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FORAGE FEATURES - p. 28

Emily Mattson



Emily (Loseth) Mattson was no stranger to the outdoors when she married a Peace River Country rancher's son and went to live with him on the family ranch at Rolla, B.C. just north of the city of Dawson Creek.

Born Oct. 5, 1947, she was raised by parents Mary and Albert Loseth (along with three brothers) in the small interior community of McBride, B.C., near Mt. Robson in the Rocky Mountains.

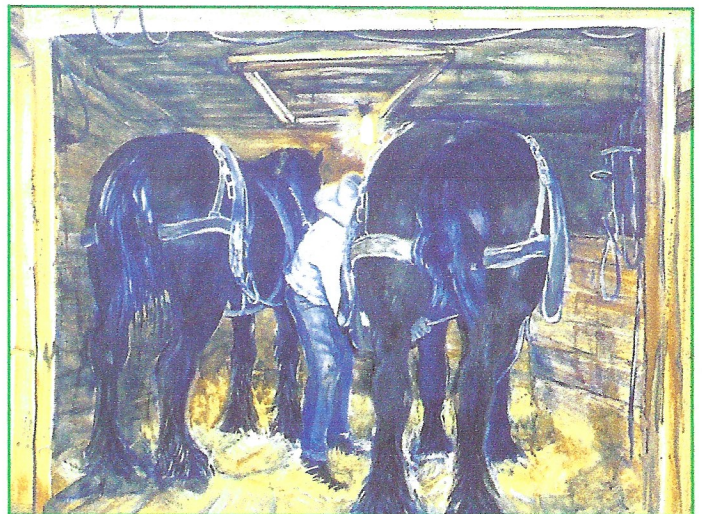
She has very fond memories of her wilderness childhood and feels "very fortunate to have been raised in the beautiful Robson Valley, as well as in such a pleasant small rural community." She says, "It was easy to develop friendships there and to explore my own particular talents in a supportive and positive environment." She spent much of her childhood enjoying participating in school sports with her friends, riding her favorite horse around the countryside and developing her interest in art.

After finishing high school she decided she needed some practical career training and went off to Simon Fraser University. While working at a summer job in Williams Lake several years later her plans took an abrupt change in direction. She met a Peace area rancher's son named Larry Mattson, married him that December (1968) and moved with him to the ranch he grew up on. They started their own small herd of cattle, which now numbers about 200 breeding cows, and raised two sons (Dean, age 20 and Karl, age 17).

They use Charolais bulls to produce 'gold' calves and a Salers bull on the heifers.

It's quite a challenge for Emily to fit her creative side into the heavy demands of ranch life but she manages to "work it in somehow". She says, "We live in a pretty erratic household; mealtimes are sometimes missed, and housework neglected to accommodate my artwork but I don't get many complaints. My husband's brother is an artist and our sons are both very creative (Dean is now studying at the Emily Carr School of Art and Karl is into music) so they are pretty understanding.."

Winter is a very busy time on the ranch, with feeding the cows everyday and then calving in January, so Emily spends much of the summer



*Peace Country Teamster II
Oil on Masonite (48" x 36")*

working on her creative projects and scouting around for more ideas. When not "up to her elbows" in paint or clay (she also does some terra-cotta sculpture) she enjoys riding and training her own saddle horses. She grabs any opportunity to ride and says "I'll check cows, herd cows, ride at the community pasture, or just get on my horse and roam the countryside, camera in hand, always on the lookout for a local subject or scene that begs to be put on canvas."

"As far back as I can remember" she stated, "I've always liked drawing and painting. I took some correspondence art courses while in high school and, over the years, have taken some art 'clinics' and short

courses at the local college in Dawson Creek, often wishing I had gone to art school rather than regular university. I like experimenting with different mediums and subjects and am currently working mainly in oils."

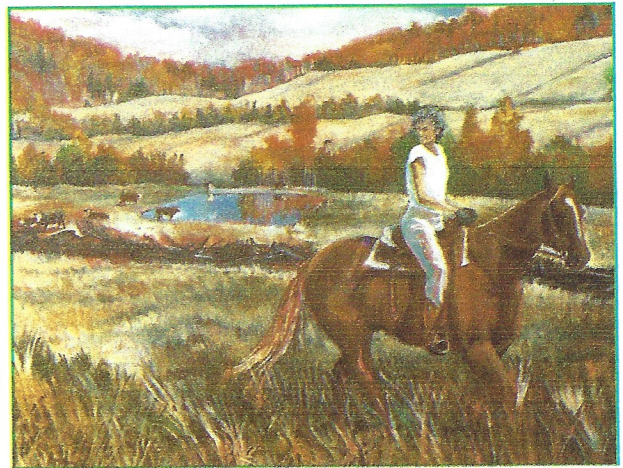
Mattson has had examples of her work chosen for Provincial Juried Art Shows in 1990, 1991 & 1992 and has held several exhibits of her own at the Dawson Creek Art Gallery (1990 and 1992). She sold quite a few paintings at both shows and was very pleased with the public response; as was artist brother-in-law Don Mattson, who shared the exhibit space with her.



Wild Garden I - Oil on Masonite (24" x 18")

She tries to follow the basic creative premise of "paint what you know" and it works very well for her; she feels much of the positive public response has been due to the local rural flavour of her work.

She has a great enthusiasm for both her life and her art, exclaiming, "I am never bored! I have a very busy life and my everyday environment is the source of most of my artistic inspiration." She went on to explain that her rural upbringing and subsequent ranching lifestyle has given her an appreciation of the rural sense of community and she has tried to depict the various facets of rural inter-relationships in her work.



Mary & Skip - Oil on Canvas (30" x 24")



Girl in a Red Dress - Oil on Canvas (24" x 18")

Mattson's painting that appears on this month's cover (Peace Country Teamster I) depicts the late Doug Wetherill, a Peace country rancher (Groundbirch area) and his wife Suzy as they feed their cows in the face of a chilly northern spring storm; driving a wagon and heavy horse team as he loved to do. Doug took great pride in the 'big, beautiful' Percheron-Clyde cross animals that he raised and trained himself, using them originally for logging, then later to help care for his herd of Hereford-cross cattle. He was well known in the area as an accomplished teamster.

The painting called "Peace Country Teamster II" that accompanies this article, is also of Doug Wetherill and one of his teams. The artist depicts him putting the huge animals in the barn after the day's chores were done, and says "I was really impressed with the sheer size of these horses, and how quietly they stood; Doug looked so small in comparison in my mind, demonstrating a comfortable relationship of trust between man and beast."

Emily Mattson can be contacted through the above mentioned gallery in Dawson Creek or at her home in Rolla, B.C. (P.O. Box 123, V0C 2G0) or give her a call at (604) 759-4552.

Susan Zais