hurry a growing crop. One day they'll trade the passenger seat for the driver's seat, or they'll be the ones in the saddle carrying forward the family business.



Samuel's First Harvest

Here is country wisdom from some famous people:

- "Plowing looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the corn field." President Dwight D. Eisenhower

- "The farmer is the only man in our economy who buys everything at retail, sells everything at wholesale, and pays the freight both ways." John F. Kennedy

- "No race can prosper until it learns there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem." Booker T. Washington

- "The farmer has to be an optimist or he wouldn't still be a farmer." Will Rogers

- "Storms make trees take deeper roots." Dolly Parton

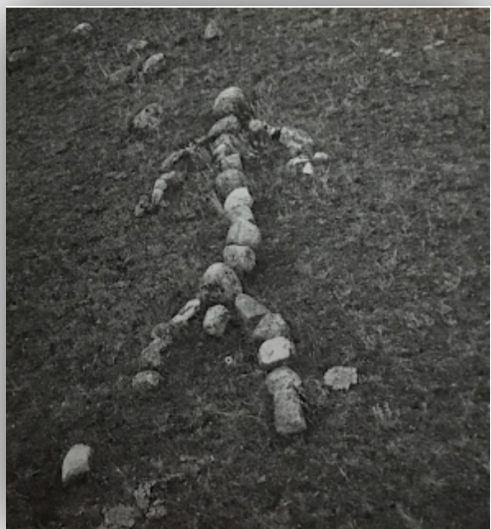
Western Lingo

- sod buster/ granger/ plow chaser/ butter churner – a farmer
- between grass and hay – half grown, neither man nor boy
- hombre – a man (derived from ombre in Spanish)
- frying size /button /chap – a young fellow
- nipper /knee high – a baby or toddler
- feller/ pie eater – a boy, country lad
- old pod/ ripened – an old man
- gal boy/ g'hal – a tomboy
- shaver – a child

Where is Esther?

People are asking, "Where is Esther?" It's only 11 miles from the Saskatchewan border, northeast of Oyen. Delbert is putting Esther "on the map". Some have been looking for it; Esther is hard to find on a map, but MapQuest not only gives it's location, Google is full of Esther's history and Facebook has many posts of Delbert reciting poetry. Delbert tells me that the present population of Esther is 3 and two of them are well over 80. It never did have a population of more than 65, but like all small towns, it's all about community spirit.

The First Nations people travelled over this long before the homesteaders, and they left artifacts. One is located a few miles NW of Esther, a human effigy consisting of stones on the ground in the shape of a stickman, about 8 ft. in length. Nearby there are tent rings also made of the rocks that were used to hold down the edges of the hide which made up the teepees. They vary in size from 2 meters to 7 meters in diameter.



Esther has a history much the same as most prairie places. In 1910 settlers began taking up homesteads, there were boom crops some years, then the late 20's and 1930's there was drought, hail and/or it was grasshoppers almost every year. Wheat sold as low as 19 cents a bushel and cattle as low as 2 cents a pound, so people left in large numbers. It was during the Second World War that tractors replaced horses and combines became the thresh machines. The rural population continues to decrease as the number of acres per holding increase.

Esther has one towering relic every small town has lost, an elevator. It was the third to be built in Alberta (an Albert Wheat Pool) and it's the last one still standing. It was built in 1926, closed in 1979. You can take an internet tour of it.

<https://www.derelictplaces.co.uk/threads/esther-alberta-grain=elevator-canada-2023.39916>



*Off the Beaten Path - with Chris & Connie
BIGDoer.com 2016*

Del's grandfather, Jim Pratt hauled the first load of wheat into the new elevator with horse and wagon; Leonard Westerfield was right behind him.

When the elevator closed, Jim was older and not doing too much. His lifelong friend Leonard picked him up and they were given the honour of hauling the last load across the scales.

In the photo Jim Pratt and Leonard are standing by the elevator. (Del's grandfather is on the right.)

Thanks for the photo, Sheila.



Read the first part of Del's poem on the next page. Hear him reciting the entire poem by clicking on this link:

<https://www.mhcowboylife.com/cowboy-stories/cowboy-poetry/del-pratt/>

Jim and Leonard

Two old friends in a Louisville
Hauling the last load of wheat,
Turn the corner for the final time
By the store on a dusty street.

They'd been given the honour
To haul that last load to town,
For today, after fifty-four years
Old number 3 is closing down.

The sentinel of the prairie, built
While CN was laying the rail,
Back then it was teams and wagons,
It must've been a sight to regale.

That opening day, many years ago,
All those folks with grain for sale,
Leading the procession, Jim and Leonard
The first two across the scale.

Ol' Number Three, was shiny brown and new,
Everyone had high hopes for the land,
Only a few short years later
Came the dust and blowing sand.

With the market crash of '29,
And the land blowing away,
A lot of neighbours pulled up stakes
Going belly up, they couldn't stay.

Ending Quote:

"Agriculture is our wisest pursuit because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals and happiness."

Thomas Jefferson

Happy Trails,

Jen