

Westbank Express...



Children at Westbank School, c. late 1930s

WINTER MEMORIES

History is not all about great leaders and the rise and fall of empires. History comes from the memories of people like you and me. In this edition of the Westbank Express, we sought out stories from the Westbank community recollecting winter in the Okanagan Valley. These are their stories.

“Several winters ago, when I was at the funny age where I felt I was “too old” to believe in Santa, I was walking home from my best friend’s house down Gates Road. It was late at night and the plough hadn’t yet come, so the fresh blanket of snow acted as a sound buffer. The night was quiet and still, lit only by the street lamps. As I walked that street on that very night, I was surprised to see I was not alone. Pedalling through the snow in the opposite direction was a man on a bike. He had a long white beard and was dressed in all in red. I think back on that night and remember that there is still magic in the world.” - Darci R.

“Many of us have experienced life on the Canadian prairies, and seemingly never tire of recounting the starkly harsh winters we survived while there. (continued page 2...)

Christmas Craft Fair



December 2nd, 11am - 3pm
Westbank Museum,
2376 Dobbin Rd.

Join us for our annual Christmas Craft Fair! There will be refreshments, entertainment by the West Kelowna Music School, and hand made crafts by local artisans. There will be many kinds of crafts including paintings, wineglasses, blankets, crocheted crafts, jewelry, and many more.

Want Westbank Express?

If you would like the Westbank Express e-mailed to you every month, become a member of the Westbank Museum. It only costs \$10 and it entitles you to:

- Personal invitation to special events
- Westbank Express Newsletter
- Complimentary ticket to Christmas Craft Fair

Your contribution goes towards running the museum and this publication. Thank you for your support!

On numerous occasions, several seniors have sat in the hot tub at the Johnson Bentley pool and entertained each other with their increasingly embellished stories of prairie winters, while the snowflakes gently fell outside and the sighs of gratitude and contentment emanated from the hot tub.

These are the memories that stay with us as we enjoy a community that brings people together and encourages active participation. We do occasionally experience harsh winters in our Okanagan, (read *A Slice of Life* by Sheila Paynter in which she describes the winters that froze orchards and wrought financial disaster for growers) but, generally speaking, our winters are pretty tolerable." - Jean-Anne C.

"My most memorable winter was in 1968 when, on Boxing Day, the thermometer plummeted to minus forty degrees Celsius. That year, our family was living in another house on our farm while my dad was performing extensive renovations on our old farmhouse. It was an ordeal thawing the water line to keep the water flowing in our barn for the cattle and horses. I was unfortunately ill and lay in bed with a very bad head cold, so I wasn't much help to them. My parents had planned to go out for the first time to celebrate New Year's Eve, but it was too cold, so they had to cancel going out to the dance. We struggled to keep our house warm that winter. The wood burning Ashley heater only kept the kitchen, living room, and lower two bedrooms just barely warm enough. That was the last winter that Okanagan Lake froze over completely. Although I didn't witness it, I heard stories about people driving their vehicles across the lake during that time." - Gordon F.

"In May of 1965, I came to the Kelowna with the task of opening an airline office. That spring was warm, so I spent many days swimming in the lake. I had just moved from Winnipeg, where it was still snowing! I now enjoy spending our (much milder) winters skiing at Big White." - Fred F.

"Memories from my childhood include having Christmas dinner at Grandpa Reece's home. Before dinner, I remember waiting in the living room looking at the fake fire in the electric fireplace with the silver tinsel Christmas tree set beside it. So different from what we had at home. Dad was one of six siblings, and all of the relatives were invited to dinner. The dinner table was the biggest table I had ever seen. I'm still pretty sure we all sat around that one table. After dinner, we all played Bingo. There were always prizes for the winners. Grandpa or his wife, Grace, would call the numbers. Grandpa, who always put an "h" in front of any word starting with a vowel, would call "under the hi", but the family favourite was "under the ho, clickety click 66." - Kathleen R.

"We held a massive Christmas party at our home in Shannon Lake for 5 years in a row. One year, we made a Christmas piñata that was glued together so well that we had to saw it open! Another year, we cooked a Turkey from our farm that was 46 pounds - the biggest Turkey we ever had. I called the local Supermarket to see if they had an oven big enough to cook it for us. They said no - and probably thought I was crazy. I cooked it in my own oven, keeping the door closed with a broom. Those times spent together with family and friends were eventful and wonderful." - Poppy A.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NOV/DEC

WESTBANK

Christmas Craft Fair

Westbank Museum, 2376
Dobbin Rd, December 2nd,
10am - 3pm

Treat yourself or a loved one to hand made goodies. Perfect time to shop for Christmas gifts, plus you are supporting local artists. Entertainment by the West Kelowna Music School from 11am - 1pm.

Festival of Lights

New Moon Art Gallery, 1726
Byland Rd, November 9, 6:30 -
8:30 pm

A truly unique display of hand woven and hand painted lamp shades. It will be sure to brighten up your night!

Sip into the Season: Westside Wine Trail

West Kelowna Wineries, Dec 3,
12 - 5 pm

Enjoy local arts and crafts and wine all at once! Take this chance to visit each of West Kelowna's unique wineries.

PEACHLAND

Indoor Artisan Market

Peachland Visitor Centre, 5684
Beach Ave. Biweekly, Nov 4 -
March 17, 10am - 3pm

Markets don't have to end with summer! The Indoor market has an awesome variety of arts, crafts, food, and drink.

SUMMERLAND

Seasons Sparkles

Summerland Arts Centre, 9525
Wharton St, Nov 24 - Dec 23,
5 - 9 PM

Summerland's annual art sale includes paintings, fibre art, jewelry, cards, home decor, and much more. Try something new - give the gift of hand made art for Christmas!

Kelowna

Ukrainian Christmas Bread Workshop

Okanagan Heritage Museum,
470 Queensway Ave, Dec 9,
10am - 12pm

Learn how to make Ukrainian Christmas bread, and taste the final product!

BUSINESS SECTION

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Wine Country Tai Chi Society

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Email: dougrwaines@shaw.ca
winecountrytaichi.ca

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