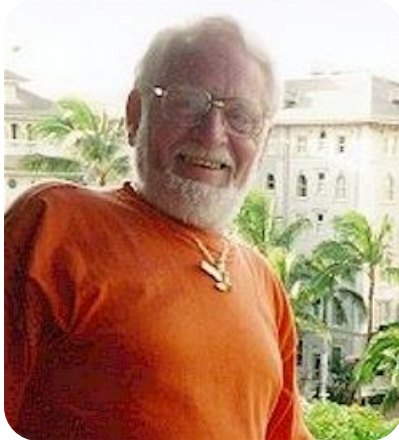


## About Hubert and Patricia

**Hubert Beyer was widely known as one of Canada's most read columnists. His columns were published regularly in most BC Community Newspapers, and his perspective sought on the Federal level as well as by NORAD in the US, Beyer lived up to his reputation as the "Fairest of them All."**



Born in a small village in West Germany, Beyer immigrated to Canada in his 20's where he married and had 4 children. A German Language publication in Winnipeg was Beyer's first foray into writing in Canada, it was soon followed with work at the Winnipeg Free Press as a Reporter covering many different beats.

In the 70's Beyer moved to Victoria BC, where he covered Capital City affairs followed by Provincial affairs for the Victoria Daily Colonist, which later merged with another daily to become the Times - Colonist.

In the 80's that Beyer moved to Legislative Journalism. His coverage gave small papers the advantage of provincial coverage. without having to assign a reporter on location.

We suggest you prepare yourself, Beyer's ability to draw emotion is as powerful as his ability to reason.

Particularly proud of his Tech Savvy, Beyer was the first journalist at the Legislative Press Gallery to sport a computer.

He had a full compliment of accessories, including acoustic couplers (the very first run of modems) with which he submitted stories to any paper that knew how to receive them electronically. Later on he took great pride in his ability to do his job from anywhere. Even Hawaii now and then.

True to Beyer's internet style, Daughter Patricia has worked online since 1999. After 5 years successful Journalism at the Legislative Press Gallery, she opted for developing PR for The BC Government Managers Association and after several years there finally moved to Entrepreneurism. A single communications store in Victoria BC quickly grew into a chain on Vancouver Island – sold in favor of working online to develop one of Canadas prominent internet firms.

Patricia later founded CANFib, a nonprofit society for Women's Health and now works with Adrian Raeside to bring Humor and News to your desktop.



## Dear Dad

While the format of our conversations will actually be reversed going forward, I wanted to make this first one a letter from me to you.

Christmas is near, and anyone that knew you – still knows that's when you shine.

Sure, you look like Santa, but that's not what made it your most memory charting time for me. It's the way you appreciate life.

Now more than ever it's easy to feel less confident in society. We seem divided, greedy. Our social heads are kept collectively low lest we be asked, eye to eye, for a piece of our gold. For some there is just nothing to give, but for many the time for giving has been replaced with contempt for the mere days left to buy presents and the cost of happiness.

**Tell me again what Christmas is about.** (I warn readers now, a tear will be shed)

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## Dearest Patricia,

You've come too far to be discouraged by humanity. It's still there, you can see it all around you - all you have to do is look. Here is the article, read it carefully & let it erase all doubt.

### THE MIRACLE OF A CHRISTMAS LONG AGO

VICTORIA -- You always have a choice. You can be cynical about Christmas, detest the crass commercialism with which our merchant class has usurped this day and say bah, humbug, or you can be a child again and see the wonder.



All you have to do is let your memories go back far enough and you'll again smell the freshly-baked cake, and feel the wonderful excitement of those far-away childhood Christmases.

Commercialism for its own sake may be bad, but the bearing of gifts is not. Ever since man first found love and compassion in his heart, he has given expression to those emotions by bestowing gifts on others.

### **The most beautiful Christmas gift I can remember was a small bag of potatoes.**

The year was 1945. I was 10 years old. The guns in Europe had been silent for six months, but the agony was far from over. Europe was a vast killing field, and everywhere people were trying desperately to restore some semblance of order to their lives which had been so terribly shattered.

Christmas 1945 saw mother and me living in Duesseldorf, once a thriving and beautiful city of 700,000. A mere 30,000 people inhabited what was left of my home town. We lived like

rats in make-shift shelters in the cellars of the houses that had been blown away by years of air raids.

Dad, who had been stationed in northern Norway, had been captured by the British and was not to be released for several more months. My only brother, who had been drafted at age 15 and sent to the Russian front in the dying throes of Nazi Germany, was missing.

Mother and I were barely surviving on the meagre rations of these horrible post-war times. For months, our daily diet consisted of a couple of slices of dry bread and some soup which we managed to get from the kitchen of a nearby hospital.

We had something of a Christmas tree that year, a three-foot-tall weed that could be found growing out of the ruins all around us. The only decoration was some ribbons of colored paper. There were to be no presents on that Christmas 1945. The gift of life would have to suffice.

**In the afternoon of Christmas Eve, mother and I trooped off to the hospital to scrounge some soup.** When we came back, we found a bag of potatoes by the door to our underground living quarters. It must have been about five pounds of precious food.

We ate like kings that night. There were real potatoes in the soup. And lots of them. With sincere apologies to the fine dining establishments I have had the pleasure of visiting in my later years, none could ever come close to presenting me with a meal like the one mother and I ate on Christmas Eve 1945.



We never found out who the generous donor was. I have been quite satisfied to regard the appearance of those five pounds of potatoes as a Christmas miracle.

Memories of that long-ago Christmas have never left me. When my own children were young and eagerly awaiting Christmas, I would think back to that night. I would remember my mother crying with happiness over the anonymous gift of five pounds of potatoes.

I would count my blessings and pray for the day when no mother anywhere would have to be grateful for being able to give her child a bowl of miserably thin soup with a few potatoes in it.

It's now 43 years later. The children are grown up. My white beard and hair would make me a reasonable facsimile for a Santa Claus at any shopping centre. And four grandchildren are looking forward to Christmas with great excitement.

You bet there will be a certain participation in the commercial aspect of Christmas in our family. Reasonable wishes will be miraculously fulfilled. Children's eyes will shine and their hearts be gladdened.

There will be a huge turkey served at a festive table. There will be a beautifully decorated Christmas tree in our house. And the children and grandchildren will come over to celebrate Christmas with us. There will be good food and good cheer in the Beyer home this Christmas 1988.

And sometime during the evening, I will probably think back to those dark and terrible days that were the legacy of a nightmare my country had inflicted on the world.

I will think of the millions who perished, never to see another Christmas. I will think of the agony of all the mothers who, in a world of plenty, must see their children starve to death.

I will probably tell my grandchildren about my own Christmas miracle and be grateful that they are granted more than mere survival. And I will also think of a belated gift we received in the spring of the following year. My brother came home, safe and sound.

So, if the commercialism of Christmas gets you down, think back. Somewhere in your childhood memories, there is something, I'm sure, that will restore your belief in the real meaning of Christmas.