



ROOTS & BRANCHES

**Wetaskiwin Branch
of the**

Alberta Genealogical Society

*BRINGING THE PAST
TO THE PRESENT
FOR THE FUTURE! ©*

Website: www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch

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EXECUTIVE

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Vice President: Lorraine McKay
Secretary: Patty Caputo
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BRANCH MEETINGS

TBA due to covid-19
restrictions

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*there are still gremlins in the page
numbering

EDITOR'S CORNER

Sharon Aney

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ROOTS & BRANCHES

is published three times a year by and for the members of Wetaskiwin Branch of AGS. It is emailed to members and it is posted on our website.

BRANCH LIBRARY

Due to Archives closure
Closed until further notice.
If research is required contact Alice at alihoy@xplornet.com

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FAMILY DISCOVERY CENTER

Closed due to Covid-19
Until further notice.

Happy New Year to all of our members, and to readers of this newsletter! May we find hope and health in 2021!

We have had to find ways to fill our "at home" hours in 2020: puzzles of various kinds, crafts, exercise ☺, movies, etc. My choice was / is reading. In a novel set in another time, another place and in different circumstances, this statement jumped out at me as being appropriate for these Covid-19 months.

*Accept the good with gratitude
and
Face the bad with fortitude!*

~~~~~

I have been editor of this newsletter for 10 years. My focus has largely been local...trying to encourage our branch members to write about their family history experiences and bringing out some aspects of Wetaskiwin's history. Has this been what you, as members of our branch, want?

I am asking for your response to a couple of questions:

1. Is this branch newsletter of value or interest to you? Why? Or Why not?
2. What would you like to see more of?
3. What would you like to see less of?

I hope to receive many responses... positive or negative, to help with future issues..

~~~~~

**We Remember
SYL GAUVREAU
Nov. 23, 1930 – Dec.12, 2020**

PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS

Alice Hoyle

Greetings and welcome to 2021. For most of us, it has been the start of a new year that we have been anxiously awaiting. Surely, it will be better than the preceding one.

The saying "May you live in interesting times" comes to mind – I believe I have had enough interesting times to last me for quite a while. Bring on the boring, uninteresting times please. ☺

Our branch's 20th Anniversary came and went and like so many other notable occasions during 2020, it was an event we could not properly celebrate. Perhaps we can look forward to a 25th celebration instead.

As suggested by Sharon in her newsletters and in her email communications with us, our thoughts and observations regarding the pandemic should be recorded for future generations. We can all allow our descendants and others to view the current Covid 19 struggles through our eyes if we record what is happening in our lives and in the world.

We were saddened to witness the closure of the City of Wetaskiwin Archives, and the resignation of Rachel, who was such a source of knowledge regarding the historical items housed in the Archives.

A few of our branch members had a virtual meeting in early December with Paul Edginton, General Manager of Community and Protective Services for the City of Wetaskiwin. We advised him of our concerns about the closure of the Archives and made him aware of how our Genealogical Society relies on the data within the Archives to answer research requests we receive. He advised us that he

would be setting up a further meeting sometime in January 2021 and we would be invited to attend that meeting. Vigilance is needed to ensure that the City does not sweep the Archives under the rug, so to speak.

It appears that GenFair 2021 will be a Virtual event. AGS has moved from using the Blue Jeans format to using Zoom for all virtual meetings and that will be the format we will be using for the GenFair.

Dan DeWolf has graciously volunteered to do a presentation for our branch members on how to use Zoom for meeting presentations, branch meetings, etc. This will be available to any of the Wetaskiwin Branch members who are interested in learning more about Zoom and how to use it effectively. Please let me know if you are interested in taking part in Dan's presentation.

The next AGS Board meeting will be on February 20th, 2021. The next Relatively Speaking publication will be coming out in February. The GenFair committee will have to meet shortly to finalize some of the details in order that advertising can be inserted in the February Relatively Speaking.

January 19th 2021 WGS meeting will be a virtual meeting again, due to the current Covid 19 situation.

I hope you are all doing well. Stay healthy, be safe.

~~~~~

*If you can smile when things go wrong, you have someone in mind to blame.*

## MEETING PROGRAMS

Since March our Branch meetings have either been cancelled or held online, which has diminished participation dramatically. We hope this will change soon.

### SEPTEMBER 2020 Member Sharing " WHAT I WANT TO SHARE WITH MY DESCENDANTS ABOUT THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC".

**Carole:** is planning to make a time capsule, including items of general information such as newspaper articles, a mask & hand sanitizer bottle, some of the jokes being circulated, etc. Also is asking for souvenirs from family members from events she was unable to attend: a wedding on a beach, a graveside funeral service, a home birth, a High School graduation, a white coat ceremony at University of Manitoba.

**Lorraine:** because this has been a weird time and people are hesitant to go out to places that may be unsafe, she has stayed close to home and limited contact to family and close friends. She would advise people to be prepared... save some money in case your income is cut off, don't rely on the government for support. Since daily trips to the grocery store may not be possible, keep your pantry stocked with staples.

**Bob:** has stayed well and has been tested several times. He does not have a problem wearing masks when he goes out, because he is used to them from his woodworking shop. His computer skills have improved .. he uses Zoom to keep contact with family.... Grandchildren had difficulties with schools being shut down. His brother in England is doing better now.

**Mavis:** misses being with people: the hugs of our grandchildren and hearing their stories, meeting and hugging little James, our Great grandson, born in September.

"I miss having people in my home for coffee visits and meals. So I made lots of phone calls the first few months to keep in touch with people.

Oh, there have been good things too. I had fun making Christmas tree skirts for 5 of you grandkids out of material left over from clothes that I had made for each of you. I read lots of books which was fun. I helped look up stories about the swim club, helped Neil make Shuffle balls for the Sonia's dogs, made lots of Christmas cards. We missed our yearly fishing trips with friends. We did not use the 5<sup>th</sup> wheel once this year.

I reconnected with cousins on Neil's moms side in 3 different states, trying to show them how they are all related.

My hips have not been good this year, so I have not been able to do lots of walking. So, I started a project that I did not need to walk a lot..... making a Family Cookbook. I have entered all the favorite recipes of my Mom's (Nana's) that I thought the kids would like. Then I have added some of mine, the grandkids and a few others. I am not sure when I will be done but it is a work in progress with love.

I hope that I have learned to have more patience, not to worry about things I have no control over, to love more from a distance, to pray more and to be more positive.

**Alice:** hopes that her grandchildren are old enough to remember this pandemic. She is recording her personal experiences and hopes that they will pass them along to future generations. She has a well stocked cold room.

She and her husband had hoped to visit their daughter who works in Germany, and they are disappointed that it could not happen.

**Claudia:** The early months went quite well with her husband and daughter doing the shopping etc. But carpal tunnel surgery, and a fall sort of caused her to "miss summer". .

She then chose to recount a situation that she called "Family Beyond DNA". Her daughter and family had developed a friendship with a young man (Maxim) from Quebec and he had visited them in Edmonton several times, including on his honeymoon. They had one child and were expecting another when he came home one day to find his wife on the floor. She had died and the 18 month old boy was crying in his crib. Maxim called his friends in Edmonton, and asked if they could come to Montreal to the funeral. Several people contributed to make this possible: some gave money, one booked and paid for the hotel stay, another lent them his car. The arrangements went smoothly; Maxim's family welcomed them to the funeral services, although none spoke English. None of the people who made the trip, and who helped make the trip possible were related to Maxim, and so Claudia relates generosity and cooperation as "Family Beyond DNA".

**NOVEMBER 2020** members sharing  
**"CHRISTMAS MEMORIES" or "HOW  
CHRISTMAS 2020 WILL BE  
CELEBRATED"**

**Sharon:** My Christmas is the consistent memory is of the traditional Ukrainian Christmas Eve supper from every year since my childhood. That was the essence of Christmas at my parents' home, is now at my home, and will become at my daughters' homes. The traditional dishes of the meatless meal are: kutia (wheat that has been roasted & boiled and mixed with honey & poppy seed), borsch (beet soup), perogies with various fillings, (potato, sauerkraut, potato & cheese), cabbage rolls

(Ukrainian style filled only with rice), mushrooms in a cream and dill sauce, fried sauerkraut, baked fish, pickled herring. We always had family visiting, gifts and church services, but they all were secondary to Christmas Eve supper.

**Mavis:** My memory as a child was driving 20 miles on winter roads in a poor car, to my Grandma's at my Uncles farm, 17 people in a small house. Before we could eat one of the Dad's would read the Christmas story and have prayer. Then we had traditional Swedish supper of lutefisk, white sauce, melted butter, meat balls, boiled potatoes, etc., with rice pudding for dessert. The kids had to sit at the kids table in the corner. After supper the Moms did the dishes and the kids went with grandma to the living room to wait. I love sitting with my grandma and watching the bubble lights on the tree. Then we got to open our gifts.

Our lunch at noon of Christmas Eve is "Dopp I Grytan" or, as the grandkids call it, soggy bread. Another name is Dip in the Kettle. It is much the same as "French Dip", served from the kettle by dipping bread in the broth. The kids and grandkids like just the broth, bread, meat, and hardtack.

**Lee:** felt somewhat shortchanged as a child in that his birthday being December 22, he never had a birthday party because it was so close to Christmas. "As a birthday "present", my parents had the Christmas tree set up on my birthday." He joked that he got a left sock for his birthday and the right sock for Christmas!

**Bob:** his most memorable Christmas was in 1959 which was spent in West Africa. It was VERY hot and the meals were African foods. He received an African blanket of camel hair which he still has. Christmases were often different as he travelled, and gained an awareness of other people and how they lived. Racism was not an issue.

**Alice:** remembers the Christmas tree of her childhood on a farm east of Gwynne. In her home her mother clipped the candles on to the branches. They were lit and the tree was admired in the dark room, but soon extinguished because of the fear of causing a fire. Then gifts were opened. Many years later, on a visit to Norway she realized that the candles and other family customs and traditions were actually Norwegian traditions!

On Christmas Day they made the journey to visit her grandfather who lived south of Westeroose.

**Claudia:** Their family remembers an occasion of travelling to a Nova Scotia to celebrate with the extended family while her parents were still alive. Her children were teenagers. Everything was perfect; the times were magical with lovely snowfalls, joyful sleigh rides and family visiting.

**General discussion** followed and we confirmed the value of family traditions; how some have changed with new generations, and how some are precious and remain. Large gatherings have become smaller as our parents have passed on, traditional recipes have been pared down and some are no longer popular.

Everyone is uncertain about Christmas 2020... hopeful that family will be able to gather, but realistically knowing that we might have 2 people at our dinner tables.

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“OVER A BARREL” - In the days before CPR a drowning victim would be placed face down over a barrel and the barrel would be rolled back and forth in an effort to empty the lungs of water. It was rarely effective. *If you are over a barrel you are in deep trouble.*

RESEARCH REPORT By: Mavis Nelson STRAUSS, HODGSON

What does a search for other people look like? Many people would write to a club and request help finding their families. My research took a totally different form. One year while we travelled home from a holiday we stopped at the visitor center in Canmore, Alberta. We started talking to a nice lady that worked there. I said we were from Wetaskiwin and Marie L., said “Oh. Do you know where Lewisville is? That is where my family lived at one time and I would like more information on them.”

The families were Strauss and Hodgson from the Lewisville, Duhamel, and Ferintosh areas. I went through the history books I had for those areas. I copied the pages on Hodgson and the area maps to mail to Marie L. showing where the family came from.

The first note that I got back from her was dated July 5, 2005. Then in September of 2010, I found an obituary from the Times that I thought would be part of her family, which I mailed to her. I also filled in some more information for her.

I heard nothing from Marie L. for many years until October 24th, 2020 when I received an email from her, just checking her email list. I answered and asked if she was still doing research on her family. That started the research again. She wanted to write to Rosebrier School. Sadly, Rosebrier School had closed about 8 years ago.

I told Marie L. that I would see if I could find the school records and the information that she was looking for. She was looking for Ben, John, Helen and Ann Strauss who might have gone to the school, also, any information on her grandparents John and Catherine Hodgson who lived in the Lewisville area.

On October 26th, I emailed Rachel Knudsen at the City Archives to see if they had the school records. She did not.

I then started phoning people I knew whose children would have gone to Rosebrier School. After 5 phone calls I found the RIGHT person, Lorraine T. "Yes, she had some of the school books and loved doing genealogy". I shared with Lorraine T. what I was looking for to help Marie L.

On November 19, Lorraine T. had found the Strauss children on the school records. She emailed me what she had found on the Strauss and Hodgson families. There were school record pages, pictures and more family history on the two families. She made hard copies and brought them into town. I mailed it all to Marie L.

Marie L. was over the moon excited. In the package was a photo of her great grandparents that she had never seen, plus copies of school records of her family.

At this point, I thought I had helped Marie L. all I could and it was time to turn her questions over to Lorraine T.

So, I feel that I am the "in between searcher". How much fun this search has been! I will keep in touch with Marie L. but let Lorraine T. find the information. Research, does come in all different forms. We can be "hands on" or just help to find the right people to do the actual research. We need each other and don't have to do it all by ourselves.

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*One minute you are young and fun -  
the next you are turning down your  
car stereo so you can see better!*

## **RESEARCH REPORT**      **By:** Alice Hoyle

**DUFVA, ERICK AND MARGARETA** – I responded to a request from a Swedish researcher, wanting information about the Dufva family. They emigrated from Sweden in 1895. Margareta's maiden name was Ring.

Thankfully, this request came in before the Archives was closed by the City of Wetaskiwin. In the obituary file at the Archives I was able to find obituaries for several of the family members, indicating that they had resided in the Water Glen district.

I did not know where the Water Glen district was located: fortunately, Rachel was still on the job, and she quickly looked in her database and told me the Archives had a Local History book covering the Water Glen district (which happens to be east of Ponoka). This local history book had a lengthy write-up on the Dufva family and their part as founding members of the Svea Lutheran Church in the Water Glen district. A bonus was - photos in the LH book of the Dufva family.

Then, as indicated in some of the obituaries of the extended family – I noted they lived in the Millet area. Again, thanks to the Millet rural history books in the Archives I was able to find the family information and copy those. A search of the AGS surname database resulted in information about the burial locales of several of the Dufva family members – Malmo Mission Covenant Cemetery in Ferintosh.

All the information I found for the Swedish researcher was photocopied and mailed to him, along with a page of information about my findings and suggestions on additional places he could look online.

**KELLY/KELLEY, MICHAEL** – A researcher from Ontario contacted our branch, requesting information about a Michael Kelly who left Ontario in the early 1900's. He is buried in the Catholic cemetery in Wetaskiwin. The researcher wanted more information about the family. E-mails back and forth zeroed in on what information he was looking for.

Unfortunately, Michael Kelly/Kelley died in 1905 so he wasn't recorded on any census records. However, research in the local history books of this area found records of his children; and their mention of Michael Kelly confirmed that this was the correct family. I also found records of Michael's family in the 1901 and 1906 census data for Wetaskiwin County, and obituary records for Michael and some of his children. All information was photocopied and mailed to the Ontario researcher.

Also, some of this information seemed familiar, so I looked at all the volunteer research I had done over the years and found that this same family had been the subject of volunteer research I did in 2010! I emailed the Ontario researcher and asked if he was familiar with xxxxx who had requested information about this family previously. I suggested since the other person was doing research, perhaps they could collaborate. He replied that this was his cousin in the USA! I gave him her email address and he said he would connect with her.

**HENDRICKSON, FRANK OSCAR** – This was probably the saddest request. I had an email on December 19<sup>th</sup> from Paul Edginton, City of Wetaskiwin, advising that someone had called the City asking for information about her husband's ancestor's residence in Wetaskiwin. I phoned the woman who had contacted the City, to confirm what information she was looking for.

She also wanted to view newspapers from the 1960's because her husband's ancestor had died after being hit by a train and she was sure there would have been a write-up in the local newspaper about this event. This would have been a simple request to fill had the Archives been open. I could have looked at the Wetaskiwin Times newspapers from the 1960's date she gave me when I talked with her.

In addition, she did not know the address of the home they lived in! This could have been determined by looking at the phone books the Archives has in their collection or looking at City property tax records.

I suggested to the researcher that because of the death date of her husband's ancestor, she should be able to find a probate record at the Provincial Archives. This would give her the address of where he was living at the time of his death.

I also suggested that with the loss of access to the Wetaskiwin Times back issues at the Archives, she might have to go to the Legislative Library at the Legislature building in Edmonton since they have copies of all the Wetaskiwin Times newspapers.

Then, Lee to the rescue: he found a write-up about the death of Mr. Hendrickson and how he died. This was sent to the researcher and she was thrilled to get the information. With diligence, we were able to solve 'most' of her mysteries.

Going forward, responding to the research requests will be more difficult now that the Archives is closed. Lee and I (the Volunteer Research Committee members) are trying to respond as best we can to those who are looking for their family connections, even with the loss of the Archives resources.

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WOMEN OF ASPENLAND

Exhibit at Wetaskiwin Heritage Museum
<https://wetaskiwinmuseum.com/exhibits/women-of-aspenland/>

ABIGAIL FONTEYNE compiled in 2012



Abigail Alvera Bergen was born to Emma Olstad and Nels Bergen in 1906, the third of ten children. Her mother, Emma Olstad, of Norwegian descent was born in 1882 in Minnesota to Mr. and Mrs. Ludvig Olstad.

Her father, Nels Bergen grew up in Sundsval, Sweden and immigrated to Michigan in 1888 at the age of fifteen. Nels was ordained as a Pastor in Innisfail, Alberta by the Western Baptist Union in 1899. Rev. Bergen came to Wetaskiwin in 1899 from a posting in Red Deer. Emma and Nels were married on July 24, 1901. However, it is likely that Abigail was born in Wisconsin. He father accepted an invitation from the American Baptist Publications Society to come to northern Michigan and serve as a Sunday School missionary, so he and Emma moved there shortly after their marriage. From Michigan they moved to Marionette, Wisconsin where Rev. Bergen became pastor of the Swedish Baptist Church – some time before Abigail was born.

They returned to Alberta in 1909. Abigail and her nine siblings (Elinore, Ludvig, Albertine, Viola, Edmond, Laurine, Bernice and Oliver) grew up in the New Norway, Ferintosh area until the family moved to Wetaskiwin in 1917.

Abie attended school at Bulyea, a school just south of Wetaskiwin and in Wetaskiwin. She met Arthur Fonteyne here and married him in 1926. The couple farmed northeast of town from 1927 to 1947 until they moved to a house on 47th Street.

Abie and Art had four children, Warren in September 1928, Darol in January 1931, Lorne in March 1935, Lois November 1938.



Arthur Fonteyne, Abie's husband was an alderman in Wetaskiwin in the 1950s, with Abie assuming the role of a politician's wife for a time.

Abie's mother, Emma was musician who taught piano and was the organist and choir leader at the various churches where Rev. Bergen was pastor over the years. Growing up with music in her life, Abie was then a student of Miss Florence Kelley in Wetaskiwin. Skilled and gifted, she received such a high degree of proficiency that she is mentioned in two articles in the Edmonton Bulletin from 1922. They stated that Abigail was "successful in the theory examinations of the Associate Board of the Royal Conservatory of Music and the Royal Academy of Music of London, England" in the categories of "rudiments of music",

intermediate pianoforte and higher division pianoforte”.

With these prodigious qualifications behind her she taught piano for over forty years, from when she was in high school until shortly before her passing in 1970. She would also play popular and ragtime music in dance bands in the Wetaskiwin area; members of the band were Marie Novotny on accordion, Bill Bushe on clarinet, Bill McIlroy on drums, and Harold Tofte on violin. Ben and Vi George were part of another group that she played with as well.

Abie’s sons Warren and Darol took dancing lessons from Jean George, the eminent Wetaskiwin performer and dance school proprietor. The siblings garnered attention by competing in Lacombe and entertaining at the Ponoka Stampede when they were ten and twelve years old, skillfully accompanied by their mother on piano. As a prominent and longtime member of Wetaskiwin’s entertainment community, Abie ably provided music for New Year’s Eve dances, and other occasions at the Legion in Wetaskiwin. She also loved spending time at Pigeon Lake and would entertain family and friends at MaMeO Beach.

Abigail influenced her children to take up music too. Warren took violin lessons, Lorne took up the trumpet, Lois completed grade eight piano and also became a music teacher. Darol has made a career out of music. At one point, he recalls that he and his mother were teaching in the same house on different floors. He went on to achieve a University degree in Music and teach Band in school.

Abie was an out-going, fun-loving, bubbly person with many interests. She curled with different teams in many places, including Wetaskiwin, Usona, Ponoka, Camrose and Red Deer. She also enjoyed bridge and bingo, (which she would often play with her

sister, Florence and from which she would sometimes bring home a cash win or a bicycle).



Gardening was a passion as was sewing on the Singer treadle sewing machine. Abigail sewed dance costumes for Darol and Warren including the

ones worn for their “When Pa was Courting Ma” number and the Ponoka air force tap performance. She also sewed Klondike costumes for the family to wear to Klondike Days in Edmonton.

Darol remembers that his mother and grandmother played Chinese checkers together and they sometimes had family scrabble games. Abie was also an excellent cook and made Lefse from a recipe passed to her by her parents. Abigail belonged to the Catholic Womens’ League and volunteered for activities like cleaning the church.

It is easy to tell from pictures of Abigail that she had many friends and always enjoyed a laugh. Abie’s family remembers that she loved to tell jokes and was a great story teller. She was a hard working lady who loved to spend time with her family at Pigeon Lake and take numerous vacations.

Abie passed away in 1970 at the age of 64.

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*How do you tell  
when you're out of invisible ink?*

## **MY COVID-19 YEAR, 2020**

### **Rudi Grab**

We live on an acreage in Leduc County. Driving time to either Millet or Leduc is about ten minutes. We continue to operate a small agricultural business raising purebred Nigerian Dwarf Goats. Nigerians are a small dairy breed that is becoming increasingly popular as they are very sociable and easy to handle. Checking them regularly and ensuring that there is adequate feed, etc. keeps us busy...a great way to get exercise and stay active without being bored, which is a good thing since I really don't like formal workouts.

Our daily routines and activities are pretty much the same, with some small exceptions, as before the pandemic. The main difference for us is that restaurant visits have been greatly reduced, although we still order some takeout meals. We also don't go out shopping much except for groceries and feed for our livestock. Living rurally definitely has its advantages when social distancing is required / mandated. Both my wife and I are fairly computer literate. We keep in regular (daily) contact with our three children and their families through FaceBook and by phone. My wife uses Zoom extensively with the grandchildren. As a result we haven't experienced the loneliness and isolation that seems to affect many people.

We are getting ready for our next crop of baby goats. Kidding is scheduled to begin around mid-January. It will keep us busy since we have close to fifty expectant Nigerian mothers. This will be a very busy and exhausting time for us. At the same time it is both exciting and rewarding to be directly involved in the life-cycle renewal process as the 2021 crop of newcomers arrive.

### **Sharon Aney**

It was a fine January to begin the year. We ventured to a new winter destination: Orange Beach, Alabama. Our condo looked out on the Gulf of Mexico and we explored. But only a few weeks later we began hearing disquieting news of a new illness.

We realized in February that our planned vacation / family history tour in May to SW France with our daughter and son-in-law would be cancelled due to travel restrictions. By mid-March, when we returned home, it was to a mandatory 2 week self isolation.

As businesses were trying to figure out how to stay open, our daughter inspired us to arrange for the folks at Beans Coffee Shop to deliver coffee and cinnamon buns to other returning snowbirds. It was a good idea to phone ahead that the treats were coming; when I called Mavis, they were just leaving Mesquite, Nevada! A quick call was made to the delivery man to change the destination.

Our lives changed. By April schools had been closed and students were learning how to learn online. Our 12 year old grandson came to our home for 3 days a week and we supervised his school days until June 20. Grade 6 was a lot easier when I took it the first time!

I opened a Word document in order to record Covid happenings, news reports, impressions of them, family events, jokes, etc. as they occurred over the months.

Our gadding about was curtailed; no summer road trips, theatre performances, etc. Never being a "shopper" staying away from stores was no hardship. Fortunately our daughter moved to the cabin for the summer and we were able to meet with family outdoors. We learned to have coffee

or wine gatherings on driveways, to wear masks, meet via Zoom, use elbow bumps instead of hugs.

Public venues and events were cancelled, so my husband's volunteer activities also went away. He used his "spare time" to golf more often than in many previous years.

Church services were cancelled for in-person participation, until early July, and then only for a fraction of usual attendance, but they were immediately streamed on Facebook! Of all places!



We missed having our daughters and their families with us to enjoy our traditional

Ukrainian Easter breakfast, but after following Easter Mass online the two of us enjoyed the symbolic foods.

*JOY!!* When our grandson's and his fiancé's dream of a road trip to Patagonia in 2021 had to be cancelled, they decided that it was a good year to get married. They navigated through the Covid-19 wedding restrictions. In the end we were delighted to join them for a lovely (attendance limited & socially distanced) September wedding on a B.C. mountain top ski resort.

To fill my time I decided on some community history projects. I compiled an album for the Knights of Columbus to recognize their deceased members, using the City Archives and contacting several members to gather the information.

I also researched some history for the Wetaskiwin & District Sports Hall of Fame. Mavis Nelson and I were able to find considerable information in our personal archives (aka scrapbooks) about

competitive swimming from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, and results of provincial competitions from 1974 onward were online. The development of curling in Wetaskiwin was documented in newspapers from 1901 to 1933 in the Peel Collection online, and the City Archives contributed more information, as well as many pictures. Unfortunately I am stuck at 1978 due to the closing of the Archives in November.

As the months passed we all worried, largely because we did not know from which direction the Covid-19 danger could come. We came through what we hoped would be a few weeks of inconvenience in the spring, only to face more shut downs. We watched in complacent concern and horror as the infection numbers rose rapidly in the USA... and we were concerned about the health of friends we had made down there over the years.

But on December 8 we too, in Alberta, were shut down due to rising rates of infection! We and our daughters had already planned for separate Christmases, but this made it official. A few days ahead of time two members from each family met in our garage to roast a hot dog and exchange boxes of gifts to take to our various homes.

All in all ... we are well. We are beyond grateful that because we are in the "vulnerable" age group, we can stay home. We do not have to go anywhere, to find care or schooling for children, pay a mortgage, keep a business open, etc. Our four oldest grandsons are working, when so many Albertans are not.

And mostly we appreciate the medical workers, educators, our religious leaders, store clerks and other essential workers who stood strong and went to work in order to enable our lives to continue to be as close to normal as possible.

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WETASKIWIN'S SPANISH FLU PANDEMIC - 1918

The following account is taken from Volume 1 of Siding 16, page 236.

Then in October, after plaguing communities to the south, the deadly Spanish influenza hit town. Two cases were spotted and both persons were put under strict quarantine. Almost immediately all schools, churches, theatres and pool halls were closed. The public was told to wear cheese cloth masks – but the flu continues to spread.

Mrs. Martha Watson, wife of Jim Watson, the city utilities superintendent, was one of the first victims. J. C. Wagner lost his wife and mother and Tracy Walker, Massey-Harris dealer and alderman, his wife and ten year old son, died within two days of each other. The remaining children in the Walker family were taken care of and brought up by Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Millen.

Mr. A. Sims said the hearse was brought to the garage for repairs, but his mechanic never had enough time to fix it because it was always being called out. Flu cards tacked to doors warned the public of the disease within – and friends or neighbours would leave food or blankets on the doorstep for the sick, and then hurry away.

The winter was an unhappy and precarious time for many families. Clubs and organizations did not hold meetings. Some farmers reported that their horses and chickens had been attacked by the flu bug. Many adults, as well as children, were bed-

ridden, and it was only through the efforts of friends and neighbours that livestock were taken care of and managed to survive.

There were no miracle drugs to fight the disease. The usual prescription was to get plenty of rest, take as much nourishment as possible --- and wait. Some women had their own remedies. One mother dosed her young daughter with castor oil and rubbed her down with mustard ointment – and the little lady survived.

When the winter chill had subsided and the flu bug had decided it had done enough damage, the spring of 1919 had all the promise of being a good year.

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**NAILED IT!!!**

