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Raising money for Make-a-Wish Foundation - story on page 5

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ALBERTA STREET NEWS

**Founder/Publisher/
Editor, Design and layout:
Linda Dumont**

Writers:

**Maria B.
John Zapantis
Joanne Benger
Sharon Austin
Sharon Spencer
Linda Dumont
Allan Sheppard
Angelique Branston
Sam Goertz
INSP News Service
S. Le Blanc**

Photos:

**Maria B.
Linda Dumont
Maria B.
Angelique Branston
Jonathan Austin**

Cover photo:

Angelique Branston

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**Alberta Street News
9533-106A Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta,
T5H 0S9
780-975-3903
dumontlc@hotmail.com
Web:
albertastreetnews.org**

Off to Manchester for the INSP Conference

By Linda Dumont

The last week of August writer Joanne Benger and I will be travelling to Manchester for the International Network of Street Papers summit that brings together more than 125 representatives from 54 street newspapers world wide. It presents an opportunity for us to network and socialize with others, who share our concern for the poor and the marginalized in our society.

Attendance was made possible for both of us to attend through sponsorship for part of the cost of the conference fees, hotel and air fare. But there are still many other costs - for example loss of wages. For myself, I work as a yoga instructor and am paid by the class, so I do not have any sick days or holidays with pay. If I do not teach, I do not get paid, so I will be returning right after the conference, while Benger will be staying on to visit in the United Kingdom for another week.

But it is important to attend conferences - the experience helps to keep us going. As street newspaper people we work in isolation. There are only three other street newspapers across Canada that are members of the INSP - one in Vancouver, one in Montreal, and one in Sydney. There is also a very small operation with only one vendor in Manitoba and there may



be other papers that are not members of INSP.

Street papers come and go. The smaller ones often fail as soon as the founder no longer is able to keep the paper going, since much of the work is on a volunteer basis. North American papers rely on ad sales, donations and other initiatives to operate. In contrast, South African and German papers are government funded programs to provide employment for the unemployed. The sale of papers is considered a job and the vendor even pays income tax on his or her earnings. Too often, locally, vending is sometimes viewed as a form of pan-handling (which it is not - it is a job).

But this is Alberta, where our social services office is called "Alberta Works". When I was at one newspaper conference, I told some other representatives what we call our social services office, and they thought I was making a bad joke!



THE VIEWS PRESENTED ARE THOSE OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

Have Compassion For The Chronically Ill

By S. LeBlanc

Three years ago, at the age of thirty-seven, my entire life was derailed when I inherited the chronic progressive autoimmune disease sjogren's syndrome (secondary) on top of my other serious health conditions. Sjogrens syndrome (secondary) is a disease where one's immune system goes rogue and begins attacking moisture producing membranes, connective tissue and nerves. When the disease attacks the nerves it causes excruciating nerve pain. Before I became sick I always believed that people were kind and helpful to those suffering from serious chronic illnesses. I was not prepared for the judgment, cruelty, ignorance, and disinterest that I encountered when I joined the ranks of the seriously ill. However, I don't believe that people mean to be cruel and I am confident that empathy, sympathy and compassion can be taught.

What not to say to people who are chronically ill.

*Do not say someone's illness is a judgment from God. When I became ill, a lady told me that I must have done something terrible to get such a devastating illness. This is not Biblical. When the disciples see a blind man they ask Jesus, "Who sinned, this man or his parents that he should be born blind." Jesus told them that the blindness was not caused by sins committed by either of them. We live in a fallen world and "the rain falls on the just and the unjust." Some of the worst people I have ever encountered in my life are living in health and prosperity. Never blame the victim of a disease for their condition.

*Do not tell a sick person that if they had lived a different lifestyle they would not be sick; for example telling a workaholic that the chronic stress they put themselves under caused them to be ill. This does not change the prognosis of the disease or the outcome.

*Do not assume that someone

on disability for a health condition doesn't want to work or that he or she is faking. I had a young man in perfect health tell me that I am on disability because I don't want to work. This could not be further from the truth. Before I became ill I earned two university degrees and took pride in my career. It was a devastating blow to my sense of self when I could no longer provide for myself. It is important to realize that a medical doctor has deemed anyone on disability unable to work. Don't make judgments you are not qualified to make.

*Don't say "Why are sick people always whining and complaining about their illnesses." People talk about their illnesses because this is the reality they live with. Some are in pain twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week without a reprieve from the pain. Have patience and listen as someone with a chronic illness talks about their condition. Being in chronic pain is exhausting and it takes a terrible toll on a person.

*Do not tell someone suffering from a chronic illness how wonderful life is. I have a friend who is a blind optimist who lives a wonderful life of health and prosperity. She will talk to me as long as I never complain or mention my illness. If I do, she will not call for weeks. Her favourite saying is "Isn't life wonderful." Life can be incredibly difficult for the sick and disabled and sometimes just getting through a day can seem like an almost insurmountable task.

*Don't tell the sick person that if they had faith in God they would be healed. Many wonderful Christian people, who have great faith in God and have devoted their lives to his service, are sick and disabled. We do not know why some people are healed and others are not. We must wait for the answers to be revealed in Heaven.

*Don't abandon someone who becomes ill. It is unfortunate that when people become ill they often lose most

of their friends. This happens because the person who is ill may no longer be able to take part in activities that they were once involved in and friends may find visiting the sick person depressing. When a person is dealing with a serious illness, this is when they need their friends to rally around them and let them know they are still cherished for the special person they are.

What you can do for the chronically ill.

*Make time to call the sick party, even for only ten minutes a week to let them know they are being thought of. Sometimes what the person needs most is simply to vent about their circumstances so try to be a good listener.

*Offer assistance to the sick. Let the sick person know that you are available to help them from time to time. Instead of saying "If there's ever anything I can do for you just let me know," be specific. For example, say "I'm going to the supermarket, is there anything I can get you." Framing it this way makes it more likely that the sick party will take you up on your offer of assistance.

*Visit the sick in their homes. Some very ill and disabled people are unable to leave their homes and they become trapped by four walls. Give them the gift of your friendship and it would be greatly appreciated if you brought a small gift like a cup of coffee from their favourite shop or a magazine.

*Do tell the sick person you are sorry for their troubles and offer them a hug.

In closing, be kind and supportive to the chronically ill as some day you may face a serious health condition and be at the mercy of those who are healthy and strong. Remember to always treat others as you would want to be treated if the tables were turned and never take your good health for granted.

Are we all (or most of us) Humpty Dumpty?

By Allan Sheppard

“You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.”

I'd long thought that sardonic (or pragmatic, or arrogant, as you choose) observation originated with France's Sun King, Louis XIV. But it was first recorded a couple of generations later, attributed to François de Charette, an aristocrat who lived and died defending the powers and privileges of his class during the French Revolution. The words or the thought could have circulated as an everyday proverb for years or centuries before that. They have certainly assumed proverbial status since Charette died before a revolutionary firing squad in 1796. Not surprisingly, the saying seems to reflect and appeal to conventional wisdom: “In order to achieve something, it is inevitable and necessary that something should be destroyed.” What could be more logical? More true? Or more truthy, using contemporary idiom, which accepts what one feels, believes, or wants to be true as or more readily than what one knows to be true, as a matter of fact?

What could be more arrogant? More self-centred and -justified? More tainted by the heady aroma of entitlement?

Who or what, for starters, is the you that gets to decide to make or not make something; on what authority and for whose enjoyment or benefit? Why an omelette, instead of something else? And if an omelette is, in fact, the best use of resources to meet a clear need, what kind of omelette? With what additional ingredients? And, given that these questions are posed metaphorically, who are the metaphoric eggs, destined or predestined to be casually broken to serve their presumed betters' needs? Were they born or raised to that purpose? Or were they co-opted, nominated, or designated for that role? By whom? Why and, again, on what or whose

authority?

In Charette's day, the answer would have been obvious and inarguable: the hierarchy of things as they were derived from the divine God-given right of kings, and the then undisputed right of kings so entitled, to delegate whatever work (dirty of otherwise) they chose, to whomever they chose, for whatever purpose (including mere whim) they chose.

The French and other revolutions might have put an end in our corner of the world (give or take a royal Windsor or two) to delusional deference to God as the source of power and privilege among history's omelette makers. But the concept of justifying one's means according to the merits of one's ends persisted.

The metaphor of breaking eggs to make omelettes was diverted from its aristocratic roots to serve, in bitter irony, the proletariat, by the Soviet revolutionaries, Lenin and Stalin, drawing on Karl Marx. Atheists that they were, Marx and the Soviet dictators, scorned notions of divine right and intervention in favour of variations on a concept of historical determinism: the notion that historical forces predetermine or constrain current events and that current circumstances, good or bad, are the inevitable consequence of the interplay of those forces. History, like time, points in only one direction and standing in its way is, at least in the long run, futile.

That path to the future ended abruptly in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall; at least in the minds of Western thinkers and doers. Inspired by fate of the wall, Francis Fukuyama wrote a book called, *The End of History and the Last Man*, suggesting that Western liberal democracy had defeated its last serious challenger, and it might thereafter be the only viable form of government.

But the fall of the wall (and the end of the Cold War) left a vacuum that

became an evolutionary niche. Like all evolutionary niches, it was soon filled by and opportunistic upstart: the economic concept of creative destruction, derived from Austrian-American economist Joseph Schumpeter. Drawing on and extrapolating from Marx, Schumpeter argued that industrial society inevitably moved through a sequence of “mutations” that destroyed old things to create new ones. Following Marx, Schumpeter argued that this creative cycle of creation and destruction, which seemed to sustain capitalism would eventually lead to its demise. Creative destruction has a dark mirror image: destructive creation.

That did not stop neoliberal ideologues from co-opting the notion of creative destruction as justification for the existence and inevitability of capitalism, rather than the means to its ultimate downfall.

Enlighten me, if I am wrong, but as I understand things, evolutionary processes, whether biological, social, or economic are arbitrary, random, and neutral; they are contingent and conditional. They lead to constant and inevitable change. But have neither direction nor motivation.

Optimists and boosters interpret evolutionary change as progress (they like to call it “reform”), in much the same way as they or their ilk interpret biological evolution toward and of homo sapiens (us) as an ascent from the depths to something better. Pessimists (misanthropes) and their ilk tend to see it as the opposite, as a descent into something worse, noting that our species is reproducing metastatically, consuming renewable resources faster than they can be replaced and mining non-renewable resources in ways that pollute the environment for ourselves and all living things.

Realists accept that evolution is neither good nor bad, moral or im-

Realists accept that evolution is neither good nor bad, moral or immoral. Neither progress nor regress. Life goes on and will go on, with or without us, as fate decides. We stand, as Isaac Newton acknowledged, on the shoulders of those who came before us. The best among us use that vantage point to see farther and better. The worst use it to trample those below them. But, once again, I ramble on. My point is simpler than my argument: we have, after 200 or so years, discarded divine right of kings as justification for the existence and growth of inequity among us (and between us and the rest of the natural world) and adopted instead the divine right of capitalists, with special attention to property and the rights that property confers on those who have it.

Those who have do; whatever and however they want. Because they can.

They lead.

Those who haven't follow or get out of the way. The market rules. It alone chooses between winners (takers) and losers (givers, whether by force or otherwise).

The lines are hardening. We are

becoming more eggs than omelette makers and consumers, more Humpy-Dumpties than sources of life and regeneration.

It needn't be that way.

Surely it does not have to be that way.

We cannot stop change, no matter how hard we want or try. Change that comes from natural processes we must, as we have always done, accept and adapt to. Change that comes from our actions and those of others in our globalized world can and must be managed. Those who make change and enable it must accept that the rights of capital and property are not sacred; that ownership is not entitlement to do anything one wants without regard to consequences; that the right to profit on capital does not relieve investors of an obligation to anticipate and mitigate collateral damage with the same enthusiasm that they promote collateral benefits.

On good days, I believe (hope) we will muddle through, which is the essence of biological evolution.

On bad days, I look at the rise of Trump-

ism; the incompetence and indifference that led to the Grenfell Tower travesty in London; the tragedies heaped on tragedy in the Middle East; and the news that a working draft of the federal government's new guidebook for immigrants lists having a job as a responsibility of citizenship (I'll get to why that is so depressing next month), I find solace in the fact that, given my age, I will not be around to see worse things to come.

Stephen Sondheim has the title character of his musical play, later a movie, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, sing with pungent wit, "The history of the world, my sweet Is who gets eaten, and who gets to eat!" (tinyurl.com/yc95j9lk)

On days like today, I see the banquet laid. Omelettes are on the menu.

Eat or be eaten.

Enjoy or be enjoyed.

That is the only question.

(Or, for some of us, the only answer. (Unless noted otherwise, direct quotes, paraphrases, and historical information were sourced from Wikipedia.)

Writer's son rapels to raise money for Make a Wish Foundation

Photo: courtesy of Jonathan Austin

Jonathan Austin, Son of ASN writer Sharon Austin took part this year in a transformation challenge and physique show at the all natural IDFA 113 competition on June 25, 2017 in which he placed 4th in British Columbia. He lost 48.5lbs and changed his body fat percentage from 32% to 5% in just under 3 months.

On July 6th, adventurer Jonathan Austin raised \$1625.00 for the Make-a-wish foundation and participated in the Rope-for-hope in a 35 storey repel down the Hyatt Regency building in downtown Vancouver. Jonathan Austin is a personal trainer who works independantly out of Bodyco Fitness in North Vancouver. What is his next adventure? Driving a motorcycle across Canada this upcoming August.

Right: Jonahan Austin



The Mysterious August Long Weekend

By Joanne Bengner

Depending on where we live in Canada we may or may not have a civic holiday on August 7, the first Monday in August. If we do have a civic holiday, what we call it depends on where we live.

The August long weekend is not a statutory federal holiday like Christmas or Canada Day. In 1974 the government of Alberta declared that the first Monday in August should be a statutory holiday to recognize and celebrate the varied cultural heritage of Albertans. This inspired Edmonton to have the first Heritage Festival in 1976. It was a three day celebration of culture, dance and handicrafts from around the world. Everyone got a day off work with pay.

Then in February, 1990, along came Family Day. Heritage Day got down-graded from a statutory holiday to an optional civic holiday. Employers were given a choice of letting their workers have a paid holiday on either Heritage Day or Family Day. If you got Family Day off, you will be working on Heritage Day, and if you worked on Family Day you will have your August long weekend.

Other provinces and cities have different names for this civic holiday. It is statutory and simply called Civic Holiday in Prince Edward Island, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Manitoba calls it Civic Holiday but it is not statutory. The civic holiday is not celebrated in the Yukon, Quebec or Newfoundland and Labrador, but the city of St. John's officially celebrates it. Three provinces give their names to the civic holiday which is known as New Brunswick Day, Saskatchewan Day and British Columbia Day. Nova Scotia calls it Natal day, but it is not a statutory holiday.

In Ontario the civic holiday has no provincial name. Every municipality and city has a different name for it. It is Founder's Day in Brantford, Joseph Brant Day in Burlington, Mountie Day in North York, George Hamilton Day in Hamilton, and Simcoe Day in many other areas. It is not a statutory holiday in Ontario but the federal government and many municipal offices close for the day. Toronto has a Caribbean Cultural festival, once called Caribana, so it comes closet to Heritage Days.

If you have a holiday on August 7, enjoy your August long weekend as you celebrate Heritage Day. And if you have to work, I hope you have happy memories of Family Day.



Tell me Yes!

Twenty years ago, on August 31, Diana, Princess of Wales, was killed in a car crash in a Paris tunnel along with her boyfriend, Dodi Fayed and their driver Paul Henri. No one is sure whether Dodi got to present Diana with the beautiful engagement ring he had bought. It was called 'Dis-Moi-Oui' which translates to "tell me yes". We will never know if she told him "yes". They took that secret to their graves. Still, those of us who believe in romance like to think of them together in heaven, living happily ever after. Rest in peace, Dodi and Diana and may God be with you.

The Triumphs of August

By Joanne Bengner

When the New Year began in March instead of January, August was the sixth month so it was called Sextilis. In 8 B.C., the first Roman emperor, Augustus (63 B.C. to A.D. 14) renamed the month August because it was his lucky month and he had three military victories in August. Each victory was celebrated with a Triumpus, the solemn and magnificent entrance into Rome with which all generals celebrated great victories.

August has proven itself to be a brave and independent month for many nations since then. Pakistan's Independence Day is celebrated on August 14. August 15 is India's Independence Day as well as Korea's Liberation Day. Ukrainian independence is celebrated on August 24. We have the end of the month with Philippine Heroes Day on August 28 and Eid ai-Adha on August 31.

To counterbalance all this macho celebration, we have the Eastern Orthodox Koimesis on August 15, the feast of the assumption of the Virgin Mary. On this date the Archangel Michael carried her soul to Heaven where it reunited with her body. Her flowers are the rose and the lily.

August is Summer's End

By Joanne Bengier

August gives me that "I've spent too long at the fair" feeling. Summer is still here but it has overstayed its welcome and someone should say "Time, Gentlemen, Time."

Mosquitoes whine, "It's still summer." as they try to get in a last few bites. Keep rubbing Bounce on your arms, burning dried used coffee grounds and wearing Skin-so-soft for protection.

The swimming pool is still open and, yes, those things sticking out of the bottom of my bathing suit are called legs. Unlike shorts, bathing suits don't come in all lengths. Personally I prefer ankle length shorts.

Days are getting colder so I can wear long sleeves again without having people wonder what I am trying to hide.

Summer is almost over and I don't have a tan yet. I blame the sun screen and sun hat.

Back to school sales are on. I mumble about grandchildren as I guiltily stock up on cheap pens and paper for myself.

And then there's zucchini. Every time I give one away, five more grow in its place. Forget Zeta and polar shift. Zucchini is going to take over the world.

Everything is going to seed – flowers, vegetables, and even people. It's a seedy world.

Days are getting shorter just like the citronella candle.

I still haven't caught up on my mowing and weeding, but soon, I tell myself, snow will hide all my gardening sins.

We're all waiting for that first frost and showing the world all our shabby old blankets as we cover plants for the night.

The camp grounds are no longer over booked and picnic sites have plenty of empty tables now You won't have to sleep and eat in the car any more.

There are wasps everywhere. Here a wasp, there a wasp. Sting. Sting, sting. Poor homeless wasps with nowhere to go.

Weighty issues

By Angelique Branston

My weight has been a struggle of mine for most of my life. Even as a little girl I was bigger than the other girls my age. I am an emotional eater so when I get too upset I find comfort in food, which creates a horrible cycle.

I have had some success in losing weight and it has been noticed, which made me feel good and also vulnerable. Someone asked me what my success was from, so that they could pass on the information to someone they know who is struggling with their weight like I am. This is what I have learned on how to lose weight: when I am having horrible cravings for sweets it is my body trying to tell me that I need vitamin B12 because in nature it is often found in sweet things, so I take a stress tablet when I can, which has lots of B vitamins as well as vitamin C. Also, when I have

the craving I allow myself to give in a little and have a small treat, and try not to beat myself up about it. Another thing I found that helps is making sure to have well balanced meals; also at least three meals a day. Or six small meals. The metabolism starts trying to store food when you have fewer meals in a day.

This is something that was hard for me to get because I was beginning to think of food as the enemy and having less food was the key. Sometimes before I go to bed I feel very hungry. I cannot ignore it. It makes it so I cannot sleep, but everyone knows you should not eat before bed. So, I made a compromise and have a bowl of cereal with soy milk. My last trick that I have learned is when you absolutely have to eat something and you know you shouldn't, it is making healthier choices even then. Like a bowl of cereal or a plate of veggies (no dip if you can; if not with dip). Try to change chips to popcorn (and when you re-

ally want chips just a small bag).

Honestly though, the main thing that has helped me is to try not to beat myself up when I make a mistake. I will continue to make mistakes, I am human. As for exercise I am too shy to go to work out gyms so I do gentle yoga in my house when my health allows it, or I take my dog on small walks.

The goal for me is not a number I have to reach with my weight, but a lifestyle I am heading towards. When I had a number I was trying to reach I always self sabotaged. This way there is no voice in my head saying I will never make it so I might as well not try. Lastly, but not least, is my faith. I always have someone to talk to about my struggles in weight or anything else I my life.

I hope this had been helpful. My struggle with weight is far from over, but I think I finally have the scale going in the right direction.

Benefits



By Sharon Spencer

Everybody is glad at a certain time of their life to know that they have a safety net. Unemployment benefits, medical benefits and even insurance. These things can be there to help in times of crisis and emergencies. They make us feel safe knowing that when we have sickness we can go to a doctor. If we lose our job at least some money will come in for a certain length of time.

If you all have not figured it out by now, I am a born again Christian. I believe that my relationship with Jesus is my safety net and my insurance policy. Even though I face struggles every day just as you do, I have belief that God is personally involved in even the smallest of details of my life. Even now, speaking to you, my greatest desire is to demonstrate that the love of Christ is a reality and has innumerable benefits.

I have sickness and pain. I have sleepless nights. There also are problems with people, there are bills and I am trying to learn not to worry. I need to trust my saviour more and I am told in

the Bible that through prayer and supplication to God I can.

Let me give you an example. The other day while driving on my scooter I was going through a store when I noticed a pink cane. My eye was attracted to the colour. Inside my head I said, "I would like to have that, maybe I could use it!"

Immediately I answered back to myself, "No, I can't afford it!" I drove out of the store.

I never gave it a second thought. The very next day I was at the Boyle McCauley Health Centre getting my teeth worked on. I decided to sit outside on my walker and enjoy some of the beautiful summer sunshine. I was having a wonderful day connecting with the homeless that were in the area. We were laughing and giggling. It gave my heart great joy to be with them. Suddenly, from across the street, a man that I did not know came towards me. He spoke to me saying, "Ma'am, can you use this?"

You can't imagine my surprise when he handed me the exact same pink cane that I had denied myself the day before. My heart

was overwhelmed with love. I was amazed that something so simple was a reaffirmation to me that I was important to Him and that God cared about such a simple detail in my life. He inserted himself in such a personal way into my life.

I felt cherished and watched over. I did not pray or ask Him for the cane. It was just a passing thought. I denied myself but the Lord did not. It is written, "Even before it is on your lips I have an answer for you." That is how personal a relationship with God can be. I felt, as if the trinity had wrapped their arms around me and given me great big sloppy kiss.

Why did God find it necessary to do this for me? I would not see the bigger picture until a day later when, going to my ministry at the House of Refuge, I came under attack from certain people in my apartment building, who were nasty and accusing. Having no time to recover, I landed at the mission so upset that I was crying. But God again helped me. I was able to continue and share the good word and good news.

Later, I would see, by the cane, He was showing that He loved me and would always be with me to provide and care for me, even when the Devil had his own plans against me. He WAS there.

He wants to have the same kind of relationship with you. You too, can have Him as a safety net. Admit that you are a sinner and invite Jesus into your life and be willing to let Him work in your life. He must be invited, for only His blood can wash away sin.

Day by day I see God's hand at work in my life.

The trek for food

By Lisa Anderson

His name is Lakesh
He is ten years old
War torn Middle East

His family is starving
With blistered and calloused feet
He makes a weekly trek
Through a mile long mine field.

A makeshift path
He timorously follows
Dug out by a stick
He stays close to it
As possible
His best friend lost a leg

He can hear the
Hum of military copters
His eyes follow
The cargo that is dropped

He falls to his knees
And prays his thank you
Food! Food! He shouts
He has brought a sack

He stuffs it full
And puts the strap
On his forehead
And the weight on his back.

He lugs the sack home
To his mothe
Who puts her hands together
And weeps silently

Scarecrow

By Lisa Anderson

Drab rags on a wooden post
Hay jutting out
From under its hat, sleeves
and pants

A face of horror
Painted on a burlap bag
Surrounded by a field
Of corn.

A rust nail is what
It rest on.
It sways ever so gently
And soaks up raindrops.

It doesn't have a voice
It never complains
Only actions brought on
By the gusts of wind.

It has a job to do
It keeps birds and animals at bay
It is a lonely scarecrow.

HEALING WORDS



BY THE CMHA
WRITING FOR RECOVERY GROUP

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How We Can Create Change: Canada

By: Sam Goertz

We've delved into the community, municipal, and provincial levels for how we can create change in ending poverty and now we look to the federal level. To close out this four part series I will be taking a look at Canada's current poverty situation and a brief history of it before exploring what we can do as a nation to ensure that the most vulnerable among us are taken care of.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Today, the amount of Canadians living in poverty, according to Stats Canada stands at 8.8% in 2011, when data was last available. Contrast that to 15 years prior when in 1996 15.2% of all Canadians were living in poverty. For a refresher, poverty in Canada is measured as being below the Low Income Cut Off line (or LICO) which is measured as half of the national median income.

We have clearly done well as a country in reducing poverty levels, and this should be celebrated. However, 8.8% is still millions of people, and further to that point, according to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, nearly half of all status First Nations children live in poverty, that figure reaches $\frac{2}{3}$ in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. We must do better.

How do we talk about poverty as a country? That question is complex, and there are no easy answers. While different than the Americans who more frequently approach it from an individualist, pull up the bootstraps perspective, we still have some negative perceptions that require checking.

Poverty is primarily a temporary malaise for those affected by it (60% are in it for less than a year) but for the 40% for whom it is long-lasting the

dialogue needs to change. We have a responsibility to our fellow people to help them get out of the poverty trap. As I have touched upon before, poverty helps none of us. We should help because we are people but we should also help because doing so benefits all of us, socially and economically.

WHAT WE CAN DO

At the Federal level, we need to explore big ideas to eliminating poverty. While the community, municipal, and provincial level all have large scale ideas attached to them in some respect, the federal level is where bold ideas really come into play. Whether it is in the form of a Universal Basic Income (UBI), also known as a Universal Guaranteed Income or Negative Income Tax, or housing assistance. As the future of work, especially low-wage work becomes increasingly precarious in the impending age of automation, we can ill afford to wait on acting.

A Pan-Canada Framework on Poverty, much like the one established for climate change, would be an important step in the right direction. Uniting the entire country behind one framework would be hard to put together but it would send a clear message about Canada's stance on poverty. Furthermore, it would allow for information sharing between provinces and stronger policy all around.

Introducing a Homeless Housing

Assistance Program that would allow for homeless people to transition into home-renting or buying would obviously eliminate homelessness to a great degree. Homeless people need homes, it is as simple as that. Programs like this already exist and if we can institute them to a greater degree in our country we will go a long way in

eliminating poverty.

Universal Basic Income (UBI), a concept I wrote about last year for the Alberta Street News, has entered the mainstream lexicon of options to eliminate poverty and offset low-wage job losses. The minimum wage is a valuable tool to give those most economically vulnerable a minimum wage standard. Those desperately needing money aren't in a strong bargaining position and the minimum wage gives them that. However, as we raise it there will be layoffs to a small degree, but more than that, as the cost of low-skill labour rises, automation quickens eliminating jobs en masse.

This isn't to say we should abolish the minimum wage to keep low-quality jobs but rather that a third option is needed. Enter UBI. A UBI would allow people a minimum standard of financial security, regardless of job situation, and allow low-skilled workers far more bargaining power and career options. A UBI would be a definitive step in giving folks financial security but would also easily become the highest cost program for the government. Affordability and a UBI level that doesn't disincentivize work are among the big questions to be answered.

To get in touch with your Member of Parliament (MP) about your ideas, you can phone, email, or speak to them at community events. If you don't know who your MP is then you can easily look them up by using an online search tool which allows you to type in your postal code to find them.

We have some hard questions on our hands that beg answering as a society. How do we want to deal with poverty? At what point do we accept a degree of inequality while also maintaining our collective humanity? I can't pretend to have the answers to these questions but I am excited to have discussions around them.

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Buddhas on Death Row

From INSP Street News Service

Buddhas on Death Row brings to light a profound journey unfolding in the darkest of places. It is a testament to the power of art, inner cultivation, and friendship.

The idea for this project was born out of correspondence traveling between the United States and Finland. The pen friends: Moyo and Maria.

Letters

At the age of 18, Moyo killed two people. He was sentenced to death and for the past fifteen years, he has been held in solitary confinement on Death Row. There, in his own words, he is working to “polish his soul, clean stains from his heart, and open windows of his mind.”

Locked inside a cell smaller than a parking spot, Moyo began a quest of self-discovery. In an effort to understand and reclaim his own narrative, he became an avid reader, delving into books on black history, art, the justice system, psychology, spiritual texts, fiction and more. He began making art as a means to explore his own experiences and emotions. Deprived of nearly every form of social interaction, he began to communicate with people in the outside world through letters. Once, from a neighboring cage in the recreation yard, a fellow inmate introduced

Moyo to yoga and meditation. In the years that followed, Moyo committed himself to a regular practice.

At the age of 18, Maria graduated from high school. In the years since, she has earned a degree, pursued passions in writing and photography, met her life partner, lived in four countries and visited a dozen others. Like Moyo, she too has sought to connect with people across the world, and has been enriched by a multitude of perspectives and countless acts of kindness along the way.

In May of 2014, Maria wrote her first letter to Moyo, inspired by a prison pen pals initiative. Though living vastly different lives on the surface, they swiftly found common ground for friendship. In this era of instant messages, their slow mail criss-crossed the Atlantic in the form of letters, postcards, photographs, poetry and artwork, taking up to two weeks one-way.

This project emerged out of that exchange.

Buddhas on Death Row is titled in the spirit of Moyo’s body of work: a series of Buddha portraits with accompanying reflections on suffering and happiness, conflict and peace, impermanence and eternity, ignorance and awareness.

In the turbulence and hostility of prison, Moyo anchors himself in the Buddha’s teachings. He now



uses his cell as a meditation cell but remains keenly aware of the inhumane conditions of solitary confinement – conditions that international human rights and civil liberties groups widely denounce as torture.

This project does not disregard violent crimes nor diminish the loss of life and the immeasurable pain to victims and their loved ones. For Moyo, his journey of self-discovery has led him to understand the hurt he has caused.

“In my first years of prison, I didn’t think much of my actions. I was simply mad that I was being taken advantage of by the system because I didn’t have the money to present adequate defense,” Moyo describes.

“I now also realize that my actions hurt a lot of people. And I have begun feeling this hurt right along with my own. It’s become my own... I have committed some grave acts and I will never be able to undo them. Yet the very least I can do is to improve myself.”

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That’s all folks. Thank you for reading this article and the others in the series if you were able to do so. Thank you for supporting the vendor

who you bought this from. Most of all, thank you for supporting the Alberta Street News and organizations like them who are doing such amazing work to combat poverty. It is not easy,

and it likely never will be. However, it is doable and it will be absolutely worth it. I’ll catch you next time.

Parents are gatekeepers, protectors, nurturers and the leaders in their children's lives

I truly believe that the statement, "Children that have gone through trauma are resilient" is just an excuse not to provide the counseling and mental help necessary to ensure their healthy development.

Being a parent does not mean that I own my children and I have the right to violate them in any form or shape. What it means is that I am responsible for their physical, mental and spiritual development. It is my duty to make my home the kind of environment that enables them to thrive and develop into incredible human beings. When children grow up in a nurturing environment, they learn to cherish their uniqueness and through unconditional love and acceptance they begin to develop their self esteem, their self image and their self worth.

The sad evidence is that thousands and thousands of parents that have been victims of abuse in their childhood, are using their dysfunctional learning and applying it to raising their own children. Therefore we have "victims" raising children and passing their destructive legacy of abuse to their children creating more victims through the dysfunctional traits of their own families.

Children that are exposed to traumatic events that include physical, sexual, and emotional abuse develop a range of psychological problems. These effects have a way of appearing through a range of psychological problems such as phobias, behavioral problems, depression, anxiety and panic attacks.

It is time to rise above and start taking the role that we are meant to have in order to protect our innocent children. We must never stand by and accept any form of child abuse; we must become vigilant in opposing the exploitation of children through, pageants, commercials, and any media form that tends to sexualize or expose our children to degradation. We must guard their childhood and ensure their development in a healthy manner.

It is a fact that the natural development of a child will be affected by the child's environmental experiences. These events can either have positive or negative consequences. Continuous abuse in any form creates stress through the flight and fight response and become reactive to any belief of dangers. The slightest noise or threat, or even just the sense of the presence of the abusive person, will create incredible fear, anxiety and complete helplessness. The child is constantly on high alert causing their heart rate to increase.

Other ways that will affect children are freezing and dissociative response. Physical flight or fight is impossible for an infant, toddler or a young person. Freezing and dissociation become their survival modes. The child will be in a constant state of fear, hyper vigilance, aggression or complete surrender. These children will be either starving for acceptance or erecting walls to preserve their sense of safety.

Knowing the detrimental effects



on children it is unconscionable that the abuse of children is not given the attention and the victims not given the help that they rightfully deserve. We are giving a blind eye to the horrors that children go through at the hands of the people that are supposed to protect them and keep them safe. This is domestic terrorism disguised as parenting. And when parents put their children through the same hell they went through or worse it becomes a true legacy of evilness.

As parents and as adults that experienced abuse, we must rise above and ensure that our children are provided with an environment where they feel safe and where they feel that they belong. We must allow them to make mistakes and enable them to use as learning tools.

In my case as an adult survivor, the legacy of abuse has been broken but not completely. My children grew up with spankings (not beatings) and me raising my voice. Now that I am aware of the "time out system" I wish I had done it because even through yelling and having high

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ASN jackets that I designed and paying it forward for our ASN vendors and writers

By John Zapantis

The number 13 is usually symbolic of bad luck, but that wasn't the case during the Alberta Street News 13th Anniversary celebrations last November that celebrated the various contributions and achievements of our volunteer writers and vendors at Alberta Street News. So being that the celebration brought nothing but positive results that made the event a worthwhile one and the number 13, falling on our anniversary obviously took a back seat to the success of this event.

That celebration was hosted by Alberta Street News at St. Faith's Church in Edmonton. Strange as it seemed to me at that time, being that I'd become reclusive with this paper, it was my first time in attendance, celebrating our historical milestone among fellow writers and vendors, who were seated row on row at a dinner table, accompanied with my girlfriend Theresa Walsh Cooke.

Our Alberta Street News Founder and Editor Linda Dumont first came up to the front of the stage to give her presentation of the paper's history, it's successful evolution and purpose, elaborating on how instrumental the paper was in helping to supplement the marginalized incomes of some of our vendors, who sell the paper on the various street corners of Calgary and Edmonton. When Linda was finished with her presentation, she was greeted by a loud eruptive thunderous applause.

I was then called up by the event's MC, Jason, who introduced me to the many familiar and unfamiliar faces in the crowded audience while starting my presentation. I began by confirming to the many newer guests in the audience that I am the Alberta Street News Media Relations Coordinator

John Zapantis and that I had a presentation to make - the Alberta Street News work caps that I'd be awarding to our various ASN volunteer writers and vendors for their many worthwhile contributions to our paper.

Not only was it considered a very special moment in time for Alberta Street News founder and editor Linda Dumont, ASN vendors and volunteer writers to proudly reflect on what kind of impact they've had with Alberta Street News, but this historical occasion made my face light up as I announced to the audience of that I had designed an Alberta Street News logo that I had Elite Sports Wear and Awards embroider and crest on the caps with yellow lettering on a black back drop. I had funded 30 caps for a total of \$589.05. dollars.

I mentioned my reason for coming up with this idea was to commend the volunteer writers and vendors for their contributions to the paper and

its purpose, while helping to inform our readers and donors on our paper's many relevant social issues that often helps to raise public awareness about the issues that impact people living on the margins and other aspects of social issues. When I finished my presentation I called up the writers and vendors to the stage to receive their well earned Alberta Street News caps.

That event was consistent throughout from Linda's presentation about the inceptions of the Alberta Street News in its humble beginnings to my presentation and awarding the writers and vendors with hats to having several poets come up to the stage to read from their personal works. The event was a total success and proved the theory wrong about the number 13 bringing bad luck and preventing great things from happening.

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John Zapantis, Theresa Walsh Cooke, Linda Dumont and Lanky with their new Alberta Street News jackets. Photo by Angelique Branston

Alberta Street News jackets - continued from page 13

By John Zapantis

In the Alberta Street News March 2017 issue I mentioned in a story that I had approached several organizations and local businesses asking them for the donation of 12 ASN Jackets for our vendors and writers, but to no avail. These organizations and businesses acknowledged to me that they could only afford to fund so many projects throughout their yearly budgets. So, as impatient as I became back in May of 2017, I set out with a goal to save \$733.60 for the production of these jackets.

Months after the presentation of the hats, I had Elite Sports Wear and Awards embroider the same Alberta Street News logo that I had originally designed on the heart side of 12 Alberta Street News jackets. To add to the character of those jackets I came up with the idea of having the writers and vendors occupational titles embroidered on right chest side of their jackets with their names above the titles, and a two inch separation in the middle. For example, the chest side of these beautifully coloured black and royal blue, long sleeved jackets would read the logo, Alberta Street News, in yellow lettering on the heart side, while on the right side of the jackets the name of a vendor on top – for example

- Dale Ferris, followed by his occupational title below his name - Staff Writer.

I'm proud and happy to confirm that the 12 jackets were all embroidered and ready and purchased by me in June of 2017. The 12 new look Alberta Street News jackets personally cost me \$733.60.

So far the some of the ASN volunteer writers and photographers have received their ASN new look jackets including ASN Founder and Editor Linda Dumont, ASN Media Relations Coordinator John Zapantis, ASN Photographer Theresa Walsh Cooke and ASN Writer Lanky and others.

I also was forced to make one more additional jacket for myself with my embroidered name and occupational title which reads on the right side of my jacket John Zapantis Staff Reporter for I currently hold two distinctive work titles for two jackets.

Due to circumstances at the time Elite Sports Wear has a policy that stipulates that you essentially have to have 12 jackets embroidered per contract and because we were shorted in not finding the 12th vendor or writer to come forwards for the manufacturing of these jackets, I felt it was necessary to order one more for myself, because of the contractual obligation in

having these jackets successfully completed. (Sounds selfish you may ask?-Guess who funded the jackets!)

There are currently seven jackets waiting to be picked up by other ASN writers and vendors. The deserving recipients include, ASN Staff Writers, Rodney Graham, Andie Wolf Leg, Dale Ferris, Sharon Austin and Vivian Risby. ASN Vendors include Glen Auger and Harvey Laderoute.

Those named on my list, who haven't picked up their jackets may make arrangements with me by working out a date, time and location where we can meet so I can drive over with the new look Alberta Street News jacket. I may be reached at 780-250-7126. When calling my answering machine, if I'm not home leave your name, number and a brief message as to where you'd like to meet me. Please keep messages brief and be direct. Thank you for cooperating.

I'll be making another 12 jackets for the next series for people who have not yet received a jacket, and will have those jackets ready at the end of September 2017. I'll keep all ASN volunteer writers and vendors posted in another future story regarding the availability of the next series of ASN jackets. In the meantime have a great summer,

World Press Freedom Day

By Dr. Hanif Hassan Al Qassim-Reprint, Chairman of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights

There have been over 1200 journalists killed in the last 15 years, and over 250 imprisoned

by the end of 2016. In an attempt to secure the rights and safety of journalists across the world, key cross-organisational players got together in Geneva to discuss and put forth recommendations which

would help protect journalists and the work they do.

Inevitably, the impact of media has the power to transform societies through enlightenment and

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World Press

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active citizenry.

Observers occasionally refer to the media as the fourth estate owing to its influential role to further enhancing the plurality of opinions and ideas.

A free press is indispensable for facilitating good governance and transparency. It strengthens the accountability of governments as citizens can critically assess the activities of incumbents through information provided by the media.

Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights defends freedom of expression and the right to information. It enables press freedom to become a reality:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Some cite as a hadith of the Prophet

Muhammad that “the ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr.” However, significant challenges lay ahead limiting the freedom of the press.

Firstly, journalists have had at times to pay a high toll for the expression of truth as they see it.

Thus, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, more than 1,200 journalists have been killed since 1992.

Among these victims, 65% were murdered, 22% perished owing to crossfire and combat, whereas 12% lost their lives owing to dangerous assignments.

Many of those murders remain unresolved and the perpetrators are rarely brought to justice as “complete impunity” prevails in 86% of the cases.

The 2016 World Press Freedom report issued by Reporters Without Borders suggests that violent extremism has put significant constraints on the ability of the press to operate freely and carry out their duties.

It was suggested by the panellists to better harness the power of media

by promoting positive stories about religion and culture.

It was also proposed that we, as global citizens, should never fear the stranger as differences enrich our societies. Media can play a more influential role in addressing prevailing misconceptions and misunderstandings that exist between people.

Journalists need to refrain from the use of contemporary phobic language triggering social exclusion and religious intolerance.

Incitements to hatred, violence and bigotry should be condemned as it exacerbates religious divisions within communities.

The spread of fake news and fabricated stories in social media contradict the goals of freedom of opinion or of expression.

A return to the founding principles of press freedom and journalism – accountability, transparency and independence of news media – is the first step.

Parents as gatekeepers

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expectations on children tends to denigrate them because our actions affect their self image. What we do to enhance ourselves in our status as a parent only serves to denigrate our children.

The residue of my abuse at the hands of my father has become my loyal companion and the memories have left a deep impact compounded by the feelings of shame, guilt and not being good enough. When growing up, for every step I took, there was a kind of blockage formed through incredible fear and even when I want to defy this fear, there is something with incredible strength holding me back and standing in the way of what I want to accomplish.

One of the incidents that left such a deep mark in my life and is so difficult to let go, is the time I told my father I was going out with someone. I was about 16 years old. He called me to the

secluded room for servants, carrying his gun and his belt and I knew I was in deep trouble. First he beat me with the buckle of the belt; then he wanted to check my private parts and I would not let him. Finally he put the loaded gun on my head and asked me to shoot myself.

I screamed and asked for help but as in other times, no one came to rescue me.

First is the fear of what is going to happen to you, then the hopelessness that there is nothing that you can do, then the sense of betrayal and the wonder that a person that holds the role of a parent could be such a coward and such an evil person to do this to his own flesh and blood. I am not going to deny that I actually thought of ending my life but that was the easy way out. I told myself, “I will show you.”

Picking up the pieces of my life was the easy part, trying to put them together and rise above took time and

incredible strength.

Now when I think about that incident it is not to wallow in pity and ask myself, “Why me?” That is not important. What is important is that through this ordeal I came to the realization that “I can do it”, that I have within me everything I need to survive and be an incredible human being. Every day I am learning how to embrace parts of my past and one thing I have been able to learn is that no one can take our worth as a human being. It is up to us to teach people how to treat us.

As survivors of abuse we are committed to the children in our society to speak against Child abuse and ensure that if we see the abuse of children we report it:

Child abuse hot line: 1-800-387-5437

If you are 18 years old you are obliged to report child abuse in any form.



Edmonton

As members of City Council, we have a goal to end poverty within a generation. It's shared vision of prosperity for all, where every Edmontonian has an equal opportunity to live, work, participate and thrive. Ending poverty benefits us all, and we've started a city-wide conversation about it. Our approaches to ending poverty — even the ways we talk about poverty — are evolving. We know there is no one simple solution. We invite you to raise your voice, share your opinions and be part of this conversation. Let's end poverty together.

www.endpovertyedmonton.ca



WARD 3 COUNCILLOR

Dave Loken • 780-496-8128
dave.loken@edmonton.ca



WARD 6 COUNCILLOR

Scott McKeen • 780-496-8140
scott.mckeen@edmonton.ca



WARD 7 COUNCILLOR

Tony Caterina • 780-496-8333
tony.caterina@edmonton.ca



WARD 8 COUNCILLOR

Ben Henderson • 780-496-8146
ben.henderson@edmonton.ca



WARD 9 COUNCILLOR

Bryan Anderson • 780-496-8130
bryan.anderson@edmonton.ca



WARD 10 COUNCILLOR

Michael Walters • 780-496-8132
michael.walters@edmonton.ca