



Heritage News

Discover Crowsnest Heritage

Issue #41

December 2015

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Co-Editors

Barb Koch, Isabel Russell and Ken
Allred

A Crowsnest Heritage Initiative
Project

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news piece, or update, please send it
to <http://www.crowsnestheritage.ca/>

This issue and the spring issue will feature the legacy of winter sports in the Crowsnest Pass. We have chosen two feature articles - one on curling and one on hockey for this issue. The March issue will highlight the history of the Pass Powderkeg and skiing in the Pass.

What's on this Winter?

January 23 - Australia Day Dinner, Dance and Silent Auction - MDM Centre

February 19-20 - *Wintervention* - 4th Annual Crowsnest Pass winter carnival featuring:

- **Feb. 19** - Ukelele Learn & Jam - Elks Hall, Blairmore
- **Feb. 20** - Fry Pan Toss - Gazebo Park, Blairmore
- **Feb. 20** - Chili Bowl Festival - Art Gallery - Frank
- **Feb. 20** - Human Dog Sled Race - Gazebo Park, Blairmore
- **Feb. 20** - Lumberjack Competition - Gazebo Park, Blairmore
- **Feb. 20 - "Into the Future"** - Cando Silent Auction, Dinner & Dance - Elks Hall, Blairmore

Crowsnest Pass Public Art Gallery - Mon - Thur -
10:00-3:00; Fridays- 10:00-1:00 & 2:00-4:00; Weekends and
Holidays - 1:00-4:00

• **Nov. 25-Dec. 23 - "Homeward Bound"** - Greg Pyra
Opening Reception - Nov. 28 - 1:00-3:00

• **Jan 27-Feb 24 - "Out There"** - Alberta Foundation of the
Arts Travelling Exhibition - Opening Reception - Jan.30 -
1:00-3:00

- **Feb 29-Mar 27 - “No Particular Topic”** - 25 local and area artists - 47 pieces of art
Opening Reception - March 5 - 1:00-3:00
- **Apr 2-May 1 - “Emergence”** - Livingstone and Crowsnest Consolidated High Schools
Opening Reception - April 2 - 1:00-3:00

Feature Article

Curling in the Pass

Brad Quarin of *Shootin’ the Breeze*

Curlers are back at Crowsnest Sports Complex in Coleman this season — calling the shots, throwing the rocks and sweeping them into the house.

Curling is a popular pastime in Crowsnest Pass, but it is also a part of our local heritage.

It wasn’t long after the first Crowsnest Pass communities were founded that people began curling. The Pass is also home to the Bunny Bonspiel, one of Alberta’s oldest surviving bonspiels.

“When I first started to curl, that’s all we had,” says Ron Collings. He has been curling for decades, and reflects on the popularity of the sport in its heyday. “We had 40 women’s rinks curling twice a week.”



Bunny Bonspiel in Blairmore – c. 1970’s

In the beginning, according to Crowsnest Museum, curlers had to play on natural ice but began holding bonspiels when weather allowed. Numerous trophies indicate curling competitions were held in the Pass in the 1910’s and 1920’s.

Curling clubs were established in each town in the Pass, and the large Crow’s Nest Pass Curling Association united curlers in a vast area from Lethbridge to Creston.

It wasn’t easy playing outdoors in the mountains. Chinook winds and warming weather persistently threatened to melt the ice and prematurely shorten the curling season. Curlers began throwing straw on the ice to slow the meltdown.

According to Crowsnest Museum, the town of Frank finally established southern Alberta’s first indoor ice arena in 1914. Residents used a former zinc smelter as their arena until 1919.

Indoor ice arenas were subsequently built in Blairmore in 1921, Coleman in 1922 and Bellevue in 1923, with funding from the mining companies. All three arenas contained ice for both skating and curling, but still, they could be used only when the weather was freezing.



Crystal Arena in Coleman under Construction

Ron, who curled in Bellevue, recalls how different it was on natural ice. The surface was less level and had to be cut. The same ice was used for curling and skating.

In 1946, Bellevue became the first town in the Crowsnest Pass to have artificial ice. The next year, the town hosted a bonspiel at Easter, with springtime curling being unheard of before that. The Easter bonspiel attracted 31 curling teams, 11 coming from Coleman alone, and formed the foundation for the annual Bunny Bonspiel that continues to this day.

Longtime curler Joe Fortunaso recalls playing in the Bellevue Arena from 1948 and taking his daughters there in the '60s. It was a big sturdy building with steel girders. Originally, only the dressing rooms and main gathering place were heated, but gas was added later and the town contributed \$500 for electricity.

He says his stepdad volunteered to put in the ice. "He didn't want to get paid. He was just happy to see the kids skating there," Joe says. At the end of the year, children were also treated to games, hot chocolate and hotdogs.



Can Anyone Identify These Avid Curlers?

Hillcrest also had its own arena, but made it into a community hall after Bellevue converted to artificial ice, Joe says.

By 1955, Blairmore had a new arena and the Bellevue Arena was getting old, so the Easter Bunny Bonspiel was moved to Blairmore in 1956.

After the towns of Crowsnest Pass amalgamated in 1979, a new Crowsnest Sports Complex was built in Coleman. The Blairmore curling arena had shut down so the Bunny Bonspiel was moved again, this time to Coleman, in 1997.

While the Bunny Bonspiel is an old custom, Crowsnest Pass curlers have continued developing innovative tournaments in recent years. In 2006, the Crowsnest Curling Club thought curling in the dark might be fun, giving rise to the Miners Spiel, with each curler wearing a miner's lamp, says organizer Tony Vastenhout.

With current generations learning the game, curling should continue to have an important place in this community for years to come.

Editor's note: Photo credits - Crowsnest Museum & Archives - If anyone can identify any of the curlers in the above photo, please advise so we can record the information in the Archives.

Feature Article

Oldtime Hockey - The Bellevue Bulldogs

Ian McKenzie

Back in the 1920s people took their sports pretty seriously, and none were more serious than the hockey fans of the Crowsnest Pass. Over the years Pass fans have had their NHL favorites, but by all accounts the best hockey was played right here at home.

One of the greatest local teams was the 1923-1924 Bellevue Bulldogs. They won the senior Crow's Nest League against the Blairmore All Stars, Coleman Crystals and Lethbridge Cougars, advancing to the Alberta Seniors playoffs to defeat the Canmore Miners in the finals. They then advanced to the Western Canada Allan Cup playoffs, defeating the Melville Millionaires (Saskatchewan) and the Rossland Miners (BC) before losing in the final against the Selkirk Fishermen (Manitoba). Three Bulldogs players from that team made it to the NHL, including one Hall of Fame inductee:

Defenceman Reg Mackey (1899-1966) went on to play for the Calgary Tigers, the Vancouver Maroons, and in 1926-27 the New York Rangers.

Left wing Norm 'Dutch' Gainor (1904-1962) went on to play for the Duluth Hornets, the Calgary Tigers, and the Boston Bruins including their Stanley Cup winning team of 1929. Gainor played on the Dynamite Line, the first "named" forward line in NHL history. In 1931 Gainor was traded to the New York Rangers and later moved down to the minors, but resurfaced in 1934-35 as part of the Stanley Cup winning Montreal Maroons.



Bellevue Bulldogs (1923-24)

Goalie Cecil 'Tiny' Thompson (1903-1981) played junior hockey in Calgary before joining the Bellevue Colts in 1921-22, then played for the senior Bellevue Bulldogs for two seasons. He went on to play for the Duluth Hornets and the Minneapolis Millers before his contract was purchased by the Boston Bruins. In his first NHL game in 1928 he recorded one of many shutouts on their way to winning the Stanley Cup that season. He was traded in 1938 to the

Detroit Red Wings and retired after the 1939-40 season. He then coached and played with a Canadian Air Force team, and was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1959.

Tiny Thompson had several unique claims in his NHL career. He was the first player to compete against a sibling in a playoff, facing his brother Paul of the New York Rangers. He was the first goalie ever to be pulled in favour of a sixth attacker. Thompson used a smaller glove and pioneered the technique of catching the puck as a method of making a save. He tended net in the famous 1933 playoff game against the Toronto Maple Leafs which went into six overtime periods before breaking the 0 – 0 tie, the second-longest game ever. In the 1935-36 season Thompson became the first goaltender to be credited with a goal assist by intentionally passing the puck with his stick to a teammate. He was the first player to win four Vezina Trophies.

With all this talent, you'd think the 1923-1924 Bellevue Bulldogs would have had an easy time of it in the Crow's Nest League. Not so – both Coleman and Blairmore could beat them. The following season Coleman imported most of its players from Selkirk, Manitoba to fuel their own run at the Allan Cup. Can you imagine the caliber of players on these teams?



Bellevue Junior Hockey - 1925

In the 1920s, NHL games broadcast over the radio suffered from sketchy reception here in the mountains, so the local games were the place to be. The Bulldogs played on natural ice in Bellevue's new arena, built in 1923, and in the Blairmore and Coleman arenas, each built in 1922. On game day the CPR would run a special train between Pass towns so that fans could watch some of the best hockey in the world. One Coleman-Blairmore game attracted 1400 onlookers! The games were often rough, causing injuries to players and even to officials.

The highly competitive nature of teams within the Crow's Nest League meant that good players were in demand. For example, Alfred 'Doc' Barbour (of the 1916 Portland Rosebuds, the first American team to play in a Stanley Cup final) captained the Blairmore team in 1920-21, but the next year played for Bellevue. After breaking his leg in early 1923, Barbour returned the following season to play for Coleman.

The Bellevue Bulldogs never matched their 1923-24 season, but other Pass hockey teams pursued provincial and national championships over the decades to come, and the Pass continued to send players to the NHL up to the present day.

Photo credits - Crow's Nest Museum & Archives

Poetry Corner

CHINOOK

The cold snow lays glistening white.
The air is still as night.

In the West a brooding gray
Hangs softly where the mountains lay.

Gently a puff of snow, lifted from a tree,
Floats down to land so softly
On the blanket of snow beneath.

The air wakens with a sleepy shiver
Causing the trees to quiver.

Soon trees are softly swaying
While around their trunks and boughs
A gentle wind is playing.
Gradually the playing increases in
tempo,
Urging the trees into a stirring tango.

Snow flies from the sweeping boughs
And rises in shimmering swirls all about.

A golden grin beams from the Sun
For He knows a Chinook has come.

-Ken Roome from Roome-in-ations-

Book Review

The Grasshopper

The novel, *The Grasshopper* by Joseph L. Lothian' is rich with endearing characters and historical details.

The plot flashes back from the main character's present days in a retirement home to his life as a young boy in Coleman, his job in a mine, and his subsequent move to the western coast.

The main character, Mykola "Kola" Krushelitznicki, born in 1924, recalls his boyhood days and his best friend Billy, a friendship that lasts through school and into working together in the mine. Incidents of horse "rustling" and tampering with curling rocks lighten the plot, since Kola's childhood is one of poverty and loss.

With his vivid descriptions, the reader travels deep into the mine with 15-year-old Kola, sharing his fears of cave-ins, entrapments, injury or death. We also share his growing confidence that a steady wage and savings give him. But tragedy strikes his life when a co-worker, nicknamed 'Grasshopper', is killed in an unexplained mining accident.

Kola and Billy move away when they are both 17. Billy enlists in the Army. Kola travels to Vancouver and then on to Alberni where he finds work in a lumber mill. He never returns to his childhood town.

It is only after a 50-year separation that he reunites with Billy and we learn what really happened on the day "the Grasshopper" was killed.

This is a moving story of friendship and a man who comes to terms with who he is and who accepts his past. It is well worth reading.

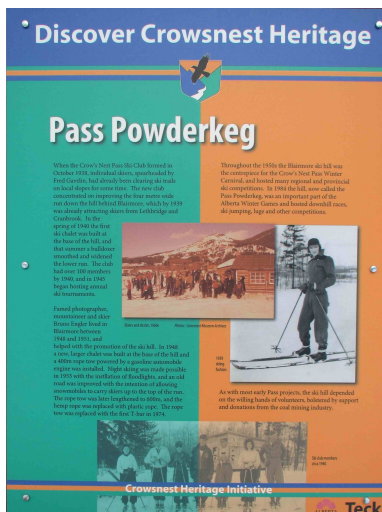
Barb Koch

The Grasshopper is on the shelf at the Crowsnest Library.

SIGNS OF THE CROWSNEST PASS

The Crowsnest Heritage Initiative has installed four information kiosks, about fifty signs and over a hundred building plaques, each revealing a small piece of our diverse history. In this issue we recommend the Powderkeg Ski Hill sign.

Have you read it yet?



Whether you ski, have skied in the past or even if you have never skied, take a trip up to Powderkeg and read the sign installed on the ski shack. And if you've got time, stop for lunch or a coffee.

110 YEARS AGO 1905

- September 1, 1905 - The provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta are created. Alberta was previously a region of the Northwest Territories before gaining status as a province.

100 YEARS AGO 1915

- February 6th, 1915 (Blairmore Enterprise)- News reaches the Crowsnest Pass about the new "Bill to Abolish Hanging". Though the bill never proceeded further than a first reading, the M.P of St.Lawrence division in Montreal had many supporters behind him in the effort to get rid of the death penalty of hanging stating it to be a "blot upon civilization".

- March 11 1915 (Coleman Bulletin) "Wonderful new torpedo has been invented by a Coleman business man" The man claims that his torpedo can be used to much greater advantage than any other torpedo currently invented: "he also has an invention that can be used to defend the ships of the country using it from torpedoes of any description-magnetical or any other kind."

- April 2 1915 (Bellevue Times)- Crowsnest Pass residence are told about the new use of war stamps that are going to be put into use after April 15th. " One cent war tax on letters and post cards mailed in Canada for delivery in Canada, United States or Mexico and on letters mailed in Canada for delivery in the United Kingdom and British possessions generally wherever the two cent rate applies. "

50 YEARS AGO 1965

- February 15 1965 - The official ceremony swearing in the new Canadian Flag was held on Parliament Hill, with Prime Minister Lester B Pearson.

Credit - Crowsnest Museum & Archives

Historical Venues in Southern Alberta

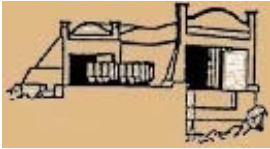


• **CROW'S NEST MUSEUM** - 7701 18th Ave. Coleman. 403-563-5434

• As well as exhibits on coal mining in the Crow's Nest Pass, there are galleries on Pass life in the early 1900s, natural history, the military, and on Emperor Pic and rum-running. There is a gift shop near the entrance. For tours and

educational programs: Contact: cnmuseum@shaw.ca.

- Open : Monday to Sunday, 9 am - 5 pm. Adults \$10, Seniors (65+) \$8, Youth (6-16) \$6, Under 6 free, Families \$24.



• **BELLEVUE UNDERGROUND MINE** - 21814 28th Avenue Bellevue, AB T0K 0C0 (403) 564-4700

• The Bellevue Underground Mine is the only authentic historic underground coal mine tour available to western Canada. The mine is a museum based, family oriented, historic underground coal mining museum tour site that offers its visitors the opportunity to

experience, first hand, what the underground miners from the first half of the 20th century would have experienced as they entered the tunnels of the Bellevue Underground Mine to go to work to each day.

- Open: Monday—Sunday 9:30 am—6:30 pm. Last tour 5:30 pm. Adults \$14, Seniors \$13, Youth \$10, Children 5 and under free, Families \$38. Discount pre-booked tours are available.



• **THE FRANK SLIDE INTERPRETIVE CENTRE** - off Hwy 3 Crow's Nest Pass
403-562-7388

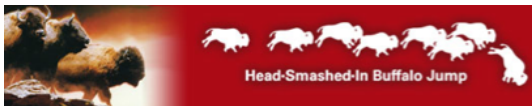
The Frank Slide Interpretive Centre highlights the rich heritage of the Crow's Nest Pass amid the breathtaking beauty of the Canadian Rockies. The Centre is open all year and visitors are greeted by friendly, knowledgeable staff who share the fascinating stories of the Frank Slide through dynamic interpretive programs and presentations. State-of-the-art interactive displays and exhibits throughout the Centre focus on the infamous Frank Slide of 1903 - Canada's deadliest rockslide. The Frank Slide Interpretive Centre is open year round 10:00 am to 5:00 pm (10 am to 6 pm in the summer) . Adults \$11, Seniors (65+) \$9, Youth (7-17) \$5, 6 and under free, Families \$28.



• **KOOTENAI BROWN MUSEUM** - 1037 Bev McLachlin Dr., Pincher Creek. 403-627-3684

• This year we will be opening a special exhibit to commemorate the 100th anniversary of WWI and the 75th anniversary of WWII. Members of the Pincher Creek Legion, local war veterans and RCMP will participate in our plaque dedication for the exhibit and be available to give tours. There will also be a flag raising ceremony, bouncy tents, obstacle courses, face painting and balloons for kids; a concession with hotdogs, burgers, candy floss and snow cones; and historical tours.

- Established in 1966, the Museum consists of 19 buildings housing over 18,000 artifacts from southern Alberta. The legendary George "Kootenai" Brown lived in southern Alberta and his cabin and some of his possessions form part of the Museum's exhibits. Kootenai Brown Museum is open to the public daily from 10 am to 6 pm. Adults \$10, Seniors (65+) \$7, Youth (7-17) \$7, Under 7 free, Families \$25



•**HERITAGE SITE**) - Hwy 785 403-553-2731

Hikes to the Dirve Lanes 10:30—3 pm.

•Experience authentic First Nations culture in the open air of our plaza. Our best native dancers perform to the beat of Blackfoot drumming and singing. Hear stories of how

drumming and dancing connect us with the ancient buffalo hunting culture

- Along with its displays, the interpretive centre has audio-visual presentations, a cafeteria featuring bison burgers, a gift shop filled with First Nations handicrafts, and hosts tour groups and runs educational programs. Open daily 10 am to 5 pm. Contact: info@head-smashed-in.com. Admission: Adults \$11, Seniors (65+) \$9, Youth (7-17) \$5, 6 and under free, Families \$28. The Centre can be booked for special events.



- **GALT MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES** -502 1st St. S., Lethbridge 1-866-320-3898

- The Museum is open all year round. Monday to Saturday 10 am to 5 pm, Thursday 10 am to 9 pm, Sundays and Holidays 1 pm to 5 pm. Adults \$6, Seniors (60+) \$5, Post-secondary students and Youth (7-17) \$3, Under 7 free, Families \$15.



•**FORT WHOOP-UP NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE** - Lethbridge, off Whoop-Up Drive. 403-329-0444

•Fort Whoop-Up existed before there was an Alberta or Mounties; it was a notorious frontier trading post. It lies nestled in the coulees of Indian Battle Park, near the Oldman River. Today, the fort still trades with the aboriginal Blackfoot tribes of Southern Alberta, supplying many ceremonial goods, hides, sweetgrass, and other items.

- The Fort is open daily from 10 am - 5 pm; Adults \$9, Seniors (65+) \$7.50, Students \$6.50, Under 5 free, Families \$24.50.



•**REMINGTON CARRIAGE MUSEUM** - 623 Main St. Cardston. 403-653-5139

•The Museum has the largest collection of horse-drawn vehicles in North America with over 240 carriages, wagons and sleighs. The 63,000 square foot facility features video displays, a fire hall, a carriage factory, a restoration shop, a working stable, carriage rides, carriage rentals, a restaurant and a gift shop. There are free guided tours. Group tours and educational tours are offered. Open daily 9 am - 5 pm. Contact:

info@remingtoncarriagemuseum.com. Admission: Adults \$11, Seniors (65+) \$9, Youth (7-17) \$5, 6 and under free, Families \$28.



•**WRITING-ON-STONE** - Hwy 4 South from Lethbridge. Then Hwy 500 West. Then South on Range Road 130A

•Open year round for camping. No reservations are necessary if you wish to use a camp site at the park in the winter. Fees range from \$13 to \$19 a day. Guided rock art tours are only offered from May to October. Writing-on-Stone / Áísínai'pi is a sacred landscape. The spectacular Milk River valley contains the largest concentration of First Nation petroglyphs (rock carvings) and pictographs (rock paintings) on the great plains of North America.

ARCHIVES

Copies of this newsletter and archived issues can be viewed at

<http://www.crownsnestheritage.ca/>

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**Help History stay alive!
2015 Membership Drive**

Get your Membership Today !

Help support the Crowsnest Museum by becoming a member of the Crowsnest Historical Society. Your membership helps protect the vibrant history of the Crowsnest Pass as well as the tens of thousands of artifacts and images stored within the Museum.

All memberships purchased during Membership Drive 2015 are eligible for draw.

The Prize Package includes:
Dinner for 4 by Country Encounters in the Crowsnest Museum with private tour.

Get your membership at the
Crowsnest Museum & Archives
crowsnestmuseum@shaw.ca
403-563-5434
PO Box 306, Coleman AB T0K 0M0
www.crowsnestmuseum.ca

CROWSNEST MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to Everyone