

ON THE INSIDE

Update On Some High Prairians	2
Retrospection	2
Christmas Treasures	3
Snow!	3
Remembering Record Breaking Storms	3
The Night of the Massacre	4
Happy Holidays	4
Recent Wildlife Sightings	4
Safer Candles	5
Tips from the Fire Chief	5
FireLines: Yellow Air and Asthma	5
Winter Solstice	6

SAVE THESE DATES

Community Council Meetings, 4th

Thursday of the month, starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center.

Needlers Mondays, at 10:30 a.m. Call 365-5288 for more information.

Fire Volunteers, 1st, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 7 p.m.

Fire Commissioner Meeting, 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 7 p.m.

Visit the community website (www.highprairie.us) for additional scheduled events and meetings.



3 WAYS TO READ THE HIGH PRAIRIAN

Did you realize that there are 3 ways to read your favorite newsletter?

1. Subscribe (see last page) to a printed copy, mailed right to your door.
2. Read the online version on your computer or tablet from the High Prairie website (<http://www.highprairie.us>).
3. Download and print your own (full color!) copy (PDF) from the High Prairie website.



FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS ENJOY FESTIVE HPCD DINNER

Audrey Bentz

The annual Christmas Holiday Dinner was a huge success! Nearly 100 people attended the amazing three-course turkey or beef dinner prepared by Rocky Schulz and Arlen Aleckson, who gracefully pulled it off despite frozen water pipes! Desserts were by Dan Hartford. There were fourteen local young people who waited table, making the evening go smoothly. Singing of Christmas carols, an auction of special cakes and desserts, and the arrival of Santa Claus, who talked with every child, giving each one a special gift, brought joy to all. Many new residents mingled with the old, and so new friendships began.

Thanks to Sharon Aleckson and all her many helpers for the beautiful decorations and implementation of this dinner event of the year!



Photos: Greer Haner

(above) Waiting to be seated



(top left) Volunteers lined up to serve

(bottom left) The dessert auction



AGAIN

The sense of Christmas fills us
And with it our spirits rise
For in the midst of winter's gloom
Our hearts awaken to a new rhythm
And if we pause to listen
We hear His symphony begin
Bringing hope, bringing peace, bringing joy
Again

Jennifer Jeffers

THE HIGH PRAIRIAN

"All the news that's print to fit"

Publisher: High Prairie Community Council
 News Editor: Gwen Berry
 Layout/Typesetting: Cindy Henschell, Cascadia Graphics & Publishing
Serving the Community of High Prairie Klickitat County, Washington

Published 4 times a year (or as often as needed)

The High Prairian can be viewed or downloaded for free on the High Prairie website: <http://www.highprairie.us>

Subscriptions for printed and mailed copies are available for \$5 per year.

Contact the editor with news or comments:

Gwen Berry: pgwenberry@hotmail.com or 509-365-0025

Subscription Information

One-year subscriptions to *The High Prairian* (four printed issues mailed to your address) are available for \$5.00.

Send your name, mailing address, email address & phone number, with a check or money order for \$5.00, to

HP Subscription
PO Box 592
Lyle, WA 98635

Please make all payments payable to: **HPCC**

RETROSPECTION

Victoria Singer

September has always glowed in Schoolbus Yellow in my mind, and echoes of maple leaves turned golden rustle down the hallways of my memory. The odors of chalk and books, pine needle smoke and frost-nipped chrysanthemums scent reveries of September.

October is orange, and black. Bright yellow birch leaves mingle with crimson oak in the park. Colorful gourds and pumpkins appear outside the grocery store. Mother put up construction-paper silhouettes of bats, spiders, skeletons and witches on mirrors and lampshades. The house began to smell deliciously of simmering apple cider and ginger cookies.

November always seems gray and brown. The trees have bared their branches, and the ground at their feet is covered with a patchwork of their own creation. Gray skies intensify muted colors into vibrancy. The air smells crisp and spicy. The whole month is full of gratefulness: for a snug home, lights bright and dim, books (and the ability to read them!), mouth-watering smells wafting out from the kitchen, and family and friends who multiply the warmth and laughter and love.

December is green and white, red and purple, silver and gold. It is anticipation, happy secrets, wishing for snow! My thoughts are scented with pine and bayberry candles, cinnamon and vanilla, walnuts and peppermint. There is special music playing on the radio, the record player, in the stores, and (my favorite) sung in church and at parties. This month holds the delights of gifts made and exchanged, the occasional disappointment of socks under the tree, and the wild dissipation of playing games and eating snacks with friends and making a joyful noise at the juncture between one year and the next.

I love this time of year! The memories, specific and evocative, are pleasant companions on chilly short days and long nights.



Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home.

— Edith Sitwell

UPDATE ON SOME HIGH PRAIRIANS

Audrey Bentz is recuperating from foot surgery in November. She has not been allowed to put any weight on the recovering foot; but the enforced inactivity has her rested and ready to go as soon as her doctor gives the word.

The community would like to extend our condolences to **Sharon Aleckson** for the loss of her father, who passed away just before Thanksgiving. We'd also like to offer our amazement and gratitude that, despite her loss and the work of making all the arrangements for and attending your father's Funeral Mass in Medford, she still made sure our community Christmas dinner would be wonderful.

Many High Prairians remember **Rolf Steffen** as one of the neighborhood's lovable eccentrics. Rolf died in late September and was laid to rest at Lone Pine Cemetery in a spot he selected in the far, southeast corner. After long careers with both the military (US Corps of Engineers) and the US Post Office, Rolf spent his retirement years working on projects around the house and traveling across the United States. In the early '90's he moved to High Prairie where he lived over 20 years in the hills overlooking the majestic Mount Hood and Mount Adams. Here Rolf was able to find the peace and solitude he needed to meditate upon his past, present and future. In fall 2011, Rolf made his final move to Olympia to live out his final years with his eldest daughter Natasha.



CHRISTMAS TREASURES

Diane Cazalet



I have been collecting chocolate molds for nearly thirty years. They intrigue me with their superb details, their historical significance, and the fact that they are still usable not just for molding chocolate but also for making papier-mache, bees-wax, butter, or chalkware figures. They are also great just for display. So much attention was paid to the artistic designs of the figures and objects. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, how our foods looked was as important as how they tasted. Molding foods of all kinds became especially popular during the Victorian era. Letang Fils of Paris, France, established in 1832, was one of the earliest manufacturers of molds. The most popular manufacturer was Anton Reiche of Dresden, Germany. This company made the finest molds in many thousands of designs. Today Anton Reiche molds are some of the

most sought after and desirable. The Eppelsheimer Company of New York City became the largest manufacturer of molds here in the United States starting in 1880.

The molds in the photographs are some of the Christmas themed antique chocolate molds in my collection. They are designed after many of our Christmas stories, books and poems from countries around the world. I have Nativity scenes with Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus in a manger, angels, trees, and ornaments. They made Santas, St. Nicks, Father Christmases in all kinds of activities. You can find Santa on skis, sleds, horses, donkeys, pigs, sleighs, cars, trucks and motorcycles.

Chocolate molds came in all sizes. I have small Christmas molds that hold only about 1 ounce of chocolate to my largest Santa that holds 20 pounds and took two men to pour. I also have Christmas scenes in what are called "postcard" molds. Each mold is about 4 X 6 inches and includes a whole Christmas scene, such as children around Santa or a fully decorated tree. These are stunning when made up in chocolate and can be wrapped in cellophane and given as gifts today, as was done a century ago.

One of the photos I have included is a mold of Santa baking Christmas sweets with a small cupid who is helping place cookies in the oven. This mold is one of my favorites because of the incredible detail and when I look at it, it makes me smile. I have also taken a photo of one of the Vaillancourt "Folk Art" figures next to the mold it was made from. The hand-painted figures can be found in limited editions and offered for sale in fine department stores across the country.

I highly respect the fine craftsmanship and artistry in the molds. I wish the artists who made them had been documented but so much of their history has been lost. I enjoy what these artists have created all year long, not just during the holidays.



SNOW!

Martha M. Hamill, © 2009

Snowflake sublime,
Flat, frail, fractal crystal
Obeying an irresistible
Force to render
The delicate symmetry.
Falling alone;
The gathering multitudes
Cover Earth's blemishes.

Snow!

Snow challenges,
Snow defies
Human efforts
With tools,
Silent or heard,
To reject the sterile white;
To relieve their primal
Need to be unconfined.

Snow, the dichotomy;
Snow, the beautiful,
Snow, the disrupter.

Snow!



REMEMBERING RECORD BREAKING STORMS

Doug Taylor

We have had ice storms in the past. 1964 had lots of snow, then rain washed out roads on both ends of Centerville Highway. People could not get in or out. We picked up mail at Palmer's by tractor. Mail got that far and was transferred to us volunteers for distribution. Cows were fed for Lyle Woods of Centerville as the road was washed out between Kemp's and Parr's. 1969 was another bad year—snow, then ice on trees, sounding like a war zone with tree limbs breaking. Electricity was off 3 days or so. In the 1998 snow, there were road closures due to ice throughout the Gorge, electricity off 3 or 4 days. We have had incredible winters (such as 2012!) but less snow than earlier years. There were years with some snow staying on from November to March and some winters when we were able to ski over top wires on fences with no trouble. I try not to predict the weather—just think what happened.

THE NIGHT OF THE MASSACRE

Quinn Perry

There were fifteen of us sleeping on a clump of thorny trees on a cool breezy night. We heard something that sounded like footsteps in the grass and our humans came by carrying a lantern. They were calling for the big clumsy bird that follows us around all the time. They eventually found it and left and we thought everything would be O.K., but we soon awoke again to the sound of howling, it sounded quite close by.

All of the sudden, through the large opening that the humans use to get into our shelter, I saw three medium sized dogs. They started yipping and barking, they came in and it looked like they were trying to climb the trees. They were snapping their teeth at us.

We split up and flew out of their range; my group was able to dart through a fence. All I could hear was the others crashing off through the dried leaves. We ran until we reached the feeding place. We saw the big clumsy bird sleeping in her plastic cage. We drank some water and flew up into another tree, making sure we were high up. We awoke to a cold and dark morning. We dropped out of the tree and walked towards the human's dwelling. I counted all the other guinea fowl and only seven others remained. The humans emerged and we followed them over to the big bird (which they call turkey) where we were all fed.

The other guineas never did return. I overheard the humans talking about the attack and heard them say the wild dogs are called "coyotes." If I ever see a coyote again, I know what I'll do—fly higher!

RECENT WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

Compiled by Gwen Berry



cougars in a tree, photographed by Mike Leach in the Columbia Hills south of Hoctor Road.

On December 4, this **Barred Owl** (right) took one of Ron and Debbie McDonald's chickens. They left the remains of the carcass where the prowler had left it so they were able to get a picture of the culprit when it returned. This was a half-mile west of Schilling Road on Centerville Highway.



On December 11, right next door to McDonalds' place, Jake Jakabosky and several other bird watchers got the opportunity to enjoy a very rare bird for Klickitat County—a **Bohemian Waxwing** (left). It was cleaning off all the remaining high bush cranberries it could reach.

On December 12, Jake Jakabosky and Gwen Berry watched this **bobcat** (right) come through

the gate at the corner of their house. It had an injured front leg and was probably hoping for an easy meal at their bird feeders, but it moved on when it saw them watching.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Tom Doll

The sky suddenly turns an ashen white.
The wind is howling and I wonder
Is it a blizzard or a polar fleece of snow
Clothing the landscape as I head out.

The mantle of snow sends shivers up my spine
As the nipping of an unheated squall lays
A blanket over the hardened earth's bed.
I sob as silent cataracts form over my eyes
And the flurry obstructs my sight.

Frosty smoke begins to show
Against the illumination of the snow
A shadow how faint it is
Unveiled itself in a starless night
Lighted by candles for all travelers to see.

A shelter beckons the lonely and friends alike,
Together for a holiday social.
The fuel that warms the body
From the sensation of the cold
Also warms the emptiness of the soul this night.

SAFER CANDLES

Most everyone occasionally lights candles in their home. The flickering light has a certain romantic appeal. However, candles are all too often the cause of house fires. Candles can be knocked over by a pet or a child, or a forgotten candle can topple or burn down and ignite combustible materials.

There is now a safe way to enjoy that atmosphere without endangering your home and family—a battery operated candle. It provides the same light and actually flickers like the real thing. These inexpensive LED candles come in a wide variety of styles with a long-lasting battery. They could make great stocking stuffers for Christmas. Check them out online.

TIPS FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

Jake Jakobosky

If you are going to use a generator to charge your home during an outage, plan ahead and have an electrician install a switch that separates your home from the power lines. That could save the life of a lineman trying to restore your power.

Another winter precaution: clean that stove flue pipe. A stove pipe that is carboned up with creosote can ignite into a flue fire with disastrous results. Check out the articles in the December, 2011, issue of the *High Prairian* describing what to do in the event of a flue fire, how to clean the flue, how to safely dispose of the ashes, etc. It's available online at www.highprairie.us if you didn't keep your copy.

Can we get to you in an emergency? For only \$25, Fire District volunteer Fred Henschell can make you an address sign and place it at the end of your driveway in as little as one day. If you don't know your house number you can get it from the county planning department. Fred also can order a reflective street sign if one is required on your road. The road name must be approved by the county. Give Fred a call at 509-365-5283.

One more thing—now that we can find you, can we get to your house? Be sure to keep your driveway plowed so emergency equipment can get in, turned around, and out again. Also, our structure engines are tall, so be sure to keep the trees pruned back to avoid damage to emergency lights, horns, radio aerials, etc.



YELLOW AIR AND ASTHMA

I've known about asthma most of my life. My brother struggled with it as a child. Mom had to keep him sitting up at night when he was having trouble breathing. Recently, though, I was with someone having a really severe asthma attack and from that experience I now understand how it can be life threatening. The struggle for air was desperate. One asthma sufferer has said it's like being buried alive. In an asthma attack, the muscles around the airways go into spasm, causing them to narrow. In addition, the lining of the airways can swell and make breathing near impossible. The results can be disastrous.

People with this condition are really vulnerable when air quality gets as bad as it was around Thanksgiving. A high pressure system had trapped accumulated air pollution over the Pacific Northwest, and the foul air was full of fine particulate matter. It cast a yellowish pall over High Prairie. Mounts Hood and Adams were barely visible. Fire Chief Doug Hutchison reported that many of the aid calls at the Vancouver Fire Department where he works were for people with heart, asthma, and respiratory ailments. Children, the elderly, and asthma patients are most at risk.

A Washington Dept. of Ecology analysis of 2009 data estimated that these very fine smoke particles cause about 1,100 deaths and about \$190 million in health care costs annually in our state. Though many of us were unaware of it, Ecology had instituted a pollution-related burn ban for many Washington counties (including Klickitat) during the worst of those smoky days, from November 25 through December 1.

Those of us burning wood in our stoves can help reduce this kind of suffering by using only clean, dry wood in certified wood-burning devices and pellet stoves. Excessive smoke produced when starting a fire can be reduced by striving for a quick, hot fire. Folks with uncertified devices should switch to backup heat sources like gas and electricity. Use of uncertified devices is prohibited during a Department of Ecology declared burn ban unless they are the home's only source of adequate heat. In addition, all outdoor burning must be suspended until a weather disturbance moves the crummy air out.

Ecology posts pollution burn bans for both indoor and outdoor burning on local media outlets and at www.waburnbans.net. You can check the website for ban updates and to determine when they are rescinded. It should be noted that there are civil penalties for violators.

Although people with asthma are more sensitive and experience the effects more quickly and severely, high levels of pollution affect everyone. Let's all pitch in and help keep the air cleaner.



Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together. —Vista M. Kelly

Lyle, WA 98635
P.O. Box 592

The High Prairian

Vol. 13, No. 4

The High Prairian

December 2013

WINTER SOLSTICE — SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2013

Gwen Berry

The Winter Solstice marks the longest night and the shortest day of the year. In cold December, the dark seems to be winning – but not for long. The Solstice is the turning point. Now the nights will grow shorter and the days grow longer, until the Summer Solstice in June when the cycle begins again.

The changing seasons are a result of our planet's yearly trip around the sun. The earth is on a permanent tilt, so when it's at one end of its orbit the northern hemisphere is tilted toward the sun. It is summer and we see the bright sun riding high in our sky. At the other end, the northern hemisphere tilts away from the sun. We have winter, and the pale sun's arc is low in the southern sky. At Winter Solstice, we are at our farthest point from the sun, and as the earth continues its orbit the days will slowly get longer and the sun will begin to creep back up the sky.

For most of us, the Winter Solstice goes by without much notice. However, to those whose lives were tied to the turning of the seasons, it was a much more significant event.

"The approaching winter solstice was once a frightening time for ancient people, especially those who lived in places like northern Europe. They did not have a scientific explanation for the shorter days and longer nights. They were afraid that the sun was losing its power, so they made up tales to explain what was happening and performed rituals to save the sun and restore its strength. They were certain that these rituals worked because—sure enough!—the sun then became stronger and stronger and the nights shorter and shorter. They eventually had to repeat this process, but it worked every time."¹

Celebrating the return of the light has been at the root of mid-winter holidays and festivals throughout the ages, and that is still true today. Most of our present-day mix of winter customs and traditions is borrowed from solstice practices of many cultures before us.

Marking the Winter Solstice reminds us of the natural rhythms of the world, and connects us with the long history of this elemental celebration. Try sitting in the darkness for a few minutes. Then light a candle or put the torch to a bonfire. Savor the sense of hope and delight, as relevant now as it has been since ancient times, that the longest night is past and the promise of the sun is returning.

¹ (from *Multicultural Holidays: Share Our Celebration* by Julia Jasmine)

