

OPINION

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THE VALLEY
sentinel



BIRGIT STUTZ

VIEWPOINT

The man who abandoned two horses in the Renshaw area to die of starvation wants them back. Frank MacKay, a lawyer from Edmonton, said he made two attempts to retrieve the animals and made "every effort possible" to save them.

I am appalled. Volunteers spent a week freeing the emaciated, trapped horses under extreme weather conditions, and he expects to just get them back?

I am not blaming MacKay for losing his horses or getting into trouble in the back-country. Things like that happen. However, not putting in more effort to find the animals, and, when he finally did locate them, leaving them for dead, that, to me, is completely unacceptable.

MacKay abandoned his two packhorses on Sept. 12 after hitting rough terrain and didn't come back to look for them until the last week in October, because he was too busy. What about the volunteers' time who put their lives on hold to rescue the two horses? Is his time more valuable than everybody else's?

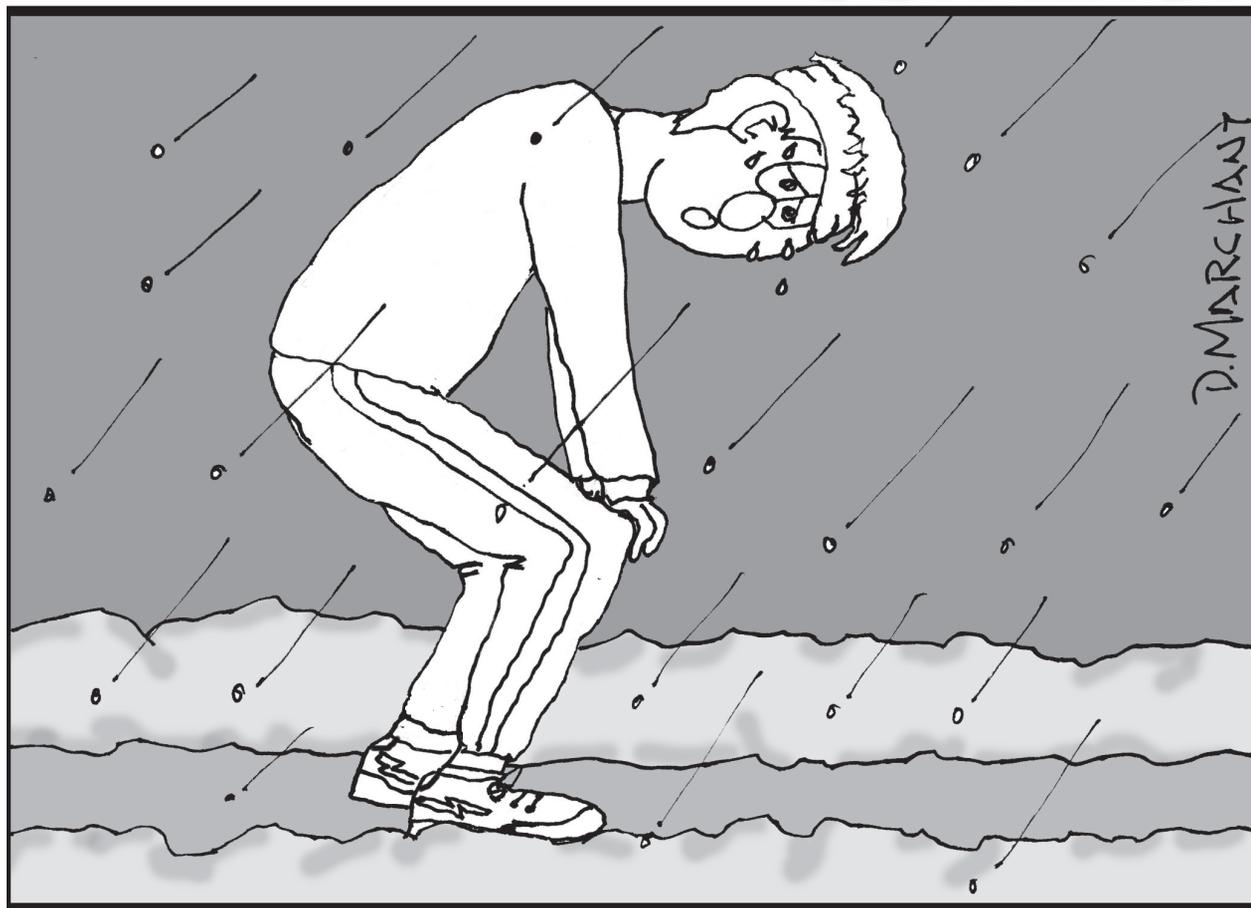
And why didn't MacKay ask locals for help to find his horses? He defi-

nately had enough time to do so, and it would have been a lot easier to get the horses out of the mountains before the snow hit and while the animals were still in decent condition. MacKay said he doubts locals would have helped a stranger. Well, he didn't even try, and seeing how the community came to the rescue of the two horses, I beg to differ.

When MacKay eventually did locate the horses, he left them to die a slow, agonizing death of starvation. MacKay claims he didn't go up the mountain to kill the horses and that he didn't have a gun. That may be so, but that is still no excuse to "let nature take its course".

As well, MacKay's lack of participation in the rescuing of the horses shows a complete lack of commitment. Where was he when the rescue mission was underway? MacKay claims he was too injured to participate. I am sure he could have helped out in other ways, informing sledders down at the parking lot about the rescue effort, providing hot drinks for the volunteers, or buying them supper.

I think I can speak for the majority of the volunteers that we don't want to see these horses returned to MacKay. He abandoned the two equines, giving up ownership, and left them to die. They are no longer his.



"I WONDER HOW YOU CHANGE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION."

» **Mailbag**

Open letter to Frank MacKay, owner of Sundance and Belle, the rescued "McBride horses"

It's been over a week now since your horses have been led out of their snowy "would-be-grave", and a couple of days ago they left to be in the care of the SPCA. I only spent a few hours with those two scruffy-looking critters, but I can't help but feel a little sad about them being gone. They touched my heart, and the heart of everyone involved in their rescue.



MONIKA BROWN SPEAKER'S CORNER

My questions to you are: how can you claim that you did everything you possibly could,

to save your horses from their terrible fate? How could you say "good-bye" to your horses, the ones you apparently raised from when they were foals, knowing that they would die of a slow, painful and horrible death of starvation? How can you be okay with "nature taking its course", when naturally those horses would have never been up there at this time of year, if it wasn't for you leading them there!

I don't blame you for losing the horses, even though, with better preparation you would have never been on the wrong trail in the first place, and most likely would have never gotten stuck the way you did. You were on the wrong road going to the destination you were headed for, and a lot of local outfitters and horse-owners could have pointed you in the right direction. However, the back-country can be tough and horses take off sometimes. You left them up there in September. That left you with a lot of time to go and

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SHAWN ALAIN
PUBLISHER
publisher@thevalleysentinel.com
EMILY VAN DER SANDE
OFFICE MANAGER
emily@thevalleysentinel.com
SHARON McCOLM
SPECIAL FEATURES AD CONSULTANT
sharon@thevalleysentinel.com
OFFICE: 1012 Commercial Drive, Box 688, Valemount, British Columbia, V0E 2Z0
DROP BOX: The McBride Trading Post, 246 Main St., McBride, British Columbia
MAIN: 250.566.4425 Toll Free: 1.800.226.2129 Fax: 250.566.4528
EMAIL: info@thevalleysentinel.com Web: www.thevalleysentinel.com

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