

NEWSLETTER

Coming Events —Awards Dinner

Start time is 6:15–6:30 P.M.–dinner & drinks– for the February 2 Awards Dinner at DuBarry’s on Selkirk and Montreal Road (where we were last year). Dave Mingie has reserved space for 25 people, which should be ample.

Awards and Trophies

Mercifully, I am not eligible for any awards this year. I retired the Crappie trophy a few years ago, having won(?) this prestigious award three times. As my old grammar teacher, Mrs. Brady, used to say, “Crappie, Crappier, Crappiest”. A natural progression!

Grant Hopkins has advised me that he plans to attend this year and will insist on paying his own way. I assured him solemnly that his wishes would be respected.

Grant has some good stories—worth the price of admission to hear him.

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Ice Fishing Humour ?

Two men are ice fishing on the local river when a funeral procession goes by. One of the fishermen takes off his toque, then puts it back on when the procession has passed.

His friend is impressed by this respect and says so, to which the other replies: “It’s the least I could do, we would have been married 35 years next week.”

And now for the other side.

Donna’s husband died suddenly. The undertaker asked how she wanted the obituary to read, noting it was \$1 per word. Donna said, “Make it —**Mike is dead.**”

“Oh, there’s a \$7 minimum,” said the undertaker.

Donna thought for a minute, then replied brightly, “Make it read —**Mike is dead – Fish House For Sale.**”

And a new twist on an old proverb:

“Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day.

Teach him how to ice fish and he will sit in a fish house and drink beer all day long.”

What do you call a fish with no eye?

FSH!

Ice Fishing —Then And Now

Ice-fishing works best as a social activity—the more, the merrier (or, misery loves company). This is really true when things are serious—you're looking for supper or keeping the larder stocked. First Nations peoples used various techniques across Canada—probably the same methods were used along the Rideau and on the Corridor lakes. For example, fish decoys were jiggled enticingly to attract fish within range of the spear or gaff, while the fisherman huddled under a blanket to keep warm and to keep the light out of the hole.

The early settlers used similar techniques, and the solitary approach still works. As technology slowly worked its way into daily life, enterprising souls found applications in ice fishing.

My father recalled how he and his friends used to fish through the ice after WW I. Older guys and men would chop a series of holes in a good spot, while he and the rest of the kids went up the lake about 200 yards away. When a net had been placed and the spearmen were in position around a large hole, the kids would be given the signal to go into action.

This motley crew would start back, whacking sticks and stamping on the ice to drive fish toward the waiting net and spears. After the beaters reached the holes, they would watch the outcome with glee. When things quieted down, they straggled off in another direction and started the process all over again.

Dad mentioned that this worked better at night. If the ice was thick enough, one of the men might bring a car on the ice and shine the headlights over the holes. Technology at work! If cars weren't available, lanterns would be hung from sticks planted in the ice at the edge of the holes. What did they catch? Rough fish—mostly perch and bullheads—occasionally a pike, lake trout, or walleye. Not sporting, but effective and that's what counted. Money was always scarce—fresh fish was a cheap addition to the diet.

Think of the sheer genius of this technique! Since the kids were going to get restless and run around anyway, why not harness their energy for a useful purpose and also keep them warm? For kids, it was great. You ran around with other kids and made noise, while the older guys and the fathers encouraged you—all for free.

Today, they'd package it as a bonding-socialization adventure at some camp and charge hundreds or thousands of dollars for the experience—they'd teach them to use electronic fish-finders and underwater cameras. Ah, progress!

Power of prayer in a fishing net

Saskatoon – Holy mackerel! Or, to be precise, holy walleye.

Rev. Mariusz Zajac, a Catholic priest who likes to fish in his spare time, hooked a world record walleye while he was reciting a prayer of gratitude.

“I believe it was a Christmas present to me from the Lord,” said Zajac, pastor at the Canadian Martyrs Roman Catholic Church in Carrot River, Sask. “Really, I feel that way when I think about it over and over.”

He caught the monster Jan. 4 on Tobin Lake near Nipawin in northern Saskatchewan. The 8.165-kilogram fish, which was 92.7 centimeters long, is a record for walleye caught while ice fishing. The average walleye weighs about 1.36 kilograms.

It was just before 5 p.m. when Zajac, having put in a few hours at his wood-stove-warmed ice-fishing shack, resolved to call it a day. “I had a few nibbles, but that was it. I didn’t catch anything,” said the Polish-born priest, who moved to Canada in 1995.

Before packing up, he decided to recite the Cantic of Mary, an evening prayer from the Gospel of Luke, which gives thanks to the Lord for each day.

“On these words, I got a bite. It was very special for me because I have a devotion to Jesus’ mother, as I was born on the (anniversary) day of her feast for the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8,” Zajac said. “I’ve had lots of signs of God’s presence revealed to me through nature.”

Zajac learned Thursday it would be in the record books for a fish caught through the ice. The requisite documents proving its existence must be signed so it can be registered with the Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame in Wisconsin. It has already been registered with Saskatchewan Environment as a provincial record in any season. A biologist has taken samples of it to the University of Saskatchewan in hopes of determining an age that might explain how it grew so big.

Saskatoon Star-Phoenix

LIFE IN THE 1500's – The Good Old Days ?

When you start thinking wistfully of The Good Old Days, just consider what has come to us from everyday life in the 16th Century.

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour.

Baths equaled a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice, clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all, the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose a small person in it, hence the saying, “*Don't throw the baby out with the bath water!*”

Houses had thatched roofs. Thick straw, piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the pets — dogs, cats, and other small animals — mice, rats, bugs, etc., lived in the roof. When it rained, it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof, hence the saying, “*It's raining cats and dogs!*”

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could really mess up your bed. So, they found that if they made beds with big posts and hung a sheet over the top, it addressed that problem — hence, those beautiful big 4 poster beds with canopies.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt, hence the saying, “*Dirt poor.*”

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet. So they spread thresh on the floor to help them keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they kept adding more thresh until when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed at the entryway — a “*thresh hold.*”

Sometimes they could obtain pork and would feel special when that happened. When company came over, they would bring out some bacon and hang it to show off. It was a sign of wealth and also a sign that a man “*could really bring home the bacon.*”

Creative Cemetery Carvings

It's never too early to plan ahead and come up with a memorable inscription. Even if people forget about you, make sure that you get in the last word.

On the grave of Ezekial Aikle in East Dalhousie Cemetery, Nova Scotia.

*Here lies
Ezekiel Aikle
Age 102
The Good
Die Young*

In a London, England cemetery:

*Ann Mann
Here lies Ann Mann
Who lived an old maid
But died an old Mann.
Dec. 8, 1767*

In a Ribbesford , England, cemetery

*Anna Wallace
The children of Israel wanted bread
And the Lord sent them manna.
Old clerk Wallace wanted a wife,
And the devil sent him Anna.*

Playing with names in a Ruidoso, New Mexico, cemetery:

*Here lies
Johnny Yeast
Pardon me
For not rising.*

Bedford, Suffolk, England

“23/3/1744 Wm Jaye was buried being the last of his name in the parish and an end of a very worthless, malicious, ill-natured family having for ages been remarkable for oppressing and as much as in them lay for defrauding the Ministers of this Parish of their just dues which character this person kept up to the last day of his life.

Witness my hand, Richard Temple, Vicar of Pettistree.”

And finally:

Two men were walking home after a party and decided to take a shortcut through the cemetery just for laughs. Right in the middle of the cemetery they were startled by a tap-tap-tapping noise coming from the misty shadows. Trembling with fear, they found an old man with a hammer and chisel, chipping away at one of the headstones.

“Holy cow, Mister,” one of them said after catching his breath, “You scared us half to death — we thought you were a ghost! What are you doing working here so late at night?”

“Those fools!”, the old man grumbled. “They misspelled my name!”

That’ll show ‘em!

A Frenchman, an Englishman, and a Canadian trapper were captured by a fierce band of Indians while exploring the New World. The chief came to them and said, *“The bad news is that now that we’ve caught you, we’re going to kill you and use your skins to build a ice fishing house. The good news is that you get to choose how you die.”*

The Frenchman says, *“I take ze poison!”* The chief gives him poison, the Frenchman says, *“Vive la France!”* and drinks it. The Englishman says, *“A pistol for me, please.”* The chief gives him a pistol, he holds it to his head, shouts, *“God save the Queen!”*, and blows his brains out.

The Canadian trapper says, *“Give me a fork!”*
The chief is puzzled, but shrugs and gives him a fork.

The trapper takes the fork and starts jabbing himself all over — the stomach, the sides, the chest, everywhere. There’s blood gushing out all over — it’s horrible! Even the Indians are appalled.

The chief screams, *“What are you doing?”*

The trapper looks at him, smiles, and says triumphantly, *“So much for your ice-fishing house!”*