Wildlife: Friend or faux pas?

A brief history of Bonner County's unique pets

By Hannah Combs

Frank Clements was known far and wide for his two pet sat unattended on the tracks, Courtesy of the Bonner County Historical Society and Museum. One of Hunt’s pet bears broke through the lawn, trying to lure song-west, and as Bonner County returned from an errand, birds to a newly established Historical Society historian “he was thunderstruck at the and a quartet of mule deer this guy tell stories.” time in hastening to the car and So sweet and fuzzy, I thought. and enjoyed listening to rag-local paper. Top: A young girl riding a custom buggy I felt like Snow White, a friend time music. Clements once told Local wild animal adven-pulled by “Babe and Buster.” of all the forest creatures. a newspaper that he refused an tures may have become smaller Then I planted a beautiful offer from a circus manager of in scale over the years, but they tulip, its blossoms a delicate $50,000 for Babe and Buster, still abounded. In 1984, as a purple that stood out as a “the equivalent of $1.3 million prank retirement gift, Idaho Photos courtesy Bonner County Histoo, a quartet of mule deer this guy tell stories.” time in hastening to the car and haphazardly, a tender treat for Clements set out with Buster eastern fox squirrels from Boi- the ground, bulbs scattered and Babe on a world-record se to former IFG commissioner harrassingly, a tender treat for expedition from San Francisco Pete Thompson’s home in the wildlife interactions. We have the mangy, dastardly creatures to New York. It appears that Selle Valley. Seven years later, established healthier boundar- that dared to step foot in my they made it at least as far as the non-native species had ires with wild animals in recent garden. Sound the alarm, I Chicago, where Frank eventu-spread far and wide, thanks to years, thanks to ever-evolving cried. Dispatch the sentries. ally settled and began training few natural predators. Though research about animals’ natural The villains will surely be back reindeer. Thompson defended the habits and habitats. We know to wreak havoc again. Equal to Clements as a squirrels, saying “I can’t see how quickly non-native species Throughout our history, master of drama — both in her they do any damage,” opinions introduction can disrupt an eco- we have had a tendency to cinemactic work and real life differed, particularly among system. We’ve learned that we’ll stop channeling Snow dramatize animals, whether by — Nell Shipment kept several people whose gardens were shouldn’t harness deer to our White, in the hopes that the reading fiendish motivations pet bears at Lionhead Lodge at munchon by the rodents. To-golf carts and fat bikes. into hungry deer or putting the north end of Priest Lake, day, the “town squirrels” have As black bears come out of ground for the summer, in- costumes on our dogs. If you which she used in some of her traveled at least as far as Sagle, hibernation, we’ll keep our gar- think that our obsession with film projects. The most famous though no one knows how they bage cans inside, so they forage humanizing and befriending bear-keeper of all, howev-hitched a ride across the Long for carrion instead of carry-out. they might say, natural habits. animals is a new phenomenon er, was Ms. Mary Matilda Bridge. We’ll remember that the neigh-born of technology-aided bore-(Timblin) Hunt, who owned As entertaining as these boisterous moose is a powerful. Research courtesy of the dom, think again. In the early the Great Northern Hotel in Sandpoint, the hunt was made to discover what place the Bonner County History Muse-days of Bonner County, our Sandpoint. sponsability to enjoy them as — for that matter — so are a um, local historian Dan Evans, ancestors maintained quite the One August day in 1910, relics of the past and not add lot of our dogs, even the ones menagerie of wild animals when a Sandpoint Interurban to the canon of questionable wearing costumes. Idaho Fish and Game