

Cape Breton Weather

Are those pearls? No, they're raindrops!



by Bill Danielson

I write this on a perfect summer afternoon. The sun is shining, it's a balmy 22 degrees, winds are light. Although the weather is ideal at the moment, I'm pretty sure it's going to rain again. I'd like to prepare you for that eventuality, by offering a rainy day activity guaranteed to delight anyone from 5 to 85.

The object is to capture and collect raindrops. Not a whole lot of them together, like rain in a rain gauge or in the ocean. No, we're after the individual drops. We'll catch them, look at them, get to know them.

You'll need a pie tin or similar container about 6 inches across and an inch or so deep; some white, all-purpose flour; a fine-mesh strainer; a shallow scoop (a 3x5 card will do); and a piece of paper to put your raindrops onto: coloured paper is best, but any paper will do.

And it needs to be raining. So...:

**Step 1:** Sift out some flour into the pie tin, an inch or so deep. Don't smooth it or pack it down; let the flour fall where it may. Did I tell you to put newspaper under the pan, to contain the mess? Oh, well. It's only flour.

**Step 2:** Expose the pie tin and flour to the rain, just long enough to collect a scattering of drops. Usually this takes no more than 5 or 10 seconds. You don't want to collect so many they run together.

**Step 3:** Come in out of the rain. Examine your rain drops, each in its little crater. Neat! But there's more.

**Step 4:** Scoop up some of the raindropy flour from the pie tin, and dump it into the sifter. Don't worry about damaging the drops; they will survive. Now sift the loose flour back into the pie tin. Gently bump the sifter against your free hand a few times, to get rid of as much loose flour as possible.

**Step 5:** And there they are! Your raindrops are lying there in the sifter, awaiting their fate. Carefully pour them out

onto the coloured paper.

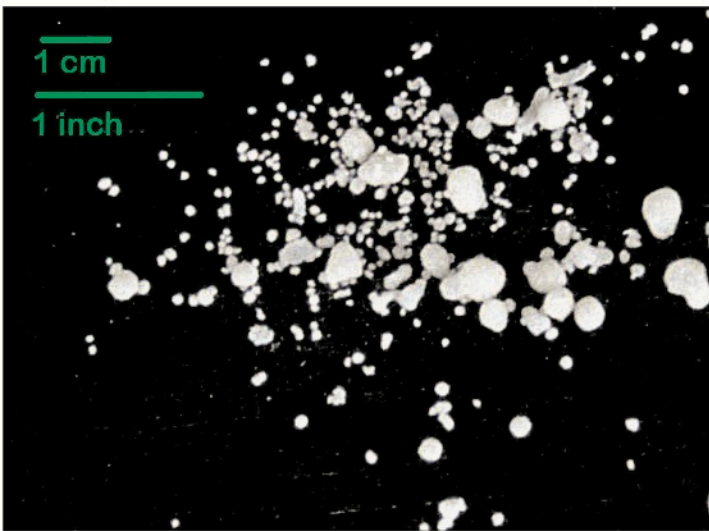
You probably ended up with a great number of small, spherical drops and a few larger, not so round ones. There's a good reason for this, which has to do with raindrop growth and development. One way raindrops grow is by colliding with and "consuming" other drops, a sort of raindrop cannibalism. For a drop to increase its diameter tenfold, it must consume a thousand small drops. So, just as it takes a lot of chipmunks and rabbits to grow into one fox, it takes many, many droplets to grow into a big drop.

As a drop grows larger, the surface forces holding it together aren't strong enough to maintain its compact, spherical shape, and it gets lopsided. If it grows too much, the surface forces fail altogether, and the drop shatters into a number of smaller drops. That's why we're never pelted by raindrops the size of basketballs, thank goodness. Half a centimeter (1/4 inch) is about the limit for a raindrop.

In order to grow large, a drop must

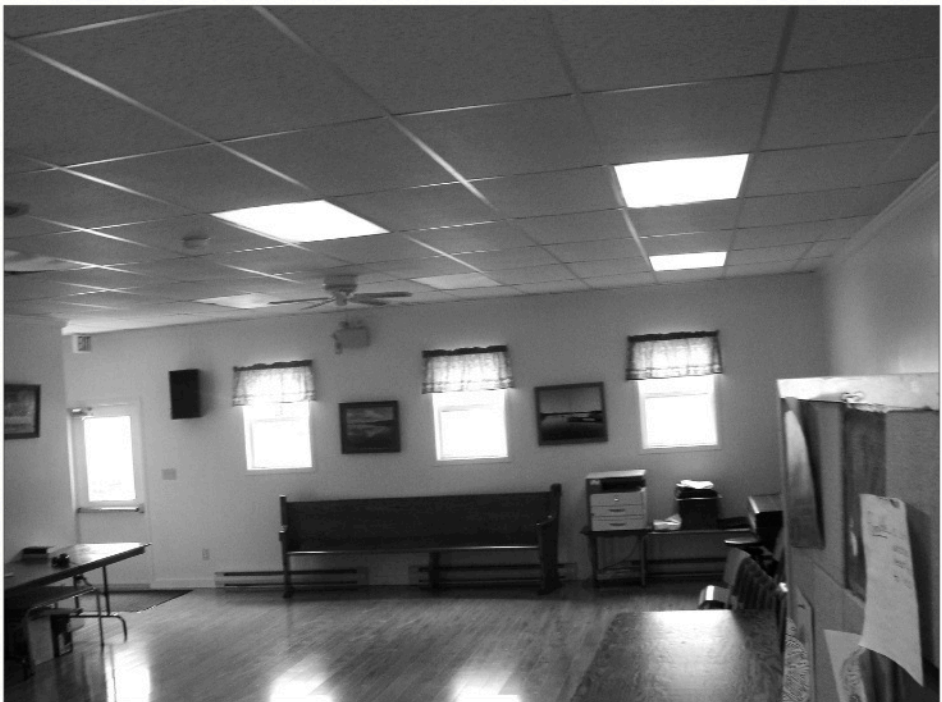
collide with a great many smaller drops, so it has to fall for a long time. Therefore, your largest drops are the oldest, and they began life high in some cloud: perhaps 4 or 5 kilometres (15,000 feet) above the ground. On the other hand, the tiniest drizzle drops are youngsters, originating only a few hundred metres aloft. So your tiny, round, young drops and large, old, odd-shaped ones are freeze-frames of different phases in the life of a raindrop.

What next? Well, you can take a photo of your raindrops, perhaps including a ruler for scale, and the date. You might begin a raindrop album, with a photo of the drops each time it rains. Or you can carefully roll some of the drops onto an album page, and tape them down with clear tape. You might try spraying the drops with art fixative, and making jewellery with them. Just think of people's reactions! "Are those pearls?" "No, they're raindrops."



Raindrops captured and preserved on August 4, 2007.

Knox Church hall reno



Knox Presbyterian Church Hall has undergone several renovations this spring. New laminate flooring has been installed and the interior wall repainted and ceiling trim added. This upgrade has been carried out to ensure the hall meets all provincial regulations for public and private rental purposes.

LARGE CAPE BRETON  
ESTATE AUCTION

Baddeck Community Hall

Saturday, August 27<sup>th</sup> - 11am

(viewing beginning at 10 am)

We have been favoured with instructions to sell  
the contents of an old 9-room country home  
that has been closed up for some years.

Many of the items on the main floor were wrapped in sheets before the folks moved into a nursing home. Other items from the 2nd floor and attic will need cleaning and some may need TLC, but it is a real nice houseful of old things including several early pieces of furniture, some Victorian and some more recent, nice dishes & ornaments, musical instruments, Gaelic Bible, Cape Breton pictures, jewelry, clocks, textiles and much, much more. *Complete list not available in time for this newspaper printing.*  
Please refer to our website week of auction for up-to-date info/photos:  
[www.pidgeonauctions.com](http://www.pidgeonauctions.com) A very nice auction!

Terms: Cash/Approved Cheques/Interac...  
we also accept Visa, MC and AmExp w/buyers prem.

Pidgeon Auctions: Tel: (902) 484-5968/Cell: (902) 396-6072  
Auction Information Hotline: (902) 485-3333

BADDECK LIONS CLUB

THANKS YOU!

All proceeds go to the Lions Kidston Island Beach Project  
IT'S FOR THE KIDS!

THANKS

to our Residents who donated varied & interesting auction items!  
to the Spirited Bidders who bid so generously for a great cause!  
to John P. Asaph for again working his magic!  
to Wendy for donating artistic & advertising skills!  
King Lion Brad Anderson & Lion Shane MacFarlane

Back to School  
To-Do List

1. Visit East Coast Credit Union for:

- Free Chequing Account Package
- Student Line of Credit/Loan
- Student MasterCard® with CHOICE REWARDS®
- Sign up for MemberDirect

2. Set up Mobile Banking on my cell phone

3. Pay tuition, buy books

Visit any of our 20 branch locations for more details!

You can also visit our website:  
[www.eastcoastcu.ca](http://www.eastcoastcu.ca)

EAST COAST  
Getting You There™