

Christmas Season, 1992

As 1992 came to an end, we looked back--- some looked back on a year of great happiness, others on a year of happiness mixed with sadness, and still others an "annus horribilis", a horrible year, to quote the Queen. Neither you, nor I, nor the Queen can do anything about the past year, but we can try to make the New Year better. In Canada, and more specifically in the Shuswap area, we have an advantage over most of the world's population; we have "HOPE"; that's a wonderful starting place.

I, was encouraged when I read the editorials written before Christmas in our own "Shuswap Market" and "Salmon Arm Observer". We were reminded why we have Christmas and why the words from the Bible telling us to "love the Lord your God" and to "love thy neighbour as yourself", make a lot of sense. Those who lean to a more commercial or secular festive season would say these words are too spiritual for today's society. I say "BALDERDASH" or a more salty expression if I were not a "lady", a grandmother, and a Sunday School teacher. No celebration is more multicultural or more non-denominational than Christmas. It is simply the time of year, when those of all faiths and of no faith, speak of "HOPE", peace and love for their fellow man. Shortly after these articles appeared in our local newspaper, the Vancouver Province published a similar article on their editorial page. Both newspapers exhibited courage. Both were secure enough to know that by supporting the "HOPE", peace and joy of the Christmas season, they were not denying other religious beliefs. They were promoting tolerance as in integral part of "HOPE".

The ladies of Eagle Bay Community Church Women's Auxiliary collected and the good people of Eagle Bay donated a truck load of "HOPE" to Safe House in Salmon Arm, in the way of clothing, food household goods and money. As well, many, many gifts were taken to Stephanie Ellix of the Canadian Mental Health Society for Christmas distribution. The Sunday School children are giving their "mission money" to the Chelsea Dunne fund. Several ladies are volunteers at Bastion Place; their visits bring joy and caring to senior citizens who now can look forward to seeing a special friend on a regular basis. We know these endeavours will continue because a gift of "HOPE" is always appropriate.

Those in Eagle Bay give "HOPE" to our abused planet by remembering the three R's for environmental care; "Re-cycle, Re-duce, and Re-use, by using the drop-off centers for recycling in Salmon Arm and Sorrento. Pollution awareness is not a new subject in Eagle Bay. On October 25, 1962, the EB Farmer's Institute supported a motion by Salmon Arm trustees "that all outside toilets and septic tanks be at least 5 feet from high water, and dumping sewage from house boats must stop. This is for sanitary reasons and protection for all people using lake water for consumption." In essence, "HOPE" in 1962 and "HOPE" in 1993 are the same.

We all "HOPE" for more tolerance and understanding of our fellow man at the world level, the national level and the local level. Our own pioneers were tested in December, 1930 when the "White Canada Association" of Vancouver, B.C., asked the members of the Farmer's Institute sign a petition to be sent to the "Honorable Premier and Executive Council, praying that legislation be enacted, prohibiting all Orientals, whether born in this province or not, from acquiring crown lands or natural resources in British Columbia". The petition was returned "unsigned".

Sometimes "HOPE" must be mixed with a little elbow grease, sometimes with a lot of elbow grease. Last Sunday, a little girl told me she was hoping for a place to use her new ice skates. I understand the ice rink at the Community Hall is now cleared of snow and "HOPE" became reality. Just to be sure "HOPE" and reality stay in place, my husband pops over to the hall just before the school bus arrives and makes sure there is space for children to skate. With a hint of nostalgia in his voice, he recalls his skating on "Tin Can Slough" with cow dung pucks and Eaton's Catalog padding. What is truth and what is poetry doesn't matter. It all reinforces "HOPE".

In every community, HOPE" becomes accomplishment with co-operation, organization and the camaraderie that goes with the above.

I "HOPE" for a peaceful, positive and happy 1993. How about you?

<This article appeared in The Shuswap Market in "A View from Eagle Bay", a weekly column written by Renee Hester.

As I put this book together in January 2006, I realize the words above are as relevant today as they were 13 years ago. God Bless the editor, Shane Mills, who always had the courage of his convictions and the guts to stand by what is truly Canadian. Anyone who knew Shane was aware he was light years ahead of his time!>

R.H.