

Through
THE
Looking
Glass

The NEW BERN

MIRROR

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God's miraculous handiwork is never more apparent to New Bernians than on those rare occasions when the town is visited by a blanket of snow.

No one in his right mind can fail to feel a sense of awe, as flakes fall from heaven to enhance the beauty that is ours, while transforming ugliness into breath taking splendor.

Dead trees, gnarled and twisted, respond in Cinderella fashion to the cloak of white that hides their defects; for awhile they look more beautiful than younger and shapelier trunks and branches, that still possess the surge of life.

Everything--houses, streets, lamp posts, smoke stacks, garbage cans--becomes a magical work of art. What we see with the naked eye is miracle enough, but under the microscope a snowflake becomes a magnificent masterpiece that dwarfs all human endeavor into insignificance.

Snow, the scientist tells us, consists of water crystals that are formed in infinite variety. Some crystals are flat or tabular, some are columnar needles, and some are compound structures. The variations of these three classes are endless.

Flat crystals are the most beautiful, and God in His great generosity has seen fit to make them more plentiful than all the rest. Some of them are flowered rosettes, while others within the plain six-sided outline contain marvelous inlaid designs formed by air tubes within the crystal structure.

Our favorite encyclopedia says that the most curious are perhaps the "cuff-button" doublets composed of a large and a small tabular crystal connected by a columnar needle. Crystals formed in the low clouds are usually large and branching, while those from the high clouds are small and compact.

Search though you may for duplicate snowflakes among the billions that tumble from the sky, and you would find no two alike. The Great Artist above never runs out of new designs.

Photographing a flake before it melts is a challenging undertaking, but a Vermont camera enthusiast, W. A. Bentley, has managed to record more than one thousand different forms on film.

An atheist or agnostic would have a tough time convincing Bentley that there isn't a Supreme Being responsible for these intricate designs. It didn't "just happen."

One of the reasons that snow seldom comes to New Bern is the fact that we are only nine feet above sea level. In all latitudes, snow forms out of the moisture in the upper air, but melts as it falls through the lower air, if this is warm.

From the Equator to latitude 30, snow is almost unknown at sea level. From latitude 30 degrees to about 40 degrees, it pays an occasional visit, while from 40 degrees to 75 degrees it covers the earth frequently during winter months.

These are scientific aspects of snow. Of more interest, of course, to kids and to grown ups who are still young at heart is the fact that the stuff makes wonderful snow balls, snow



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