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Notes 'N' News

Best wishes to you and yours for a
Happy Christmas and a prosperous
New Year – Etta and Chris.



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By the time you read this, the festival of Thanksgiving (US) and our Caribbean Cruise will be history and, like you, we will once more be heading into the frenzy of the Christmas season. Maybe now is a good time to remind ourselves what it is all about.

Sure it's all about celebrating and the sharing of gifts: but what about the deeper meaning of Christmas which so often gets overlooked in that frenzy.

Christmas as we know it has been a long time in the making. Originally it was the pagan celebration of the winter solstice, in which mistletoe, holly and the Yule log were a part of the sacrificial rite. In the 17th century, the Christmas tree was first used indoors, in Strasbourg, France, symbolizing the mythical Garden of Eden of German mystery plays. In 1841, Albert, prince consort of Queen Victoria brought the tree to Britain and it was then carried by the emigrants to the New World. The Dutch settlers brought their tradition of celebrating Sint Nikolaas, patron saint of children, which they celebrated on December 6th, with gifts to children. Later this celebration was merged with the Christian "Christ Mass" a celebration to mark the birth of Christ, which has been practiced since the 4th Century. Today's "Santa Claus" is a derivative of Sint Nikolaas or St. Nicholas. It is today a Christian celebration throughout the world.

As adult leaders we have a "Duty" to remind our youth that this is a time to think of others. Of the thousands of people who are in need at this time of an outstretched hand of friendship and love. To think of the Police, the 911 operators, Customs and excise officers, Prison Guards, Fireman, Ambulance personnel, Doctors and Nurses, Train, bus and taxi drivers, to name but a few, who will work around the clock to keep us safe, help us if we get into difficulties and ferry us around while we celebrate. To think about our soldiers, sailors and airmen posted thousands of miles away from loved ones here at home, and, their families who will celebrate half-heartedly because part of their family are away from home; serving us, overseas. And for those who will not be celebrating at all, but rather mourning the loss of someone who has made the ultimate sacrifice that we may be free to celebrate the joy of this Christmastide. Include them in our prayers at the closing of our section meetings – If you don't have closing prayers, maybe this is a good time to start. We truly do have so much to be grateful for.

A Program Planning Guide...

Planning a night hike or widegame for January? Will you want a moonlit night or a very dark one? This moon calendar will help you to plan accordingly.

Month	Full Moon	New Moon	Month	Full Moon	New Moon.
January	14 th	29 th	July	11 th	25 th
February	13 th	28 th	August	9 th	23 rd
March	14 th	29 th	September	7 th	22 nd
April	13 th	27 th	October	7 th	22 nd
May	13 th	27 th	November	5 th	20 th
June	11 th	25 th	December	5 th	20 th

Throughout time, people have tried to explain why certain, often mysterious things happen. Superstitions emerged to help us avoid bad luck and bring good fortune. Let's look back on some of the superstitions that folks have put stock in over the years. And why not? After all there's still a lot out there we still don't understand.

Looking at a new moon over your right shoulder is good luck, whereas looking at it over the left shoulder is bad luck.

It's good luck to get out of the bed on the same side you got in. And if you're making up your bed, don't stop in the middle or you'll have a restless sleep.

If the bottom of your foot itches, you're going on a trip. If you're nose itches, watch out your going to get into a fight or be kissed by a fool.

Catch a falling leaf on the first day of autumn, and you won't catch cold all winter.

The Campfire is an integral part of camp life yet we seem to have great difficulty in getting troops and packs to join in.

Many youth today do not know the words to many (if any) of the campfire songs or be able to put on skits. Over the next five issues of this newsletter we will publish the words of six songs and details of six skits, and six cheers.

Please get your youth to learn these, and then they will hopefully be able to take an active role, and better enjoy the spring Campfires. They can all be found in "The campfire book" Published by Scouts Canada National Council, available at the Scout Shop.

This month two of each.

First skit. "Three Rivers"

Cast: two youth who are prospectors on separate claims.

First prospector is cooking his supper when the second enters. They exchange pleasantries.

First invites the second to share his supper.

First: "Here, use this plate."

Second: "I don't want to be picky, but this plate is not very clean."

First: "Well now, that plate is as clean as three rivers can get it."

Second accepts the plate and they enjoy the stew.

Second: "That was very good, thank you."

First: "Would you hand me the plates so we can clean up."

Second hands him the plates.

First sets them on the ground and calls the dog,

"Here three rivers! Here three rivers! Come boy! Clean up, Good dog."

First Song. "My Bonnie"

This is an *action song*. Stand up on the first word with a "B" in it, sit down on the next "B", and so on for each word with a "B" in it. The whole group should end the song sitting down.

My Bonnie lies over the ocean,
My Bonnie lies over the sea,
My Bonnie lies over the ocean,
Oh, Bring Back my Bonnie to me.

Bring Back, Bring Back,
Oh Bring Back my Bonnie to me, to me,
Bring Back, Bring Back,
Oh, Bring Back my Bonnie to me.

Cheer #1

All Together... slowly

"Oh fa_____ Oh fa_____ Oh fa_____
Oh-fa-goodness sake."

Second Skit. "Lion Tamer"

Cast: Three children

Action: Two children watching the other child crack a whip at a frozen chicken.

First Child: "What is she doing?"

Second Child: "Practicing"

First: "Practicing what?"

Second: "She wants to be a lion tamer."

First: "But that's not a lion. That's a chicken"

Second: "So is she."

Cheer # 2

"Bubble gum,
Bubble gum,
Bubble gum,

Pop!"

Second Song: "I had a little chicken"

1. Oh, I had a little chicken and it wouldn't lay an egg,
and down it's leg,
So I ran hot water up and down its leg.
an Easter Egg.
Oh, I ran hot water up and down its leg.
leg,
And the darn old chicken laid a hard-boiled egg,
Bacon and egg.
Hard-boiled egg, Hard-boiled egg,
leg,
The darn old chicken laid a hard-boiled egg
chicken laid a pickled egg.
2. So I ran hot chocolate up
And that darn old chicken laid
3. So I ran a pig up and down its
And that darn old chicken laid
4. So I ran vinegar up and down its
And that darn old

Country Legends abound in folklore, and I thought it might be fun to look at the true stories behind a few of them.

The legend of John Henry.

They say that John Henry was born in Alabama with a sledgehammer in each hand, destined from birth to be a steel diving man. "Big John" got his fame working on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, driving steel faster than any man who ever swung a hammer, and every man who tried to match him.

As the tracks were laid, and the railroad moved forward, they came upon a monster – Big Bend Mountain in the hills of West Virginia. Rather than go around the mountain, the C&O bosses decided to tunnel through it, with John Henry leading the charge. In they tunneled, with Big John swinging his fourteen-pound hammer, often gaining twelve feet a day.

Now, this was an era when machines were replacing workers all over the country and, as fate would have it, one such machine showed up at Big Bend with a slick salesman in tow. "My machine can drill faster than any man alive!" the salesman claimed. The C&O crew knew better – but the railroad bosses considered the offer. John Henry, like most workers had a wife and family to support. Realizing that the new machine was threatening their livelihood, John said "A man is nothing but a man. Before I'll let your steam drill beat me, though, I'll die with a hammer in my hand. So a challenge was struck.

The race begun with a mighty roar as the crowd cheered, the steam drill cranked into life, and John Henry went to work swinging TWO extra big, twenty-pound hammers. With all the noise and smoke the crowd thought the mountain was going to cave in. But it was Big John swinging away, doing what he did best, as the steam drill furiously tried to keep up.

When the dust settled and the tunnels were measured, John had beaten the steam drill. But then Big John staggered, and then he fell. That day John Henry died just like he said he would, with a hammer in his hand.

Some say he was a real man, others say that he was just a folk hero who today still lives on in the stories, songs and hearts of workers everywhere. If you're ever down this way, call in at Big Bend Mountain, near Talcott, West Virginia, where you can see the Great Bend Tunnel, said to have been carved through the mountain by John Henry.

Useless Trivia... Did you know that the first state to unanimously ratify the Constitution, did so on December 7th 1787 becoming the first state in the U.S.A. Ah.... But can you name it?

Codes and Ciphers...

Here's a new code to add to your collection. It is called a **Dial-a-gram**. The messages are written in numerical code based on the familiar telephone dial or pad. Each number represents one of the letters shown with it on the dial. A letter is not necessarily the same each time, since each number has three letters associated with it. You (and your youth) have to decide which letter to use. (Note there is no "Q" or "Z" but you could substitute the # and * for these respectively.) Use the number 1 to indicate a Full stop.

Test your skill on these two messages before attempting to confuse your youth.

Message #1. 843 8463 47 7473 367 843 94334263 86 78278

Message #2.

843 *8336 63 #3532 47 2 782883 46 843 72751 6338 84373 28 P1GJ761

4663 58251 _ _ _ _ _

Sweet Dreams... Before putting away your sleeping bag after each camp, put in a sheet of fabric softener to keep it smelling fresh.

What all the BUZZ is about...

People have long understood the benefits of keeping bees – for candle wax, to help fertilize crops and, of course for the honey we love so much. But here are some facts you might not know:

- Bees visit around two million flowers to make one pound of honey.
- To help find all those flowers, bees have five eyes: two “compound” eyes with thousands of facets, and three “simple” eyes.
- A single beehive can have around 50,000 bees at any one time during the spring and summer.
- Honey never spoils or goes bad.
- By combining the healing power of beeswax with pure, natural ingredients like botanical oils, herbs, and even buttermilk, you can create some of the best skin care products money can buy.

It could happen to you...

My wife and I spent our honeymoon touring Southern Ireland in a rental car. On day four we set off from our hotel to drive the very scenic “Ring of Kerry” About an hour and a half into the trip we were horrified to see a cart loaded with hay and two Kerrymen sitting on top, emerge into the narrow lane from a field. My wife who was driving at the time, slammed on the brakes, but couldn’t stop in time, so she yanked on the wheel and steered the car through the roadside hedge on over some rocks into the field, where the car stooped and burst into flames. Fortunately we were not hurt.

Later at the police station, we heard the Kerryman saying to a garde “Bejebers, some of these tourists are awful bad drivers. We only just got out of that field in time”

Several hours later, we were in our hotel room and decided to have a late night snack. I picked up the telephone and listened for a dialing tone – only to overhear a conversation that went something like this:

“Is that Kerry two, double two, double two”

“No, you’ve got the wrong number, this is Kerry double two, double two, two.

“Oh, sorry for troubling you in the middle of the night”

“That’s all right, I had to get up anyway, because the phone was ringing!”

Can you identify the badge...

Requirements... (note: = missing word or words)

1. Help plan and take part in an outdoor Activity lasting at least 72 hours.....
2. Keep a log or diary, or other form of record of your.....
3. In your record, first explain why this activity was chosen, and the part you played in its planning.....

More than a Million....

A school here in Florida has just this week donated 1,000,000 pennies or \$10,000 to a charity that helps children of very poor families. Is this not something we can do as an Area? If every member of Valley Highlands donated all the pennies from their change for the rest of the Scouting Year, I am certain that we too could help a few families in distress, while hardly noticing the loss from our own purse.

As a point of interest I have just counted the pennies in our "change" pot. The total is 26cents

U.S. and we have only been here a week. I know for a fact that there is \$30. Canadian, back home. So...

I will set the ball rolling with 326 pennies, now I hope you will encourage all the members in your group

to join in. Send me an email and let me know your tally at the end of each month and let us all watch

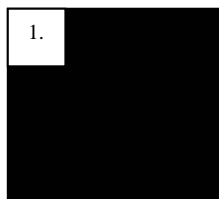
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our "Charity Fund grow." Don't forget your committee members and sponsors. Select, Copy, and paste the

form at end of newsletter, into a new page and print one for each member of your group.

And Finally....

A crossword puzzle for the educationally disadvantaged...



Clues:

1. Across. The indefinite article. (Anagram.)
1. Down. The first letter of the alphabet.
1. Diagonally. Alpha Singular.
1. Up. First of several blood types

More than a Million....

