

A Job Done With Cheer

Ruralite writer
Yvonne Prater
sets aside her long
storytelling career
for Big Bend Electric

By Dale Anderson

Although her career writing for *Ruralite* spanned many years, it was not until January 1992 when many of us met Yvonne Prater for the first time.

There was no fanfare, skywriting or even so much as a drum roll.

We were introduced to Yvonne through a one-page *Ruralite* feature article simply titled, "Nancy's Fancy Fudge."

Although many Big Bend Electric members never actually met Yvonne, we got to know her through her monthly feature stories the past 16 years.

Those of us who worked with Yvonne, met her at an annual meeting or were fortunate enough to be interviewed by her for a feature story, we were lucky to meet a thoughtful, caring lady who always focused on the good we all have within us.

Yvonne has always had the ability to find joy in meeting new people and finding out what makes them tick or the special talents they have to share.

Yvonne has decided to retire as the feature writer for Big Bend Electric Co-op.

In a letter dated January 22, Yvonne wrote she is sorry she must resign her job, but health problems have taken their toll and it has been difficult for her to keep pace with the travel, interviews and time constraints of doing a monthly article.



Yvonne Prater

In summing up some of the joys of her job, she wrote:

Several times I forwarded copies of outstanding features to the desks of the governor, state and federal legislators, and they always sent back letters of commendation to the feature subject ... as well as to the manager and board. It did a lot of good for the legislators to know a small sample of the high quality and talented people who are Big Bend Electric Co-op members.

With the high adventure of meeting fine people through the features ... while learning about businesses, schools, churches, hobbies, noble community service; while climbing ladders, exploring barns, mills, warehouses, or riding in the Big Bend bucket at an annual meeting; these experiences helped me to keep up with my writing and photography skills.

This aided me in writing books as a freelancer, including editing of the history of my hometown of Dryden in the Wenatchee Valley this year. Your scenery from Ritzville/Benge to Othello/Mesa and the Columbia River-Tri-Cities areas is tops.

My career has overlapped the retirements of many from the top Big Bend

managers at Ritzville and Mesa to Ruralite magazine, as well as board members—to office staff and linemen, not to mention serving the second and third generations of Big Bend members and allowing me to form lifelong friendships.

Thanks for the many years of outstanding memories of adventure, amazing rural farming scenery and friendship! May the next feature writer have as much enjoyment and rich experiences as I have. Your former writer/photographer!

*Appreciatively yours,
Yvonne Prater*

Having worked closely with Yvonne the past seven years, I was amazed how much joy she received through her visits with our members. She was always so excited to tell me about the wonderfully talented people Big Bend Electric Co-op serves. She would often go on about how generous people were and the hard work they faced each day.

Yvonne is one of the most caring people I have ever met. After talking with the people she interviewed, to a person the comments I heard were filled with: "What a nice lady." "What a joy it was to be a part of her interview." "That was a lot of fun, and I'm sure glad we decided to do this article!"

When you hear those comments, you realize how fantastic it was for these people to meet each other.

Far too many of us are too busy to get to know the underlying talents in all of us.

Yvonne has the ability to find out just a little more. She often would set out to do an article and find out about the interviewee's family background, unusual hobbies or activities in important community service.

I've talked with a fair number of people about doing a *Ruralite* story, and many thought their business or hobby was boring and likely would



Above, Yvonne's photo of the Yakima River. Below, Yvonne enjoys making holiday greeting cards, illustrated with her own photographs, including this historic home in Ritzville.

not be read by members of Big Bend Electric Co-op. But after Yvonne's article was printed and they had the chance to read it up close and personal, they all wanted an extra copy or two to send to their friends and relatives.

Yvonne's friendly nature and true excitement about learning from others made for easy interviews, and she always added her personal touch.

We appreciate the hard work, travel and great stories that came from Yvonne.

From all of us at Big Bend Electric Co-op and our members, we wish you the best of luck, Yvonne! Take care of yourself and don't stop writing. ■

Dale Anderson is manager of member services for Big Bend Electric Cooperative.



Merry Christmas Big Bend
Electric Co-op

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