



Fast Genetics recognizes years of service at Christmas Party



Lucinda Smolinski (left) and Shannon Meyers (far right) presenting 15 years of service awards to Tammy Wingerter (2nd from left), Redge Watt (centre left), Brett Kent (centre right), Wayne Kish (2nd from right), and Ernest Biro (absent).

Founded in 1982 by Dr. Harold Fast and his wife Marjorie, Fast Genetics, known then as Fast Pigs, is one of the cornerstone companies and largest employers of Spiritwood and area. The company has seen many developments and changes over the years and has grown accordingly now employing over 100 employees in Canada, most of which are based in Saskatchewan.

Starting out with one barn at the Fast's home farm site, the company now produces breeding stock at 6 dif-

ferent farm sites, with one more on the way, which sell pigs to multiplication sites and boar studs across Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and in the United States. The company also owns and operates its own feed mill, Northern Feeds, and truck wash station, both of which contribute to the company's commitment to Dr. Harold's vision of a high-health breeding stock. An attribute the Fast pigs are globally recognized for.

After being acquired by Sexing Technologies in 2015, the company

saw further growth as trials for sex-sorted pig sperm started. Facilities and staff grew once again with the introduction of the sorting lab in Saskatoon. Being on the cutting edge of research in the pig industry has helped to attract some bright new researchers to the company that keep up the drive for excellence.

Dr. Fast had always stressed the importance of having good people working for the company. Shannon Meyers, the company's Chief Operating Officer, reiterated this point at the

Fast Genetics Christmas Party held at the Spiritwood Recreation Centre's Mezzanine. The company would not have made the leaps and bounds it has were it not for the good people that keep it running. Each year Fast Genetics takes time to recognize employees who have put in five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years of service with the company by providing them with a gift of appreciation and describing their contributions to their work as put forth by their manager.

More photos on page 2

2020

Wishing You a Spectacular New Year

From the staff at the
Spiritwood Herald

Fast Genetics recognizes years of service at Christmas Party



Lucinda Smolinski (left) and Shannon Meyers (far right) presenting 5 years of service awards to Melchor Asuncion (centre left), Cliff Christopherson (centre right), Betty-Ann Kehrig (absent), and Paul Flint (absent).



Lucinda Smolinski (left) and Shannon Meyers (2nd from right) presenting 10 years of service awards to Raymond Laguyo (2nd from left), Brent Franson (centre), Noel Maglabe (far right), and Allan Lendvay (absent).

Thompson comes out ahead in Super League wrap up

The rocks were flying down the ice on Tuesday, Dec. 17 at the Spiritwood curling rink for the Super League playoffs. Teams had finished up their playdown weeks and came into the wrap up tournament with teams Thompson and Brewer tied with 3 wins 1 loss, followed by team Wasden with 2 wins 2 losses, and teams Pauls and Fisher each with 1 win and 3 losses.

Fisher played Pauls to sort out the bottom standings with Pauls coming out ahead with a 5-0 finish after 6 ends of curling. Brewer played Wasden for a neck and neck 8 ends that finished off 4-2 for Brewer who went on the final.

The last game saw Brewer get ahead 2-0 after the first 3 ends before Thompson managed to bring in 2 in the 4th end to tie it up. Brewer went ahead again in the 6th end to make the score 3-2 before Thompson closed out the game with a big 5-point end in the 7th, leaving the score 7-3 Thompson.



The winning Super League Team Thompson, from left: Terry Thompson, Glen Caffet, Emma Beaulac, and Dustin Smolinski.

NOTICE OF NOMINATION

Nominations will be accepted January 3 - 9/2020 for Delegates of Lake Country Co-operative Association Limited. Delegate Positions are available at the following locations:

- Domremy (one 3 year term)
- La Ronge (one 3 year term)
- Paddockwood (one 3 year term)
- Shellbrook (one 3 year term)
- Smeaton (one 3 year term & one 2 year term)
- Wakaw (one 3 year term)
- Big River (one 3 year term)
- Kinistino (one 3 year term)
- Marcellin (one 3 year term)
- Canwood (one 3 year term)
- Birch Hills (one 3 year term)
- Spiritwood (one 3 year term)
- Prince Albert (five 3 year terms)

Nomination forms are available at the Food Store at each location, except Shellbrook where they can be picked up at the Agro Center and in Spiritwood at the Service Center.

- Nominees must do the majority of their Co-op purchases at the location for which they are nominated, or be a resident of the district.
- Nominees must hold a Co-op membership in their name.
- Nominee purchases must be equivalent to those of the average Co-op member.



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Five generations by Memorial Cross

Submitted by Blanche Pott

To get to Memorial Cross, you must climb Memorial Hill, which is 965 feet above sea level and was known as Mayard's Hill. The lake south of the hill was known as Taylor Lake, and was then changed to Memorial Lake in remembrance of the soldiers who fought in World War 1.

In 2004, the Shell Lake Legion began to improve the site. Now there is a 212-foot walkway, 179 concrete treads in the 76 steps climbing 148 lineal feet of stairs and walkways, and 720 feet of hand railing along each side of the steps and the walkways.

The Legion members and volunteers have kept it repaired, built benches and have a little chain fence around the cross and main area. The keep it will worth your effort to climb Memorial Hill.

Several years ago Memorial Hill was rededicated to all people who

have or are still serving Canada. Also on the hill was grandpa Claude Wasden, auntie Megan Wasden, auntie Mellisa (Wasden) McEwen and her husband Anthony.

Great grandma Roberta Wasden waited at the bottom of the hill to take pictures as we descended.

From there, we had dinner in the diner. We kept Rhonda and her mother Edna busy, as they had many other customers as well as the 10 of us.

After good-byes, we each went to our own job or activity.

Christine had to peel potatoes and shuck corn, which she donated to the Legion corn feast, and Blanch had to go home to back bannock, also for the con feast.

All in all, it was an enjoyable day and well spent.

Oh yes, the Shell Lake Legion Corn Feast is one of our fundraisers, and is always delicious. And it is an annual event!



Five generations on Memorial Hill, Sept. 15, 2019. Huntly Wasden with his mother Farin (top), Left great grandma Christine Wollms, centre grandma Adele Wasden, and right great great grandma Blanche Pott.

Be informed as cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals become available

Cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals may soon be available for purchase, under federal and provincial cannabis laws. With these products becoming available, there are important points consumers should keep in mind regarding the retail and consumption of cannabis.

Some other things to keep in mind if you choose to consume cannabis products:

- In Saskatchewan, the minimum age for buying and consuming all forms of cannabis, including edibles, is 19 years of age.

- All cannabis products, including edibles that may look like candy, baked goods or other food items, should be stored in a place that cannot be reached by children or pets.

- Possession of any amount of non-medical cannabis by a minor is prohibited.

- Licensed retailers are required to follow specific health and safety guidelines regarding the products they sell. Unsure if you're buying from a legal source? The list of licensed retailers in Saskatchewan (stores and online) can be

found on SLGA's website at <https://www.slga.com/permitsand-licenses/cannabis-permits/cannabis-retailing/cannabis-retailers-in-saskatchewan>.

- Edible cannabis may take hours longer to take effect than smoking cannabis. The effects of edibles are also generally more intense and last longer than the effects of inhaling cannabis.

- Consuming any form of non-medical cannabis in public spaces is prohibited. Individuals can only carry up to 30 grams of dried cannabis or equivalent in public.

- Possessing, consuming or distributing any form of cannabis in a vehicle could result in a \$300 fine. Cannabis can only be transported from one lawful place (store, home) to another lawful place (home, another's home). This is consistent with the rules already in place for alcohol and vehicles.

- There is zero tolerance for all drug-impaired driving in Saskatchewan.

- Penalties for driving under the influence of cannabis may include immediate license suspension, vehicle seizure for up to 60 days,

and license suspension for up to five years upon conviction of drug-impaired driving. These laws apply to everyone, including medicinal users of cannabis.

- Penalties in place for provincial cannabis offences range from \$200 to \$2,250. In more serious instances, individuals could be charged with a provincial offence and face fines ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000 and imprisonment of up to six months.

Related Items:

- Cannabis in Saskatchewan: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/cannabisin->

- Saskatchewan Cannabis Retailers: <https://www.slga.com/permitsand-licenses/cannabis-permits/cannabis-retailing/cannabis-retailers-in-saskatchewan>

- What to Know About Cannabis Legislation: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/newsand-media/2018/october/17/legalization-of-cannabis>

- Cannabis Legalization Background: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/newsand-media/2018/october/17/legalization-of-cannabis>

SARCS updates

The Spiritwood Recreation Centre has been busy this month with Christmas parties galore. It is great to see the community using and supporting the facility.

Laura Beauchense and Donnell Wingerter run yoga classes four nights a week in the mezzanine, and Larissa Swityk-Conacher runs walking with Friends a couple afternoons a week.

Texas Hold'em Poker had three tables sit down this week with cash prizes going out to 6. Don Tipton took home the first prize of \$351 followed by Rene Turgeon winning \$260, Kelly Parker with \$156, Kelly Egert with \$117, Mark Baier with \$91, and Charles Schira with \$65.

SARCS hosts a BINGO night each month. December winners

were Sally Tipton, Sally Turgeon, Isabelle Horne, Brooklyn Saam (2), Mark Cornfield, Mary-Lynn Cross, Ashley Iverson, and Kaeli Cross.

Advertising Deadline is Friday 5:00 p.m.

REAL ESTATE WEEKLY
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 \$229,000 636 - 3rd St. E., Spiritwood 'Motivated Sellers' Bi-Level family home, 4BD, 3BA, attached garage, fenced back yard, move in ready, all appliances included. MLS#SK755613	 \$69,900 2 Main Street, Rabbit Lake Double lot, 2BD, 1BA character home, newly refinished original fir hardwood floors, new bathroom flooring, paint, heated with NG and wood stove, double detached garage. MLS#SK759563	 \$385,000 RM of Spiritwood 'Open to offers' Acreage 6.5 miles SE of Spiritwood, 3BD, 2BA, fully furnished, barn, quonset, garage, mature landscaped yard, open to offers. MLS#SK764518
 \$189,000 605 - 3rd St. E., Spiritwood 3BD, 2BA. Attached double heated garage, fenced private yard, insulated heated shed/work shop, well maintained. Quick possession available. MLS#SK766562	 Reduced to \$215,000 120 Memorial Drive, Spiritwood 3BD, 2BA family home, lots of upgrades and is move in ready, main floor laundry, open floor plan, fenced yard, attached garage, c/w all appliances + hot tub. MLS#SK767916	 \$335,000 Birch Lake Waterfront situated on 8.26 acres at Birch Lake. 3BD, 2BA unique home, walk out basement, wood/electric heat. A must see property!! MLS#SK770220

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To a tough 2019, we say good riddance

As this, the final newspaper of 2019, hits newsstands we are just five days removed from the beginning of another new year.

If you're asking yourself just where the heck 2019 went, you're not alone by any means. But then, it's doubtful that many will greet the end of this year — and all of the things it brought with it — with any genuine sadness.

Instead, most of us are probably already looking forward to 2020 with crossed fingers and bated breath. It's a brand new decade. That means we have an opportunity to truly hit the reset button, and can get down to the hard work of becoming better versions of ourselves (for real this time).

Over the past couple of years, this end-of-year column has tended to embody the spirit of self-reflection that comes with the holiday season. It's been half meditation on the year that has passed, and half hopeful projection for the year to come.

Nearly all of those projections have turned out to be extraordinarily inaccurate. But perhaps 2020 will finally be the kinder, gentler year that was wished for in 2018. Perhaps it will finally be the year in which we turn away from our darkest demons, and, instead, turn towards each other and work together to make our country (and the world) a better, more inclusive place.

As a confederation, Canada certainly couldn't be much worse off heading into 2020.

We are a nation, to use the term loosely,



JORDAN
TWISS
~
Columnist

bitterly divided by seemingly unbridgeable chasms. And the birth of the fledgling separatist Wexit movement in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, suggests that there are some of us here in the west are tired of trying to mend fences with our neighbours in the east.

Support for the Wexit movement may never reach the level of the 1995 Quebec independence referendum, which was frighteningly close to being successful.

But it's something that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau needs to

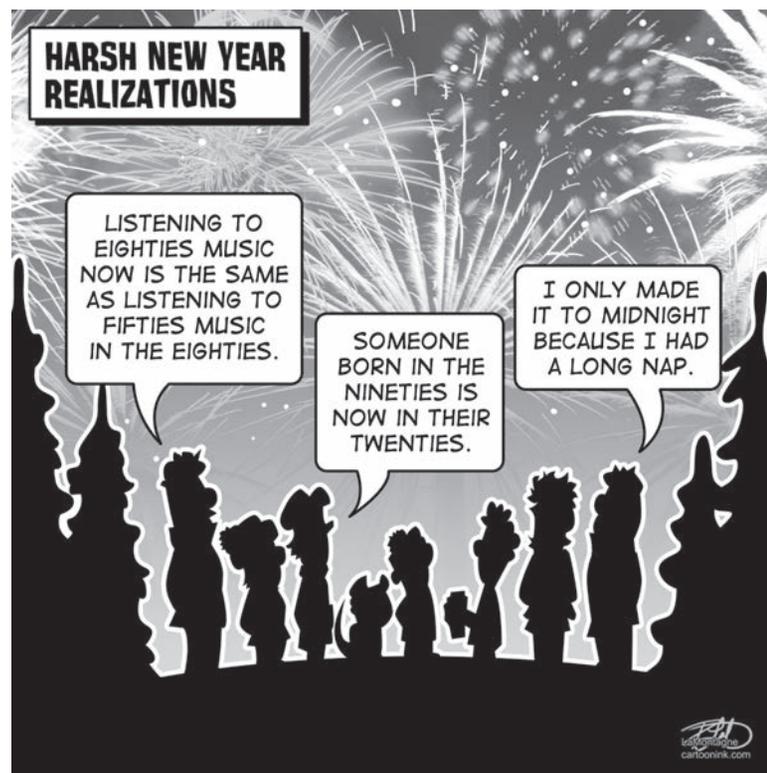
address in 2020.

Speaking of Mr. Trudeau, it's hard to imagine a leader of a political party having a worse year than Mr. Trudeau experienced in 2019. To name but a few, there was the sordid SNC Lavalin affair to kick off the year, his snide, dismissive remarks to an Indigenous protester in March, and revelations regarding his affinity for donning black and brown face when he was younger (but old enough to know better).

With all this, Mr. Trudeau should consider himself lucky to have been given a minority mandate from Canadians back in October, and focus much of 2020 on repairing his tarnished reputation through his actions rather than his pretty rhetoric.

In short, he needs to deliver on the "sunny ways" he promised Canadians back in 2015

Not so fortunate in 2019 was Conservative leader Andrew Scheer, who failed to resonate with Canadian voters enough to take advan-



tage of the many embarrassing scandals that Mr. Trudeau found himself embroiled in.

Though Mr. Scheer actually won the popular vote, he was forced to resign as the Conservative leader on Dec. 12, after it was discovered that he'd used party funds to pay for his kids' private schooling. For the now leaderless Conservative Party, 2020 will be a year of rebuilding as it searches for a fresh, new face to rival Mr. Trudeau.

Looking provincially, Saskatchewan finds itself in an election year in 2020. Though that contest won't happen until Nov. 2, the current political climate in the province suggests that Sask. NDP leader Ryan Meili will have to pull off a miracle if his party is to put up any sort of fight.

For Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe, 2019 was a year of maintaining the status quo in fighting against the federal carbon tax, and

a number of measures and policies that are considered harmful to western Canada's economy.

Going into 2020 and the provincial election, Mr. Moe finds himself with more allies among his provincial counterparts, and plenty of support from his electorate.

Odds are, he'll be able to keep it cruise control for much of the year.

Locally, 2019 was a year of big events. From the opening of a Dairy Queen in Shellbrook and the Demers Rona in Debden, to the historic premiers' meeting on the Big River First Nation, there were plenty of signs that the communities in this area are strong and thriving.

We here at the Herald hope that 2020 will bring only more signs of this strength, and nothing but the best for you and your loved ones. Happy new year!

Gormley: Improving a better world

As another year ends, imbued with the Christmas messages of love, charity and goodwill, it's a good time to try mindfulness, a long overdue digital disconnect and to work on improving ourselves.

It is easy in our times to conjure up the famous opening sentence of Charles Dickens' 1859 novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way ..."

It is a fascinating time, so awash in incredible opportunity and,

at the same time, so forsaken for some. From climate alarmists to assorted worriers, a concerted campaign has convinced many young people that times are not good. Surveys, laughable a generation ago ("will humans be wiped out in the next 100 years") actually have significant numbers of people agreeing. Even the more balanced question "are times getting worse" finds agreement among 60% of the general population.

While some of this stems from the incessant push of certain groups toward the apocalyptic and a media focus on the unusual, dramatic or shocking, there is also the innate human negativity bias - it's just easier and safer to expect the worst. Notwithstanding, a look at some of the planet's vital signs find that they're not bad.

Singaporean academic and former UN delegate Kishore Mah-

bubani, in his 2018 book "Has the West Lost It", reminds us that today fewer than 10% of the world's population lives in extreme poverty, a contrast to the 75% who did in 1950. He points out that by 2030 over one-half of the world's population will enjoy middle class living standards.

Dr. Mahbubani also explains that in addition to the planet's huge gains in public health, immunization rates and reduced infant mortality, today's citizens have the lowest likelihood in human history of dying in a war.

Earlier this Fall, Reason Magazine, in conjunction with the Human Progress Institute, declared the "impending defeat" of pestilence, famine, war and death, the so-called Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Admittedly, everything is not perfect. The world still struggles with environmental and

human challenges, even crises. But author Ron Bailey, writing in Reason, concludes that technology and policy have combined to dramatically increase world wealth, reduce hunger and infectious diseases, and dramatically increase life expectancy.

In addition to human innovation, adaptation, and enterprise, much of this is due to inclusive economic and political institutions which are committed to freedom, the rule of law and democratic ideals. This stands in contrast to centuries of human behaviour where the masses lived to be exploited by the elites.

While the human condition improves, we should ask ourselves how we are doing socially. 25 years ago, Seattle Pastor Bob Moorehead wrote "The Paradox of Our Age". It still challenges us that "we have taller buildings but shorter tempers; wider freeways but narrower

viewpoints; we buy more but enjoy it less; we have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, yet less time; we have more degrees but less sense; more knowledge but less judgment; more medicine, yet less wellness. We drink too much; spend too recklessly; laugh too little; drive too fast; get too angry quickly; stay up too late; get up too tired; read too seldom; watch TV too much and pray too seldom.

As a Christmas and year end reflection, it's worth remembering that a better world is still possible. And it begins by improving ourselves.

John Gormley is a broadcaster, lawyer, author and former Progressive Conservative MP whose radio talk show is heard weekdays from 8:30am – 12:30pm on 650 CKOM Saskatoon and 980 CJME Regina

Federal carbon tax burden growing for Saskatchewan families

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation is demanding answers as federal projections show carbon tax costs are going up for families while the projected rebate is being slashed.

"Ottawa owes taxpayers an explanation: why are carbon tax costs for Saskatchewan families going up while the re-

bate is going down?" asked Aaron Wudrick, Federal Director for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. "When governments raise taxes, elected representatives must stand and vote to take responsibility. Instead, this government is changing the numbers on the fly without any real explanation or

transparency."

Last year, the federal government projected carbon taxes would impose costs of \$403 on the average Saskatchewan family and promised a rebate of \$598. The 2019 carbon tax rate translated to 4.4 cents per litre on gasoline.

Prior to the election,

the federal government projected the 2020 rebate would rise to \$903 as the carbon tax jumped to 6.6 cents per litre.

This year, the federal government is projecting that carbon taxes will impose costs of \$641 on the average Saskatchewan family, but the rebate will only

be \$792. The lower projected rebate means the average Saskatchewan family will lose \$44 compared to last year.

It's important to note rebates are supposed to be covered by carbon tax revenues so even if some taxpayers receive a net return, it's a direct result of others carrying a heavier tax burden.

"Saskatchewan families will be paying more in carbon taxes while Ottawa slashes their rebates," said Todd MacKay, the CTF's Prairie Director. "In the meantime, not a single MP has voted on carbon tax rates or rebates. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau owes Saskatchewanians an explanation."

The origins of Baby New Year

Excitement for a new year abounds on January 1. Baby New Year is one of the more recognizable symbols of the New Year's holiday, particularly in print advertisements and television commercials. Perhaps you've wondered what role Baby New Year plays in the celebration? While he may seem like a relatively modern icon, this cultural mainstay has a lengthy history.

One theory suggests Baby New Year was celebrated as far back as 600 B.C. in ancient Greece, when a child was paraded around in a basket upon the arrival of the new year. The baby represented rebirth, and Greeks believed their god of wine, Dionysus, was reborn on New Year's as the spirit of fertility. Other historians say that the custom even predates the Greeks to the ancient Egyptians.

Even though the baby new year custom was originally frowned upon by Christians and deemed a pagan tradition, eventually Christians embraced the symbol as well, albeit in a different way. The end of the year is marked by the birth of the Christ child,



and this became a special way to interpret Baby New Year.

In modern times, Baby New Year has lost any connection to a deity or religious figure. Rather, he is now interpreted as a child who arrives at the start of the year and eventually ages into Father Time. The baby is depicted as an infant or toddler wearing a diaper and a sash with the year he is representing (and often a top hat). He is sometimes

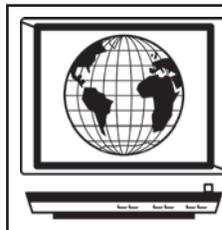
depicted holding or associated with an hourglass, a noisemaker or other item either pertaining to time or New Year's Day festivities. Father Time is often portrayed as an

elderly man with a long, gray beard. The Baby New Year/Father Time message boils down to "out with the old and in with the new." People bid goodbye to Father Time and

welcome this cherubic child who will carry them through the next 12 months and grow with them.

The Baby New Year idea eventually developed into a "First Born" tradition as well. Many towns, cities and hospitals have instituted contests awarding the first baby born in the new year the title of "Baby New Year." Such children are often the subjects of local news coverage and get their picture in the newspaper. Gifts, such as complimentary diapers, a case of formula or baby food or other baby supplies may be offered. In addition, private companies may offer their own gifts and recognition to the lucky child and his or her family in turn for complementary publicity.

Baby New Year is a symbol of the fresh start the new year brings. His relevance in celebrations has endured for centuries.



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Member of



Why exercising in winter is so important

(NC) When it gets cold outside, our natural instinct is to stay indoors, but physical activity is a great way to keep off the weight gain that comes naturally at this time of year and banish the blues that can come with the shorter days.

“Like most creatures, our bodies are designed to cope with the cold of winter by staying inside and packing on the calories to keep ourselves warm,” says Dr. Kevin Velicaria, M.D. family medicine. “Couple that with any recent holiday over-indulgences and you have a recipe for weight gain that’s hard to get rid of come spring.

Fortunately, staying active helps regulate the amount of calories that you take in during the winter and has the added benefit of boosting your mental health by fighting off the winter blahs. Velicaria adds that going outside also exposes our bodies to

the sun for some much-needed vitamin D.

Another advantage comes from the cold-and-flu fighting benefits that exercise offers.

Studies have shown that regular exercise boosts our immune systems, helping our bodies fight

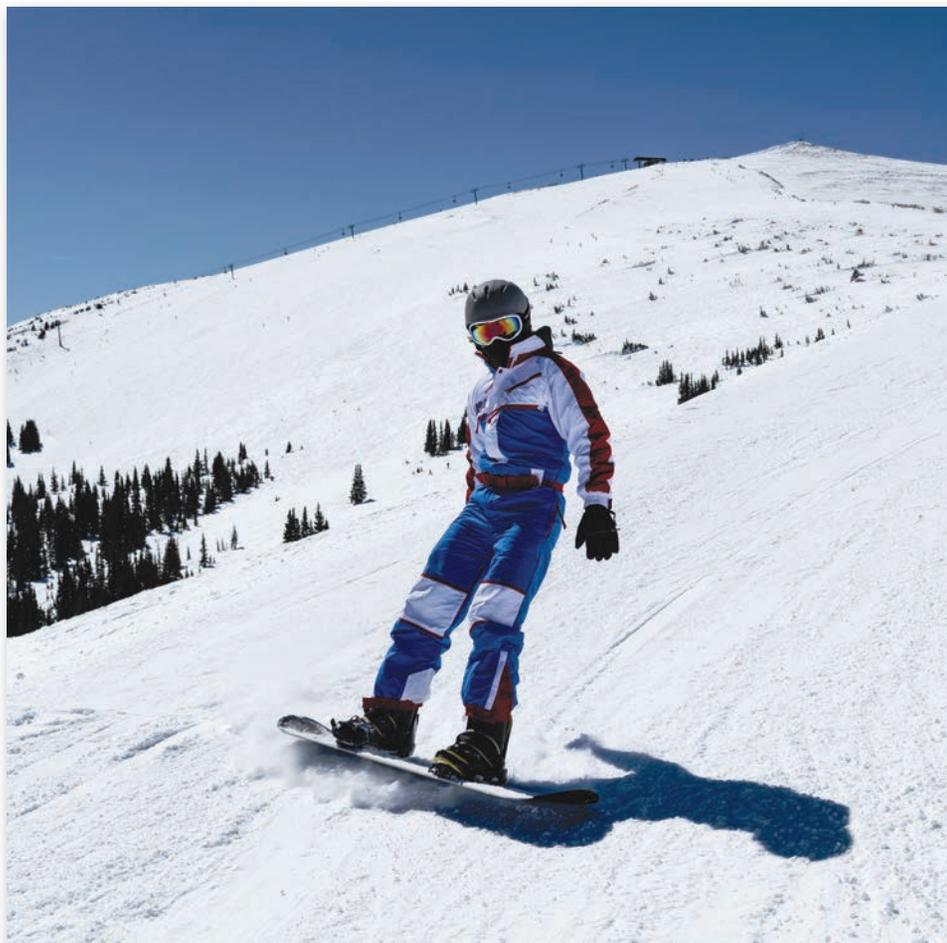
off any germs we’re exposed to at this time of year.

Still, Velicaria cautions us to pace our-

selves. In a rush to accomplish new year’s resolutions, he’s seen many gyms across the nation fill up with people who try to do too much, too quickly and wind up getting hurt.

If you find yourself in that situation, there are topical creams like Away that can help soothe the pain. Developed in Canada, it’s an effective natural product and the only topical pain cream on the

market that leverages the body’s own defence system by combining two pain-relieving agents with complementary mechanisms of action, β -caryophyllene and capsaicin, and is a unique, effective, and natural product that is non-addictive. One of Health Canada’s approved counterirritants, it contains a novel formulation never used before in any other product.



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Regulation is a tough balancing act to manage

Rules, regulations and red tape are often seen as the roadblocks of progress by those with innovative ideas and products.

The same rules, regulations and red tape are also the safeguards which exist to protect people and the world around us.

However, as in all things, common sense and balance are required.

The challenge is determining where the line of balance is, and then maintaining the flexibility to adjust that line as needed.

That flexibility, if it exists, is of course being put to the test these days as new innovation and scientific advancements are emerging at startling speeds.

In the farm sector that is certainly the case as science is making huge strides in terms of just about every aspect of production. Those steps include advancements in plant breeding techniques that are allowing new varieties to come to production much more rapidly, which is a good



CALVIN DANIELS

thing, if the techniques used are well-understood and the regulations reasonable to deal with.

That said, it is rather clear at present a grow-

ing segment of the population sees science as a near 'dark art' that they increasingly fear. We have seen that manifest itself in areas such as those shunning child vaccinations against disease which once killed thousands, and on the farm the shudder the term genetically modified crops sends through many.

It is somewhat understandable that today's science is beyond the ability of many of us to fully understand, although I suspect that has always been the case. When something is not easily understood it is easier to fear it.

The difference today of course is that the fear is often made worse by the deluge of information available at our fingertips. Often reports that are suggested as cold hard facts conflict with other reports also

deemed equally factual.

And, then there are the deluge of half-truths, rumours, opinions and outright fabrications that float nebulously around social media muddying the water in terms of actually knowing if a new science is good, or bad.

That is why we need well-established regulations, because there needs to be processes in place to determine safety for those things the public is generally not qualified to fully understand.

That does not mean however that such processes should be barriers to new developments.

In terms of agriculture there is a constant need for new varieties, better crop protection products, better fertilizers, simply better everything to allow producers to stay competitive with farmers around the world, and to increase production in the face of a growing population.

That is where the balance is required.

3 strategies for enjoying a safe New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve is one of the most festive nights of the year. Counting down to a new year while simultaneously saying goodbye to the current year provides grounds for celebration for millions of people across the globe.

New Year's celebrations vary depending on where the partying is taking place, but it's common for people to check their inhibitions at the door on December 31. That can make for a fun evening, but also puts celebrants in jeopardy of making bad decisions or confronting the consequences of others' poor decisions. Adhering to three simple safety strategies can increase the chances that this New Year's Eve is memorable for all the right reasons.

1. Travel in packs.

Most people who are out and about on New Year's Eve are focused solely on having fun. However, some criminals see New Year's Eve as an opportunity to prey on unsuspecting men and women who may not be as alert to danger as they are on other nights of the year. For example, a recent report from Australia's Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found that the number of violent offenses between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. on New Year's Eve is nine times higher than it is on other nights of the year. By hitting the town with friends and staying with those friends throughout the night, New Year's Eve revelers can make themselves less vulnerable to criminals.

2. Don't overindulge in alcohol.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration notes that people who consume alcohol begin experiencing a loss of judgment when their blood alcohol concentration, or BAC, reaches

.02. That means it only takes a relatively small amount of alcohol before people's judgment begins to falter, and judgment only suffers further with each additional drink. The pressure to overindulge in alcohol on New Year's Eve can be considerable, but revelers should avoid situations where they might be tempted to drink too much. Such overindulgence only makes people vulnerable to bad decisions and even criminals looking to prey on inebriated victims.

3. Don't get behind the wheel.

Even people who avoid alcohol on New Year's Eve are vulnerable to potentially unsafe highways. That's because everyone shares the roads, and drivers never know who else will be on the road when New Year's Eve festivities end and everyone goes home. The U.S. Department of Transportation notes that, over the last half-decade, an average of 300 people died each year in drunk driving crashes in the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. To avoid becoming such a statistic, New Year's revelers can celebrate at home and invite others to stay overnight.

New Year's Eve is a fun but potentially dangerous night. However, a few simple safety strategies can make sure New Year's Day conversations are all about the fun from the night before.

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Ode to the Poinsettia – Part III

By Patricia Hanbidge

Poinsettias are truly the “Christmas Plant”. Last week’s column detailed how to keep your poinsettia in good shape throughout this holiday season. This week I would like to concentrate on how to keep that poinsettia thriving in its entire holiday splendor for many years to come. As you remember from last week poinsettias are native to Mexico and in their native surroundings are a large, leggy shrub. Therefore, if you intend to keep your poinsettia for years to come then you will be nurturing a shrub for the future in spite of the selection and breeding that has made them more compact.



Once it is beginning to green up outside it is time for gardeners to decide the fate of that likely still rather attractive poinsettia that is rather reminiscent of Christmas past. Some of us will undoubtedly just ignore it and eventually compost it; others prefer to convince it to reflower again for the next Christmas season.

In the spring of the year it is time to cut back your poinsettia to about 15cm. This will encourage new growth. It is also a good idea to repot the plant into a pot that is slightly larger than the previous one. Place it in a very sunny location. Continue to water but let the me-

dia dry out almost completely between watering. Once June rolls around you can increase the watering and place the plant outside in a sheltered location. In the same fashion that you would harden off your bedding plants, gradually acclimatize your poinsettia to withstand a few hours of direct sunlight each day. At this time, I like to dig a hole in a suitable location in the garden and completely bury the pot. Fertilize the plant with 20-20-20 about every two weeks

and watch that poinsettia grow. What you will see is the production of thick, healthy branches with very green leaves. To encourage a bushier plant, pinch back the top centimeter of the growing shoots every three or four weeks to encourage branching. In a milder climate your poinsettia would grow into a very

attractive shrub. Leave the plant outside until the nights begin to cool off. Bring the poinsettia back indoors before the nighttime temperatures reach 10 C (50 F) as they are quite subject to chilling injury. Again, place your poinsettia in a very bright indoor location. If the plant has grown substantially, and you wish to maintain that size it will have to be repotted. If you wish it to be a smaller festive plant, trim back the plant to about 4 leaves per stem.

In order to entice your poinsettia to rebloom for the Christmas season it must receive bright daytime light and totally dark nights. Flowering is “photoperiodically” induced in the poinsettia. What this means is that it requires a certain day or more correctly night length in order to convince it to flower. To get a poinsettia to flower it needs long nights (greater than twelve hours) and short days. Starting about mid-September, place the plant into a completely dark location at

5 PM each and every night. It is important that it remain in total darkness until 8am each morning. At that time bring the plant back out into a bright location. This schedule must be continued for a period of about 75 days. Very short periods of light during the “nighttime” can ruin the whole process and necessitate it beginning all over again.

So, if you are the type of gardener who likes to achieve more difficult tasks – I urge you to try to reflower your poinsettia. You will likely find it a rather satisfying process – not without challenges but definitely worth the process! All the best to you and yours throughout the holiday season.

Hanbidge is a horticulturist with the School of Horticulture and can be reached at 306-931-GROW(4769); by email at growyourfuture@gmail.com; facebook: @schoolofhort; twitter: @horticulturepat; instagram: patyplant or check out our website at saskhort.com.

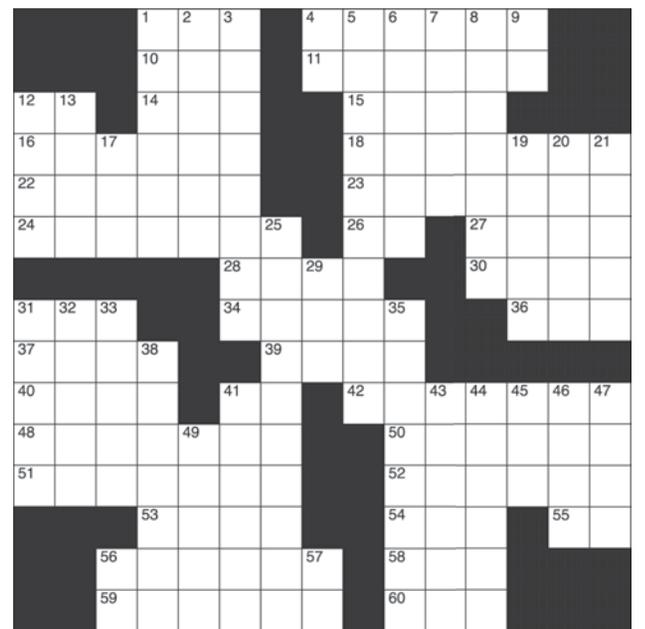
CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Hair care product
- 4. Looped
- 10. It's present in all living cells
- 11. Choose
- 12. South Dakota
- 14. Cash machine
- 15. Of the pia mater
- 16. Ancient Egyptian documents
- 18. Layers at the back of the eyeballs
- 22. Not perceived
- 23. Look over
- 24. Improve a tire
- 26. Time zone
- 27. Main branch of Islam
- 28. Bark of the mulberry tree
- 30. Sea eagles
- 31. Records heart muscle activity (abbr.)
- 34. Famed Hollywood producer
- 36. Yuck!
- 37. Reject outright and bluntly
- 39. ___ 500, car race
- 40. Small heap or pile
- 41. Type of degree (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

- 1. More cloudy
- 2. Main course
- 3. Protect with plastic
- 4. Equally
- 5. Rebukes
- 6. Friend to a salesman
- 7. Warms up
- 8. Overshadow
- 9. Interior lineman in football
- 12. San Antonio hoopster
- 13. Comedian Cook
- 17. Time zone
- 19. First PM of India
- 20. Performing perfectly
- 21. A way to hide
- 25. Former NBA commissioner
- 29. Peter's last name
- 31. Outlying suburb of London
- 32. Used to cut steak
- 33. Deep inlets
- 35. Type of tree
- 38. Done openly and unashamedly
- 41. Indigenous person of N. Africa
- 43. Confessed openly



- 42. Contagious skin disease
- 48. Erases from a surface
- 50. In an enthusiastic way
- 51. Begin again
- 52. Intricately produced pattern
- 53. It flows NW to the Seine
- 54. Be obliged to repay
- 55. Southeast
- 56. Slip in
- 58. Leisure time activity
- 59. Breastbones
- 60. Sun up in New York

- 44. A way to separate with an instrument
- 45. Influential journalist Tarbell
- 46. Manning and Roth are two
- 47. One who cares for horses in India
- 49. Something to believe in
- 56. Form of “to be”
- 57. Atomic #73

Answers on page 10

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The best quips and quotes from 2019

Part 1 (January through June) of the annual review of the year's best quips, quotes and anecdotes:

- Headline from the onion.com: "Should The NFL Prohibit Players From Appearing In Hotel Security Footage?"

- Dwight Perry of the Seattle Times: "On Jan. 26, Canada's first event that combines curling and cannabis. And of course they're calling it ... a bongspiel."

- NFL Memes, on Facebook, after the Raiders signed mistake-prone QB Nathan Peterman: "Is it possible to drug-test an entire organization?"

- * Comedian Argus Hamilton, on the Blue Jays owing \$38 million to recently released shortstop Troy Tulowitzki: "Only Judge Judy gets paid more to sit on the bench."

- Comedy writer Jim Barach: "Major League Baseball has made a deal with Cuba to scout and sign players without them defecting. In other words, they can now make it to the Bigs by the draft instead of the raft."

- RJ Currie of sports-deke.com: "Clippers guard Patrick Beverley tossed the ball at a courtside heckler in Dallas, earning him a \$25,000 fine from the NBA. Definitely not a free throw."

- Patti Dawn Swanson, the River City Renegade, on Connor McDavid's supporting cast with the Oilers: "It's like watching a John Wayne duster with the Duke riding out to catch the bad guys, only he's got Larry, Curly, Moe and Shemp for a pos-

se."

- Currie again: "When Rockets star James Harden finally quits basketball, he might be the first retiree to spend less time travelling."

- Jim DeBow, via Twitter, on President Trump feeding the Clemson football team hamburgers and pizza during their White House visit: "He was going to get Taco Bell but found out that Mexico wouldn't pay for it."

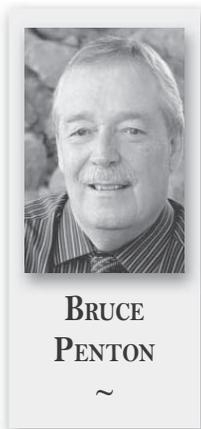
- Greg Cote of the Miami Herald on rumours that running back Le'Veon Bell might sign with the Dolphins: "The Dolphins and new personnel boss Chris Grier owe it to themselves to imagine it could be Miami for whom this Bell toils."

- Norman Chad of the Washington Post, on the Patriots' QB: "(Tom) Brady is so unbeatable, when he had acne as a teenager, he sued Clearasil — and won."

- Comedy writer Brad Dickson: "Nebraska football has landed a four-star cornerback out of Hawaii. I'm going to guess he doesn't watch the Weather Channel."

- Dwight Perry again: "There's rumblings out of L.A. that the Lakers are itching to swing a three-city trade to land Pelicans big man Anthony Davis. In return, the Lakers would send Lonzo Ball to New Orleans, and LaVar Ball to Flin Flon."

- From Mike McIntyre of the Winnipeg Free Press, on Twitter, quoting Jets' coach Paul Maurice after a 5-2 loss in Montreal: "Coach was no good. Players were no good. Food was no good. I just hope the plane works."



BRUCE
PENTON

- Ryan Whitney on Twitter: "In a crazy sequence of events Matt Kuchar just picked up a quarter Jon Rahm was using to mark his golf ball. When asked to put it back Kuchar threw down a nickel and walked away."

- Headline at TheOnion.com: "Schnauzers rioting outside Madison Square Garden following Westminster Dog Show defeat."

- Another one from Barach: "Zion Williamson of Duke hurt his knee when his Nike shoe fell apart in a game. Somewhere in China there is a six-year-old who is in a whole lot of trouble."

- Colin Jost of Saturday Night Live's Weekend Update: "Bryce Harper has signed a 13-year, \$330 million contract with the Philadelphia Phillies. Finally, answering the question, 'How much would someone have to pay you to live in Philadelphia?'"

- Janice Hough of leftcoastsportsbabe.com: "At 13 years for Bryce Harper contract, there are kids not even born in Philly who will be booing him someday."

- Brad Rock of the Deseret News: "Patriots owner

Robert Kraft pleaded not guilty to charges of soliciting a prostitute. But he did plead guilty to wearing a coloured shirt with a white collar 30 years after they went out of style."

- Remembering the late, great sportswriter Dan Jenkins, on the Winter Olympics (without the expletive): "Cross-country skiing's not a sport, it's how a (...) Swede goes to the 7-Eleven."

- Perry again: "Q: How do MLB apologists try to spin it when a player vanishes for half a season because of a marijuana suspension? A: Tommy Chong surgery."

- Broadcaster David Feherthy, during NBC's coverage of the Players Championship: "Tommy Fleetwood looks like a homeless guy who just robbed a Nike store."

- Comedy writer Alex Kaseberg: "In the NCAA tournament, 14th seed Yale lost to third seed LSU 79-74. After the game, LSU celebrated with barbecue while Yale went to their rooms and conjugated Latin verbs."

- Tim Hunter of Everett's KRKO Radio, on baseball's Atlantic League using computers to call balls and strikes this season: "Instead of yelling at umpires, managers will be told to call tech support."

- Argus Hamilton again: "If you receive an email with the subject line 'Two free Lakers tickets,' do not open it. It contains two free Lakers tickets."

- Norman Chad again, on increasingly unruly fans at sporting events: "If Vatican City were in New Jersey, the

Pope likely would get heckled during Easter Mass."

- TC in B.C., on Donald Trump announcing he would award his buddy Tiger Woods with The Medal of Freedom for his comeback to win the Masters: "Tiger said he would reciprocate by giving Trump an autographed copy of the Nine Commandments."

- Another one from Dwight Perry: "Colts owner Jim Irsay forked over \$718,750 to buy John Lennon's famed piano. Hey, Jim, when the player-personnel people said they wanted Peppers, they meant Julius, not Sgt."

- Gene Collier of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, after word circulated that Kentucky Derby favourite Omaha Beach was scratched from the race due to a throat ailment: "He's a little hoarse."

- RJ Currie again: "We are gathered today to note the passing of another Grand Slam curling season: Ashams to Ashams, brush to brush."

- Marty Burtwell, via Facebook, on the Rockets' complaints about officiating in Game 1 against Golden State: "Out of habit, I am sure James Harden argues with the staff at Foot Locker."

- Sportsnet panelist Nick Kypreos, on a video of San Jose's Joe Thornton getting hit by a puck in the ... uh, the worst place a man can get hit by a puck: "Joe knows that at this time of year, it's all about the cup."

- Steve Simmons of the Toronto Sun, on the down-

side of the Raptors playing the Bucks in the NBA Eastern Conference finals: "I'm going to have to learn how to spell Antetokounmpo on deadline."

- Janice Hough again, noting the arrest of former Indy 500 winner Al Unser, Jr., for driving while impaired in his Volkswagen Beetle: "What's more embarrassing? The DWI, or a former Indy winner driving a Beetle?"

- Dwight Perry again: "Golf Digest is struggling to come up with advertisers. New in-house marketing slogan: 'Get out of the hole.'"

- Reporter Dennis O'Donnell of the Bay Area's KPIX-TV, after the Trail Blazers fan he was interviewing live predicted the Blazers — trailing in the series 3-0 — would beat the Warriors in seven games: "As you can see, cannabis is plentiful here in Portland."

- Comedy writer Jim Barach, after the NHL suspended the Blues' Oskar Sundqvist for boarding the Bruins' Matt Grzelcyk: "Apparently he hit him so hard he knocked the vowels out of both their names."

- Headline at thekicker.com: "Giants Considering Anyone Who's Ever Met Belichick For Head Coach"

- Rob Merc, via Twitter, on news that Yankees shortstop Didi Gregorius, while sidelined after Tommy John surgery, taught himself to play the piano: "Maybe he accidentally had Elton John surgery."

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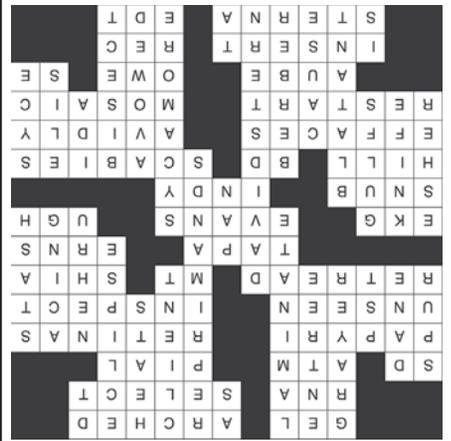
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The history behind popular New Year's traditions

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are a time to both reflect on the past year and to look forward to the excitement the months ahead will bring. There may be confetti, there are probably noisemakers and some bubbly is likely overflowing from champagne flutes.

New Year's celebrations can be traced back thousands of years to ancient Babylon. And as with many holidays with deep histories, traditions are the hallmark of many New Year's celebrations. While many people perform these traditions by rote, it can be interesting to delve into the history behind various components of New Year's celebrations.

Champagne

Toasting the new year with a sparkling wine can be traced back to French champagne producers. Champagne, a sparkling wine from a specific region of France, was used in the baptism of the Frankish warrior Clovis, according to the Champagne Committee of France. Soon, champagne became a key part of religious events, coronations and so-



rees - as well as secular rituals that replaced formerly religious rituals, according to the book "When Champagne Became French" by Kolleen Guy. Champagne manufacturers eventually linked the bubbly to festive occasions with family, and New Year's celebrations became another ideal time to

pop the cork on a bottle.

Ball drop

While not everyone can venture to New York City's famed Times Square to watch the ball drop in person, millions tune in around the world to watch it on television. Original celebrations in New York centered around listening to the bells

of Trinity Church ring at midnight, but the New Year's Eve celebrations were later moved to the New York Times building in 1904. Fireworks were part of those celebrations, but hot ash and sparks falling on spectators led to a ban on fireworks, and event organizers needed another spectacle

to draw crowds, according to PBS. Publisher Adolph Ochs asked his chief electrician Walter Palmer to create something visually appealing. Inspired by the maritime tradition of dropping a time ball at harbor so that sailors could set their own timepieces while at sea, Palmer devised the idea of dropping an illuminated ball on New Year's Eve. This has been tradition since 1907.

Resolutions

New Year's resolutions can be traced to the Mesopotamians. Ancient Babylonians also made spoken resolutions during a 12-day-long New Year Festival. These resolutions were oaths made to the sitting or new king and were considered essential to keeping the kingdom in the gods' favor. The Romans also had a similar tradition of swearing oath to royalty at the start of the year. Many of these traditions merged into modern resolution-making, according to Live Science.

These are but a few New Year's traditions. The history behind these traditions is storied, just like the holiday itself.

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