



The Kamloops Cowboy Festival each spring featured Western music, cowboy poetry, art and overall good times.

Cowboy festival hangs up its spurs

I was saddened to hear the Kamloops Cowboy Festival is riding into the sunset after 25 years.

Coming up with a “cowboy poem” to share at the festival each year was always a fun challenge for me, and there were such a great bunch of people involved.

Organizers Mark and Kathy McMillan said they had to cancel the event this year and last due to the pandemic, but admit their volunteer base and funding was dwindling, too.

I “tip my hat” to all involved, it was an event so many looked forward to each year, a celebration of



Mark and Kathy McMillan

B.C. cowboy heritage that I have to believe will one day rise again.

On a happy note, the McMillans have been named recipients of the 2021 Joe Marten Memorial Award for the Preservation of Cowboy Heritage in B.C.

Well deserved, I say.

EMERGENCY DEBATES

Keystone XL, vaccine rollout under scrutiny

Parliament resumed sitting last week and it's been full-on with two emergency debates, and 10-12 hours a day spent on Zoom in order for many of the nation's 338 MPs to participate from afar.

I was slated to return to Ottawa, but MPs were asked to continue to work from their ridings to have reduced numbers in the House.

The system is functioning though, we are effectively holding the Liberal government to task, despite doing our jobs remotely as part of pandemic safety protocols.

Monday's emergency debate focused on the weak response to devastating job losses in the oil and gas sector after U.S. President Joe Biden nixed the Keystone XL pipeline

expansion project, which would go from Alberta to Nebraska.

I also took part in Wednesday's emergency debate on the botched vaccine rollout, asking the Liberals to be honest with Canadians and Parliament: If things are at risk with Pfizer, then what is the backup plan?

And I raised concerns in Question Period about how new small businesses have fallen through the cracks in terms of pandemic supports.

The Finance Minister responded that it is an area of concern and something they are looking at.

I hope she's right that it's an issue of importance the government follows through on.