

ALBERTA Street News

Volume 16

Issue 4

April, 2019



Sculptor Naji Matta's sculpture, Son of God, left, sits at the front entrance of the Morinville Library
Photo by John Zapantis

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ALBERTA STREET NEWS

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**Deadline for next issue is
April 15**

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The cycle of abuse

By Angelique Branston

Last month I made a rather bald statement, and I wanted to further explain myself, and my thinking. I wrote that we as society should blame the abuser, not blame the victim. Blaming the victim is more than just pointing the finger at someone and saying that because of their actions they were hurt. Although even this is acceptable according to society. The first question usually asked is what were the circumstances surrounding the situation, for example, what was that person doing alone in a room with the other person. This implies that they put themselves into harms way. When the question should rather be, why did that person think it was all right to harm someone.

Blaming the victim is an attitude taken on by the people around the victim. It happens when what the person went through is devalued, when the victim is told to get over it, when they have no family holidays because their inability to sit with the abuser tears apart the family. It is the attitude that there is something wrong with that person, because of the coping mechanisms they had to employ to survive.

Blaming the abuser

The abuser is just a person, much like you or me. They have almost always been harmed themselves. The very act of violence or harm in some other way is wrong. It should not be tolerated. We as society have the message sent that regardless of how someone acts or what we wear we have a responsibility to ourselves to control our actions, not like lesser beasts that see and hear a mating call and respond without thought. Some people simply need firm boundaries, and the knowledge that if they tried to harm someone there would be consequences. For others that is why there is jail with counselling included. They say there is a thin line between love and hate. I think there is also a thin line between victim and abuser.

For I have heard many abusers say that they felt alone, misunderstood, that society would not accept them as they were. We must accept people as they are, listen to their stories, and just be there for them. Whether abuser or victim, they are people.

Supporting the male victims of domestic abuse

According to statistics published in Switzerland in 2017, every fourth victim of domestic violence out of the country's 10,000 annual total of reported cases is a man. Even though they are rarely the victims of physical violence, these men are still in need of refuge. Zwüschehalt in Bern offers just this.

By Klaus Petrus, Switzerland

At some point, Daniel L. [whose name has been changed for anonymity purposes] stopped talking to his friends about it. One just said, "Be happy, that means she still loves you". Another joked, "Maybe you should go to the men's refuge". A third grumbled, "I'd show them!" Even his best friend appeared to be slightly ashamed of him and asked, "Can't you defend yourself?"

No, Daniel L. thought. I can't. I don't want to go to a refuge. But should I?

Daniel L. is in his mid-forties and is an electrician by profession. His is not an isolated case. Although it is hardly talked about, according to crime statistics in Switzerland published in 2017, one in four of the country's 10,000 victims of domestic violence is a man. Statistics also show that more than 70 per cent of the registered cases of domestic violence perpetrated against men are counted as being comprised of "slight violence". These include forms of psychological violence, such as threats or verbal abuse. This is in contrast to the physical "serious violence" that affects many female victims. In the latter cases, the husband or partner is

the biggest threat, and the individuals' roles are much clearer: the man throws the punch and the woman is beaten.

On the other hand, the men who become victims of domestic violence are often also perpetrators: three out of four male victims are in relationships where violence is inflicted by both partners. This violence is often triggered by the exaggerated control of the wife or partner, as was the case for Daniel L., who lived in psychological terror of his wife. And like Daniel, the affected men usually feel like failures because they don't conform to the stereotypical image of a man. They are told that real men should defend themselves, instead of being cowards who submit to the violence inflicted on them.

The notion of a man being the victim of the woman shatters our traditional understanding of domestic violence, in which men are perpetrators and the victim is usually female. Sieglinde Kliemen identifies one of the hurdles in tackling this type of domestic violence. "The affected men often do not feel like they are being taken seriously," she says. "They do not have the courage to share their experiences or to seek help. They remain alone."

Women almost always react violently when their husbands seek protection at Zwüschehalt, a refuge for men, says Kliemen. It also has to do with the fact that in violent relationships, strong addictions also exist. For them, Zwüschehalt is just a stopover on their way back into the relationship. They stay for two months on average.

Daniel L. also returned to his wife after a few weeks. "I love my wife," he says. "But not this monster in her"

Smile.! It's April!

By Joanne Bengner

1. April begins with April Fool's Day and it merges into clown week, April 1- 6. Smile and enjoy.
2. The second week of April is Smile Week, also known as Dental Hygienists Week, Brighten and whiten that smile.
3. April 6 to 13 is also National Volunteer Week. Spread your joy as you help others.
4. April 10 is International Safety Pin Day. Broken zippers, missing buttons, rip or tear – never fear, the safety pin is here.
5. April 14 is Palm Sunday. In Tudor times, palms were made into crosses and hung over doors to protect homes from misfortune for the coming year.
5. April 15, the third Monday in April, is Librarian Day. It is also Wear Your Pyjamas to Work Day, which never quite caught on. Read in your pjs.
6. April 17 is National Haiku Day and our elected leaders birthday. Greet Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta. Happy Birthday girl.
7. April 19 Passover begins at sundown. It recalls the exodus of Jews from Egypt with Moses, and for seven days unleavened bread, matzah, is eaten.
8. April 18 to 20 are Holy Days, Tri duum, the Doom Days. April 18 is Maundy Thursday, when the pious visit seven churches and say the Stations of the Cross in each church. April 19 is Good Friday. This year Edmonton will have its 40th Way of the Cross as the Pope leads the way of the Cross in Rome. Do a good deed on good Friday. April 20 is Holy Saturday. Lent officially ends at midnight.
9. April 21 is Easter Sunday, which is the first Sunday after the first full moon after Passover. It varies from March 22 to April 25 so this is a late Easter, late spring. Wear something new.
10. April 22 is Earth Day when we all try to walk a bit lighter and leave a smaller footprint.. For me it is Shame Day. Last year I resolved to limit myself to 40 new items of clothing. In 2018 I got 69. In my defence, 11 were second hand and thanks to bag days I only spent \$153.80. I know. If excuses slowed global warming we'd be in a new ice age.
11. April 23 is Shakespeare's birthday. He warned, "Men are April when they woo, December when they wed."
12. April 24, 1883 the soda fountain was invented. It's spring. Lent's over. Enjoy a soda or sundae today.
13. April 28 is Ukrainian Easter Sunday. Their traditional toast is, "I wish you prosperity, long life and good health and all the blessings you wish for."
14. April 29, 1933 the zipper was invented. Count your zippers.
15. April 30 is National Honesty Day in the United States. Here it is the opposite as we all search for loop holes on this, the last day to file our 2018 income tax. Over 8 million Canadians wait until this last day.
16. April 30 is also National Oatmeal Cookie Day so we can munch as we crunch those numbers.



The Easter Hare

By Joanne Bengner

The fact is that the Easter rabbit is not a rabbit but a hare. Early settlers saw our native hares hopping about and thought they were rabbits so they called them jack rabbits in error. They should have called them jack hares.

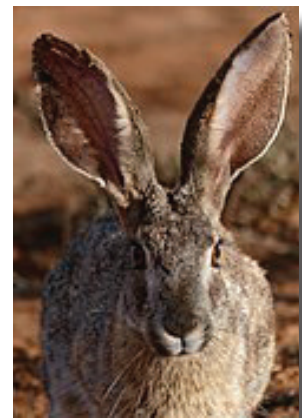
We all grew up thinking that's how rabbits look. Brer Rabbit, Bugs Bunny and the Easter rabbit are all based on the American jack rabbit or American jack hare.

It's an easy mistake and it has happened before. The Belgian hare is really a rabbit. Both rabbits and hares are lagomorphs (not rodents) with large front teeth and small tails. Their greatest difference is seen at birth. Rabbits are born blind, hairless and helpless like kittens. Hares are born fully furred with their eyes open and they are ready to hop about and eat grass at birth.

Hares have longer ears and hind legs than rabbits and move by jumping rather than running. They often thump with their back legs and some believe that is how they speak. Most North American jacks are very large.

European rabbits are smaller, gentler, running animals with longish ears and are easily tamed. The rabbits in pet stores originated in Europe and are true rabbits.

They differ in temperament as well as appearance. In literature the hare is the symbol of lust whereas the rabbit is the symbol of timidity. Hares are often pictured as evil, clever and destructive. Rabbits are quiet and gentle. So now you know. That chocolate Easter rabbit is really an Easter hare. Happy Easter and I hope the Easter hare brings a lot of eggs.



Above right - Hare - often seen in Edmonton.

Lower right - Rabbit - found in treed areas

Breaking ground with a Christian flavour at Higher Grounds

By John Zapanitis

'God works in mysterious ways!' as the old adage goes and when that happens he has a calling for those, who need to deliver from his gifted works, and to others, who are on the receiving end, when being served at the Higher Grounds Espresso Bar located at 10019-100 avenue in Morinville, Alberta.

The Christian cafe has inevitably helped in serving its purpose in holistically offering its many volunteer employees opportunities in both volunteering their helpful skills and learning new culinary skills while helping in either the cafe's kitchen, or cooking main course entrees that are served to its happy customers.

The humble little cafe is welcoming to the public and does not impose its views on people, who may be non-denominational. Everyone, regardless of what they believe is welcome to enter the premises and join in on meeting the staff for spiritual support, humane treatment, and of course an array of quality cooked main course dishes, pastries, coffee and various beverages.

The one of a kind concept is funded by the Father's House Church and proudly employs 20 volunteers, including a full-time paid manager and assistant manager.

The Christian cafe concept first came into a discussion when a group of female church congregants, all consisting of pastors, originally came into the café, when holding their church meetings, but that soon all changed, when they decided to add their own version

of a spiritual flavour to the cafe's operational format that was known to only serve espresso.

Soon the cafe's theme was taken to a higher level, when the congregants suggested that the restaurant add more of a holistic approach, while serving Morinville's public.

In a recent interview with ASN, Higher Grounds manager Elisabeth Melvin reflected on the cafe's humble beginnings and the transition that took place over the years. Melvin said, "The congregants wanted to be very effective but they quoted it more as a hidden gem. So very few people came in, but the impact on their lives was high, right. The difference between their vision and our vision is, for myself, "Hey everybody, I made a pot of soup. Everybody come and eat, right. So I invite everybody."

Melvin reflects on the bumps and grinds of getting the restaurant off the ground, Melvin said, "When we first started they didn't even have a kitchen. It started with, I think, more espresso."

Over the last eight years the cafe has gone through an immense change in helping to make that big difference in the community. Melvin explains, "They eventually built it up over the long-term. Since I've come on board, we've been able to establish it more as a cafe. So we now have the coolers and fridges and operational stove. We're cooking every day."

The helpful cafe takes a holistic approach in making certain that its volunteers are also given an opportunity to find gainful employment when the need is required.

Melvin describes a recent success story, where a former male employee of hers, who lives with autism, was eventually referred by her to a McDonald's eatery for job placement. Melvin said, "So he came in here and he was faithful to show up, when he was scheduled. He would work his full shift and whether he

liked doing dishes or not, you know none of us really likes doing dishes, and just whatever needed to be done. I remember taking him and just working out a plan. He became overwhelmed. His whole face lit up. He was so happy and it really was our plan. So it just stretched me as the manager and knowing the individuals and knowing how to get the best out of them. I had the pleasure, when he applied for a job, that I ended up meeting his new manager and was able to just give a personal reference at that point and I said, "You know you're getting a really good guy."

The cafe is notable for showing its support for artistic freedom of local artisans and musicians. Artists are given the opportunity of displaying and selling their various art that they are allowed to hang on the cafe's four walls, for sale to its customers. Artisans are given 80% of revenues for every painting sold, while the café, acting as an agent for artisans, takes a 20% commission for every sale made.

Musicians are also invited to the cafe's open mike night, while honing their musical skills as volunteers. The incentive for volunteering allows them a permanent place to perform and practice their music.

The manager's theological training as a certified pastor has at times come in handy, while showing her spiritual support for people who've often reached a low point in their lives. Melvin said, "I think one of my greatest moments here was a young lady, she came in here, self-professing she was a self-recovering addict and you could see, she was definitely tormented in her mind. In the summertime we have a patio out here, just chairs and a little table and I invited her to go sit out there and we just sat outside and I prayed with her. I told her about Jesus for sure."

The restaurant's financial priorities are a benefit to Morinville's local community functions. Melvin explains, "We're able to bring in enough profit to pay for the bills, utilities, rent, including our wages; anything over and above the cost, goes back into the community, including our tips."

The cafe also plays an integral role in the field of benevolence. They've been known to donate the proceeds from the tips earned by their waiters and waitresses, who donated tip money to causes like the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation. The foundation was named after Jessica Martel, who was murdered by her husband in Morinville.

Other funded initiatives have included the military, the Food Bank, the Knights of Columbus and free dinners that the cafe has



Left: left to right are, Naji Matta and Higher Grounds Manager Elisabeth Melvin standing in front of a painting called Nostalgia an acrylic abstract/impressionism re-interpreted from an apartment village in Beirut Lebanon. Photo by John Zapanitis

Earth Day 2019: Protect Our Species

**“In nature, nothing exists alone.”
Rachel Carson 1962**

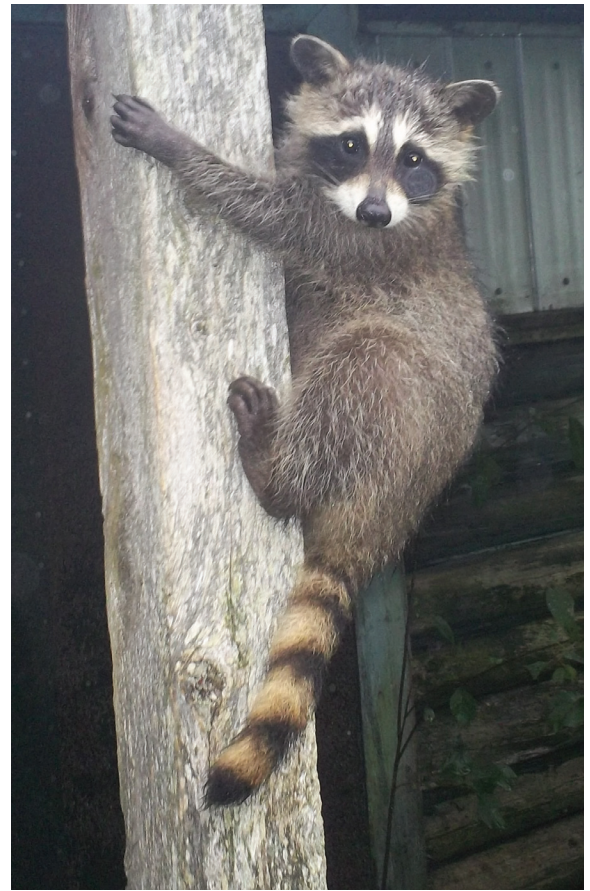
By Sharon Austin, photo by Linda Dumont

Many years ago when I was a young teen in Biology class I had a teacher that was well ahead of his time. On the subject of pesticides and household insect sprays he asked us: “If these pesticides will kill insects what do you think they are doing to the environment and to you?” That really got me thinking about how everything in Creation was connected; without the bees and other insects plants aren’t pollinated, without the berries, fruit, and crops, animals and people grow short of food. This was back in the early sixties long before the first Earth Day was ever thought of. Perhaps he was reading Rachel Carson’s bestseller “Silent Spring” published in 1962 which raised awareness on the need to protect living organisms and the environment and to stop pollution. The first Earth Day was founded by Gaylord Nelson, a senator from Wisconsin, after he saw the terrible destruction caused by a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California. April 22 was chosen because it was between spring break and final exams and students could get involved. On April 22, 1970 in the U.S., 20 million people from all walks of life rallied and demonstrated for a common cause; the need for a healthy and sustainable environment. The first Earth Day was a great success and led to the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Act. In 1990, Earth Day went global with 200 million people in 141 countries participating in rallies for environmental issues. By 2000, Earth Day was celebrated in 184 countries and focused on global warming and the need for clean energy. Earth Day 2010 launched the world’s largest environmental project called “A Billion Acts of Green” a global tree planting project shared by 192 countries. It focused on reforestation and

educated people on the importance of forests and trees. To celebrate Earth Day’s 50 anniversary in 2020, The Earth Day Network has a goal of planting 7.8 billion trees; one for every person on the planet.

The theme of Earth Day 2019 is Protect Our Species and the official poster is a beautiful photograph of a giraffe taken by Brad Wilson. He donated the photograph to the Earth Day Network to draw attention to the plight of giraffes and other endangered species such as bees, coral reefs, whales, elephants, and many types of insects. In 2018 scientists announced that three more species of birds had vanished from the earth for good; the Po’ouli, a small songbird native to Hawaii, the Alagoas Foliage-gleaner from Brazil, and the Spic’s Macaw, a bright blue parrot also from Brazil. One of the species that are now on the brink of extinction is the tiny vaquita porpoise that will likely go extinct within the next few years as there are only thirty left in the world. The plight of the Northern White Rhino is heartbreaking as the last male died in 2018 at the age of forty-five leaving behind two females who are the last on earth. Their decline was caused by humans who poached them for their horns. In Canada, more than 735 species are considered at risk including 502 kinds of animals. The major factors that put Canadian animals at risk are loss of habitat to urban and agricultural use, the pollution of lakes, rivers, and the ocean, climate change and over fishing and hunting.

How can we help to protect the species? One thing that we can all do is cut down on plastic use to keep plastics out of the environment. In the ocean plastics kill whales, turtles, seabirds and other wildlife that mistake plastic bags and bottles for food. Plastic debris can also drown and entangle animals and birds. Some plastics break down and leach harmful chemicals into the environment. Microbeads and microfibres shed from synthetic clothing are eaten by krill and enter the food chain leading all the way



up to fish and humans. About 40 per cent of the plastics made today are for disposable products. We can cut down on plastic use by using reusable grocery bags and bringing our own water in a reusable water bottle. Say no to single use plastic straws and cups. Go back to bar soap instead of liquid soap in plastic containers. Try to buy foods without a lot of excess plastic packaging. Other ways that we can help protect the species include: using household cleaners and detergent that won’t harm the environment, planting wildflowers for the bees, volunteering for a beach, shore, or roadside cleanup, and responsibly recycling to keep harmful materials out of landfills. Sometimes we may feel overwhelmed by the huge scope of the environmental problem but remember that individual actions matter and we all have a part to play. Happy Earth Day, April 22, 2019!

hosted and organized at the Morinville Community Cultural Centre for previous Thanksgiving Day and Christmas dinners.

The cafe is also notable for responding to an emergency crisis, when money is demanded for victims, who’ve lost their homes in a tragic fire. Melvin said, “Even before that, we keep a tip jar up at the front and all the money, regardless of how business is doing, would go back out to the communities. So somebody could walk in if their house is burnt down. They would go and find the local resources and we would also pitch in where we can. So it

was definitely that community aspect.”

As far as manager Elisabeth Melvin is concerned, Higher Ground’s formula for success will always be its unconditional love for anyone who comes walking through its doors, no matter who they are. Melvin said, “We’ll always offer an atmosphere, where you’re accepted if you don’t have money. You’re welcome to come in if you need food. You’re welcome to come in if you’re just having a rough day. I’ve got one customer in particular and any time she’s having a rough time, this is where she comes. She calls this her cafe. So we

are very much involved in people’s personal lives and hopefully see them develop into the best that they can be, right. So if they want God, then we point them towards the church. If they don’t, well that’s fine. You don’t have to be a Christian to come here!”

The name of this restaurant truly defines what it stands for, while helping the many people who walk through its doors, while adding a spiritual flavour to its theme, when breaking ground for those who arrive at Higher Grounds!

Shall a child lead us?



By Allan Sheppard

Shall a child lead us? Might be a good thing Whatever happened to Greta Thunberg? Perhaps more importantly, whatever happened to the worldwide school strike for the climate, inspired by the 16-year-old Swedish youth's words and example, that was supposed to happen on 15 March?

A news item posted online by CNN on the morning of 15 March predicted 2,052 events demanding climate change action. They would involve hundreds of thousands of students and supporters in 123 countries: a significant demonstration of concern about arguably the most significant existential issue of our time, certainly worthy of the broad coverage it received in the weeks and days leading up to 15 March.

During the final week, I read and heard stories and commentaries daily about Thunberg and the remarkable way youth around the world were rallying to her cause.

Her story was indeed remarkable and newsworthy. In August last year, she began a weekly Friday sit-in outside the Swedish parliament building in Stockholm, instead of going to school. Displaying a handmade sign saying, in translation, "School strike for the climate," she answered questions and handed out a brochure she had prepared about the dangers of climate change and its potential impact on her and future generations.

Her demonstration was low-key and low-profile, yet it was remarkably effective. Local media noted and reported on her presence and her cause, attracting broader attention nationally and then internationally. Young Swedes and others joined her weekly vigils, supporting her and helping spread her word. In November 2018, she spoke at TEDxStockholm. In December she addressed the United Nations Climate Change Conference. In January 2019 she was invited to talk to the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland.

By early March, she had been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for raising awareness and rallying support for global action on climate

change. From a modest beginning, she had generated a worldwide movement that, it seemed as 15 March approached, could not be ignored or overlooked. Her journey and her story seemed a potent example of the power of one; of the power of a single person, given passionate commitment to a cause, to make a positive difference.

And yet, on 15 March and in the days since, as I write this, I have read and heard almost nothing in the media I usually monitor about Thunberg or the demonstrations that were to have taken place on 15 March. Whatever happened?

Christchurch happened. There can be no other answer.

On 15 March, a young man in New Zealand showed the world another face of the power of one, the power of one person, given enough anger, hatred and firepower, to make a devastatingly negative difference. Armed with several semi-automatic assault rifles, the gunman (New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has called rightly for his name not to be mentioned) fired repeatedly and randomly at worshippers at Friday prayers in two mosques.

Fifty people died and forty-two were injured in a horrific, senseless act of terror and intimidation. The gunman's goal, according to a "manifesto" he posted on line, was to incite, by provoking reciprocal retaliations, all-out war against Muslims everywhere.

It remains to be seen whether the gunman will find success in his terms, but we can take heart from the example of Prime Minister Ardern and other New Zealanders, who have responded so far with admirable dignity and restraint.

Greta Thunberg and many young people around the world see the status quo as a threat.

Still, it seems clear that he succeeded in forcing media coverage of Thunberg and the climate-strike movement from, not only the front pages, but almost all news pages and other media, at least in the English-speaking world. That is unfortunate.

I won't argue that the Christchurch terrorism should not have received week-long wall-to-wall coverage that is just now receding. The incident and its immediate consequences were newsworthy. They could not and should not have been minimized.

But I will argue that coverage of the school-strike movement should not have fallen off the table entirely. The immediate consequences seem uncertain, but the long-term consequences of climate change and our collective unwillingness or inability to act in response to mounting evidence of impending danger are more certain and potentially even more catastrophic.

Tragic as the events in Christchurch were and will always be, their consequences could well seem insignificant in comparison to disasters that we are told from reliable sources are likely to happen due to climate change—that have already begun, if deaths and damage wrought on Mozambique by Cyclone Idai are accepted as credible examples of future consequences.

Critics of Thunberg and her young followers argue that going to school and preparing for future lives and careers is most important at their ages, that it is wrong-headed and short-sighted of them to jeopardize their futures by sacrificing their education. Thunberg's brochure addresses that critique pithily:

We kids most often don't do what you tell us to do. We do as you do. And since you grown-ups don't give a shit about my future, I won't either.

She makes two inconvenient points: parents and societies do not teach their children about important things by what they say, they teach by example, by what they do; and a child's future is not determined only by what one knows or is taught but by what one does and what one's parents and communities do.

Not stated by, but easily inferred from, Thunberg's provocative words is the idea that education might be part of the reason why we as communities and societies cannot address climate change or appreciate its challenges from the perspective of youth. The best-educated scientists and leaders in our world have not been able to agree on action to confront climate change; they seem, often too reluctantly, to agree there might be a problem, but even the best of them throw up their hands in despair at being able to do anything about it.

Education—at least the kind of education most of us have received—one might argue, got us into this mess. Can we count on more of the same education to get us out?

Not if the intent and effect of most formal education is to indoctrinate and co-opt young people as supporters and perpetrators of the status quo.

Greta Thunberg and many young people around the world see the status quo as a threat. Who are we to tell them they are wrong? And who will pay the price, if they are right, and we, their elders, do nothing to address their concerns?

Do they have all the answers? Probably not. But they are asking some of the right questions. Rather than condescending to them, in effect patting them on the head and saying everything will be all right, we might get better results for them and ourselves, if we engage with them, starting with the understanding that they, not we, have the most to gain—and lose—from the way government and corporate leaders, and grass-roots citizens deal with climate change in the next decade.

I'm not sure Thunberg deserves the Nobel Prize, not yet. But she and her supporters certainly deserve to be heard. With respect.

Child care policy is helping, but is it adequate?

By Timphy Wild, Calgary

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recently released a report, written by David Macdonald and Martha Friendly, on childcare costs in various cities in Canada. The document: "Developmental Milestones: Child care fees in Canada's big cities 2018" provided a snap shot of the monthly costs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers in "full-time, full-day child care" in 28 big cities across the country. According to the report, the median monthly fee for a toddler in Calgary is \$1,030, while the monthly cost for an infant in Edmonton is \$975. The average cost for a pre-schooler ranged from \$835 per month in Edmonton to \$1007 a month in Calgary.

In many ways, these costs remain prohibitive for a significant number of families, particularly working-class families and / or families headed by a single parent (usually a woman). I talked to a social worker, in Calgary, who noted that the expenses associated with child care certainly restrict the economic options of many families. The monthly expenditures cause considerable financial strain and stress and, in one case at least, seemed to put children into the dangerous waters of questionable care. The social worker stated that she had spoken to one parent who said "I need childcare to be able to work but unfortunately the cost of quality childcare is out of reach. I have had to put my children in childcare situations that are not very desirable." She informed me that another parent had stated "I have a large family. If I were to put them in care it would cost me my entire monthly salary, so only one of us works. Our finances are tight, but we manage the best we can." For some, use of child care might be related to individual, parental development. But for many working-class families, participation in the work force is not so much a choice as a necessity. Due to the unremitting economic demands of daily living many families simply cannot enjoy a decent level of social, cultural and economic inclusion and participation without full-time work. This is not really

about choices, then, but basic survival and the enjoyment of some measure of dignity.

Fortunately, there has been policy involvement of the Federal Government in bilateral agreements with the various provincial and territorial governments, together with Indigenous communities, to reduce childcare costs, and provide more realistic and attainable options for Canadian parents. Thankfully, our province's New Democratic government has entered into such a partnership with the Federal Government to help reduce the financial burden of childcare on some Alberta families. As noted by Macdonald and Friendly:

"In previous years we have pointed out how common it is for child care fees to go up faster than the rate of inflation. In 2018 this was the case in 17 of the 28 cities surveyed. At the same time, feed reduction efforts in... Alberta appear to be lowering costs for parents... Edmonton's median preschool-age fees dropped 6% and Calgary's fees rose by less than the rate of inflation."

Therefore, there is, at least a little, good news. Effective and targeted progressive public policy is having a positive impact and will undoubtedly increase the choices of families in our province. For example:

"In 2018, Alberta added another 100 child care centres (6,000 spaces) to the 22 that were part of the provincial government's \$25/day program in 2017. Although \$25 is more than double what Quebec parents pay (about \$8 / day at median incomes, it is far less than the market rates for child care in Alberta or most other provinces."

Overall though, access to affordable child care is about social justice and gender equality. Despite sustained efforts by governments of all stripes to enact measures designed to give women equal opportunity, inequality exists in pay at all organizational levels and in many economic sectors. We are still faced with the unacceptable presence of a feminized expression of poverty. Women are over-represented in the service and helping sectors of the economy, and under-represented in the highly paid, information, production, engineering and science fields. This despite the fact that women make up a majority of university graduates in almost all academic fields. The principle reason for this, in my opinion, is the socially

constructed norm that women are the primary care givers for children (and aging parents), which "requires" certain career sacrifices. Affordable daycare, along with generous parental leave and care policies, are tangible ways to address this structural problem.

However, it is my fear that such policy advances will be readily sacrificed, if we have the misfortune of electing the UCP in the upcoming provincial election. There will be those who say that the government should not provide any finances to support the "choices" of parents. Perhaps suggesting that women should maintain traditional, socially constructed gender roles related primarily to reproduction and child minding. Obviously, this ugly misogyny and classism misses the point. Despite the need to support both child birth and rearing – for future collective social and economic growth – it is also essential that we support the ambitions of parents, especially if they help deconstruct unhelpful, indeed harmful, gender norms. Secondly, as already noted, it is important to bear in mind that for many parents, particularly those from groups on the social and economic margins, such work force participation is essential to the fundamental and overall well-being of the family.

Macdonald and Friendly suggested: "if there is a main conclusion we can draw from the results of this year's child care survey it is this: provincial set-fee regimes are reducing costs to parents. The effect of these new programs, however, is not the same across the board." Costs remain high. Spaces continued to be limited. Waiting lists are long; in fact, some child care providers even charge people to be on these waiting lists. And workers in the field are under-paid and, in so many ways, undervalued. There is a long way to go, and enhanced bilateral cost-sharing programs need to be developed and funded to address these issues in order that all Canadian families have access to quality, universal, affordable and developmentally appropriate child care. The current advances, although by no means ideal, represent a significant public policy development. However, public policy can be rapidly changed, and the ideology of individualism trotted out by the UCP will certainly undermine these gains. Let's remember that basic point.

Well off are the menace - Not the poor

By Rodney Graham, Winnipeg

Here's a good example of something I've been saying for years. It's not the poor on the street who commit crime - especially violent crime - it's the well off. Besides date rape, vandalism, and other petty crimes - violence is almost all committed on the street at night

by the well off. This article is a good example - it's from CBS 11 News in Dallas, Texas. If you google it you can watch the video too:

'A woman who was badly beaten in a Deep Ellum parking lot by a local bartender is recovering Friday morning. The victim - who CBS 11 News is not identifying - said she went to the hospital Thursday evening to be treated for her injuries. According to her attorney, Lee Merritt, she is recovering from post-concussion syndrome and cranial swelling. She said as she pulled into the parking lot at the corner of Elm and Crowds

Streets, she had blocked in another driver. The driver, Austin Shuffield, then got out and confronted her, holding a gun by his side. The confrontation was recorded on a cellphone by a bystander across the street. When the woman pulled out her phone to call 911, the man in the video can be seen slapping it out of her hand. She pushes him, and then he begins repeatedly punching her in the face - at least five times.

According to the victim's attorney, the woman said Shuffield called her "racial slurs"

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Recovery From a Dysfunctional Family

By Maria B.

We can confidently recognize that the family is the primary influence in our lives that not only builds up and shapes us, but also set in motion the disorders that limit us as adults. Many times confrontation alienates family members even more and nothing will become resolved. Physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of a human being are all intricately intertwined. Repressed injuries that we experienced in our family can cause health issues.

All of us find ourselves following the pattern of our family even if we have vowed we would never repeat it. In my family, accepting the departure of our mother, we failed to validate the pain that we felt when she left physically.

FORGIVENESS IS THE KEY TO RESOLVING THE PAIN OF THE PAST. WITHOUT IT, NOTHING IS EVER LAID TO REST.

Recovery from the wounds of the past begins with accepting that we were children and we were powerless. We must give God our past with all its losses and shame, handing over every moment of disgrace, every disappointment, every tear, every dashed hope, every scar. We turn our lives to God with the knowledge that he has offered us a relationship with himself through his forgiveness of our failures. God will make up for everything that we have lost. He can rid of our shame and fill the empty places in our heart.

From this we learn that resolution of problems rooted in the past can come only through forgiveness. When we make this real and concrete we can reject the myths and lies that have held us bound. It reinforces our decision to leave behind the darkness of denial and to live in the light of truth. We must ensure that

we are taking appropriate responsibility for our own behaviors and we must check that our boundaries are intact – that we are not allowing harmful people or patterns to creep back into our lives.

Forgiveness is often a process that must be repeated. Even when we have worked through our feelings and forgiven someone, who has hurt us, we may find that pain from old wounds starts showing up again, signaling us that fresh forgiveness may be in order.

As we work through the process of forgiveness, we are able to move beyond ourselves and our pain, to establishing a stronger, healthier relationship with God.

In order to acknowledge and accept our pain, God walks beside us helping us to see things clearly. One of the joys of forgiveness is that we experience a wonderful sense of freedom in our lives. Holding grudges keeps us focused and locked in a situation of pain.

Recovery is a spiritual process. Our forgiveness always flows from our forgiveness – from the mercy and grace that God has poured upon us through his son Jesus. Having experience forgiveness for our own wrongs and being able to extend forgiveness to others, we become new, free creatures. We move from codependency and dysfunctional behaviour into genuine caring and love.

Why do you want reconciliation? If you approach the other person, what do you think will be their response? Can you accept the worst possible response?

I want you to know that I have walked the path of hurt, confusion, and pain, and I also know the release that will come as you follow the path of forgiveness, forgiveness for what was done and what was not done. You will find a new openness in our family.

We never talked to our parents about any-



thing. We just existed. As I grew into an adult, I had to search for answers as to why I felt so ashamed and guilty. I wanted to know who my father was and what kind of childhood he had. The fact is that our dad had failed us and injured us in many ways.

I had to dig around, ask questions, and pry loose whatever scraps of information I could gather. I learned that my father had a hard and painful childhood. The same with my mother; she also had a hard life, so I was able to understand that you can not give what you do not have to give.

No one talked about the beatings; everybody learned to shut down their feelings and everyone left the family to enter into troubled and broken marriages that describe the characteristic patterns of a dysfunctional family.

When we read about the dysfunction of our family, sometimes members of the same family will find themselves resisting and even denying the dysfunctional behaviour described. That is not surprising since this is painful material to cover, especially if your family of origin is dysfunctional to one degree or another. Do not allow yourself to succumb to the temptation of letting that discomfort serve as an excuse to stop the journey of discovery.

Changing to healthy God honouring behavior and nurturing the relationships is so important in our lives.

WE MUST RISE ABOVE AND BECOME THE BEST THAT WE CAN BE.

Well off are the menace

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and made other "racist remarks."

Dallas police identified that man as Shuffield, charging him with aggravated assault, public intoxication and interfering with a 911 call.

He was booked into the Dallas County Jail but posted bail overnight. Merritt said he is pursuing felony assault and hate crime charges against Shuffield.

Shuffield was fired from his job as a bartender at the High and Tight Barbershop and Speakeasy. Braxton Martin, the shop's owner, said what he saw in that video is horrific. "He was a very good employee. Somebody that never has anger or reached out in any way to

hurt or be violent towards anyone," Martin said.

Note how they say he was 'such a nice guy' - Exactly, it's the phony, two faced who get away with crime the most. The following is my opinion of this 'issue' ~ (DALLAS (CBSDFW.COM)):

Whereas the homeless, the at risk youth, the poor are criminalized, hounded, harassed, and used, abused, and accused... Most violence on the street occurs near nightclubs and upscale businesses at night. And the offenders are almost always the well off customers of these establishments, and, as in this case, and employee of one of these businesses. This is more common than the public would know since it's

not in the news each time it happens.

Now this is the irony of our society. As I've mentioned - It is the homeless and poor, the vulnerable who are surveilled, hounded, searched, and arrested - It is quite rare that a creep like this even gets caught. Often panhandlers are assaulted by patrons, and bouncers of businesses too. Most violence on the street - in Canada and in America is perpetrated at night by patrons and employees of upscale business and of taverns and other businesses - NOT by the homeless.

There is the issue of gang violence. Yes there is a lot of violence there - But very rarely does it involve the general public at all.