

Oh-Oh It's that chain again

We think of chains we have known over a long lifetime. There are those we once put on cars and trucks to get through snow or mud or the log chain that broke when we tried to pull out that big stone in the field. It might even be the watch chain we wore to church. No, it's not one of those but the chain on the spreader. I'm omitting the name that usually preceded the word "spreader" just to keep this story clean.

I started to write this shortly after I saw my Amish neighbor emerge from his barn with his team of horses on the spreader. You know, the special wagon that makes those wide brown marks on the white snow. He had only gone a short way when I saw him unhitch the team and lead them toward the fence. He went back toward the spreader and I had a good idea why. That darned chain had come off the sprocket again. Soon the horses were doing their job again.

It is strange what comes into an old mind. Turning the clock back some 70 years when I came to the Nellis farm in Stone Arabia. I was in the same situation within sight of the present saga. The snow was deep when things were not working. It was so cold but I had to try to get the chain back where it belonged to empty the spreader before going back to the barn. My ear lappers were down but the lobes of my big ears hung below them.

Oh, how cold my ears were. Then as I struggled with the chain they got warmer. Why was that? Because they were frozen solid. Finally, that day passed to another. Weeks, months and years also disappeared. There was still the reminder of that cold day year after year for a long time. Those earlobes would get quite sore and the skin would peel.

I guess this story cannot teach us much except that history does repeat itself.

Skip Barshied

On a cold Stone Arabia day