



## *From the Officers Quill*

With the snow gently falling outside the kitchen window, I am reminded of why I live in this valley. Yes, the winters are long and for our ranchers cold and harsh sometimes. But they also remind us that we have the opportunity to start anew as each season comes to us.

In winter time, we can finally finish those projects that we put off, because we wanted to play in the sun. We can start calling those friends and relatives that we put off calling while we tended our gardens or ran our kids to summer activities. We can finally take the time to slow down a little and just be content with staying home and enjoying our family. Yes, we will rush to ski, sled or shop as the winter gets under way. But we also have the time to stop, listen and feel the sounds and sights of this season which have nothing to do with flashing lights or registers.

This valley is one to be cherished and embraced as we experience another Colorado winter. Snug in the mountains and in our homes as we watch the snow fall outside. Lift a cup of hot chocolate and be thankful that you are blessed to live in one of the most beautiful places on earth. Until next year!

*Diana Elliott*

## Calendar of Events Fall 2008

**Holiday Stroll** - downtown Basalt Lion's Park Friday December 5, 2008. Join us for the annual Holiday Stroll. Santa will hear children's wishes starting at 4:00 p.m.. Warm up with the famous BRHS chili and corn bread and take a ride on the Nieslanik Horse drawn hay wagon. The 8th annual Historical Ornament, the Kelly Building is available at Town Center Booksellers. Come and enjoy the holiday in Historical downtown Basalt.



## A LOOK AT CHRISTMAS PAST

by Earl Elmont, BRHS Historian

It was often ten below zero in Basalt at Christmas time in the nineteen forties. The snow was often three feet deep and adults had to shovel a path to school for the children. We felt like we were walking in "tunnels." Cars had trouble getting up Tucker Hill on their way to Third Street, so mother threw ashes all over the hill to help them. The deer had trouble finding food in such deep snow so mother threw out potato peelings and we loved to watch those wonderful creatures eat from our window. Heat systems were often very poor in those days. (Wood and coal stoves) We closed off the room where the tree was and only heated it when we had a special party in there. The room was so cold that the tree still had its needles at Easter time when we re-lit the tree. Gifts were scarce at some homes. One year we got few gifts but we got a small metal tractor. A brother notched one wheel so it would "putt-putt" on the table or floor. We never counted the number of gifts or felt cheated. Swede would always offer to pay for free ice cream cones at the local Sundry. Just get a cone and sign your name on the list.

The Hyrups are said to have the first Christmas tree in all of Basalt. The cute decorations came from a relative in Germany. There was no door-to-door caroling in those days as we recall. Too cold? There was an old jukebox in the library at school belting out Christmas songs for a nickel a whack. One of the local boys was given a huge Toboggan by old Gus Hutz. It would hold 3 adults or four children. One time Nicky Terliamis was trying it out alone on Coasting Hill by Oscar Blanc's. He lost control, went through a barbed wire fence and was hauled off in an ambulance. Others missed the curve and landed in a pond of water cress. Our heat was an old potbelly stove heated by sage-brush. We stunk to high heaven on the way home. There was no such thing as a turkey processed at the store. They had to be gutted, scalded in very hot water and then plucked. All dinner items were made by hand. The pies, the dressing, the salads and even the cranberries and mayonnaise. Mother was often too exhausted to eat with us. She would say: "You go ahead and I will eat later. Then she would promptly fall asleep at the table. Church was always an important event on Christmas day. Mother was late only when she could not find her girdle or her false teeth. The school always had some fancy program with singing and Christmas stories. At times it would be nice to go back to then.