



RISTWATCH

RCVFD Quarterly Newsletter P. O. Box 2, Bellvue, CO 80512 Issue No. 106 April 2023

Letter from the President

Big Changes on the Horizon:

I am excited by everything that is happening within your fire department in 2023.

We have started discussions on proposals for a great location for a new Buckhorn fire station. This station will improve response times in that area of our coverage area and will provide faster access to response vehicles.

Obviously, a new fire station comes with a lot of additional expenses. We need to fill it with new vehicles and equipment. Our chief is currently trying to obtain a 4WD "ambulance" (one of those tall vans to hold patients comfortably). Unfortunately, the demand for used equipment is high, which means prices are high. And as we all have experienced in the last several years, the prices of all commodities are rising fast. So, the costs of establishing this new station are daunting.

Chief Elsner is on a mission to make sure that every house with a fireplace or wood stove is equipped with a Chimfex chimney fire extinguisher. He is buying them in bulk and handing them out to anyone who asks.

Finally, there is some exciting new technology that will make response times faster and more effective. The supposition is that had this technology been deployed in 2012, the High Park Fire would have been a minor incident. But this technology requires new equipment that must be purchased.

Having said that, my plea to everyone is to be generous with your donations to RCVFD this year. We want to keep supporting our first responders who work so hard to keep all of our properties and loved ones safe.

Have fun and stay safe!



Neil Faber
President - 2023

Festival News

SATURDAY, SEPT. 9, 2023 • 10-4 • RAIN OR SHINE!

Join us in supporting our firefighters and our community!

We are already working hard preparing for this year's festival!
These are some of the great and fun ways you can help!



Sponsorships: Do you own or support a business that would be interested in becoming a festival sponsor? Wide range of levels available to accommodate every business that wants to support RCVFD! Contact Tony, pavlantostony@gmail.com.

Silent Auction: Do you have or know of a business interested in donating an item? Connect with Silent Auction coordinator Janet, equiphile@gmail.com, to make sure we don't contact the same businesses multiple times!

Book Bees: The Book Bees will soon begin sorting donated books. Are you available to help? If you have books to donate, please put them in the donation bin located at Fire Station No. 1. Contact Carolyn with any questions, Cloud9Sewing@gmail.com.

Plant Sale: Are your indoor plants out of control? Now is a great time to root the extras and get them ready for the plant sale! And while you're doing your garden spring cleaning, save your divisions and pot them up! Contact Kimberley, kimberley.carr@kiewit.com.

Booths: Are you or someone you know interested in becoming a vendor? Contact Debby, DebandLyle007@gmail.com. If you're interested in having a free educational/not-for-profit booth, contact Trisha, tajohnmt@outlook.com.

Kids Area: This is a family-friendly event, and we are always looking for great activities to fill our kids area! Contact Trisha, tajohnmt@outlook.com.

Bake Sale: Now is the time to start experimenting with new recipes and perfecting old ones to fill our bake sale tables! Contact Patti & James, clutterp28@gmail.com

Volunteers are essential!

Volunteers in every capacity are critical in making the festival a success. You can make a difference by helping now, or before, during or after the festival, and we would love to hear from you! Contact HJ, HJ@computer.org

Bake Sale Tent Please Donate Baked Goods for the Mountain Festival

Last year we sold out before 3:00 PM! Thank you to all the generous community bakers who donated so many delicious items! This year we're anticipating a bigger crowd so we're counting on your participation again. Donating baked goods is a terrific way to get the entire family involved in supporting our firefighters and EMS. PIES are the best-selling item, and we sell it by the slice or whole pie. Cookies, bars, brownies, muffins and breads are popular items too. Whatever you love to bake, we would love to sell! Please package items in sellable amounts (2-4 cookies, half dozen, dozen, etc.) so folks can take them home or munch on them while they walk around at the festival. Items that do not require refrigeration are best for the sale. Also list high allergen ingredients such as nuts, gluten or dairy. Thank you for supporting our incredible RCVFD that keeps us safe. If you have any suggestions or questions, please feel free to contact me anytime.

Patti Clutter
Bake Sale Chair
858-248-6328, clutterp28@gmail.com

Chief's Report

As we move into March, we are gearing up for another wildland fire season. Despite the small fire in Poudre Canyon, we are prepared for any challenges that may come our way. As the weather remains cold and relative humidity stays high, we are transitioning from structure and chimney fire training to wildland training.

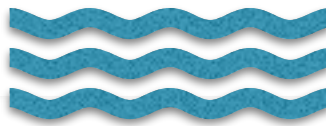
Our annual wildland field day will be held in May, and Larimer County Emergency Services will be leading this crucial training for us. With many new recruits on board, we are eager to provide them with hands-on pump and hose training to prepare them for the upcoming season.

In addition to training, we are also continuing our search for land to build a fire station in the Buckhorn area. We have recently found a

piece of property that we believe will meet all of our needs and are currently exploring our options.

Our EMTs are also working hard to keep up with the changes going on with UCHHealth, who provides our medical training. It is crucial that we keep our continuing education hours up for certification requirements, and we are committed to ensuring that our team is well-prepared for any medical emergencies that may arise.

Sincerely,
Jeff Elsner, Chief
Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department
P.O. Box 2, Bellvue, CO 80512
chief@rcvfd.org



We want to take a moment to extend a huge thank you to Jax for their continued support of the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department. Recently, they generously donated high-quality water bottles to every firefighter in our department.

These water thermoses are the perfect size to carry in our wildland packs and are virtually indestructible, making them the ideal companion for our firefighters out in the field. The donation from Jax not only helps us stay hydrated and refreshed during long days of fighting fires but also shows their support and appreciation for the hard work that our department does every day.

We are so grateful for the ongoing support from Jax and other local businesses in our community. Your contributions allow us to continue providing top-notch services to our community and we couldn't do it without you.

Once again, thank you Jax for your support and generosity toward our department. We look forward to continuing our partnership in the future.

Jeff Elsner, Chief

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Letter From the Vice President

RCVFD - PLEASE RESPOND TO 123 SMITHSIDE RD FOR 54 YOM [year old male] NOT BREATHING. DAUGHTER STARTED CPR.

RCVFD - PLEASE RESPOND TO A TREE AND GROUND COVER FIRE SW OF CORD RD AND ELK PATH LANE.

- RCVFD is **your** Rist Canyon **Volunteer** Fire Department.
- These are the types of pages we may receive from “911 dispatch” anytime, 24/7.
- RCVFD responds, saving lives and property in an over 110 square mile area.
- RCVFD are the **first responders** when 911 is called in our community.

While the responders volunteer their time and energy for extensive training and to respond to **YOUR emergencies**, we need your donations, please, for maintaining our trucks, fuel, hoses, fire suppressant foam, heat detectors, gas detectors, water pumps, medical supplies, stretchers, splints, bandages, communication radios, GPS devices, ropes, ladders, protective uniforms, helmets, boots and more.

Please see the photos below for examples of the equipment we use to **help you and your family**.

We will be sending a letter asking you to support RCVFD with your donations. Please be sure to read the letter and return the donation envelope with your generous check. Thank you!

H. J. Siegel
Mountain Festival Coordinator and
RCVFD Board Vice President



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Bears: What's the Problem?



Every year in North America thousands of healthy black bears and more than a hundred grizzly bears lose their lives for being too good at making a living in People country.

Ask almost any bear behavior expert what's the biggest cause of human-bear conflicts and the answer is always the same: teaching bears to associate humans with food is a recipe for trouble. Almost all conflicts between people and bears can be traced back to people intentionally or unintentionally attracting or providing food sources for bears.

Bears instinctively avoid us. But foraging all day in the wild is a lot of work, and there are no guarantees of turning in for the night with a full stomach. Foraging for five minutes in the garbage is easy, predictable and productive. Sometimes the lure of a life-sustaining easy meal for very little effort is too powerful to ignore.

Bears are biologically programmed to follow their noses—seven times more powerful than a bloodhound's—to food sources, whether they're around the corner or several miles away.

Nature has equipped bears with the size, strength and endurance to regularly roam far and wide searching for meals, along with the stomach of an omnivore so they can eat just about anything. Bears are naturally curious and constantly exploring their environment looking for new things to eat. That can lead them to new natural food sources—or places it isn't safe for bears to be.

Bears are attracted by anything that smells interesting or different or unusual. It doesn't have to be good to eat, or even edible. Sometimes there are berries or nuts or maybe an ant hill or beehive or rotten log full of insects or even a yummy decomposing carcass at the end of the olfactory rainbow.

But sometimes a bear follows its nose to an overflowing garbage can, a bird feeder filled with seeds, a mini-orchard of ripening fruit, a flock of chickens roaming through the backyard, a picnic table groaning with food or a backpack stuffed with energy bars. Getting its paws on such calorie-laden rewards teaches the bear that overcoming its natural wariness of people pays off big time. Now the bear will risk spending a few minutes someplace it doesn't really want to be for the reward of a quick and easy meal.

Sometimes the source of the interesting odor turns out to be something that's not edible even by bear standards, like a hot tub cover, vinyl tarp, container of oil or even a citronella candle. Sometimes that good smell turns out to be coming from something like antifreeze that's downright lethal.

It usually starts with something small. If nothing bad happens, the bear learns it's O.K. to come back for more. The next time it won't be so shy or wary. Soon it may be going from house to house or camp to camp looking for handouts. Before you know it the bear has become a "nuisance" and is causing a lot of "problems."

People expect bears to intuitively understand that they're supposed to respect our boundaries and leave our stuff alone. But the only rules bears play by are self-preservation and survival of the fittest.

While most people don't have to worry about where their next meal is coming from, all wild bears live from paw to mouth, with no guarantees where or when they'll find something to eat. So when a bear discovers a

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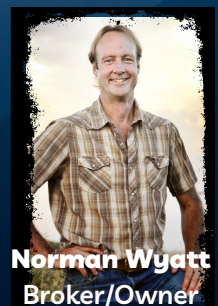
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Norman Wyatt
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What's the Problem, cont'd.

seemingly endless supply of high-calorie food, it will come back until the source dries up. It's simple math. A bear foraging out in the woods would have to work all day long to find the same number of calories it can gulp down in minutes in someone's backyard. The less energy bears have to expend finding food, the more fat they can store for their upcoming long winter's fast.

If a hard-working woman struggling against all odds to make a living behaved like a mother bear, we'd greatly admire her. We'd say things like, "No matter how tough life got, she figured out a way to survive, find food for her family, and put a roof over their heads. She worked three jobs, learned new skills, and took some big risks that paid off with big rewards." The family would probably get their own reality TV show and a bunch of lucrative endorsements.



In the real world it's much more likely the bear will learn to rely on people for food and become human food-conditioned. The more relaxed human food-conditioned bears become around us, the better the chances for conflicts between the two-footed and four-footed neighbors. When human-bear conflicts escalate to encounters and confrontations, it's almost always the bear that loses.

*Bear information in this issue excerpted from the Living with Bears Handbook by Linda Masterson
For more information or to order, visit livingwithbears.com*

The Bear Behavioral Ladder of Progression A step-by-step journey from wary beginning to untimely end

Smell something interesting. Follow nose to people place. Food smells good, but people might be dangerous.
Wait until dark to explore.

Gobble up birdseed on ground. Knock down feeder, eat lots more. Run back to the woods.

Come back a few nights later. Feeder is full again! Chow down. Follow nose onto deck.

Jackpot! Find garbage by back door. Open, scatter and eat. Score a day's worth of calories.

Plan to return often to this new food bonanza. Amble back to the woods.

Explore the neighborhood. Get much fatter much faster than you could foraging in the woods.

Start coming during the day since food supply seems endless and humans appear to be harmless.

Find open garage, knock over refrigerator. Eat pizza and ice cream.
Score a week's worth of calories.

Do enough damage to get reported. Make the news.
Start approaching people, looking for food. Get trapped, ear-tagged and hauled away.

Find your way back. Yummy treats still there! Pick up where you left off.

Scare someone putting out the trash.

Get labeled a threat to human safety.

Get killed way before your time.

And that makes room for another bear that smells something interesting.





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Around the Department



Recently RCVFD President Neil Faber and Assistant Chief Carol Dollard attended a luncheon at Woodward Governor, where they were awarded a grant for \$5,000. The grant was used to purchase PPE (personal protective equipment).

Fire in Poudre Canyon

On April 1, 2023, RCVFD was paged to assist with a fire in the Poudre Wilderness Area. The page came in at 10:57 am and over 15 RCVFD firefighters responded. The initial size of the fire, located $\frac{3}{4}$ mile south of Hwy. 14, west of Stove Prairie Road, was 34 acres. RCVFD fire fighters checked in with Incident Command (Poudre Canyon VFD) and split into two crews to conduct suppression activities and construct fire lines on two flanks in steep, rocky terrain.

The U.S. Forest Service arrived later and took over Incident Command. The Larimer County Sheriff's Office assisted with road closure and drone recognizance. One SEAT air tanker dropped fire retardant at approximately 17:00. After being on scene for eleven and a half hours, the RCVFD was pulled off scene. The USFS and LC remained on scene to finalize containment and suppression. Debrief and demob occurred and all RC units left the scene at 18:25. Back at Station 18:45.

On April 2nd, the RCVFD checked the fire and saw no signs of fire or smoke.

Way to go RCVFD fire fighters!

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Notes from Stove Prairie School

Dear Neighbors,

Spring is finally here! We are looking forward to things getting green and all the fun end of the school year activities that we have planned!

A big thank you to our neighbors, the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Dept., Bellvue Post Office and Morning Fresh Dairy for an amazing field trip in January! What a great time we all had!

Visit us on Facebook to see all the fun!

<https://www.facebook.com/StovePrairieElementary>

Jacki Lawson

Stove Prairie Elementary PTO



Firefighters Juana Jackson, Hunter Squibb, Lyle Benson, Jocelyn Wolf and Chief Jeff Elsner (pictured left to right) hosted Stove Prairie School students at Station 1. Jocelyn showed them M14 and talked to them about responsibilities during a medical response. The kids also got to use the Stokes basket. Jocelyn made a few scenarios where students got to be the patient.

Lyle talked to them about firefighters' safety gear and the students got to put on bunker gear, making it super fun for them.

Chief Elsner and Hunter showed the students E611, they loved the sirens of course. The students also got to shoot water with the hose, which was a lot of fun!

Juana showed the students the big trucks E412 and E313. They were impressed by how BIG the trucks are (the tires were bigger than some of them), but they had the most fun when they got to go inside the trucks.

Chief Elsner was the perfect host, he made everyone feel welcome, the students had a great time and they definitely want to come back to visit us again.

RCVFD Monthly Meeting Schedule

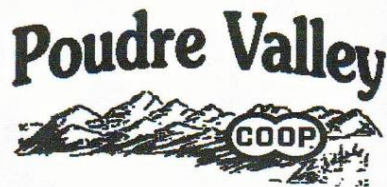
Operations —1st Wednesdays (6-7 PM)

Fire Training—2nd Wednesdays (7-9:30 PM)

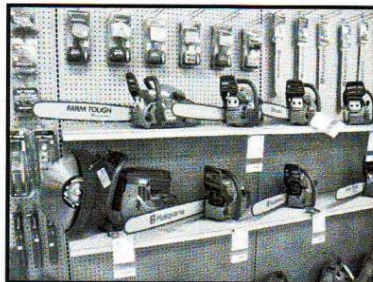
Board Meeting—3rd Wednesdays (6-8 PM)

Medical Training—4th Wednesdays (6-9:30 PM)

Ops, Fire and Medical Trainings are at Firehouse #1 at 11835 Rist Canyon Road. Board meetings are held at Firehouse #1, or on Zoom if necessary. All Rist Canyon area residents are welcome to attend. Around the first of each month, RCVFD sends out a Community Alert with the deadline to request a copy of the agenda. If you would like to receive the agenda, please email your name, email address and phone number to the RCVFD Board Secretary at secretary@rcvfd.org. Please note that the agenda will arrive one to two days before the scheduled meeting. To sign up for Community Alerts, visit RCVFD.org.



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Notes from Your Area Representatives



Photo courtesy of
Julie Rouse

It's snowing as I write this and I'm happy about it. The roads are clear and my family is enjoying the beautiful mountain view with me and my wife. Pretty cool timing. I feel very fortunate.

There have been a lot of bobcat sightings lately. It's always exciting when things start waking up in spring. The wet winter should bring a colorful crop of wildflowers. There's

always something to look forward to in the mountains. Enjoy them while you can.

Take it Easy!
Tim Stratman
Stove Prairie Area Rep

Despite spring having arrived on the calendar it still seems like winter in the Upper Buckhorn. As I write this snow is falling but signs of spring can still be found. Animals become more active and the elk, deer and moose will shed their antlers. The creek was starting to break up a little bit last week and I saw a flock of turkeys along the creek. Happy spring neighbors!

Erica Michels
Upper Buckhorn Buckhorn Rep

We have had several road closure incidents recently involving construction material and/or construction trucks and trailers on the only entry /exit road to the Davis Ranch area. Proper instructions and equipment may have avoided these incidents that affected missing work schedules, putting residents' health at risk and inability to obtain any services, including those for fire rescue and medical emergencies. I understand that in both cases it involved a lengthy closure of the road. Hopefully the old saying that we learn more from our failures than from our successes will be true here. There has been a lot of learning over the years.

Carolyn Stanley
Davis Ranch Area Rep



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Stove Prairie Once Famous for Its Mountain Pearl Potatoes

Colorado bound settlers brought a wide range of agricultural knowledge and skills to the Rist Canyon area. Early on, Stove Prairie's high altitude mountain valleys lured optimistic prospectors; then came the cattlemen and lumbermen. Cool summers, soils rich in mineral matter, 320 annual days of sunshine and spring-fed irrigation by which plants could be supplied with just the right amount of water at just the time needed were found to have the ability to yield significant crops.¹ Lesser-known crops became important sources of precious cash as these 7,000-foot-high mountain meadows provided fertile ground for growing coarse grains, fed primarily to animals. Hardy vegetables and, most notably potatoes also came to be a significant revenue source.

As early as 1881 the Stove Prairie potato crop was noted as being unusually good. By 1923, farmers were bragging about the Larimer County mountain valleys' famous spud district as being one of the great potato producing regions of America. Historical accounts note the potatoes were at a minimum marketed locally and in Cheyenne as table potatoes, and in Weld County as seed potatoes. At one point the potatoes were part of the diet for the convict labor carving the road through Poudre Canyon.

The names of early potato farmers in Stove Prairie included R.R. West; the West Brothers; Em Vannorsdel; the Paysons, Christlers, Bosworths, Shulls and Farrells; John Lyon; S.R. Lyon; and John Lewis. John Lyon's 1883 crop was noted as being "unsurpassed." His 12 acres yielded about 100 bushels per acre.²

Some of the success of area growers is explained by Mr. Bosworth and Mr. Shull in the May, 1895

Loveland Register newspaper: "We can grow a very superior potato here

*at much less cost than they can at Greeley or any place where they need to irrigate. The soil is admirably adapted to the growth of root crops of all kinds. The Stove Prairie potatoes are beginning to have a reputation of their own and will, we think, always command a good price both for seed and table use."*³

In 1910 Stove Prairie grown Mountain Pearl seed potatoes, a variety of Irish potatoes, were reported as being a major source of revenue for the local

farmers. Seed potatoes, which are planted to produce crops the following year, command a higher price than table potatoes. Colorado Agricultural College (now CSU) Professor C.L. Fitch declared the Stove Prairie Mountain Pearl seed potatoes to be "as nearly as perfect as a potato can be."⁴

Although potatoes proved to be a significant source of revenue, growing them came with its challenges. In Colorado, seed potatoes generally do best when taken from higher altitudes to plant in lower regions,⁵ which made growers' demand in Weld County very profitable yet transportation to Weld County still was necessary. Growing seed potatoes did, however, overcome some of the need for nearby transportation because it took fewer seed potatoes to generate the same amount of revenue as table potatoes.

Another consideration was that potatoes could not be grown in the same field year after year in order to maintain the consistent high quality required. In northern Colorado the most common rotation was potatoes two years; followed by grain, clover or field peas for one year; then alfalfa as a hay crop for two years.⁶

A third challenge facing the producers was storage, as the seed potatoes must be properly stored over the winter for use the following spring. At one time there was a receiving warehouse in Bellvue. It proved to be unsuccessful due to lack of proper cooling and ventilation. A warehouse also was built in Weld County

The Loveland Register

Jan. 21, 1896

We have just consumed the last of a sack of potatoes, donated by Em Vannorsdel of Stove Prairie, and can testify to the excellent quality of the potatoes raised on his mountain ranch. Many were the thoughts of gratitude that we entertained towards the donor as we appeased our appetite with those mealy spuds, and even the memory thereof leaves a good taste in our mouth. Not only did he succeed during the past year in raising some of the finest potatoes in the country but he also proved beyond a doubt that the general line of garden vegetables can be raised at that altitude.



Mountain Pearls, cont'd.



that was a significant improvement, however it did not have the capacity to store the volume of seed potatoes needed to supply the demand.

A number of Stove Prairie farmers built in-ground cellars on their property. These cellars or pits generally were not large enough to properly store their entire crop over the winter months. Some of these cellars also were not properly monitored or ventilated. As a result, there were significant differences in quality from grower to grower. This led to each farmer selling their crop individually, allowing buyers

to purchase specific farmers' crops. This meant each farmer had different prices on their potatoes based on production, storage and reputation. There even was talk of the farmers establishing a seed potato headquarters that included storage facilities in Weld County where a significant number of table potato producers grew the Mountain Pearls. An August 1917, Colorado Agricultural College publication included, "It is the patriotic duty of every grower at this time to conserve every part of his crop."⁷

During this era when local potato research was in its relative infancy, potato diseases had the ability to completely devastate entire crops heedless of the fact that the insects and diseases seen in Colorado were significantly less than in eastern states. Blight (also found in many weeds, peas, beans, beets and alfalfa), fungus⁸ and by 1921, Mosaic disease had all but devastated the Pearl potato variety except those grown from new seed stock.⁹

With Stove Prairie producing seed potatoes for farmers at lower altitudes, the demand for the Weld County product, for example, also was predicated on the quality of and demand for the crops produced in those areas. Greeley was the oldest commercial potato-producing district in the state, which was a bonus for Stove Prairie producers. Commercial production there started in 1870 and reached its peak in 1909. At its height the district produced between four and six million bushels and shipped between 8,000 and 14,000 train cars of potatoes annually.¹⁰

By 1930, Pearl potatoes were not even mentioned as being one of the primary varieties being grown in Colorado. The focus had turned to varieties that more consistently focused on quality, yield and reduction in production costs.¹¹ It appears the Mountain Pearl did not fit into these criteria.

Later, by 1932, the consumption of potatoes also had dropped drastically. The purchasing power of the public previously had been very low, but by 1932 other fresh vegetables and fruits had replaced the potato in the diet to a considerable extent. Prices received by growers were the lowest on record. Trucking introduced a new method of transportation and merchandising, which had a tendency to shift production toward the consuming centers and away from more isolated, rural areas. Colorado growers also began experiencing keener competition from other states.¹²

None of the available literature pointed to the exact cause of the extinction of Stove Prairie potato farms, however a combination of the above factors most likely led to its decline and ultimate demise. None of the available literature suggested the potato "industry" in Stove Prairie ever returned.

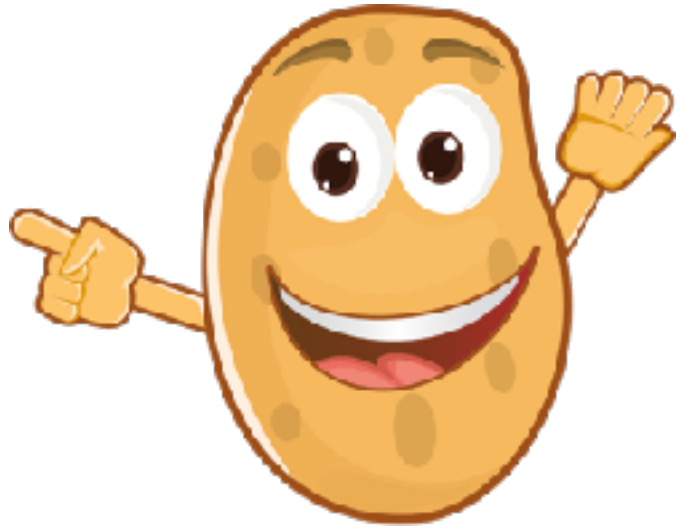
Compiled by Karen Salaz for the Ristwatch

Endnotes:

- ¹ *The Agricultural Experiment Station of the Agricultural College of Colorado, Potatoes in Colorado*, C.L. Fitch, 1910, Fort Collins, Colo
- ² *The Fort Collins Courier*, Sept. 6, 1883 (www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org)
- ³ *The Loveland Register*, May 16, 1895
- ⁴ *The Weekly Courier* (Fort Collins), March 24, 1910
- ⁵ *The Agricultural Experiment Station of the Colorado Agricultural College, The Colorado Potato Industry*, E.R. Bennett, Jan 1907, provided by Dr. David Holm, CSU Ag Experiment Station, Center, CO
- ⁶ *The Agricultural Experiment Station of the Colorado Agricultural College, The Colorado Potato Industry, Potato Insects*, C.L. Fitch and E.R. Bennett, Nov 1910, provided by Dr. David Holm, CSU Ag Experiment Station, Center, CO
- ⁷ *Colorado Agricultural College Extension Service, Farm Storage of Apples and Potatoes*. James L. McGinnis, Aug 1917, provided by Dr. David Holm, CSU Ag Experiment Station, Center, CO
- ⁸ *The Agricultural Experiment Station of the Colorado Agricultural College, The Colorado Potato Industry*, E.R. Bennett, Jan 1907, provided by Dr. David Holm, CSU Ag Experiment Station, Center, CO
- ⁹ *The Agricultural Experiment Station of the Colorado Agricultural College, Report of Potato Investigations*, Charles F. Clark, Jan 1921, provided by Dr. David Holm, CSU Ag Experiment Station, Center, CO
- ¹⁰ *The Agricultural Experiment Station of the Colorado Agricultural College, Report of Potato Investigations*, Charles F. Clark, Jan 1921, provided by Dr. David Holm, CSU Ag Experiment Station, Center, CO
- ¹¹ *Growing Better Potatoes in Colorado*, C.H. Metzger, Jul 1932, provided by Dr. David Holm, CSU Ag Experiment Station, Center, CO
- ¹² *Ideal Types for Colorado Standard Potato Varieties*, C.H. Metzger, Feb 1930, provided by Dr. David Holm, CSU Ag Experiment Station, Center, CO
- ¹³ *The Agricultural Experiment Station of the Colorado Agricultural College, The Colorado Potato Industry, Potato Insects*, C.L. Fitch and E.R. Bennett, Nov, 1910 provided by Dr. David Holm, CSU Ag Experiment Station, Center, CO

1910 Potato Trivia¹³

- When the cattlemen first established their home ranches in our mountain valleys they found the dark, sandy, alluvial loams to be good potato soil, rich with the wash and willow leaves of ages, and large returns were secured for years on these soils. The introduction of alfalfa from Utah and California made the bench lands even more productive, and when farmers learned how to break and handle the alfalfa sod, it proved the greatest factor in the extension of potato growing and of irrigation development generally. The total output was doubled from the same areas in a few years' time and the possibilities of profit woke up the state.
- A little later the fine shape and wonderful quality of mountain potatoes became known outside the mining and lumber camps, and railroads saw the possibilities of agricultural freight and farm development.
- More weight of food was produced by potatoes than by any other crop in the world. In the number of bushels, the potato far exceeded any of the great cereals of the world; wheat or corn or the rice of the Orient were far behind it in total production.
- Colorado was practically half way between the producing and consuming regions, thus its geographical position gave a big saving of time and freight in reaching the high-priced markets of the United States.
- Botanically, potatoes are closely related to tobacco and tomatoes.
- Why potatoes are grown: Climate and the cheapness of the potato as a food (with no processing needed) among people where cheapness is desired or imperative, together with the small knowledge required for moderate success with the crop, have been chief factors in the extension of potato culture. The appreciation of good potatoes as a staple food was a later factor.
- The world production of potatoes was nearly 50% more than the leading grains—wheat or corn—and nearly three times the production of the world's rice crop. The average crop, in tons per acre, of potatoes in Colorado, was about six times that of grain.
- The loss in weight was not a serious part of paring away the tuber. As has been shown, the food value of the area of the potato just beneath the skin is much greater than the center of the potato. Where potatoes are particularly rough it will be seen that not only is one-fourth of the weight of the potato removed but considerably more than one-fourth of the real nutriment of the tuber is lost, and that of the best quality.
- 'Early' potato varieties should be planted at 5,000 to 7,000 feet elevation.
- At 7,000 to 8,000 feet altitude, October 1 is the danger line that crops need to be out of the ground.
- When to sort potatoes—The third week after storing is the time to care for potatoes that have been touched with frost in the ground. The first ten days after storing, the frozen ones cannot be detected nor sorted out with seed. Frosted potatoes can be sold at any time by thumbing the nose of each potato. After the third week they are likely to be semi-liquid rots and to smear the mass past remedy.



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What Makes an Heirloom?

"Ouch! That hurt," I muttered to myself, as the box I yanked from the top shelf at the back of the closet hit me in the head. With spring's arrival (at least on the calendar), I have been taken by the urge to declutter. I had already made quick work of the first few boxes I tackled. But this next box, labeled "half-finished sewing projects", slowed me down. Spring cleaning—a practice that is observed in many cultures around the world—typically involves a deep cleaning of one's home or workspace during the spring season, often after a long winter period of being cooped up indoors. Taking up this tradition was placing my impulse to get rid of stuff in conflict with my tenderness toward objects. Setting aside the fact that "half" might have been generous for some of those "half-finished sewing projects", each one revealed layers of meaningful fabric: souvenir textiles from trips away from home, gifted fabric from friends, cloth from significant events in my life. This box had survived four moves in twice as many years. Was it time to give these objects a better steward? Would that caretaker appreciate their value?

Have you faced similar dilemmas? Think about an object that is special to you. Maybe it's an article of clothing in your closet or a tool in your workshop that was handed down to you. Maybe a piece of furniture, a watch or bracelet, or a recipe, perhaps. How did you acquire your treasured object? Did someone give it to

you? How would you describe its value to someone else? When we think about objects that are special to us, it seems that things we cherish don't tend to be new, untarnished or pristine. In fact, their value seems to derive from the

experiences, people or places they represent; the memories that the marks and imperfections call to mind; and the love and labor we invest to take care of these items and put them to use in our lives. An object can take multiple paths as it ages. It can age with grace. Or, left unattended, it can wither, break down and become useless, lifeless. Objects, through labor, become valued like an heirloom. What might you hold onto for another year? What will you let go? The neatly ordered dress pattern pieces I just finished cutting out this past weekend suggest my cloth will live with me at least for a little longer.



Ellison Carter
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