The Bergen News

Bringing Bergen Together

January 2023

Birds, Beasts and Botany in Bergen

by Sandy Easterbrook

Rough-Legged Hawk (Buteo lagopus)

You may have noticed that this article has a new author. I am Bob Griebel's partner, and we have decided to share the duty of producing this monthly article. I think Bob is running out of inspiration after writing *Birds, Beasts and Botany* for well over ten years.

One bird he hasn't yet tackled is the Rough-legged Hawk. This raptor is one of the last migratory birds to leave the Bergen area in the fall, and it returns by late March. Apparently some "Roughies" overwinter in Alberta; according to Fisher & Acorn's *Birds in Alberta,* one of the best places to see them in the winter is Highway 22 between Turner Valley and Cremona. They are well adapted for cold weather as they nest in the Arctic on cliffs or, rarely, on the ground. Their population cycles with that of the northern lemming. When lemming populations are high, a couple can produce up to seven young but, in lean years, they are lucky to raise one.

Rough-Legged Hawk, photo by Sandy Easterbrook

The first part of the Latin name of this bird, *Buteo,* denotes the bird's genus. It contains 12 species of "soaring hawks" including the common Red-Tail. Buteos are usually seen high in the sky or perched on trees and telephone poles along roadsides. Their hunting strategies range from using a lowish perch to pounce on their prey, to dive-bombing in a high-speed attack. When the "Roughie" perches on trees, it likes to sits on the smallest twigs at the very top, looking like it might topple over, branch and all. The bird often "wind hovers" or "kites" to scan the ground below, flapping to maintain a stationary position while facing into the wind. It can adeptly maneuver its body and tail to maintain this position. Its favourite food is mice and voles, although it will also take songbirds, reptiles and even large insects.

Lagopus, the second part of the Latin name of the bird, denotes its species. It means "hare's foot" and the Rough-Legged Hawk is so called because it is one of only three North American raptors which are feathered right down to their toes (the others being the Golden Eagle and the Ferruginous Hawk). Its English name refers to the same characteristic.

The Rough-Legged Hawk can be difficult to identify—I must admit that I am no expert on hawks due to their different colour phases (light versus dark) and age patterns. Serious birders take into account size, flight appearance, wing lengths, eye colour etc., as well as plumage. In size, though, the "Roughie" is large for a buteo (18-23" in length), with the females being bigger than the males, as is usually the case with hawks. Despite their size, they appear delicate due to a small bill and small feet—an adaptation that makes them less vulnerable in cold weather. There are two age colouration patterns (first year and adult) and a light and dark morph variation. In addition, the "Roughie" is the only buteo in which the female is patterned differently than the male. See what I mean about being difficult to identify?

The adult male light morph varies from white underneath with dark mottling throughout the body to white underneath with a dark bib on the upper chest and faint wrist spots. It tends to be greyer above than the female, with multiple

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Rough-Legged Hawk, continued from page 1

black tail bands. The female light morph is whitish with a blackish belly and wrists, and a white tail with a single black band. The immature colouration is similar to the light morph female. The adult dark morphs show even more variability. Personally, I look for mottled plumage, a ruffled appearance, chocolate "elbow" patches, visible in flight, a dark streak through the eye and a size similar to a Red-Tailed Hawk. With at least some of these characteristics and in this area, the bird is likely to be a Rough-Legged.

Its call is a descending whistled scream, somewhat like a Red-Tailed Hawk's. Usually the bird is vocal only on its breeding grounds or during aggressive encounters. To hear the sound, I would recommend installing Raptor ID on your iPhone. It is an excellent site, with good descriptions and photos as well as vocalizations. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, a sponsor of the app along with Hawk Watch International, also has a more extensive website: www.allaboutbirds.org, if you want to check out songbirds as well.

Now that March is not too far away, I will be on the watch for my local "Roughie". He usually sits in the single poplar tree on my stretch of range road. I will welcome him back to Alberta and wish him "Bon Voyage" for the next leg of his long journey north.

Alberta Towns: Vulcan

by Jamie Syer

As a young teenager, I sometimes watched a new TV show called "Star Trek." Illogically as it may seem, though we lived in a southern Alberta town called Vulcan, the connection with the home of Mr. Spock never really crossed our minds.

Vulcan, Alberta, was named after the Roman god of fire—perhaps because of the area's hot summers. When I lived there, it was known as the town with more grain elevators than any other place on the Canadian prairies.There was a passenger train (the 'dayliner') to Calgary and to Lethbridge every day. At County Central High School we were very proud of our football team. And the 'County' was always called County of Vulcan No. 2. One witty administrator appropriated the tag line "We're No. 2. We try harder."

Present-day Vulcan was the destination of one of our recent peregrinations—this time to pick up the organic flour we use in our brick-oven baking. We almost didn't survive the trip. The fog was so thick, when we suddenly came upon a railway crossing south of Cheadle we could hardly see the flashing lights, and the passing train was a ghostly blur.

But the sun was out by the time we arrived, and these small-town visits to places I lived as a kid always spark a host of memories.

There's the building that housed the pool hall and pinball machines, where my friends and I spent too many after-school afternoons, and where the proprietor once noisily wrung the neck of a chicken for her supper while we played snooker or 8-ball on 12-foot tables.

There's the empty lot which held what we called "Virginia's Drug Store." The building I knew is now the ice cream shop at Heritage Park. In Vulcan, it had a convenient, unsupervised side door near the magazine section which made it easy for one of my friends to occasionally purloin the latest copy of MAD.

There's the former home of the Vulcan *Advocate*, whose editor, with the musical name of Peter Pickersgill, played first trumpet in the town band.

There's the house where I spent my rebellious high-school years. I was the son of the Grade 10 Social Studies teacher. Two friends were the sons of the United Church minister. Another was the son of the vice-principal. Together, we published an underground newspaper on a Gestetner secreted in the vice-principal's basement. Illicit copies were seized by the parental authorities, and dramatically burned in the minister's fireplace.

I walked past the church where I was once the organist and choir accompanist. A man about my own age was salting the sidewalk. "Is

Reserved parking sign in the church parking lot

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EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY

by Jessie

Well, Yappy New Year everyone, dogs and persons alike. Hope you had a good holiday. Personally, I am dog-tired. No I wasn't having a wild party. I worked all night. You see, the persons had a cow butchered for meat. Now, you might not care for the subject of butchering but, trust me, unless you're a vegetarian—and your pets are vegetarians—it enters into your life somehow. Now, as a dog, it is a subject dear to my heart—except that the sound of the gunshot scares the liver out of me. But when that's over the good part starts. All sorts of tidbits—and I will spare you the details of them—are discarded as not suitable person food. An enterprising dog is free to help herself!

However, even the best dog can't and won't eat all the available freebies.

Enter the varmints. First come the flying varmints, the big black undertaker ravens. I hate ravens! They are rude and bold and make horrible noises like strangled toilets. And when one sniffs out a treat, in minutes all his cousins and aunts fly in—and not on our unreliable airlines either.

Next come the magpies. They are much better-looking in their formal suits of black and white but they are rude and pushy, too, and jabber away in what sounds like some unrecognizable person language to me.

This invasion lasts all day. When it gets dark the birds go home. Then come the coyote varmints looking for any leftovers. Well, we can't have them hanging around so I go into guard dog overdrive. You should hear my coyote bark! But the nasty little critters bark right back and even howl at me! All night long the concert goes on. I am sure my persons are so grateful for my loud barks at 3:00 a.m.

Anyway, it's morning now and all the invaders have eaten their fill and gone home. That's where I'm going—into my house and to bed for a LONG nap. See you next month.

If you have comments on anything that you read in the Bergen News, send your response to The Bergen News, editor@thebergennews.ca or the Bergen News c/o Marilyn Walker, Box 21, Site 9, RR2, Sundre, T0M 1X0.

FELLOWSHIP AND TABLECLOTHS

by Pat Gibbs

Well folks, we have stepped into a brand new year. May God be with us as we journey through 2023.

December went so fast one could hardly keep up to all the seasonal events. The decorating was helped along by our busy cat, Tigger. I decorated and he graciously un-decorated, losing the small balls under the china cabinet. Retrieving them resulted in more cleaning for me, as his efforts brought out numerous "dust bunnies". However, all got accomplished. There were fundraisers to help those less fortunate, and our first concert since Covid was held at the Bergen Hall.The day was as cold as could be, with Old Man Winter doing his best to keep folks at home. But a wonderful crowd gathered to enjoy music and recitations performed by our talented Bergen neighbours. There was also group carol singing of those beautiful old Christmas carols we all love to hear each year. It's called fellowship, folks. Santa came HO HO Ho-ing in to join the happy people and children. What followed was more fun and fellowship in the form of hot coffee (delicious I might add), oranges and chocolates for one and all. The hall was filled with greetings, best wishes and reminiscences of years gone by. We all knew when the chairs started being put away that it was time to say goodnight and goodbye to another Christmas concert at the Bergen Hall.

Socializing is a learned and special part of one's life. I love it! Nowadays I get excited just seeing someone I know when I go to town! When we were young, our family would go visit Grandma Baughman, my mother's mom, and have coffee and tea with her and her brother, Uncle Ted. She would have a lovely tablecloth, adorned with all her beautiful cups and saucers set out, and lots of goodies. We children were treated to a cup of REAL English tea. This was made with tea leaves—no tea bags in that house—and it was black as could be but laced with lots of sugar and canned cream. Delicious and forbidden at home! Loved those visits! Back in the day, when you went out to visit, usually the lady of the house had a pretty tablecloth on her table. Thus it is at our house too. Over the years our minds become filled with "stuff" good and bad. God intended for us to hold onto those good thoughts that help us have joy and peace during the difficult times. His promise is to never leave us. May all of you and yours take time to reflect on the blessings from the past and hold onto the peace for the future.

Now I think I will put the kettle on and have a cup of that black tea while I remember two very special people I have loved.

Musings: Another New Year

by Phyllis Cormack

Another new year. What to do? Make a resolution? Nah! I've never been one to make one of those, as I know how dedicated I am to something like that. I have the things I like to do fairly well imprinted on my mind and to introduce something foreign would lead only to failure, I'm sure. Especially since the type of resolution that lurks in the back of my mind is "exercise". Did I say that? Exercise is one of my least favourite things to do. I don't like sweating. And don't try to tell me that repetitive, strenuous movement results in "glowing" because it isn't any different. You get all wet and sticky and stinky. I guess I should have been born years ago when ladies wore fancy gowns and sat in chairs being waited on by servants, barely having to lift their hands except to feed themselves.....wait a minute! In those days they didn't have the luxury of going to the bathroom and turning on the tap with hot water at their fingertips. The water had to be heated on a stove, carried to the tub—by the servants of course. Then one could immerse oneself in the now tepid water for a quick in and out—a shivery experience. Hmmmm.... Nope, I think I'll stick with life as I have it now. I do like the lovely big dresses they wore, though. So many yards of fabric gathered up to make the full skirts that swished when they walked. That is, if they could walk—being cinched up with a corset until you couldn't get a full breath if you tried. Perhaps that's why they sat in chairs? Alas, I have nowhere to go to wear such finery except as a costume.

So where was I? Oh yes! The avoidance of resolutions. I would admire anyone who made a resolution and kept it if I knew such a person. I guess I've never bothered to quiz people I know to see if they make such pledges and are dedicated enough to follow through. So here I am, starting the new year doing basically the same things I did last year and not minding it a bit. I hope you are enjoying the new year and able to be content with what you are able to do and not putting unrealistic expectations on yourself.

Happy New Year! May God bless us everyone!

Bergen News Financial Report For 2022

by Laurie Syer

Below are the figures of expenses and revenue for the Bergen News for the year of 2022. Our postage costs were down a little bit this year as a few more subscribers moved to email copies. We also save some postage during the Bergen Market season when subscribers pick up their papers at the market.

Print costs were modestly higher this year due to more colour pages occasionally. The extra colour cost was offset by a couple of issues with fewer pages.

Labels and envelopes were more expensive this year due to inflation.

Our subscription and advertising revenue was exactly the same as last year. We had a few more single copy sales. Donations were half as high as in 2021.

We finished 2022 with a modest deficit of $408.00.

Thanks to all our subscribers for their continued support, and to those who also support us with donations.

	Expenditures		**Revenue**
Postage	1936.00	Subscriptions	2,340.00
Printing	3,001.00	Advertising	300.00
Web Page	176.00	Single copies	180.00
Labels and office	340.00	Extra Donations	225.00
Total Expenditures	5,453.00	Mountain View County Grant	2000.00
		Total Revenue	5,045.00
		Deficit for 2022	408.00

The Sundre Palliative Care Association

Is Presenting a FREE Information Session

Let's Talk About:

- **Estate Planning (Wills)**
- **Power of Attorney**
- **Personal Directives**

How soon should you have them? Why are they important?

Date: **Thursday, February 23, 2023**
Time: **7:00—9:00 PM**
Where: **Mountain View Seniors Housing**
749-6th St SW-Drop in Centre (North Doors)

Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this informative session.
Refreshments will be served
We look forward to seeing you there!

Sundre Palliative Care Association
P.O. Box 1259, Sundre, Alberta T0M 1X0
sundrepalliativecare@gmail.com
www.sundrepalliativecare.ca

Presented by: Elevator Law — Dan McPherson

HOLIDAY VERNACULAR

by Noreen Olson

The holiday season is over, the good china and the silverware have been put away, the turkey is all gone (even the soup), and the guest rooms are empty. But the cards are still up. I just noticed a big red ribbon and some gold garland on one of the doors and there are a couple of gifts on the dining room table that have not yet found a permanent home. We work and plan for weeks and then it's all over so quickly. So I thought I would extend the season a little by exploring some of the words that we use at this time of year. My information comes from Katherine Barber, who was the editor in chief of the Canadian Oxford Dictionary when it was published in 1998.

HOLIDAY: In Old English the word we know as “holy” was halig pronounced 'hally.' A Saint’s Day or church festival was therefore a 'hally’ day or “holy” day. In the Middle Ages, holy was pronounced holly so for some time we had both halliday and holiday. But by about 1500 holiday won out. We still hear the variation in the way some people say Halloween and others Holloween.

REINDEER: In Old Norse 'rein' was the name of a particular type of deer, what we would call a caribou. So if rein already meant deer doesn't 'reindeer' mean deer deer? No, in those days deer simply meant 'animal' so reindeer might translate as “caribou animal”.

CHOCOLATE: Chocolate came to England from Spain at the beginning of the 1600s, but the Spanish found it in Mexico a century earlier and, under strict orders from the King, had kept it a secret for all that time. The Mayans, Toltecs and Aztecs had used chocolate as a ceremonial brew and prized it so highly that the beans were used as currency. They called it *chocolatl* which may have been a combination of the Mayan word for hot, 'chocol' and the Aztec word for water, 'atl'. An active ingredient in chocolate is 'theobromine' which sounds terribly scientific, but it actually comes from a Swedish botanist who was classifying the plant and, being a chocolate lover, called it “theobroma” from the Greek 'theo' meaning God and 'broma' meaning food; the food of the gods.

TINSEL: Tinsel comes from the French. It began as *etincel*, meaning 'spark.' This came from the Latin 'scintella.' In the early 1500s “tinsel”was a kind of fabric interwoven with metallic thread or decorated with spangles. By about 1600 the word was being used for metallic material used in cheap and showy or gaudy stage costumes. As a word for a Christmas tree decoration, it dates only from the 20th Century.

MANDARIN ORANGES: Probably in reference to the yellow/orange robes worn by Chinese officials.

EGGNOG: Was originally heated beer or wine with an egg beaten into it and served in a noggin (a small drinking vessel). Sounds awful.

MINCEMEAT: Really did have minced meat in it—ground meat, fish or liver—and pudding in the very old days was blood sausage or black pudding.

Now I suppose I have no more excuses so I will have to take down the Christmas cards and get that big ribbon off the door. This year’s Christmas Season is officially over.

Please Note New Rates for Subscription Renewals

To our loyal Bergen News subscribers: Please check your mail labels for your expiry date. You may mail your renewal to The Bergen News c/o Marilyn Walker Box 21, Site 9, RR 2, Sundre, T0M 1X0. Renewals by e-transfer can be sent to editor@thebergennews.ca ***Subscriptions are $20 annually or $15 for an email subscription. First time subscribers may use the same addresses to set up a subscription. For additional information call Marilyn at 403-638-2156. Thanks for your support.***

The Bergen News is very grateful for the rural community grant received from Mountain View County to assist in our operating costs. Thank you for your continued support.

Bergen Church News

by Phyllis Cormack

The Bergen Church is located on the Bergen Road one mile west of the Highway 760 intersection. For Sunday morning services online, please go to our website http:/bergenmissionarychurch.ca/ then click on the Facebook page where services will be listed.

Bergen Church services are every Sunday starting at 10:30 am. Pastor Rob Holland gives encouraging and Bible-based messages while adding a little humour.

The Children's Feature presented before the message is entertaining and a good learning experience for all ages. Thank you to those who take the time to prepare and share.

There is Sunday School for the kids and space is provided for little ones.

The skating rink is up and running for all you eager skaters. Please follow the rules of the rink which are posted on the boards by the entrance.

The Christmas Eve service was well attended. Those attending enjoyed the play which was also performed during a Sunday morning service. Our Sunday School teachers are very talented at writing and planning costumes for the kids. Kudos to Jaime Bodell, Naomi Holland, and Rachelle Underwood.

The first Sunday of each month we will be having refreshments after the service. This may be coffee and cookies or a potluck. Plans will be announced prior to the date.

Alanna Waines and Scott Anderson are taking care of our youth by organizing events on Friday evenings. These evenings are open to all kids grades 7—12.

“The Den SYC” or Sundre Youth Center provides various activities for our youth between grades 7—12 who are looking for a place to “hang out” after school and evenings. There is a wide variety of activities planned which can be viewed by googling “The Den SYC” or on Facebook.

The Sundre Ministerial is a team of churches in the Sundre area which is available to help, whether the need is physical or emotional. Please feel free to contact this number where someone will be able to direct you to an appropriate resource: 403-636-0554.

You can also go to the Sundre Ministerial web page — sundreministerial.blogspot.com — if you'd like to contact a church directly. Click on 'Church Listings and Links'.

If you want to donate food to the McDougal Chapel food bank, it can be taken to the Chapel. There is a door bell you can ring to alert them that you are there. Call ahead so you know if there is someone there to open the door for you. Their number is 403-638-3503. You can also donate by e-transfer. Contact McDougal Chapel or check their website for information. Times have been hard for a lot of folks who depend on this food bank.

If you have prayer needs, please call or email Leila Schwartzenberger at 403-638-4175 or leila@processworks.ca Thank you to those who faithfully lift these requests to God.

Pastor Rob Holland's number is 403-672-0020.

Olwyn, our Church secretary, is in the church office Tuesdays and Fridays, 10:00 – 4:00 p.m. The Church's number is 403-638-4010 and the fax number is 403-638-4004.

The email address for Bergen Church is office@bergenchurch.ca

The website is http://bergenmissionarychurch.ca/

Bergen Ladies Aid Report

by Phyllis Cormack

The December meeting is set aside for our Christmas party.

It was a chilly but lovely day when a dozen of us met at Donna McGregor's home. Her Christmas decorations added to the atmosphere of the party and we admired her displays throughout the rooms.

The Christmas story was read from Luke 2 to start our time together. Our Christmas carol booklets were handed out and we sang a variety of well loved songs. Following that musical interlude, the gifts we brought were passed out and opened. We then admired the contents, ranging from ornaments etc to useful items. Next came our lunch. The counter was well covered with a variety of goodies from our kitchens. No two dishes were the same and we thoroughly enjoyed nibbling away and visiting with each other. Keeping a tradition going, we put packages of homemade baking into gift bags that were then delivered around the Bergen community to those living alone without family close by.
It was a lovely afternoon and we missed those who weren't able to attend but were glad to welcome those who don't normally come to meetings. The more the merrier!

Happy New Year to you all! That message is a bit late as January is almost finished but it's sincere.

Note to Self

by Shari Peyerl

Your friend is coming for afternoon tea, and you want to serve her favourite dessert: Chocolate Truffles. Fortunately, you recently found a recipe that is so simple you wonder why you've never made truffles before. Preparation requires intermittent refrigeration time, which means you can simultaneously clean the house. Perfect.

Step 1: Turn on some bossa nova music. Think "The Girl From Ipanema" with original Brazilian lyrics. The indecipherable words provide congenial yet non-distracting ambiance, infusing you with calm serenity.

Step 2: Assemble your ingredients:

- 12 oz semisweet chocolate, finely chopped. Pull out all Bakers' chocolate, and be thankful you have enough. Since you usually melt chocolate on stove without any chopping at all, save time by chopping coarsely. Observe that pieces do not slide smoothly off flexible plastic cutting sheet and into sauce pot as planned. Instead they launch themselves through air and scatter across countertop. "Isn't static electricity an amazing phenomenon," you think, as you attempt to sweep stray flakes into pot, smearing them on counter.

- 1/2 cup whipping cream (35%). Smiling with self-satisfaction, congratulate yourself on having well-stocked fridge.

- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, cubed. Substitute regular salted butter, because, really, who has the unsalted kind anyway?

- 1 tbsp vanilla. Although this seems excessive, it has to balance out an awful lot of chocolate.

Step 3: Read instructions. Perhaps you should have refreshed your memory by doing this at the very beginning, but this is a simple recipe—just follow along.

Although instructions say, "Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper," use the one large sheet you own. When you read, "Place chocolate in heatproof bowl," realize that you are not supposed to melt chocolate in pot, and transfer it to glass bowl, spilling some.

Continue reading, "In small saucepan, heat cream and butter over medium-high heat just until butter is melted and bubbles form around edge of pan, 1 to 2 minutes." Easy-peasy. You complete this task, flawlessly. Aren't you talented. Samba to next instruction.

Read: "Pour over chocolate; whisk until smooth." Remember you had intended to use whisk on standing mixer, since you are trying to save time. Quickly transfer chocolate into mixing bowl, spilling more fragments on counter due to gravitational force with which we Earthlings are blessed. Pour warm ingredients into bowl and turn on mixer. After a few moments, reread "whisk until smooth," and note biggest fragments are still not melting. Decide more heat must be needed to offset large fragment size.

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Note To Self, continued from page 8

Disentangle metal bowl from standing mixer, splodging chocolate cream on multiple surfaces, and place bowl on burner over low heat. Stir gently. When fragments do not decrease in size, turn up heat. Observe that mixture is deflating into clumps. Rapidly return bowl to mixer base and whisk some more. When creamy mixture is again fluffy, but chocolate chunks remain unchanged, heat more cream on stove. Pour this small amount of warmed cream on mixture and whisk gingerly. Noting that there is no change to average chocolate fragment size, despite prolonged mixing, you recall the time you whipped cream until it turned to butter. Abort "whisking until smooth" task and move to next instruction. After all, what are a few chunks in a truffle. You'll call it "Chocolate Chip Truffle" and no one will be the wiser. Marketing is everything.

"Whisk in vanilla." Done. "Cover and refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour." No problem. Time to vacuum and check laundry. When Husband enters house, walks through chocolate-littered kitchen into newly cleaned area, scold him. In response to his query, "What happened to your face?" glance in mirror and see large streak of melted chocolate on cheek. Ponder the conflicting forces of static and gravity, and marvel at Nature.

At appointed hour, return to fridge and follow next instruction: "Using melon baller or teaspoon, drop by rounded 1 tsp onto prepared pans." Since you thoughtlessly discarded your melon baller years ago, choose semi-spherical measuring teaspoon, since it looks like melon baller without useless little mechanism that was so annoying to clean. Jam spoon into chilled mixture. Discover it is impossible to remove congealed cream from spoon. If only there were a little apparatus in there that could sweep it out. Retrieve regular teaspoon from drawer, and leave chocolate fingerprints on drawer handle.

Thrust teaspoon into mixture to remove portion and continue to next direction: "Gently roll to form balls." Working rapidly, attempt several balls. Notice chocolate melted onto palms. Realize that only surface of bowl's contents has chilled, while majority is still too soft to roll. Re-cover bowl and return to fridge. Wash hands thoroughly. Rinse and repeat.

Break for late lunch.

After indeterminate amount of time, retrieve bowl from fridge to scoop up teaspoon of mixture. Noting mixture has now hardened too much to conform to spoon, break off hunk and squish forcefully into quasi-sphere. After several attempts, and experimenting with length of melting time in palms, concede that standardized spherical portions are impossible, and thus unnecessary. Place proto-truffles on pan. Move to next instruction: "Freeze until hardened, about 30 minutes." Place tray in freezer.

Look at clock and realize friend is due in only 45 minutes. Admit that final phase of dipping in melted chocolate may take longer than expected.

Contemplate whether your friend loves you enough to consume potentially naked, chunky truffle lumps in kitchen sullied with chocolate. Decide you love your friend enough to spare her. Pivot to baking your tried and true one-pot brownie recipe that takes only 30 minutes, including baking time.

Step 4: Complete the truffles.

After good visit, hearty supper, rest and rejuvenation, melt **4 ounces FINELY chopped semisweet chocolate (last of package)** with **2 tbsp butter** in bowl over hot water, stirring frequently. Allow to cool slightly. Remove truffle nuggets from freezer. Dip them into melted chocolate, using 2 forks. Return to tray. Sprinkle immediately with exotic sea salt (gifted from friend). Repeat until you run out of chocolate. Makes 49 (14 more than predicted) only 2 of which vaguely resemble magazine illustration. Consume sparingly. Dance tango.

SUNDRE & DISTRICT MUSEUM PRE-SCHOOL PARENT & TOTS PROGRAMS

Tuesdays, December 6th, 13th, January 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st
10-11:30 am
Ages: 3-5, $2.00/person
Join us for crafts, games, learning activities and story time.
For more information, contact 403-638-3233, sundremuseum@telus.net

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE SUNDRE LIBRARY

Sundre Library Hours

Monday	**Closed**
Tuesday	9:00—5:00 PM
Wednesday	noon—8:00 PM
Thursday	noon—5:00 PM
Friday	noon—5:00 PM
Saturday	11:00—3:00 PM

Sundre Library (403) 638-4000, www.sundre.prl.ab.ca

New Hours

Fun for Kids
Tuesdays, events start at 9:30 AM.
Weekly rotating programs (**Pop Up Play, Rhyme Time, Parent Connect).**
For kids with caregivers. Call for details.

Wonders of Wildlife: Bluebird Trail
Wednesday, February 15, 6:30—7:30 PM.
Learn about caring for local bluebird trails. Children welcome with adults.

Book Folding - Heart
Wednesday, February 22, 6:30 – 7:30 PM.
Celebrate love by creating a heart book display.

Teen Takeover Games Night
Thursday, February 2, 6:30—8:30 PM.
Games, food and fun for teens. FREE.

Family Gym Time
Friday, February 17, 10 AM—Noon.
Sundre Community Centre
Run! Jump! Play! For ages 0-6yrs.
with a caregiver, in partnership with MVFRN.

Winter Walks in Bergen

Want to get more exercise? Meet neighbours? Lose weight maybe? Join the winter walks in Bergen, Friday mornings beginning November 4th at 10:00 a.m. We walk about four miles on a different road every week. If you get tired, you can return to your car at any time. For more information, call Sandy Easterbrook at 403-638-1283 or 638-1985. The schedule for upcoming walks is:

January 27	Twp. Rd. 314 and Range Road 61 walking north (to Bergen Road)
February 3	Pioneer Lodge Road and Range Road 62 going north
February 10	Pioneer Lodge Road and Range Road 61 going north
February 24	Pioneer Lodge Road and Range Road 60 going north
March 1	Pioneer Lodge Road and Range Road 54 going south

Ride With Me

by Donelda Way

New Year's Eve: My husband, adult son and I chose to drive west of Sundre to view the "lights attraction". Bright red bulbs formed the cheery MERRY CHRISTMAS sign at the parking area. A white wooden arch was the entrance to the various pathways. A gazebo table held the guest book arrangement. I noticed two nativity scenes: one was painted wood, the other was blown up. I grinned at the wooden gingerbread family. The sparkly white penguin family were delightful. Rounding a corner we saw a tall tree with strings of LED lights which were synchronized to music. I commented "the toilet paper is outside" as someone else commented "the sign says occupied". At that instant the outhouse door swung open and Santa popped out. There was a rocking canoe among the displays. Time restrictions and becoming cold meant we were unable to view the entire "lights attraction" this year. It was early evening when we returned to our vehicle. In the distance, two neighbours were releasing fireworks into the night sky. Such a pleasant way to end 2022.

A clean and glossy dark teal restored Model A or T was facing us from a flatbed trailer deck. The chrome, upside down U shaped grill and round head lights gave a clue to the age of the vehicle.

Near Cross Iron Mills Mall a pilot truck caused congestion. The load was an over-size backhoe. In the semi dark I noticed a second Cross Iron Mill sign closer to the Lowes store.

Calgary 16th Ave: "Wow! That is a Corvette. It's so low to the road it's like the driver is dragging their bum on the pavement." Pulling alongside this classy vehicle I chuckled as I saw the older male driver. His head barely showed above the door frame of the driver's door. A very large landscaping truck was beside us. I glanced over and was again surprised—this driver was a little old lady. On the top floor of an apartment building the sign read, "Thank You Healthcare Workers".

A long, straight row of fence posts with only *one* post attracting *two* ravens resulted in a frenzied squawking and flapping war for personal possession of that post. A third raven on the next closest post attentively watched their interaction.

Our dog was doing his zigzag leading as we drove down the entrance lane. An unexpected gathering of crows caused him to detour through the ditch, and up into the spruce trees to investigate. Later, we saw the blood spattered snow. Maybe a squirrel died.

Crossfield: Petro Can gas pumps and bulk station, along with the Burger King and 7-Eleven franchises, are closed. Everything was dark when we drove past at night. Everything was blocked off by pylons and fences as we passed by in daylight.

The police had two vehicles pulled over and stopped just south of the QE II rest stop. This was unique as the two vehicles were close, separated by maybe ten car lengths.

Day trip to Lethbridge: 8:00 am sunrise. "The clouds look funny". They were pink with a sharp white bar underneath. Soon the pink was a brilliant backdrop for the bare limbed poplar trees. Near Carstairs, the railroad tracks were a solid line of silver far into the distance. Near Langdon, a one and a half story house was parked on the shoulder. Otherwise, we expected it would have filled both lanes behind the pilot truck. The Mossleigh Bar and Grill sells meals only. Very thick diamond willow posts support the rafters. Further down the parking area, a little building with an "open" sign sells doughnuts. Near Vulcan, high piles of drifts from plowing line the farm entrances and country roads. One field had rows and rows of snow-covered Solar Panels in it. An old barn was only half there. The front portion had walls and the roof. The back was completely open to the elements. At Keho Lake, we saw two vehicles parked on the ice. We guessed they belonged to fishermen. In Lethbridge, at Imperial China restaurant, the meal was delicious. Near Shaughnessy, 30 to 40 geese were grazing in a field. In a number of nearby fields, wheeled irrigation systems had been left for the winter. Again near Vulcan, the radio stated a fog advisory for much of the province. We were well aware of this. As we travelled visibility diminished, cleared for a short distance and diminished again in cycles until we reached Calgary. From the city homeward we kept our night time vision on high alert.

Bergen's Junior Steer Rider

by Sally Banks

In November each year the Canadian Rodeo Finals (CFR) is held in Red Deer. It's the Stanley Cup of professional rodeo, the final event of the season with one of the richest purses in Canadian rodeo.
While much of the attention is on the professional cowboys, the CFR also features events for young up-and-coming competitors.

One of these events is Junior Steer Riding, for contestants 12 to 15 years old. By November last year six young cowboys had earned the right to compete. Bergen's 15-year-old Glen Erickson was one of them.

He didn't hold out much hope of winning. "I went in in fourth spot. It wasn't really looking good but it was my first time and it was exciting for all of us. It's a pretty big deal to be able to go there."

It's perhaps not surprising that Glen's keen on rodeo. His dad, Rob, was a calf roper and his older brother, Gordon, (who also rode steers) is now a bull rider.

What's the appeal of climbing aboard several hundred kilos working hard to toss you off? "I like the adrenalin rush," says Glen, with a smile. "I calf roped too but steer riding is my favourite."

Like Gordon, Glen attended steer riding school. "I went about three times. The first time I was about eight. The instructors teach you how to get on and off a steer and understand all your gear."

Training is only the start—competition with other young hopefuls is what counts. "There were 26 rodeos this past year," says Glen. "I rode in 23 of them. The amount of money you earn adds up. The top six earners get to go to the CFR."

Those 23 rodeos found Glen travelling around Alberta (where he won four of them) and into Saskatchewan and BC. His dad

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Bergen's Junior Steer Rider, continued from page 12

or mom drive him to the rodeos, often with other steer riders. "It's more fun when you have two or three travelling buddies," he says.

Glen's parents, Rob and Brenda Erickson, ranch in the Bergen area. They raise cows and horses and also have hay land. As well as doing school work Glen helps on the ranch. And while he's doing chores this winter he's also preparing for the 2023 rodeo season—this year his focus is on bull riding.

"In a couple of years I hope to be a professional bull rider. There's lots of money riding bulls and you can make a career out of it." Colleges that offer rodeo scholarships are one possibility for his future. He'd also like to be a heavy duty mechanic.

One constant that runs through Glen's life, even more important than rodeo, is his love of the outdoors. "I like the wilderness, being alone out there."

That love developed early. Rob & Brenda run Scalp Creek Outfitters. Each year the family spends about 60 days in the back country. It's a two-day ride to their camp trailing about 18 horses. "Mom first took me in when I was only three months old."

At camp they live in wall tents. Brenda does the cooking. "Mom makes bread and pies. My favourite thing? When it rains she makes cinnamon buns—they're *so* good."

Last November, when the dust finally settled in Red Deer's Westerner arena and the points were tallied, Glen was in 2nd place. He'd ridden four steers and won two go-rounds, taking home a big shiny buckle for each win.

Based on his overall score for the four rounds he also took home the most prize money. Well done, Glen—congratulations!

Bergen Community Association Report, January 11

by Maureen Worobetz

Happy New Year to all!

The Christmas concert, organized by Shelley Ingeveld was again, excellent. There was a good turnout even though it was extremely cold.

Our annual meeting is coming up on February 8, at 7:30 p.m. at the hall. We welcome all who are interested to attend. Lunch is served after the meeting.

Our goal this year is to replace our wooden chairs with more modern, and comfortable chairs.

A Scientific Query

by Sandy Easterbrook

We all learned in science class that plants take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen, the opposite of the animal kingdom. Therefore I wondered whether our human contributions to the rise in CO2—it is now at a level not seen in at least 500,000 years—actually benefit crops, pastures and forests. The topic turned out to be well covered on the Internet. Of course there are a few outliers who laud or dismiss our greenhouse gas emissions, but I focussed on the sites I believed most credible, including the MIT Climate Portal, NASA, Scientific American and Columbia Climate School.

It turns out the CO2 promoters are correct in one aspect: most plants do grow faster and bigger with additional amounts of the gas, since it increases photosynthesis. Between 1982 and 2020, global plant photosynthesis grew

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12%, trailing CO2 levels as they rose 17%. Twenty five to fifty per cent of Earth's vegetated lands have shown a significant greening over the last 35 years, according to a study in the Journal of Nature Climate Change. The productivity of wheat has increased by 11.5% since pre-industrial times and corn by 8.4% (scientificamerican.com/article/ask-the-experts-does-raising-CO2-benefit-plants1/).

Unfortunately, though, what science calls "the fertilization effect" diminishes over time as plants acclimatize—the experts haven't yet figured out why. Also, these statistics presume that a plant has all the nitrogen it needs for this extra growth (nitrogen contributes 9% of the greening effect while carbon dioxide contributes 70%). The nitrogen is used to make carbohydrates and proteins. The plants cannot obtain it from the gas in the air, but depend on soil bacteria to "fix" the nitrogen into compounds which they can absorb. Agricultural land is fertilized with "fixed" nitrogen compounds (usually chemical, which could initiate another debate) but wild places like forests—some of our best carbon sinks—are not. Researchers who studied hundreds of plant species found that most unfertilized ecosystems are becoming deficient in nutrients, especially nitrogen, due to climate change.

This brings up another consequence of increased carbon dioxide: the fact that it is responsible for trapping heat in the earth's atmosphere. Any potential positive effects of increased CO2 will be outweighed by the drawbacks of climate change. Drought, heat stress and wind disturbance will increase with a rise in temperature. Resultant wildfires, which we are already seeing, will destroy more and more trees and grasslands. Flooding becomes a distinct possibility as sea levels rise and "atmospheric rivers" become more common. A longer growing season means the plants demand more water. The result will be drier soil and less runoff than is necessary for maintaining our rivers and streams. The longer growing season and warmer winters will encourage weeds, insect pests and pathogens to produce more generations and spread more widely. Globally, weeds account for a 34% crop loss; insects 18% and disease 16%, so the world food supply will be affected.

The crops we grow could even endanger human health. With rising levels of carbon dioxide "food crops lose significant amounts of iron and zinc—and grains [also] lose protein", says Samuel Myers, leading research scientist in Environmental Health at Harvard. At 550 ppm of carbon dioxide, predicted for the mid-century (we are currently around 414ppm), 150 million people could have a protein deficiency and 150-200 million a zinc deficit.

Some skeptics argue that millions of years ago, Earth had a much higher level of carbon dioxide—in excess of 2000 ppm—and plants did just fine. However, this ferny vegetation was quite different from the plants we now depend on for food. Oh, and one other problem. The earth would be so scorching that humans could not survive. I know I sound like Doctor Doom, but keeping these facts in mind will surely expedite our efforts to transition to greener energy solutions.

Bergen Photos by Crystal Maitland

Vucan, continued from page 2

the church open?", said I. "Sorry, no." "Oh, too bad…I used to play the organ here." Pause. "You're Jamie Syer!" Turns out we were in the same class in high school.

In 2009, Vulcan (the town) decided to capitalize on its connection with Vulcan (the planet). Remarkably, Leonard Nimoy paid a visit the next year, led a parade down main street, and left his Vulcan-salute handprint on a plaque where Virginia's Drug Store used to be.

Some of the town's Star Trek memorabilia is now looking a little tired, but the quirky Starship Enterprise street lights are still polished and shiny. The store which in my time was simply "Wolfe's Hardware" is now "Wolfe's Starfleet Supply."

Laurie and I had lunch at the Chinese restaurant, obviously a local gathering place, as it was decades ago. Unfortunately, the water-filled cooler with the mechanism that would release a cold Orange Crush for a quarter is long gone.

Camp Spartan: the New Musical

Here's a cure for the February 'blahs'—come enjoy a brand-new musical theatre production at the Sundre Arts Centre, February 10-18.

CAMP SPARTAN was written by Bergen's Jamie Syer and his partner-in-theatre Brian Bailey. Together, they call themselves 'B. S. Productions' and they've produced eight musicals over the past eight years. Many Bergen News readers will remember B. S. Productions' *Matilda,* which featured Bergen's inimitable Gerald Ingeveld in the unforgettable role of Miss Trunchbull.

Now Gerald and a cast of 20 kids, teens and adults are back onstage—singing, dancing, and telling the story of CAMP SPARTAN. It turns out this particular summer camp doesn't have any of the supplies and amenities you'd expect at camp, so kids have to make their own fun. The camp staff also seem rather unqualified, though they all hope for the best, "'cause anything can happen...". Ghost stories, camp food, memorable characters, a bit of romance—all are part of the CAMP SPARTAN world.

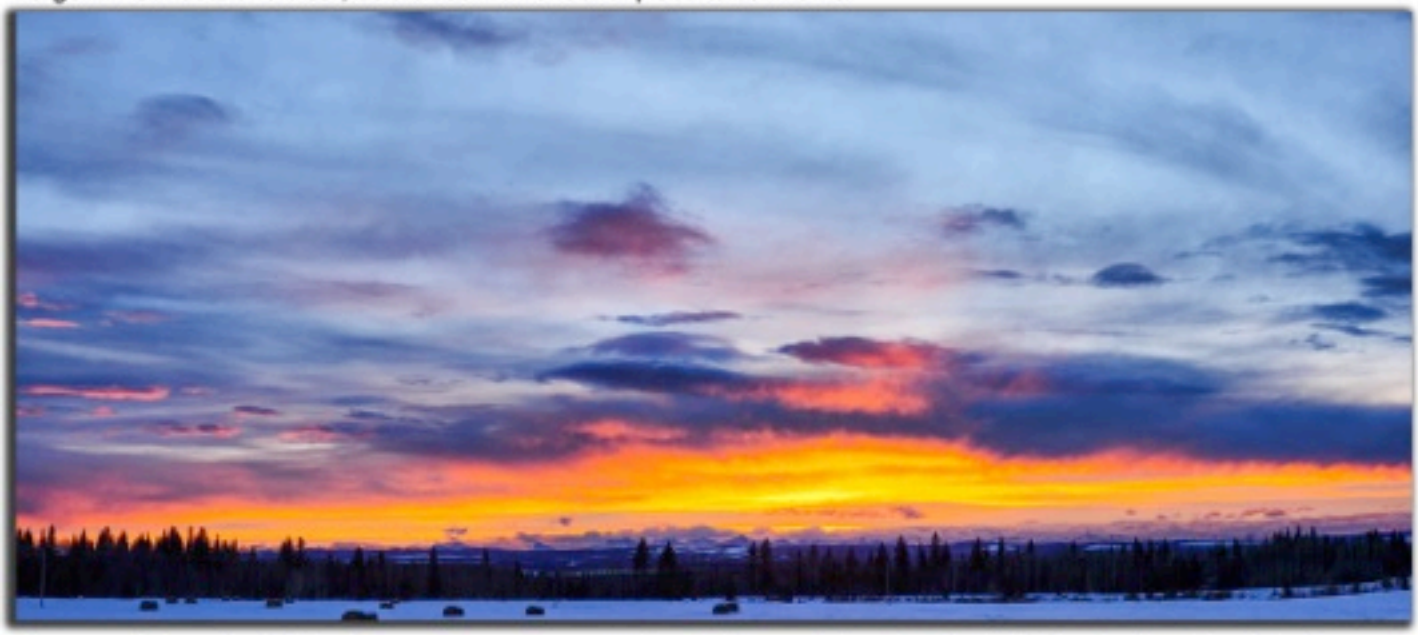
Tickets are available online: Visit sundreartscentre.com , and look at the "Events" tab, or buy tickets at the Sundre Library, Olds Library, or Backwoods Bakery Café. Tickets will also be available at the door, unless the performance is sold out. Only $20 for a world première of family-friendly entertainment, live onstage. Six performances to choose from.

Don't miss CAMP SPARTAN, where "the fun is just startin'.

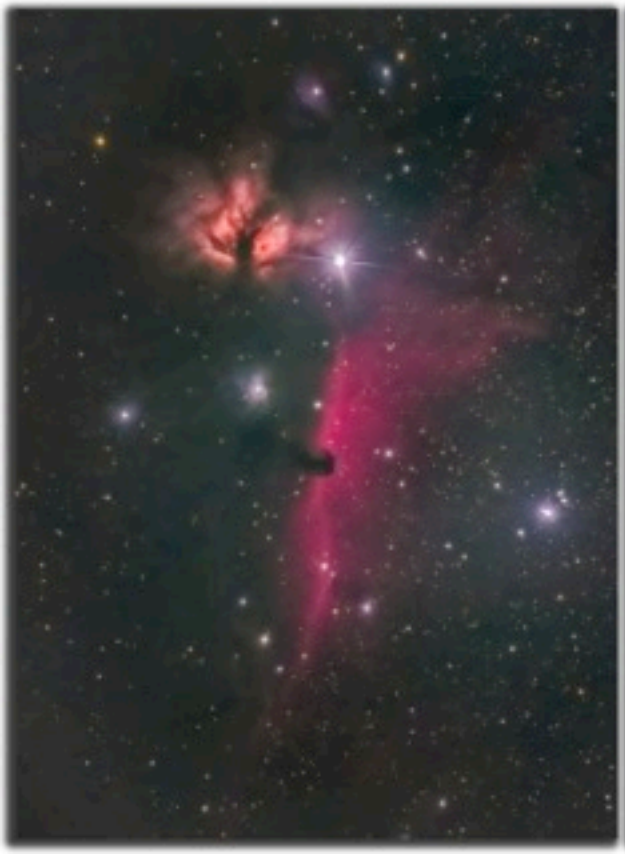
From My Office Window

by Brian and Kim Allan

Bergen... Sunsets and clear, cold skies. A wonderful place to call home!



Flame and Horsehead Nebulas



Great Orion and Running Man Nebulas (a favorite of mine)