CULTURE BRIGHT:

A WINTER ESSAY SERIES

Reflections on art, culture, and the future *of the Quad Cities from* ***Linda Bowers,*** *Board Chair of The Cultural Trust.*

Krampus On Campus



"The real lesson belongs to their work: good ideas can begin when someone pays attention to what other people enjoy."

A holiday fable inspired by QCBC's Krampus Nights.

The scenes and dialogue are imagined. (Cue magical music.)

Once upon a time, gardens lay dormant as winter approached, bringing long hours of indoor chores. (Cue drudgery music.)

Cleaning. Stoking the stove. Lining windows against harsh winds. Shoveling paths to the barn. Knitting blankets and doing homework by candlelight.

Week after week. Month after month.

At the Quad City Botanical Center, winter brought a different assignment: giving people reasons to put on their coats and visit the gardens.

Imagine Paige Underwood, the Center's marketer, and Kate Mapes, one of its growers, considering their next guest.

Paige brings a marketer's instinct. Kate brings a grower's knowledge and experience at Disneyland, where details help tell a story.

They look around the gardens and imagine something unexpected wandering in.
(Cue duh-duh-DUH music.)

Enter Krampus.
(More duh-duh-duh-DUH music.)

The horned figure associated with St. Nicholas in Alpine folklore seems an unlikely botanical garden guest.

Shaggy. Mischievous. Unlikely to wipe his feet.

He also has a devoted following.

In our telling, Krampus and St. Nicholas arrive just as the lights begin to glow.

At first, Krampus encourages harmless mischief. A silly prank. A surprise. A trick for a parent expecting a peaceful evening.
(Cue playful mischief music.)

Before long, his followers race through the grounds, turning quiet corners into a commotion. Shadows stretch. Even the bravest visitors glance over their shoulders.

Paige and Kate decide their guests need a change of pace.

They lure the group into Kari's Cocoa Social Club with warm blankets, hot cocoa, cinnamon buns, and foot warmers.
(Cue lullaby.)

Singing softly, they settle their unruly guests down for a nap. Outside, the lights keep twinkling.

Meanwhile, Santa hears about the antics and calls for reinforcements. (Cue parental warning music.)

The Cultural Trust arrives with fairy sparkle for the children and spiked eggnog for Krampus.

The children sparkle. Krampus sips. The mischief melts away.
(Cue Pachelbel's Canon in D.)

Everyone sits in a circle, singing Kumbaya.
(Cue angels singing.)

A peaceful ending for a guest who probably would have preferred more trouble.

Outside this fable, Krampus Nights is QCBC's own programming. The team recognized an audience for a different kind of holiday experience and gave it room in the gardens.

That willingness to listen matters. Visitors bring different interests, traditions, and ideas about an evening out. Their enthusiasm can inspire a cultural organization to try something unexpected. That can begin with a question at the front desk, a visitor's suggestion, or a conversation about something the team has never tried together before.

Its connection to Culture Bright is that spirit of experimentation: people combining knowledge, considering an audience, and creating another reason to visit.

The fable lets familiar colleagues become characters. The real lesson belongs to their work: good ideas can begin when someone pays attention to what other people enjoy.

Even a place you think you know can hold a surprise.

Sometimes, it has horns.

Find information about QCBC's Krampus Nights through CultureBright.org.

Culture Matters Here.
And it always will.

Come see why Culture Matters Here. And why it always will.

To learn more about the Culture Bright Winter Series go to CultureBright.org.

The Cultural Trust

CULTURE BRIGHT











