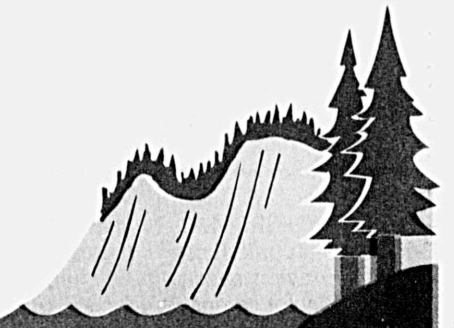


CITY EDITOR:
Mark Allan
562-2441,
Local 382
FAX: 562-7453



COMMUNITY



HERE and NOW

Crib tournament

The Prince George Grass Roots Cribbage Club hosts its regional cribbage tournament Sunday at 6 p.m. at the Patricia Hall, 944 Patricia Blvd.

It costs \$30 for 18 games. Membership is required.

For information phone 562-4827.

Teddy bears

The Prince George Art Gallery holds a teddy bear workshop with **Bonnie Duchscherer** this Saturday and Sunday as well as Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 (10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturdays and 1 to 4:30 p.m. Sundays) at the art gallery.

The cost is \$150 for non-members and \$125 for members. Make a child-proof, washable, acrylic bear with safety eyes.

The class is limited to eight participants and the registration deadline is this Friday.

For information phone 563-6447.

Lighting up

The fun-filled Christmas light-up ceremony at the Civic Centre happens next Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

The annual event will highlight the unveiling of the Civic Centre Plaza and area Christmas light display. There will be hot refreshments, entertainment, mascots and a visit from Santa.

The fun outside the Civic Centre is free. Should you wish to take part in the Festival of Trees event taking place indoors at the Civic Centre, a small fee will be charged.

Call the Leisure Services office at 561-7633 for more information.

Perogy sale

The St. Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Church holds a sale Nov. 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the church, corner of Westwood Drive and Range Road.

Sale includes perogies, cabbage rolls, borscht, sausage and baking. Eat in or take out.

For information phone 563-4974.

Bottle drive

The College Heights Secondary dry grad committee holds a bottle drive Dec. 1 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Please save your bottles.

Wells arts

The Island Mountain Arts gallery in Wells is open for Christmas shopping from noon to 5 p.m. every day through Dec. 23.

You can choose from arts and crafts creations by the people of the area including art prints to sweaters to gingerbread houses to twig furniture. Some Third World crafts are also available.

For more information call 994-3466 or 1-800-442-2787.

Art submissions

The Prince George Art Gallery and the Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society invite artists to submit two- and three-dimensional artwork interpreting the theme Cultural Visions.

The deadline for submissions is Dec. 10. Details are available at the art gallery.

For information phone 563-6447.

Native art

The Prince George Native Friendship Centre holds a native art auction Dec. 6 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the P.G. Native Friendship Centre, back hall.

Proceeds go to the street kids Christmas party and Friendship house.

For information phone 562-2538. Everyone is welcome.

Reptile pets: *For some, it's love at first bite*

by **BERNICE TRICK**
Citizen Staff

Kathryn Paton's house in Prince George is filled with reptiles from top to bottom.

There are 22 of them, to be exact. Six turtles, two snakes, four iguanas, three bearded dragons, three berber skinks, a water dragon, a red-sided skink and two basilisks.

Other than the turtles and snakes, they're all species of lizards — small ones and not-so-small ones; gentle ones and not-so-gentle ones.

You find them upstairs, downstairs and the main floor, and Paton loves them all — even those who don't like her very well.

Like Solomon, a 3.5-foot iguana who got off on the wrong foot with his mistress two years ago.

"He kept bobbing his head at me, and because I didn't know better, I bobbed back, thinking it was a form of communication," said Paton. "I later found out it's an aggressive move used towards each other. He's never forgotten and he's never forgiven."

Solomon's most dangerous quality is his long tail which he whips back and forth to de-

fend himself. It can raise four-inch welts on an unprotected arm. "Even a small iguana can do that. It's not a good situation if there are children in the home."

People buy them when they're four to six inches long, and "rather cute." Then they grow to six feet long with razor-sharp claws that can make mincemeat of a person's skin.

Other types of Paton's lizards are docile and like to be stroked. The most popular reptiles purchased as pets are turtles and green iguanas costing from \$10 to \$25.

If you insist on a reptile pet, you must also research to learn what food, heat, light and habitat are required, Paton advises.

She uses heating pads, heating bulbs, temperature-controlled rooms, filtration water systems, aquariums, tanks and a special area to raise worms for food.

Cheech and Chong, her two basilisks, are examples of what happens when reared in the wrong environment. They should be able to rise up on their hind legs and run like the wind, but improper lighting left their legs undeveloped, so they skitter along on all fours instead.

Don't dump that turtle!

Citizen staff

Kathryn Paton's greatest mission is to keep people from dumping pet turtles they no longer want.

The Prince George woman accepts them all and sends them to South Carolina.

Her refugees go to the Edmonton Valley Zoo, and from there to the U.S.

It costs her a \$10 drop-off fee for each one disposed of, and she pays it.

"I'd sooner do that than see them dropped off in the wild, or in a pond, or in a lake. That's a death sentence."

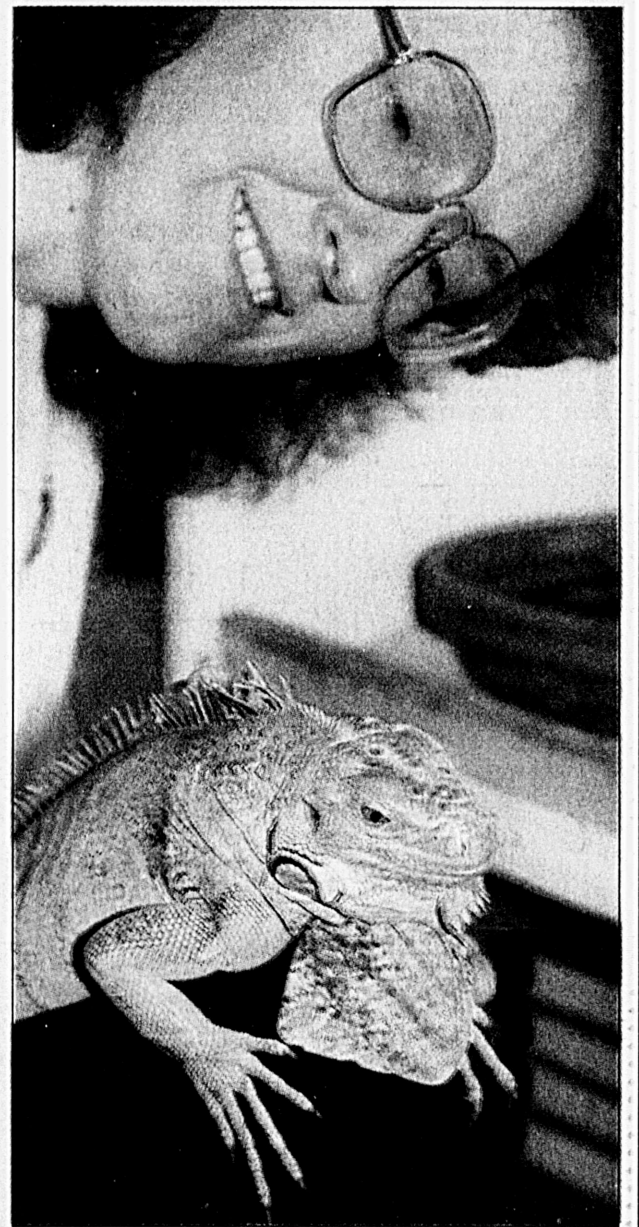
People get pet turtles without knowing

what's involved, and Christmas is a prime example, Paton says. "These tiny creatures the size of loonies grow to the size of a dinner plate, and as they grow they become a big problem."

Creating the precisely controlled environment needed can cost from \$100 to almost \$200 just to start, she said.

Citizen photo by Dave Milne

Right: Kathryn Paton's pet Iguana, Solomon, has a memory like an elephant.



Citizen photo by Dave Milne

ANNUAL DONATION — Kirk Nielsen, left, and Dennis Smith, right, from the North Central Guides Association load Capt. John Fredborg with about 1,200 pounds of processed moose and caribou meat for the Salvation Army Addictions Treatment Centre in Prince George. The meat is donated to outfitters by hunting clients taking home the trophy horns, but not all of the meat. The association raises funds to process the meat during its annual Hunter Harvest Ball taking place this year on Nov. 30 at the Royal Canadian Legion.

Lot of nice people in BMX racing — and Susie is one

by **KEN BERNISOHN**
Citizen Staff

When Susie Fairbairn got involved in BMX racing seven years ago, it was just as a parent of two youngsters who raced.

It's taken over a lot of her life.

And that's why Judi Sharp nominated Fairbairn as one of Prince George's unsung heroes.

Fairbairn is the president of the Prince George BMX Club, the office manager for the Canadian BMX Association, and put almost 20,000 kilometres on the family vehicle this year going to BMX races.

Her husband, Gord, and two of her three kids don't mind. They all race.

This year Gord went to England for the world championships, and about 20 people from Prince George, including five Fairbairns, are expected to go

UNSUNG HEROES

to Saskatoon for the world championships July 22 to 27.

In Prince George there are about 60 young people active in BMX racing, plus nine adults.

"It's not advertised as a parent participation sport, but it should be, because it takes 17 adults to run a race: first aid, concessions, track officials, registration and at the finish line," Fairbairn said.

She's been involved in two races a week from breakup to freezeup since 1990. That's a lot of races, but "the kids never want to end the season."

In the letter nominating her as an Unsung Hero, the way Fairbairn encourages sportsmanship was mentioned.



Susie Fairbairn: BMX mom.

"The kids have to follow the rules. If someone does something that isn't nice, although it may not be against the rules, we talk to them," she said.

Unlike other sports, the BMX club avoids the pecking order concerns of young people. Some young people, like Susie's son Thomas, are involved for the social aspects of the club. But in a race, she says, it's the racer against the track, not just against each other.

Another advantage she sees is, "It's usually a whole family thing."

Today, unlike in early generations, people tend to change the hobbies they're involved with every five years, according to studies for the provincial government in the 1980s. But there's one good reason Fairbairn stays involved.

"There's a lot of really nice people involved in BMX."

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