

ELDERS ROCK

Reviving Our Cultural Knowledge

Volume 1, Number 12

DECEMBER, 2009

Welcome

We are pleased to present the December 2009 edition of the All Nations Elders Counsel newsletter, Elders Rock. We hope that this monthly newsletter will help to keep you informed about upcoming events and opportunities for the Elders. If you have any comments on how we can improve the newsletter or news that you would like us to include in the next issue, please contact Laura or Joyce.

About the All Nations Elders

The All Nations Elders Counsel is a group that is open and inclusive to all Elders, regardless of ethnicity and age. Youth are encouraged to participate.

Happy Holidays

Warm thoughts and best wishes for a wonderful holiday and a very happy New Year!

Meeting Time Change

Due to popular demand, the meeting time has changed from a nine am start to ten am.

FREE Computer Tutoring for Elders

One-on-one computer training at your own pace and skill level. The tutor can show you everything from how to turn the computer on, the internet, email, facebook, Microsoft Office, how to use a digital camera and more advanced applications. She's available twice a week for up to two hour sessions. Please let Joyce or Laura know if you are interested and we will set up a time.



ALL NATIONS ELDERS COUNSEL NEWSLETTER

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Aboriginal Art & Craft Fair

Saturday December 12th, 9 am to 5 pm
Prince George Native Friendship Centre

We'll have **hand-crafted:** blankets, carvings, clothing, drums, moccasins, jewelry, outerwear, paintings, souvenirs, stocking-stuffers and more!

Please come out and support our **local artisans** and **local vendors** and enjoy some **fresh baked goods**.

Elders Camp

The All Nations Elders have secured funding to host a second Elders Camp. Planning meetings will take place after the December meeting, more information to follow.

We are on the web: <http://abdc.bc.ca/services/elders-rock>

Importance of Traditional Foods for Urban Aboriginal People

Culture

Aboriginal people traditionally have a connection with the land and with food practices, they lived off of the land through hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering and growing. They took only what was needed, wasting nothing and sharing everything, always giving back to the earth. Their diet was high in animal/fish protein and low in fats and carbohydrates. Traditional foods are not only important for nutritional well-being, but for cultural participation and inclusion. Food connects us to our families and communities by forcing us to work together (e.g., canning, smoking) and reminding us where we came from. The loss of traditional food sources and knowledge can make it harder to perform spiritual ceremonies.

Urban Population

A significant percentage of the Aboriginal population (Prince George especially) is urban. Many urban Aboriginal people no longer have a direct connection to their home communities and access to traditional foods is limited. The pressures of urbanization, poverty and modern lifestyle push many individuals and communities towards processed and artificial foods. Knowledge of traditional agriculture techniques, food sources and preparation is rare, especially among the youth.

Health Benefits

People who eat traditional foods have a better quality of diet than those who eat only store bought food. Studies in the Yukon have shown that traditional foods have lower fat and saturated fat content and are an important source of dietary energy, protein, iron and zinc. Also, the increased physical activity associated with harvesting traditional food is good for health. The same study also showed that on days when people ate traditional foods, fat intake was close to dietary recommendations. On days when people only ate store-bought foods, fat and saturated intake was excessive (40% of total energy).

Processed foods have driven a 'generational wedge' between community members who eat traditional food (Elders) and those who do not (youth). The younger generation tends to eat more processed food and this is a concern because the food causes obvious health problems (e.g., diabetes, obesity) and put youth at risk of chronic diseases (e.g., heart disease, cancers).

Poverty

Although Canada is one of the richest countries in the world, a lot of Aboriginal people are living close to or below the poverty line. According to Health Canada, the health of Aboriginal people is worse than that of the general population. Many health problems (e.g., diabetes, obesity, malnutrition) are related to an unhealthy diet made up of cheap processed foods that are high in fat and sugar. A study in the Yukon showed that 39% of people did not have enough money to purchase all of the food they would need from the store if traditional food was not available; and this is probably true for many communities in Canada. Being poor in Canada means not having food security; experiencing hunger and not having access (both physical and economical) to healthy foods at all times.

Environmental Concerns

One of the results of colonization was the drastic changes to the environment (e.g., hydroelectric dams, deforestation, water pollution) that have led to the contamination of many traditional foods and sites. Elders are worried about the risks to their grandchildren and want to know the pollution levels out there.

History of the Christmas Tree

Pre-Christian Roots

Historically, there has been opposition to the custom of the Christmas tree because of its pagan origins. In 1851, Pastor Henry Schwan was condemned as a pagan for decorating a Christmas tree in an American Christian church. In the 1832 *Book of Days*, Robert Chambers wrote that the festivities of Christmas originally derived from the Roman Saturnalia, had afterwards been intermingled with the ceremonies observed by the British Druids at the period of winter-solstice, and at a subsequent period became incorporated with the grim mythology of the ancient Saxons. Two popular observances belonging to Christmas are derived from the worship of our pagan ancestors—the hanging up of the mistletoe and the burning of the Yule log. Regarding the Christmas tree itself, Chambers said that it seems to be an ancient German custom from the Middle Ages. Other traditions relating to Christmas that derive from Germanic pagan practices include the Christmas ham, Yule Goat, stockings, elements of Santa Claus and his nocturnal ride through the sky, and elements of Alpine folklore.

There are some accounts that place the earliest Christmas trees in Tallinn, Estonia. In the two Hanseatic cities the merchants of the Brotherhood of Black Heads guild are known to have carried trees to the city center during Christmas. In Tallinn, as part of a Christmas ritual first recorded in 1441, unmarried merchants sang and danced with the town's girls around a tree erected in town hall square, which they then burned.

While the Christmas tree's pagan roots are generally accepted, there still are legends of Christian origins. Such legends often relate to Saint Boniface. Francis Weisler argued that Christmas trees are completely Christian in origin and that the Yule tree had no direct pagan connotation.

Origin

The custom of erecting a Christmas tree can be traced to 16th century Northern Germany. In the beginning of the nineteenth century it grew into a general German custom, which was soon accepted also by the Slavic people of Eastern Europe. In the Cathedral of Strasbourg in 1539, the church record mentions the erection of a Christmas tree. A professor of European ethnology found a Bremen guild chronicle of 1570 which reports how a small fire was decorated with apples, nuts, dates, pretzels and paper flowers, and erected in the guild-house, for the benefit of the guild members' children, who collected the dainties on Christmas Day. Another early reference is from Basel, where the tailor apprentices carried around town a tree decorated with apples and cheese in 1597. Martin Luther is sometimes credited with adding lights and decoration to fir branches traditionally hung from ceilings.

False claims about the first Christmas tree are made in Riga, Latvia and Tallinn, Estonia. Such claims are quoted in tourist guides, but they are refuted by Estonian historians. In both cities there is a documented tradition of German trader society Schwarzhäupter to burn a tree on Ash Wednesday, but it was burning rather than decorating a tree, and the tradition was not related to Christmas.

18th and 19th Century

By the early 18th century, the custom was common in towns of the upper Rhineland, but hadn't spread. It was regarded as a Protestant custom by the Roman Catholic majority along the lower Rhine and was spread there only by Prussian officials who were moved there in the wake of the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Just like Christmas (Germanic Yuletide), the Christmas tree was "adopted" by the Roman Catholic Church because it could not prevent its use.

In the early 19th century, the custom became popular among the nobility and spread to royal courts as far as Russia. Princess Henrietta of Nassau-Weilburg introduced the Christmas tree to Vienna in 1816,

and the custom spread across Austria in the following years. In France, the first Christmas tree was introduced in 1840 by the duchesse d'Orléans.

In Britain, the Christmas tree was introduced in the time of the personal union with Hanover, by George III's Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz in early 1800s, but the custom hadn't yet spread much beyond the royal family. By 1841, after Queen Victoria's marriage to her German cousin, Prince Albert, the custom became widespread throughout Britain. In 1847, Prince Albert wrote: "I must now seek in the children an echo of what Ernest [his brother] and I were in the old time, of what we felt and thought; and their delight in the Christmas-trees is not less than ours used to be".



A woodcut of the British Royal family with their Christmas tree at Windsor Castle, initially published in the *Illustrated London News* December 1848, was copied in *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1850. *Godey's* copied it exactly, except removed the Queen's crown and the Prince's moustache, to remake the engraving into an American scene. The republished image was the first widely circulated picture of a decorated Christmas tree in America. The image was reprinted in 1860, and by the 1870s, putting up a Christmas tree had become common in America.

Several cities in the US with German connections lay claim to that country's first Christmas tree: Windsor Locks, CT claims that a Hessian soldier put up a Christmas tree in 1777. Easton, PA claimed that German settlers erected a Christmas tree in 1816. In his diary, Matthew Zahm of Lancaster, PA recorded the use of a Christmas tree in 1821. August Imgard, a German immigrant living in

Wooster, OH is the first to popularize the practice of decorating a tree with candy canes. In 1847, he cut a decorated a blue spruce tree with paper ornaments, candy canes and a tin star. The National Confectioners' Association officially recognizes Imgard as the first ever to put candy canes on a Christmas tree; the canes were all-white, with no red stripes.

20th Century

Many cities, towns, and department stores put up public Christmas trees outdoors, such as the Rich's Great Tree in Atlanta, the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree in New York City and the large Christmas tree at Victoria Square in Adelaide. In some cities Festival of Trees are organized around the decoration and display of multiple trees as charity events. In some cases the trees represent special commemorative gifts. In Trafalgar Square, London, the City of Oslo presents a tree as a token of appreciation for the British support of Norwegian resistance during the WWII. In Boston, a tree is gifted from the province of Nova Scotia in thanks for rapid deployment of supplies and rescuers to the 1917 ammunition ship explosion that leveled the city of Halifax. The US' National Christmas Tree is lit each year on the South Lawn of the White House. Today, the lighting of the National Christmas Tree is part of what has become a major holiday event.



The term *Charlie Brown Christmas tree* is used in the United States and Canada to describe any poor-looking or malformed little tree. Some tree buyers intentionally adopt such trees, feeling sympathetic to their plights. The term comes from the appearance of Charlie Brown's Christmas tree in the TV special *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.

In New Zealand, Pōhutukawa trees are described as "natural Christmas trees", as they bloom at Christmas time, and look like Christmas trees with their red flowers and green foliage. In Russia, the Christmas tree was banned shortly after the October Revolution but then reinstated as a *New-year*

fir-tree (Новогодняя ёлка) in 1935. It became a fully secular icon of the New Year holiday. Decorations, such as figurines of airplanes, bicycles, space rockets, cosmonauts, and characters of Russian fairy tales, were produced. This tradition persists after the fall of the USSR, with the New Year holiday outweighing the Christmas (7 January) for a wide majority of Russians.

Dates

Both setting up and taking down a Christmas tree are associated with specific dates. In pagan times, the practice was associated with the Winter Solstice (December 21). Tree decoration was later adopted into Christian practice after the Church set December 25 as the birth of Christ, thereby supplanting the pagan celebration of the solstice. Traditionally the trees were put up and decorated on the 24th, and removed after the twelfth night (January 6). Modern commercialization of Christmas has resulted in trees being put up much earlier; in shops often as early as late October. In Australia, the Christmas tree is usually put up on the 1st of December, which occurs about a week before the school summer holidays; except for South Australia, where most people put up their tree after the Adelaide Credit Union Christmas Pageant in early November.

Artificial Trees

The first artificial Christmas trees were developed in Germany in the 19th century. These "trees" were made from dyed goose feathers. The German feather trees were a response to deforestation. The tree branches were tipped with artificial red berries which acted as candle holders. Other styles of fake Christmas trees have evolved over the years. In 1930 the US - based Addis Brush Company created a tree made from brush bristles (the same type that used to make toilet brushes!) The aluminum Christmas tree was first made in 1958. Later, fibre optic Christmas trees became popular.

Environmental Issues: Artificial vs. Cut Trees

The debate about the environmental impact of artificial trees is ongoing. Natural growers contend that artificial trees are more environmentally harmful. On the other side of the debate, trade groups continue to refute that artificial trees are more harmful to the environment and maintain that the PVC used in Christmas trees has recyclable properties. In the past, lead often used as a stabilizer in PVC, but is now banned by Chinese laws. Most trees are made of recycled PVC rigid sheets using Tin stabilizer, its use of Lead stabilizer in the old trees has been an issue of concern among politicians and scientists over recent years. A 2004 study found that while most artificial trees pose little health risk from lead contamination, there do exist "worst-case scenarios" where major health risks to young children exist. A 2008 report from the US EPA found that as the PVC in artificial Christmas trees aged it began to degrade. The report determined that of the 50 million artificial trees in the United States approximately 20 million were 9 or more years old, the point where dangerous lead contamination levels are reached. A professional study on the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of both real and fake Christmas trees revealed that one must use its artificial Christmas tree at least during 20 years to leave an environmental footprint as small as the natural Christmas tree.

Natural Christmas trees are biodegradable and often reused by tree farms or governments as woodchips/mulch. A common misunderstanding about natural Christmas trees is that cutting one results in the loss of a tree. Christmas tree farms exist as long as people purchase real trees. Today, as fewer people are buying trees, many farms are going out of business and the land is being used for other purposes. Natural Christmas trees are ethical in the way that the Christmas tree production employs local people, supporting the local economy.

Real or cut trees are used only for a short time, but can be recycled and used as mulch or used to prevent erosion. Real trees are carbon-neutral, they emit no more carbon dioxide by being cut down and disposed of than they absorb while growing. An independent Life Cycle Assessment study, conducted by a firm of experts in sustainable development, states that a natural tree will generate

3.1 kg of greenhouse gases whereas the artificial tree will produce 8.1 kg per year. Some people use Living Christmas or potted trees, so they plant it later to help ease the CO₂ levels, making it the greenest choice. Living Christmas trees can be reused for several seasons, providing a longer life cycle for each tree. Living Christmas trees can be purchased or rented in by local market growers. Rentals are picked up after the holidays, while purchased trees can be planted by the owner after use or donated to local tree adoption/urban reforestation services.

Farmed trees are considered by many environmentalists better for the environment. David Suzuki is quoted as saying, "I would give a lump of coal to someone who buys an artificial Christmas tree this year. I also would like to commend all privately owned and operated Christmas Tree Farms."

Decorations and Ornaments

Tinsel, garland, ribbon and baubles are commonly used to decorate a Christmas tree. Delicate mould-blown and painted colored glass Christmas ornaments were a specialty of the glass factories in the Thuringian Forest especially in Lauscha in the late 19th century, and have since become a large industry, complete with famous-name designers. Lighting with candles or electric lights is commonly done and a tree topper, traditionally either an angel or a star, completes the ensemble.



Individuals' decorations vary widely, typically being a mix of family traditions and personal tastes. Even a small ugly ornament, if passed down, may come to carry considerable emotional value and be given a place on the tree. Many people also decorate outdoor trees with food that birds and wildlife will enjoy, such as garlands made from unsalted popcorn or cranberries, orange halves, and seed-covered suet cakes.

Since candles were used to light trees until electric bulbs came about, a mat or "skirt" was often placed on the floor below the tree to protect it from dripping candle wax and fallen needles. Even now, a skirt is commonly used to hide the Christmas tree stand.

In the 1940s and 1950s flocking was popular in the US. Home flocking kits could be used with vacuum cleaners. In the 1980s some trees were sprayed with fluffy white flocking to simulate snow. Typically it would be sprayed on the tree from the sides, which produced a look different from real snow, which settles in clumps.

Controversy

The Christmas tree has seen an amount of controversy, mainly involving the secular and non-secular usage of the tree as well as groups who oppose usage of the tree on the grounds of interpretation of scripture and pagan origins and/or pagan character of the custom.

In 2005, the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport removed all of its Christmas trees in the middle of the night rather than allow a rabbi to put up a menorah near the largest tree display. Officials feared that one display would open the door for other religious displays. In 2006, they opted to display a grove of birches rather than religious symbols or Christmas trees.

In 2005, the city of Boston renamed the spruce tree a "Holiday Tree" rather than a "Christmas Tree". The name change drew a poor response from the public and was changed back to "Christmas Tree" after being threatened with several lawsuits. In the same year, Speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., asked that the tree that decorates the Capitol grounds to be renamed back to "Christmas Tree". It had been renamed "Holiday tree" in the 1990s.

Christmas Recipe: Gingerbread House

When the years have come and gone, the moments that make your Christmas memories special are the traditions. Quickly forgotten are the bright colored toys and the latest gadgets, what remains is the special times. If you have never done any of the traditions of Christmas, no time like the present.

Ingredients

1 cup butter, softened	1 tsp salt	2 lbs confectioners' sugar
1 – 1/3 cups molasses	1 tsp ground allspice	1 tsp cream of tartar
4 eggs	1 tsp ground cloves	6 egg whites
8 cups all purpose flour, divided	1 tsp ground cinnamon	
1 tsp baking soda	1 tsp ground ginger	

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). In a large bowl, cream together the butter and brown sugar until smooth. Stir in the molasses and eggs. Combine 1 1/2 cups of the flour, baking soda, salt, allspice, cloves, cinnamon, and ginger; beat into the molasses mixture. Gradually stir in the remaining flour by hand to form a stiff dough. Divide dough into two pieces. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8 inch thickness. Cut into desired shapes. Place pieces one inch apart onto parchment-lined cookie sheets. Refrigerate for 15 minutes. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in the preheated oven. Cool on baking sheet for five minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

Icing

In a medium bowl, sift together confectioners' sugar and cream of tartar. Blend in egg whites. Using an electric mixer on high speed, beat for about five minutes, or until mixture is thick and stiff. Keep covered with a moist cloth and plastic wrap until ready to decorate.

Supplies

A pattern
Gingerbread dough
Rolling pin
Cookie sheets
Aluminum foil
Plywood base or heavy cardboard
Icing
Pastry bags
Butter knife
Damp cloth (for quick cleanup)
Glue gun (optional)

Helpful Tips

- Allow a weekend to complete the house.
- Have all supplies ready.
- Read all instructions before you begin.
- Double the gingerbread recipe for a big house.
- Allow the gingerbread to cool thoroughly before assembling.
- Make icing ahead of time.
- Cover icing with a damp cloth to prevent it from drying out.
- Adjust the consistency of the icing by adding more egg whites if the icing is too dry or more powdered sugar if it is too wet.
- Prepare the base for your house by covering plywood or heavy cardboard with several layers of foil.
- Use canned goods to stabilize the walls during assembly.

The House That Jack Built

Apply icing generously to one side of the joint and press an un-iced side to the edge, hold until set. Apply icing to the bottom of your pieces for more stability. Allow thirty minutes for the walls to dry before adding the roof. You'll need an extra pair of hands when securing the roof. Allow house to dry completely before decorating: a minimum of four hours, preferably overnight. Don't worry; you'll be able to fill gaps and cover errors later with more icing and decorations. A fool-proof assembly method, if you're not going to eat the gingerbread, is to use a glue gun. Use icing to finish the look. Icing can be kept at room temperature overnight. Be sure it is well-covered with a damp cloth and plastic wrap.

Quotes, Proverbs & Teachings

Elders Meditation

"We need to save those Elders who cannot speak for themselves, the trees."
~ Haida Gwaii, Traditional Circle of Elders

The trees are the Elders of the Earth. Go to the forest or to the mountains and find a young tree. Then find an old tree. Spend time with each. Sit by the young tree and listen to your thoughts. Then move to an old tree and listen to your thoughts again. Just being in the presence of an old tree, you will feel calmer. Your thoughts will contain wisdom and your answers will be deeper. Why is this so? These old trees know more, have heard more, and are the Elders of the Earth. We must ensure these trees live so we can learn from them.

My Creator, help me to protect the trees and listen to them.

"There is no ideal Christmas; only the one Christmas you decide to make as a reflection of your values, desires, affections, traditions."
~ Bill McKibben

"Of all dear days is Christmas Day the dearest and the best."
~ Margaret E. Sangster

"May peace be your gift at Christmas and your blessing all year through!"
~ Unknown Author

"Friendship is a precious gift to give at Christmas time. A cherished gift, a treasured gift that lasts through all time."
~ Unknown Author

"Christmas comes everyday because to be alive is the greatest gift ever!"
~ Unknown Author

"As many mince pies as you taste at Christmas' so many happy months will you have."
~ Old Saying

"Wish you all a merry Christmas,
May the joys of the season
Fill your heart with goodwill and cheer.
May the chimes of Christmas glory
Add up more shine and spread
Smiles across the miles,
To-day and in the New Year."
~ Rosie Cash

"Peace on earth will come to stay when we live Christmas every day."
~ Helen Steiner Rice

"Christmas is the day that holds all time together."
~ Alexander Smith

"A lovely thing about Christmas is that it's compulsory, like a thunderstorm, and we all go through it together."
~ Garrison Keillor

"Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine, love was born at Christmas, stars and angels gave the sign."
~ Christina G. Rossetti

"Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas"
~ Calvin Coolidge

"Aren't we forgetting the true meaning of Christmas? You know, the birth of Santa."
~ Matt Groening

"Remember this December, that love weighs more than gold!"
~ Josephine D. Bacon

"I never believed in Santa Claus because I knew no white man would be coming into my neighborhood after dark."
~ Dick Gregory:

Fun and Games



Denominations

Maria went to the post office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. The clerk asked her which denomination? To which Maria replied, "Oh! Good heavens! Have we come to this? Give me fifty Methodist and fifty Church of England ones please."

Christmas Shepherd

One Christmas, Joe and Peter built a skating rink in the middle of a field. A shepherd leading his flock decided to take a shortcut across the rink. The sheep, however, were afraid of the ice and wouldn't cross it. Desperate, the shepherd began tugging them to the other side. "Look at that," remarked Peter, "that guy is trying to pull the wool over our ice!"

Blackmail

It was coming up to Christmas and Sammy asked his mum if he could have a new bike. She told him that the best idea would be to write to Santa Claus. Sam, having just played a vital role in the school nativity play, said he would prefer to write to the baby Jesus. So his mum told him that would be fine.

Sam went to his room and wrote 'Dear Jesus, I have been a very good boy and would like to have a bike for Christmas.' But he wasn't very happy when he read it over. He decided to try again and this time he wrote 'Dear Jesus, I'm a good boy most of the time and would like a bike for Christmas.' He read it back and wasn't happy with that one either. He tried a third version. 'Dear Jesus, I could be a good boy if I tried hard and especially if I had a new bike.'

He read that one too, but he still wasn't satisfied. He decided to go out for a walk while he thought about a better approach. After a short time he passed a house with a small statue of the Virgin Mary in the front garden. He crept in, stuffed the statue under his coat, hurried home and hid it under the bed. Then he wrote this letter. 'Dear Jesus, if you want to see your mother again, you'd better send me a new bike.'

Canada Post & Santa Have Teamed Up

Canada Post employees (postal elves) have teamed up with Santa. Currently, more than one million children write to Santa at his 'NORTH POLE HoH oHo' address. Each letter that includes a return address receives a reply from Santa, including Braille.

Encourage your children and grand-children to write to Santa. It is a fun learning experience that helps teach kids how to write and send a letter. To ensure that children will receive a reply from Santa before Christmas, they should write as early as possible. Remember to include your return address.

"Your Merry Christmas may depend upon what others do for you, your Happy New Year depends upon what you do for others."

~ Unknown Author

"There's more, much more, to Christmas than candlelight and cheer. It's the spirit of sweet friendship that brightens all year. It's thoughtfulness and kindness; it's hope reborn again, for peace, for understanding and for goodwill toward men."

~ Unknown Author

"Christmas Eve was a night of song that wrapped itself about you like a shawl. But it warmed more than your body. It warmed your heart... filled it, too, with a melody that would last forever."

~ Bess S. Aldrich

"I wish we could put up some of the Christmas spirit in jars and open a jar of it every month."

~ Harlan Miller

"Gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas."

~ Peg Bracken

"There's nothing sadder in this world than to awake Christmas morning and not be a child."

~ Erma Bombeck

Groaners

Q. What's the difference between the Christmas and the ordinary alphabet?

A. The Christmas alphabet has no L (noel).

Q. What kind of candles burn longer, red candles or green candles?

A. Neither, candles always burn shorter!

Q. What do you call people who are afraid of Santa?

A. Claustrophobic.

Q. Why are Christmas trees such bad knitters?

A. They are always dropping their needles.

Q. What did the bald man say when he got a comb for Christmas?

A. Thanks, I'll never part with it!

Q. Why was Santa's little helper depressed?

A. Because he had low elf-esteem.

Q. Why does Santa like to work in the garden?

A. Because he likes to hoe, hoe, hoe!

Q. What happened when the snowwoman got angry at the snowman?

A. She gave him the cold shoulder.

Q. What is a snowman's favorite lunch?

A. An iceberger!

Q. What did the Gingerbread Man put on his bed?

A. A cookie sheet!

Q. Mom, can I please have a cat for Christmas?

A. No. You'll have turkey, just like the rest of us.

Q. What's the most popular Christmas wine?

A. I don't like Brussels sprouts!

Q. Why do Canadians find turkey so popular at Christmas?

A. Because the weather warmer there.

Q. Why would you invite a mushroom to a Christmas party?

A. He's a fun guy to be with.

Q. Where do snowwomen like to dance?

A. At ice balls.

Q. How do snowmen get around?

A. They ride icicles.

The other day I sent my girlfriend a huge pile of snow. I rang her up and asked, 'Did you get my drift?'



“Bloody Christmas, here again, let us raise a loving cup, peace on earth, goodwill to men, and make them do the washing up.”

~ Wendy Cope

“For somehow, not only at Christmas, but all the long year through, the joy that you give to others is the joy that comes back to you.”

~ John G. Whittier

“I heard the bells on Christmas Day; their old familiar carols play, and wild and sweet the word repeat of peace on earth, good-will to men!”

~ Henry W. Longfellow

“The rooms were very still while the pages were softly turned and the winter sunshine crept in to touch the bright heads and serious faces with a Christmas greeting. Louisa May Alcott quotes

“Christmas gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect.”

~ Oren Arnold

“When we're good to one another it's Christmastime whenever we're together.”

~ Unknown Author

A Beautiful Christmas Story: The Tablecloth

A brand new pastor and his wife were assigned to reopen a church in suburban Brooklyn. They arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, and painting. By December 18th they were ahead of schedule and just about finished. The next day a terrible rainstorm hit the area and lasted for two days. On the 21st, the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster to fall off the front wall. He cleaned up the mess and headed home, planning on postponing their first service. On the way he noticed a flea market and stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful, handmade, ivory colored, crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colors and a Cross embroidered right in the center. It was just the right size to cover the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus. She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder and hangers to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area. Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was like a sheet. "Pastor," she asked, "where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials, EBG were crocheted into it there. They were. These were the initials of the woman, and she had made this tablecloth thirty-five years before in Austria. She could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just gotten "The Tablecloth". She explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week but was captured and sent to prison, she never saw her husband or her home again. The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth, but she insisted that he keep it for the church. He drove her home.

On Christmas Eve they had a wonderful service. The church was almost full, the music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return.

After the service, one older man continued to sit in one of the pews and stare. The pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving. The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall and told him that it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago. He told the pastor how the Nazis came and how he forced his wife to flee for her safety. He was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put in a prison. He never saw his wife or his home again all the thirty-five years between. The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to the woman's house. He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine.

"Your Merry Christmas may depend upon what others do for you, your Happy New Year depends upon what you do for others."

~ Unknown Author

"There's more, much more, to Christmas than candlelight and cheer. It's the spirit of sweet friendship that brightens all year. It's thoughtfulness and kindness; it's hope reborn again, for peace, for understanding and for goodwill toward men."

~ Unknown Author

Upcoming Events and Information

Wed. Dec. 2 2 – 4 pm	Golden Age Social – Free afternoon social for seniors at the PG Civic Centre hosted by the PG Council of Seniors and Zion Lutheran Church. There will be an hour of entertainment followed with refreshments. Contact 250.564.5888 for more info.
Thu. Dec. 3 5 – 9.30 pm	2009 International Day of Persons with Disabilities Celebration – Join us to celebrate the success of people with disabilities in PG. Celebration includes a buffet dinner, entertainment, door prizes and more. Guest speakers include Mayor Dan Rogers; Dan Bauer, a successful entrepreneur; and Vern Martel, Arm Wrestling Champion. Venue: PG Civic Centre. Contact 250.562.9622 for more information.
Fri. Dec. 4 11 am – 1 pm	CSFS: Fundraising Loonie Auction & Luncheon - \$6 will get you stew, bannock and a dessert. There will be a raffle for a 42 inch LCD TV, and a 50/50 draw. Auction goes from 11 – 1, lunch 12 – 1. Proceeds will go towards food hampers and Christmas gifts. RSVP with Debra: debra@csfs.org or 250.562.3591.
Fri. Dec. 4 7 – 9 pm	SPCA Cleans House! The SPCA is cleaning house and stocking up on office supplies at the Cougars game. Please bring a housekeeping item such as a mop, bleach, paper towels, laundry soap, pens, paper, post-its and more. Venue: CN Centre. For more information please contact: 250.562.5511 or agough@spca.bc.ca
Sat. Dec. 5 9.30 am – 12.30 pm	Good Grief for the Holidays - Grief can be difficult at anytime, particularly at holidays. This workshop will provide an opportunity to discuss ways to help you cope with your grief. Fee: \$10 or by donation, materials included. Location: Domano Renewal Centre (110 6500 Southridge Ave.) Contact 2500.964.4475 to register
Sat. Dec. 5 10 am – 12 pm	Green Christmas Ideas Workshop - The average family throws away five extra garbage bags on top of their regular garbage at Christmas! Learn about practical ways you can reduce your environmental impact this Christmas while giving thoughtful, useful gifts you have made by hand. Try your hand at several different homemade (mostly recycled) decoration and gift ideas (craft supplies will be provided). If you have any old Christmas cards or old magazines at home, bring them along, and we'll show you how you can recycle them! Venue: REAPS Garden 1950 Gorse Street. Admission: FREE For more info please contact 250.561.7237 or sarina@reaps.org
Sat. Dec. 5 12 - 2 pm	Rally - A rally protesting poverty, homelessness, and cuts to programs affecting BC's most vulnerable takes at the Courthouse. Speakers, singing, a chilli lunch, and distribution of new and gently used items will be featured. Donations of blankets, winter wear, children's clothing and necessities would be appreciated and accepted at the CNC library, the UNBC Northern Women's Centre, and St. Michael's Thrift Shop.
Sat. Dec. 5 2 pm & 7.30 pm	On the First Day of Christmas - Nove Voce, PG's most dedicated carolling choir will be performing two Christmas Concerts at Our Saviours Lutheran Church. Tickets are available at Studio 2880 (adults \$15, children \$10). Contact 250.562.6806 or normley@shaw.ca for more information.
Sat. Dec. 5 8 pm – 12 am	Dance – Music by Fiddlin Country. Venue: Senior Activity Centre (425 Brunswick St). Cost: \$10, includes light lunch. Contact 250.564.3287 for more info.
Dec. 5 - 6	Blackburn Craft Fair - The Blackburn Craft Fair will be held at the Blackburn Community Centre. Contact 250.963.3292 for more information.
Dec. 5 - 6 12 – 2 pm	YMCA Public Skating – Free skating at the Coliseum
Sun. Dec. 6 10 am – 12 pm	Breakfast with Santa – Breakfast with the fat man at the Columbus Centre. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Call Andrea at 250.964.8553 for more info.
Sun. Dec. 6 10 am – 4 pm	Huble Homestead Winter Festival - Join us outside to make maple taffy, snow ice cream, and roasting hot dogs and marshmallows on the open fire. Snowshoes and cross country skies will be available to those wanting to take advantage of the winter conditions. There will indoor activities for visitors that prefer to stay indoors. Kids

	can create Christmas ornaments to take home, dip candles, decorate gingerbread cookies, and start warming up their vocal chords with some carols! Venue: Salmon Valley Post Office, located in the upper parking lot of Huble Homestead.
Mon. Dec. 7 2 pm	Let's Talk Seniors: Canadian Hearing Care This month's FREE information session is brought to us by Brent Clayson - Registered Audiologist with Canadian Hearing Care. Brent will offer information on how to take care of our hearing, product information and more. No Charge, refreshments served. Venue: Prince George Chateau. Contact 250.564.0202 or pgcactivities@gmail.com for more info.
Mon. Dec. 7 7- 8 pm	Christian Meditation - Experience the ancient tradition of prayerful stillness. We begin by listening to a short audio tape by Abbot John Main, OSB. This is followed by thirty minutes of silent sitting. The group is open to both experienced meditators and those who would like to learn to practice Christian Mediation. No fee. Location: Domano Renewal Centre (110 Southridge Ave) Contact 250.964.4475 for more info.
Fri. Dec. 11 7.30 - 9 pm	Christmas Carol: a Dramatic Reading! The PG Public Library and CBC Radio are proud to host a dramatic reading of A Christmas Carol! Venue: St. Michael's Church. Tickets: \$15 at the Library or Books & Co. All proceeds go to the library.
Sat. Dec. 12 7 pm	Taizé Evening Prayer – A prayer, in the style of the ecumenical community at Taizé France, consists of simple chants of praise, petition, and thanksgiving, as well as short readings from scripture and periods of silence. No fee. Refreshments to follow in Bethany Dining Room Location: Domano Renewal Centre (110 6500 Southridge Ave). Contact 250.964.4475 for more information.
Sun. Dec. 13 8.30 - 11 am	Pancake Breakfast – Everyone welcome. Venue: Eagles Hall (6742 Dagg Rd). Contact 250.962.7005 for more information.
Sun. Dec. 13 4 - 6 pm	Free Swim - The City of PG and Canadian Tire are hosting a free swim at the PG Aquatic Centre. For more information please contact 250.561.7787.
Sun. Dec. 13 8 pm	Handel's Messiah Sing-Along - Lift up your voice and sing – or enjoy being part of the audience – as you join the PG Cantata Singers for this very special sing-along presentation of Handel's baroque masterpiece The Messiah. Featuring piano and organ accompaniment, the concert will also include soloists from our choir. Venue: St Michael's & All Angels' Church Admission: \$15 Tickets available at Studio 2880 and at the door. Contact 250.563.2880 for more information.
Sat. Dec. 19 8 pm	Prince George Indoor Farmers' Market - Look for the market at St. Michael's Church hall (5 th Ave. & Victoria) where you will enjoy fresh produce from the local fall harvest as well as baked goods, preserves and an interesting selection of products from local crafters and artisans. Contact Gina at 250.614.9292 for more info.
Sun. Dec. 20 4 – 8 pm	Christmas Party – The Nechako Metis Elders and PG Community Metis Association are hosting a Christmas party
Dec. 18 – 20	The Nutcracker - The holiday classic returns as the PGSO and Judy Russell's Enchantment Dance Centre team up for Tchaikovsky's beloved ballet at Vanier Hall. This tradition is a favourite of one and all. Choose from matinee & evening performances. Contact 250.562.0800 for more info.
Dec. 18 – 20 11 am – 8 pm	Celebration of Lights - Come and celebrate the season with the PG Railway & Forestry Museum! Santa is waiting for you!! Enjoy our beautiful Christmas village, rides on the Cottonwood Railway, hot chocolate and roasting hot dogs around a bonfire, and skating (weather permitting).
Wed. Dec. 29	Olympic Torch in Prince George! The Olympic Torch will arrive in PG and spend one night until it travels on throughout British Columbia.
Thu. Dec. 31 8 pm – 1 am	New Years Eve Dance – Adults 19 and older welcome. Lunch, hats, fun, prizes and friendship. Music by Fiddlin Country. Admission: \$25. Venue: Senior Activity Centre (425 Brunswick St). Contact 250.564.3287 for more information.

Ongoing Events

MONDAYS

December 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th

Monday Events.

TUESDAYS

December 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th

6.30 pm **Walk PG** - Come Walk With Us! Make friends, lose weight, have fun. Meet in Fort George Park at the Band Shell. How far you walk is up to you. Call 250.561.9284.

WEDNESDAYS

December 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th

10 – 11.30 am **Wellness Wednesdays** - PG Council of Seniors is hosting FREE drop in sessions for anybody 55+. Location: 1055 - 5th Ave. Contact 250.564.5888 for more info.

10 am – 2 pm **Senior's Social at Pineview Hall** – Events held in the basement of Pineview Hall (wheelchair accessible). Contact Syl Meise at 250.963.7427 or 250.649.8281.

THURSDAYS

December 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st

10 am – 9 pm **FREE Thursdays at Two Rivers Gallery** – Open all day. Featuring work by local and emerging artists. Contact 250.614.7800 for more information.

12 – 7 pm **Blood Donor Clinic Hours** - We need you to donate blood in Prince George, 2277 Westwood Drive. Call 1 888 2DONATE to book your life saving appointment.

1 pm **Walk PG** - Come Walk With Us! Make friends, lose weight, have fun. Meet in Fort George Park at the Band Shell. How far you walk is up to you. Call 250.561.9284.

6 pm **Sacred Drumming Circle** - Everyone welcome, fun and free. Location: PJ's Rock & Gem Shop (205 Brunswick St.). Contact 250.562.3331 for more information.

6.30 pm **Chess Night** at Cafe Voltaire in Books & Co. every Thursday.

7 pm **Darts at PG Legion** - Everyone welcome blind draw mixed doubles. Must be 19 years. For more info. call Carol at 250.564.3148 or Joe/ Claudette at 250.963.9918.

7 – 10 pm **Fiddle Jam Nights** - The BC Old Time Fiddlers sponsor weekly jam sessions for all ages, everyone welcome. If you play the fiddle, want to learn to back up fiddles with another instrument, or if you just love to listen, come join us. Admission \$2. Location: 1692 10th Ave. Elder Citizens Rec. Centre. Contact Beth at 250.563.1025 for more info.

FRIDAYS

December 4th, 11th, 18th

6 pm **Healing Reiki Circle** – Everyone welcome. Location: PJ's Rock & Gem Shop (205 Brunswick St.). Contact 250.562.3331 for more information.

8 pm – 12 am **PG Legion Dance** – Everyone welcome, there is a live band and dance floor. There's a \$5 entry charge. Location: PG Legion - 1335 7th Ave. Contact: 250.562.1292

SATURDAYS

December 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th

10.30 am **Walk PG** - Come Walk With Us! Make friends, lose weight, have fun. Meet in Fort George Park at the Band Shell. How far you walk is up to you. Call 250.561.9284.

SUNDAYS

December 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

7 pm **All My Relations** - AA meetings followed with an after session smudge ceremony at the Alano Club – 766 Alward Street. Contact 250.563.9517.