



Birds, Beasts and Botany in Bergen

by Bob Griebel, photos by Sandy Easterbrook

Poinsettia (*euphorbia pulcherrima*)

Over the last few weeks a poinsettia shrub that Sandy has nurtured over the past six or seven years has once again become resplendent with red blooms—just in time for Christmas. Now I fully realize that these plants are not native to the Bergen area, but I suspect dozens of them are now brightening Bergen homes, and I thought a little background information on the plant might be of seasonal interest.

Poinsettias are native to southern Mexico and northern Central America as far south as Guatemala, where they grow in the mountains on the Pacific facing slopes. I can recall how amazed I was when I first saw a poinsettia growing in its natural habitat in Mexico. What I had always experienced in Canada as a short, potted houseplant, was actually a shrub growing to a height of 10 to 12 feet. I also learned that the flowers of the plant are not the attention-grabbing red whorls, but rather the small, unassuming yellow structures in the centre of the modified red leaves. The leaves turn red in response to the formation of the flowers, which occurs when the plant is subjected to at least fourteen hours of darkness daily for six to eight weeks.

Poinsettias first came to European attention with a specimen brought back to Germany by Alexander Humboldt following his 1803-04 expedition to Mexico, and was first given its taxonomic identification as a new species in 1834. Of course the locals in Mexico had long been acquainted with the plant. The Aztecs used the red leaves to dye cloth, and the sap was used medicinally to treat fevers. After the Spaniards arrived, the association of the plant with Christmas was made when the friars would decorate churches with the flower at Yuletide and compare the star-shaped “blossoms” with the Star of Bethlehem.

Known to Mexicans as *Flor de Noche Buena* (Flower of the Holy Night), the plant was renamed “poinsettia” in the United States after Dr. Joel Poinset, the first US ambassador to Mexico. As an amateur botanist, Poinset shipped some of the plants back to his plantation in South Carolina in 1826 and was able to successfully cultivate the plant in his home state. It was not until the 1900s, however, when Albert Ecke, a German immigrant in California, began to widely promote the plant as a Christmas symbol, that poinsettias became a commonplace Christmas accoutrement. Albert Ecke and his descendants used a grafting technique to make the plant appear bushier with multiple blooms and sent free samples to television stations to feature on their Christmas specials. Since the 1960s the poinsettia has become the world’s most economically important potted plant with approximately 70 million sold annually during the



Sandy's Poinsettia

Poinsettia, continued from page

six weeks prior to Christmas. The Ecke family controlled the bulk of the poinsettia trade until the 1990s, when their closely guarded grafting method became common knowledge and a host of competitors entered the market. New varieties are introduced annually in order to lure customers so that salmon, pink, burgundy, white, yellow and cream poinsettias are now available along with speckled and marbled options.

It has been a long held belief that poinsettias are highly toxic, even lethal, to small children and pets. Recent studies have shown this not to be the case. Poinsettia sap may be an irritant and causes mouth rashes in some people if flowers are eaten. There have also been reports of nausea or vomiting following ingestion but, by and large, the plant is considered non-toxic although not particularly tasty. Best to enjoy the plant for its beauty and brightness and use lettuce or cabbage in your Christmas salads. Further to this bit of advice, I would like to wish all readers and subscribers of The Bergen News a healthy and happy Holiday Season and the year ahead brim-filled with blessings and good luck.

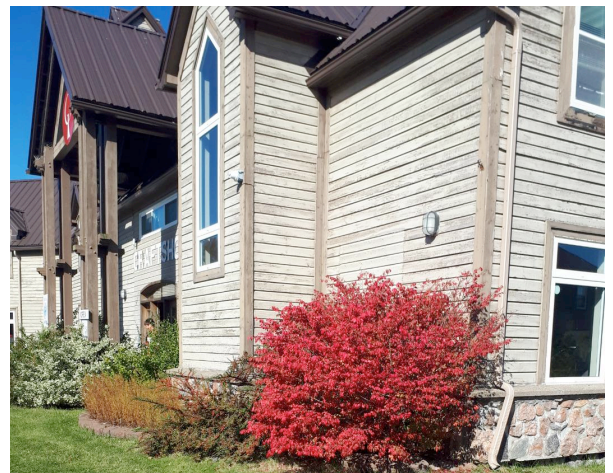
Cape Breton, Celtic Colours Music Festival

by Shelley Ingeveld

We started planning our trip to Cape Breton, for the Celtic Colours Music Festival in June. We bought airline tickets and booked a B&B. In August tickets went on sale and we booked the concerts we wanted to see on that first morning. Then Hurricane Fiona struck less than two weeks before our departure. We prayed and hoped that folks we knew were OK. They were fine and our B&B host, the day her power was turned on, emailed asking if we still wanted to come. We did but had to wait to hear from the music festival folks that the planned venues were still able to function. All venues were able to go ahead, so we flew on Oct.9th at midnight and were at our first concert the next evening.



But on our way to the concert, we stopped at the Baddeck Fibre Arts Festival. There were weavers, quilters, knitters etc. Everywhere we went the organizers thanked us for coming. We were treated to great music from Canada, USA, England, Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man (which any devoted Scot would tell you is not in Scotland).



The MC at the first concert offered to sell gently used chain saws at intermission!

We treated ourselves to a ham and potato salad supper on Tuesday night at St. Paul's church in Port Morien, then attended the concert in the Legion Hall. The meal was good and plentiful; same for the music. On Wednesday we headed up the Cabot Trail (photo, top, page 15) for a Lobster and Crab supper at St. Andrew's hall. The Neil's Harbour fishermen went out that morning to catch the lobster and crabs for our supper. (photo, middle, page 15). On our way up the trail, we stopped at several artisans' shops, buying some treats and stocking stuffers. The concert was in the Aspy Bay elementary school and on our way back to our B&B we stopped at the Gaelic College in St. Ann's for their late-night music fest. (photo at above right). Every night at 11pm, throughout the week, many performers from concerts around the island came to play music until the wee hours of the morning. It was \$20 each night and more

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EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY

by Jessie

NO DOG IN THE STABLE?



Such a beautiful time of year, with stories to warm the heart. I especially like to think about that new baby in the stable with all of the animals gathered around to admire it. But, sadly, I have never yet heard *all* of the animals mentioned. My question is, where was the dog? They let all those sheep herders in. Surely they must have brought along their *sheepdogs*.

We dogs are very good with small children. If I had been there I would have licked his little feet with my big warm tongue and volunteered to curl up beside him so he could snuggle in my long black fur. I think a good cow-dog would have been useful as a lookout for any sort of nonsense.

But, never mind. That was then; this is now. And Christmas is a time to love all our fellow-dogs (and even humans) so my wish to you all is Merry Christmas, warm beds, and juicy bones.

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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.

Views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and not of the Bergen News.

THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR

by Pat Gibbs

How can this oh so cold month be the most wonderful time of the year? Well for me, I love to hear and sing the beautiful Christmas Carols and imagine the image of the song being sung in my mind. I enjoy watching the excitement of children as they gaze in wonder at all the decorations that suddenly make the stores and houses sparkle seemingly overnight.

Al and I did some mall walking in Calgary while waiting for an appointment and the moose and tree displayed were as tall as some houses! I do believe there is bit of a child in all of us at this time of year. As children, my brother and sister and I were raised on songs like Away in a Manger and Silent Night. A Christmas concert was held at the old Bergen Hall without fail. I'm not sure if there was a concert at the Bergen school prior to that. No matter the weather, our family would crowd into the pick-up truck and head to the hall, often plowing through big snow drifts, but we got there! So did the rest of the Bergenites. Family and friends made up our close knit community and the Christmas concert brought out the best in everyone. The singing would begin, followed by recitations from little children and big folks who had been practicing for what seemed like forever. (My cousin, Trevor, was five years old and sang the *Twelve Days Of Christmas* without missing a single word). It was pretty scary getting up on that stage and seeing everyone staring at you. I don't remember anyone fainting but I'll bet they may have felt like it. I was very fortunate that my dad was always with me because he was my music for every song I sang back then.

There is so much in the story Marilyn wrote in the Bergen News that reminds me of those wonderful Christmas gatherings.

We always had a short but sincere reminder of what the real meaning of Christmas is, by our Pastor from the Bergen Church. My favourite memory was when Bob Cheesmuir stood on the stage peeling an orange very slowly as he recited a poem/story about the Baby Jesus who came to earth as a Saviour, adding some humour as well as his delightful English accent to the tale. He was loved by all.

I told hubby that this Christmas I will be more organized, and ready earlier than in past years. I will be soooo relaxed that he won't know who I am! He looked at me kindly and replied, "Yes, my dear, you are absolutely right. I would not know you.

Merry Christmas everyone and God bless you and yours.

Til next year.....

Musings: The Bergen Christmas Concert

by Phyllis Cormack

I have many memories dating back to my childhood and one of those is the Bergen Christmas Concert. My first recollection of this event happened in the old Bergen School which was situated where the Bergen Hall is now. The school was heated with a wood furnace in the basement. There wasn't any ducting to distribute the heat in this building; it simply rose up through a large metal grate in the floor above the furnace. So on a crisp winter evening the best place to sit was on a bench directly on top of this grate or as close as one could get. Santa and a gift should be the memories that stand out the most with this event. However all I remember is sitting and opening my candy bag which held peanuts in the shell, a Christmas orange and hard candy all mixed together. I'm not sure when the concert moved to the old Bergen Hall but I was a little older at that time. Tex Worobetz always brought what seemed to be a huge spruce tree from Nitchi Valley that was set up toward the north end of the hall and decorated for this auspicious occasion. There was a small stage on the east side of the hall where willing performers could entertain with song, recitation, or musical instruments. The old metal folding chairs were set out in rows for the community folks to sit and enjoy the programme. I remember singing "Silver Bells" once with Patsy Haug (now Gibbs). Two young girls trying not to laugh and get the song done. Let's just say I haven't attempted that feat again! Again, I fail to remember getting a gift although I'm sure my sister and I did. What I do recall is going home to a cold house. Dad would stoke the fire in the wood furnace in the cellar and Mom would do the same in the cookstove in the kitchen. We'd sit in our coats and

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The Bergen Christmas Concert, continued from page

shell peanuts and eat them along with our oranges until the chill was off the house, then go to bed. Fires would be banked for the night.

The old hall was closed down and a new one built in 1974. The Christmas concert tradition carried on. By this time I was married and we lived elsewhere but were often back in Bergen for the concert, bringing our two kids with us. Gifts for the young ones would be smuggled in by the parents and tucked under the tree which was set up and decorated at the south end of the hall. Then we would sit and enjoy the entertainment that varied from a family singing a carol to a piano or other instrumental solo. Someone might recite a poem. The Bergen Ladies Aid often sang "Silent Night" or other selections. Jim Haug accompanied himself on guitar as he sang "The Marvelous Toy" and "Grandmother's Feather Bed". He and daughter, Patsy, often entertained us with a song or two. Whoever was in charge of organizing the programme did a great job of lining up all ages of eager performers.

Interspersed with the people on stage was group carol singing for the audience. Newspapers used to send out sheets of carols that we used for many years. Once the programme was done everyone sang "Here Comes Santa Claus" and he would appear with a "Ho ho ho!" from the back of the hall and make his way down the side, stopping to chat with different ones. He knew everyone, of course, as he'd delivered gifts to them all when they were little. Right? This jolly fellow was Jim Haug and he was a great Santa and filled that role for more years than we kept track of. Santa had a helper who would find each child's gift with their name attached under the Christmas tree. How did he get them there without carrying a big bag over his shoulder when he entered the hall? He would call out each name, then speak briefly with each child, before handing them their gift and a candy bag which still contained peanuts in the shell, hard candy and an orange. The Bergen Community Association and the Bergen Ladies Aid shared the cost of the candy and oranges and the boxes of chocolates that were given to those in the community who were 80 years young and older. Santa also received a box of chocolates for filling the position of the most important person there. Some years the hall was so full of people, young and old, that it seemed there was standing room only. No wonder we needed a new and bigger hall!

We moved back to Bergen in 1980. I joined the Community Association and had the responsibility of organizing the concert for a few years. One year we had a short play. We never turned down anyone who was interested in being part of the programme. Santa's role has been filled by others—each one lending their twist to the character—some a little more bashful than others but still fulfilling Santa's purpose. He still gets a box of chocolates as a thank you.

Several other things have changed. It's getting harder to find young ones who want to perform. Shelley Ingeveld has been the person in charge for many years now and does a super job. Her husband, Gerald, plays his guitar and we still sing the from the newspaper carol sheets between entertainers. We also do a rendition of the "Twelve Days of Christmas". Each row of attendees is given one, or sometimes two, of the days to sing in turn. The number of days you get depends on the number of people attending. It's quite fun and livens up the crowd. We've been blessed with many musical community members who grace us with a song or a tune on an instrument. Always, at the end of the programme, we sing for Santa to come and he never disappoints us. He makes his way to sit by the tree and his helper hands him the gift telling him the name he's to call out. That child can sit on his knee for a photo—or not. Some just don't know about this guy in red. Once the gifts are all gone, Santa heads back out and the kids focus on their gifts.

For a few years candy bags were handed out minus the peanuts due to allergies. There were a couple of years when there were hardly any kids present, so, because of not knowing how many bags to make up, and due to the expense, the bags have been discontinued. We still hand out oranges and pass bowls of chocolates around. Most people stick around for a visit and to wish a Merry Christmas to their neighbours.

The demographic of Bergen has changed dramatically. There are a lot of folks living here; however there seems to be less interest in being part of the community. It's sad really. However, those of us who are interested will keep on doing what we do with the hope that new folks will join in to keep this and other traditions alive.

That being said, I hope to see you at the hall December 17th, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. for our Community Christmas

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

by Noreen Olson

My mom's mother, Anna, a widow with a six-year-old daughter, Esther, sailed from Norway to America in 1897. Their destination was Marysville, Washington, where, by prior arrangement, they met my widowed Grandfather, John, and his six-year-old daughter, Sophie. John and Anna married, took up a homestead near Ponoka and were never again "Home for the Holidays."

My husband, Ralph's, parents were married in Norway on March 1st, 1919. They went directly from the wedding reception to the ship that brought them to America. They hoped that they would return to visit someday soon, but it was 1947, 28 years later, before they were next home for the holidays.

Christmas anthologies are filled with tales of brave and gallant prairie fathers hiking on snowshoes through the blizzard, a hundred pound sack of flour in one hand and the Christmas mail and a bag of peppermint sticks in the other, or of Dad being pried from the frozen saddle of the faithful pony that had brought him and the groceries home through the trackless waste. Getting home for Christmas was not to be taken lightly. Family and Christmas were among the few things that made winter bearable, and no effort was too great to get home for the holidays.

With each generation things got a little easier but, especially for rural Albertans, winter roads and transportation in the 30s, 40s and 50s were a major challenge. The roads were practically non-existent, snowplowing was in its infancy and the only dependable method of travel was often a team and wagon. Cars didn't start in the cold, tires were thin and treads shallow, car heaters were not universal and not dependable, headlights were dim and prone to failure. I remember my brother-in-law fashioning fuses from the silver paper in his cigarette package to keep his headlights functioning.

In about 1948, Ralph's sisters had jobs that required coming home by train. Well, that got them to Carstairs but then what? A storm had plugged the roads. A neighbour was also expecting her sisters on the same train so the two families conferred. The neighbour's husband, Don, had one of the first rubber-tired tractors and it had road gear (but no cab). The Don and my dad mounted Dad's wagon box on bob sleigh runners and hooked the sleigh to the tractor. They filled the wagon box with pillows and blankets, met the train in Carstairs, and brought the four girls safely home for Christmas. They probably sang carols.

At about the same time, maybe the same storm, my older brothers used their gravel truck to bring groceries and Christmas supplies and mail to the corner about a mile from our house. The rest of the road was impassable. We younger kids took our pony, Pal, and went down to the drop off. Feeling like intrepid Arctic explorers, we tied bags and boxes to the saddle rigging and, using Pal as a pack horse, began the trip back to polar base station. We skirted the bigger drifts, plowed bravely through the smaller ones, and stayed alert for polar bears and bottomless crevasses. In those rural pre-electric days, a tin of coal oil was included in the supplies. Some of the coal oil leaked out onto the horse who, understandably, went berserk. Howie and I picked oranges, apples, onions and tinned goods from snow drifts for some time. The horse was fine once we calmed him down. Coal oil is not caustic.

I wish you a peaceful and Merry Christmas. At home, and with family, if possible.

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 alternative 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 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.

The first Sunday in December, everyone is encouraged to bring a bag lunch to be eaten while the kids practice for the Christmas program which will be performed on December 11th during the regular service time.

The skating rink is being prepared for eager skaters. When ready, it will be posted on our website.

The Christmas Eve service is happening again and will start off with a meal as was done a couple years ago. The food will be ready at 5:30 pm. December 24th with the service to follow.

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

It was a wintery day when we met at Lynn Whittle's home for our November meeting.

Twelve ladies braved the chill and answered roll call with a happy memory. Many of these tales dated back to our childhood. After the Lord's prayer we had our minutes and usual reports. Treasurer, Maureen Worobetz, filled us in on our auction results. Auctioneer, Ken Walker, and spotter, Gerald Ingeveld, encouraged the bidding and we appreciate their time and effort. The quilts brought lower prices but, as per usual, the baking, canning, and crafts etc made the difference. We were very pleased with the outcome and will be able to start sending out donations again in January. Filming of the auction took place without a hitch and we eagerly await the end result.

Plans for our Christmas party were made. Donna McGregor has invited us to her home.

We set quilting dates for January 17th and 19th when we will do a stitched quilt and hope to have a wool quilt ready to tie. It will be nice to get back into the routine of quilting after being shut down for two years. Three quilt tops were displayed that are ready to be stitched.

We will meet at the end of January for our business meeting when we elect officers and decide on donation recipients and how much to give. The meeting will be at Phyllis Cormack's home with Maureen helping supply lunch. Phyllis is also to read scripture.

We sang our theme song, then enjoyed the lovely lunch provided by Lynn and Barb Wiens. The raspberry shortcake was a special treat!

Piecing Together History—Part Three: An Heirloom Quilt

by Shari Peyerl

Some of us are the lucky custodians of a family heirloom. My dear friend, Janet, showed me a treasure that has been in her family for several generations. This amazingly intricate quilt is a keepsake of the fascinating Barnes family.

The Barnes quilt contains all the features typical of the crazy quilt style. Silk and velvet fabrics in rich, dark colours predominate. Their randomly shaped fragments have been combined to form four large blocks. A unique fan pattern highlights each corner of the quilt body, which is surrounded by a black velvet border. To this base, an extravaganza of embellishments has been added.

Embroidery stitches of infinite variety and colour are the main ornamentation. These stitches highlight fabric edges, and create texture and design on the fabric pieces themselves. Some of the stitching has been done using chenille thread, its fuzzy texture giving the design a three-dimensional quality. Some of the silk and velvet pieces are decorated with paint or ink, as well. The finishing touch is a wide cream lace trimming



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Piecing Together History, continued from page 8

the quilt edges, a feature I've not seen on other quilts.

Standard crazy quilt design motifs (besides the rectilinear body panels themselves) are abundant in the Barnes quilt, such as fans, parasols, birds, flowers (especially pansies), insects (particularly butterflies and dragonflies), and children.

This stunning work of art also tells a family story. Two fabric pieces bear a date: "1889" marks the start of the quilt's construction and "1892" indicates the quilt's completion. Additionally, three pieces are embroidered with texts suggesting the quilt's purpose: "for auld lang syne" (roughly translating to "for times gone by"), "souvenir" (meaning "memory" or "keepsake"), and "useful as well as ornamental" (hinting at the quilt's objective). Also, three pieces have stitched names: Lavinia J. Barnes (the quilt's maker), Oscar R. Barnes (the maker's husband), and Elliott C. Barnes (the maker's son and recipient of the quilt).

Oscar Record Barnes was born in New York in 1843. At the age of 21, this American Civil War veteran married 25-year-old New York native, Lavinia Jane Chappel. Two years later, their son Elliott Chappel Barnes was born in New York.

By 1885, the family had moved to Bismarck, North Dakota, where Oscar opened a dry goods store. Lavinia was active in the social scene, attending and throwing parties, etc. She was a dedicated member of the Presbyterian Ladies Aid, and was responsible for purchasing fabric and cutting pieces for their sewing projects.

Elliott tired of assisting his father at the store and struck out on his own, working as a writer, photographer, hunting guide, and rancher. In 1896, he married Janet (Jennie) Mcnider, but continued to pursue adventure. In 1905, Elliott moved his family to Banff, while he pastured horses at his ranch "Kadoona Tilda" on the Kootenai Plains. He worked as an outfitter and guide, and was instrumental in founding the Alpine Club of Canada's annual camps.

Not content to stay in one place, Elliott went on to manage the SL Ranch at Morley, then took out a homestead in Jumping Pound, followed by a dairy farm in Springbank, and later a wheat farm at Milo. During the Great Depression, the family moved to Calgary, where Elliott died in 1938.

The crazy quilt Lavinia sewed for Elliott survived packing and unpacking, and the passage of more than 100 years, until it finally came to reside with his granddaughter. The Barnes crazy quilt is the quintessential heirloom.

The word *heirloom* dates back to Middle English (roughly 1400 AD). We recognize that an *heir* is legally entitled to the property of another on that person's death. The second half of this compound word originally referred to the odds and ends left behind upon that person's death. But its meaning narrowed to *vessels and tools*, and eventually to the specific tool used for weaving which, consequentially, we now call a *loom*. So, the product of a loom—the quilt made of woven fabric—is the ultimate heirloom.

Thank you to Janet, for sharing this quilt story, and wishing all of you, dear Readers, the warmth and comfort of family (past and present) this holiday season.

Sundre Seniors Socialize

Presented by Sundre United Church

Wednesdays, Jan. 11th and 25th

Noon to 2:30 p.m.

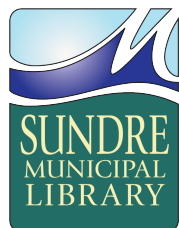
Sundre United Church Hall

Luncheon, Community Resource Speaker, Entertainment

Sponsored by New Horizons for Seniors Program Grant

This is a free event for 55+ seniors. For those who are single, isolated for any reason and newcomers to the community. Must pre-register with Joyce Wicks @403-638-1950 and also phone if not able to attend after registering.

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

HOLIDAY HOURS: CLOSED Dec. 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31; Jan. 1, 2

Parent Connect

Third Tuesday of the month, 9:30—11:30 AM
Drop-in time for parents and children 0-5 yrs.

Rhyme Time

Second and Fourth Tuesday of the month, 9:30—10:30 AM
Stories, rhymes, songs for ages 0-5yrs.

Family Gym Time

Friday, January 20, 10 AM—Noon

Sundre Community Centre

Try our outdoor themed games and build physical literacy.

Teen Takeover Games Night

Thursday, January 5, 6:30—8:30 PM
Games, food and fun for teens. FREE.

Pop Up Play

First Tuesday of the month, 9:30—11:30 AM
Toys and activities for ages 0-5yrs by MVFRN.

Tech Club (Beginner)

Saturday, January 14, February 11, March 11, 1—3 PM
Three-part coding class. Age 10-14 yrs. Registration required.

Dragon Puppets

Wednesday, January 25, 6:30—7:30 PM

Welcome the Chinese New Year with a craft (beginner and advanced).

Wonders of Wildlife: Owls

Wednesday, January 18, 6:30—7:30 PM

Local photographer shares photos and facts about owls. Children welcome with adults.

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:

Dec. 23	Pioneer Lodge Road and Range Road 54 going north. Christmas goodies at the Griebel/Easterbrook residence.
Dec. 30	Bergen Road and Range Road 60 going north.
Jan. 6	Bergen Road and Range Road 60 going south.
Jan. 13	Bergen Road and Range Road 61 going north.
Jan. 20	Twp Road 314 and Range Road 61 going east.
Jan. 27	Twp Road 314 and Range Road 61 going north (to Bergen Road).
Feb. 3	Pioneer Lodge Road and Range Road 62 going north.

Ride With Me

by Donelda Way

Pulling into our yard: "Look at her go! She has a mouse hanging from her mouth. That mouse looks pretty fresh". The mother cat sprinted over the snow and ducked under a shed. We knew she had three semi-grown kittens.

Why is that damaged vehicle left stranded on the shoulder? Our guesses: A second working vehicle had already left; It had hit and injured a dog which had ran away; a tow truck was coming.

At our rural mailboxes: the bushy tailed, scurrying squirrel crossed the plowed parking area, followed its tiny trail up the side of the ditch among the shrubs, until it vanished into the lower branches of the spruce trees.

At the former Bergen Store site: a slender, long-bodied squirrel did an about face in the centre of the road as our vehicle approached. Down in the ditch he came upon a square, timber sign post which he very promptly climbed.

My granddaughter, riding with me: "Look at that! The car next to us has a winter scene." It included snowmen and a white picket-fenced garden on the dashboard. "So cute".

Hwy 760 leaving Sundre: The sky had a red glow indicating there was a big fire to the southwest. The roadside trees gave a flickering view of the red, then golden glow in the sky.

"There's a moose". My husband slowed our vehicle so I could see the slender, healthy-looking, wild animal. The moose was out in the open but close enough to the bushes and trees to have cover in seconds. A wide rack of antlers indicated that it was a bull moose.

Fallen Timber Tr., S-curve: Several times there have been five or six does and one buck, with a full set of antlers, grazing in the open quite near the fence line on the east side of the road.

Meeting an approaching plow truck in full operation meant driving with caution as we passed.

Pleased, I came across a parked vehicle at a spring of fresh water. I could just see the curve of a person's back above the shoulder of the road. Mission accomplished, they would return home with the three or four big water jugs that had been set out in preparation for filling.

Former Bergen store site: "They're right there!" Two deer stood calmly, a little lower than the road shoulder. One held its head high as it faced my surprised gaze. The other one's attention was drawn to something over its left shoulder.

Boards missing, colours fading and doors gaping led me to wonder about the families that owned these pioneer buildings. Along Rge Rd 60 a pioneer home has succumbed to its age. The roof has totally given way and sunk into the interior. In the low area near the bridge at the intersection of Fallen Timber Tr and Twp Rd 310, several buildings are in various stages of decay. These are the heritage sites of previous generations that developed this area.

Bows and bells were hanging on gate posts. Merry Christmas banners had been hung over the entrance. In the dark, the antique tractor glowed with lights, making it delightful. In towns there were colourful blow-up snowmen, Santa Clauses, candy canes and more to draw our attention. Festive solid and flashing lights outlined homes and fence lines. The seasonal pole decorations of poinsettias, stars, snowmen and others were in place, stimulating our festive Christmas moods!

Cows, calves and horses looked happier now that they were eating what the farmers had spread out for them. A few still pawed through the snow.

Along Hwy 760: Snow was blowing across the road, just above the open fields and off the angles of most of the building rooflines.

Fallen Timber Tr. Bridge: we watched a snow devil twirl around and around.

Olds Auction Mart: the wind and air were cold as we wandered about viewing items for sale. I smiled as a pickup with Santa in his sleigh on its roof drove around, Christmas Carols emanating from a speaker system. During our drive home, a strong wind was sifting snow across the road, diminishing visibility. We decided to turn on our headlights so that our taillights also illuminated. We were observant and learned that about 50% of the vehicles we saw also did that. And then the blizzard stopped and the sun shone brilliantly from within the clouds, leaving us with a very pleasant drive home.

Have Yourself a Weird Little Christmas

by Sandy Easterbrook

Although Christmas around the world is becoming more Americanized due to movies and social media, some cultures have managed to retain their unique traditions. When I searched these online, I found some of them particularly amusing or delightful. Here are a few that tickled my fancy.

Japan: Christmas isn't widely celebrated in Japan, since only 1% of the population is Christian. But, thanks to a 1974 marketing campaign which proclaimed "Kentucky is Christmas", many Japanese believe that Americans indulge in a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken for their Christmas dinner. Over 3.6 million Japanese order a meal from KFC far in advance, to avoid waiting in long lineups. The special meal comes with cake and champagne, and costs about \$50 CDN.

Caracas, Venezuela: On Christmas morning, residents of this predominantly Catholic city, strap on their rollerblades and skate to Mass. The streets are closed for this purpose until 8:00 a.m. Firecrackers accompany the sound of the church bells and, after Mass, everyone gathers for food, music and dancing. Too bad our winters are snowy and the side roads are gravelled, or the Bergen Church could adopt this rollerblading tradition.

Catalonia, Spain: A regular figure in Catalan nativity scenes is *El Caganer* or "the pooper". He usually crouches, pants around his knees, behind a tree or the stable. The custom began in the early 18th century. No one is sure of the pooper's significance: he could symbolize the common man or be a symbol of evil. Another interpretation is that he represents the wish for a good harvest since he is fertilizing the soil. A second website describing this custom says that, in early December, many homes dress up a wooden figure to represent this character. They sit him on a log and the children offer him gifts of fruit and nuts. Come Christmas Day, they beat him with sticks and knock him off his log, to discover a lode of candies hidden beneath.

Sweden: Half the country watches the 1958 Walt Disney special *From All of Us to All of You*. Known in Swedish by a title that translates as *Donald Duck and his Friends Wish You a Merry Christmas*, the cartoon has been shown at the same time, without commercials, every Christmas Day since 1959. Parts of the dialogue have become common parlance in Sweden. People shout out the lines they have memorized as they watch the show. It sounds like a cross between *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Rocky Horror Picture Show*!

Greenland: I like this tradition, though not the food on offer. On the big day, the men serve the women Christmas dinner. The main dish is *mattak*, strips of whale blubber, with a side of *kiviak*, the flesh of auk (a seabird) buried in sealskin until it starts to decompose. Dessert is a little more familiar: porridge garnished with butter, cinnamon and sugar. Mincemeat tart or a *buche de Noel* never seemed so appetizing.

Iceland: I love the tradition of *Jalabokafloð* or "Christmas Book Flood". Families exchange new books with one another and spend Christmas evening reading. The custom originated during World War II, when paper was one of the few things NOT in short supply. This encouragement of reading goes a long way to explain why one in every ten Icelanders has published a book.

Many cultures host malevolent visitors on or around Christmas to intimidate people (especially children) into being well behaved. Italy has Befana, a scary witch with warts and a pointy nose. Iceland has the Yule Cat who lurks in the snow and devours anyone who did not work hard enough during the year to afford new clothes for Christmas. What a bonus for the garment industry! In Austria there is the Krampus, part demon and part goat, who punishes naughty



El Caganer, Wiki Commons with permission of Maria Schnabel Communications.

Have Yourself a Weird Little Christmas, continued from page 12

children. And in parts of Switzerland, Schmutzli acts as an anti-Santa, accompanying him in a black robe and black beard, and brandishing a whip. Apparently there is also a growing trend in the US for families to install a Shelf Elf, who is moved to various rooms in the house to “report” on which junior members have been naughty and which have been nice. I hope this creepy, spying Elf stays out of Canada —there is enough surveillance going on without him.

Speaking of the US and Canada, what would a far-away culture think of a society where, at Christmas, couples kiss under a berry-laden branch hung inside the house or where people photo-



Sandy, at right, with some of her siblings visiting Santa, ca. 1959.

document their kid sitting on the lap of a bizarrely dressed stranger in a shopping mall? Guess it takes all kinds to make a world. Merry Christmas, everyone, from our light-strung house to yours.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS COUNTRY STYLE

by Marilyn Halvorson

“Twas the night before Christmas and out in the barn,
The cow was cud-chewing like cows do with such charm.
The pig was snore-snuffling in the straw deep and soft
And the old hen was sleeping above in the loft.
Lightning was napping as horses do, standing up,
While the border collie dreamed of his days as a pup.
The sheep were quite wakeful, so they tried counting folks,
They really get weary of those sheep-counting jokes.
The cat was still prowling with her green eyes alight
For those nocturnal felines do their best work at night.
The night was so peaceful as Christmas should be
And out in the yard there were lights on a tree.
Then from out of the skies there came a loud roar
That woke the old pig up right there in mid-snore.
“What a commotion!” she grunted as she rose to her feet,
“Oh no!” said the sheep with a terrified bleat
“It must be Super Coyote, that old flying creep!”
“You are wrong,” said the cow with a loud bovine cry
“Have none of you heard of the ghost herd in the sky?”

“Oh dear,” said Mrs. Chicken with a horrified squawk.
Right there on the roof is a huge red-tailed hawk!”
“Nay nay,” said the horse with a toss of his mane,
“It’s my ancient ancestor, Pegasus by name.”
“Rowf Rowf!” yelled the dog, “it’s a burglar come down,
I’ll chew on his leg till he gets out of town.”
The cat then said with a slightly bored yawn,
“Perhaps we should look before conclusions are drawn.”
“I can’t look,” said the cow, “on account of my hoofs.
A cow on the roof would be really uncouth.”
“I hate to admit it,” said the horse with a snort.
“But climbing on roofs is not a horse sport.”
“Not us!” cried the sheep while rolling their eyes,
“Whatever is up there could be a nasty surprise!”
“I’d go,” said the pig, “I’d really try hard,
But for climbing up on roofs I just have too much lard.”
The hen, almost petrified though alive and still kickin’,
Said, “You can’t make me go cause I am a chicken.”

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The Night Before Christmas Country Style, continued from page 13

The dog cleared his throat, showed his teeth to look badder,
Said, "I'll handle this!" and took a run for the ladder.
He really was a brave dog, he charged with no fear
But dog claws aren't for climbing and he lit on his rear.
The cat shook her head and then washed her face,
As she considered the brains of the whole canine race.
"I'll do it," she said, and she sharpened her claws,
Then streaked up the ladder with never a pause.
What a sight met her eyes as she climbed to the top,
Where the noisy invader had come to a stop.
There sat a large sleigh all heavily loaded,
With so many parcels it looked like Christmas exploded.
And hooked to the sleigh were nine little creatures,
Like miniature horses in some of their features.
But horses they weren't it must clearly be said,
For they seemed to have branches growing out of their heads.
And the creature in front Puss feared had been drinking,
For his cherry-red nose on and off it was blinking.
And then out jumped a man in a suit red as paint,
When he shouted, "Ho Ho!" Puss fell down in a faint.
Oh dear," said the man, "I've scared you of course,"
And he petted Puss Cat till she purred like a Porsche
"I'm Santa," he said, "and all these are my deer,
I come every Christmas, you have nothing to fear.
I have presents for all in the house and the barn,
And I'm here to bring joy to all on the farm."
The cow got alfalfa and a very large bra.
And the horse was delighted with the oats that he saw.

For the sheep there was clover and polyester sweaters,
Wool makes them itchy so polyester is better.
And the pig ate fresh corn till her stomach was sore.
And the soap in her package she chose to ignore.
The dog got a new bone so juicy and raw,
That he was wagging with pleasure as he lay down to gnaw.
That left Mrs. Chicken with a watering mouth,
Till Santa gave her the worms he'd brought up from the south.
Now there was just Puss Cat alone and polite,
Wondering if she'd get a present tonight
Old Santa just chuckled as he reached into his pack
And brought out for Puss Cat a little green sack.
Puss cocked her head, and stared at the sack
For she'd wanted a mouse and there was no rodent in it.
But one little sniff and she knew she had nothing to dread.
For that bagful of catnip went right to her head.
She rolled over twice and then batted her eyes
All filled with delight at Santa's surprise.
And as Santa drove off with his reindeer—not horses,
Up from the barn came these animal choruses.
"Thanks a lot Santa, you did everything right.
Merry Christmas to you and to Santa goodnight!

The Bergen Farmers' Market

The Bergen Farmers' Market ended its season on November 26th with its annual Christmas market. The market was well attended. There were many beautiful crafts, as well as the usual food items to tempt shoppers. Live Christmas music was performed by our local string trio who give generously of their talents throughout the season.

Thanks to all the vendors and customers who support the Bergen Market. We look forward to welcoming you back next spring.



Celtic Colours, continued from page 2

music than you would get at any planned evening performance. They had a variety of food trucks lined up out the back door for everyone's dining pleasure.



Thursday night we dined at the Freight Shed in Baddeck. The line up was long, but the wait was worth it. Outside in the parking lot was an electric line repair truck from Newfoundland. At the table next to us Mona Knight was having a birthday dinner with a friend; the whole restaurant enjoyed singing Happy Birthday to the blushing 70 something lady. We found out she writes books (shoot 'em up westerns). When we were home, I borrowed some through our local library. They came all the way from the Halifax library system. They were pretty good.

Friday night found us in Sydney Mines for the fish and chip supper in the local legion. After supper we carried on to St. Andrew's church for the concert. We chose seats up in the balcony and enjoyed watching those great musicians play. On Saturday evening we were in Port Hawkesbury for the grand finale concert. A couple of young lads piped and drummed the lieutenant governor and his wife to their seats just three rows ahead of us.

In addition to the concerts, we also enjoyed the Mi'kmaq heritage centre in Membertou. We would recommend a visit there when you are in the area.

Our last night found us in historic Pictou. We stayed at the Scotsman Inn owned by Sandy and Cathy Best (formerly of Bergen). Nearly



everyone in the restaurant that night was their guest. It really helped that they were the only place open this late in the season!

If you like great Celtic music, seafood, good local wines and ciders, friendly people and great scenery, then you need to go next October to the music festival.

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



From My Office Window

by Brian and Kim Allan

The Andromeda Galaxy (Messier 31) is one of the few galaxies visible to the naked eye under a dark sky. It was first cataloged in 1764 by Charles Messier as Object: M31. At the time it was considered to be the Andromeda Nebula since no one then realized there was more than one galaxy in the universe. It wasn't until 1925 that Edwin Hubble showed the Andromeda 'Nebula' to be a galaxy far outside the Milky Way Galaxy.

M31 is a barred spiral galaxy with a diameter of about 152,000 light-years (L-Y) (compared to the Milky Way's diameter of 140,000 L-Y). It is approximately 2.5 million L-Y from Earth and the nearest large galaxy to the Milky Way. M31 contains in the order of 500 billion to 1 trillion stars (compared to the approximately 400 billion in the Milky Way).

M31 is heading towards the Milky Way at 110 km/sec (246,063 mph) and is expected to collide with us in about 4-5 billion years potentially forming a giant elliptical galaxy. Sadly, our Sun and Earth won't be around to witness this event.

M31 is a relatively large stellar object with an apparent diameter close to three times the diameter of the full Moon. It just looks small to the human eye due to its faintness. It is a great target for amateur astrophotographers.



Composite of two images taken over the past decade