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# ALBERTA Street News



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Mule Deer at Writing On Stone  
Provincial Park in the fall of 2019.  
Photo by John Zapantis

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# ALBERTA STREET NEWS

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

## Writers:

John Zapantis  
Joanne Benger  
Allan Sheppard  
Sharon Austin  
Linda Dumont  
Maria B.  
Eric Mosely

## Photos:

John Zapantis

## Cover photo:

John Zapantis

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Alberta Street News  
9533-106A Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta,  
T5H 0S9  
780-428-0805  
dumontlc@hotmail.com  
Web:  
albertastreetnews.org

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# Isolation – Yes, Ventilator – No

By Joanne Benger

My age puts me in a high risk group so my job is to simply stay isolated and stay well so I won't need a ventilator and it will be there for others. I've seen those ventilators on TV and feel no desire to use one. And thinking of a ventilator keeps me motivated to stay inside and keep my distance outside. May be shallow but even I have my priorities. Fancy new jeans - yes. Ventilator - no.

I only go out in public to get the mail twice a week and I go to the bank even less often. Food's no problem. The Senior Bus stopped running and I felt a touch of panic. "What will I do without my monthly grocery trip?"

Then I remembered my next door neighbour works at Walmart. I asked her if she would pack up groceries for me and she said yes. I gave her my monthly grocery list and she and her big, strong husband carried the groceries right to my door. I paid with a cheque. The first order surprised me. I got all the fresh dairy and produce I'd asked for but Walmart was out of tea, rolled oats, canned milk and beans. Lee casually said, "I'll get them when they come in." This is my new normal, I realized with a shak.

I stay fit by using my exercise cycle for half an hour a day plus I walk laps for an hour in the back alley where I will meet no one. I'm lucky because I am an introvert. Sheltering in place and exercising alone are no big deal. For years I have had a daily work schedule of reading and writing. My only challenge was re-inventing fun time. Fortunately in January, Ines, my neighbour across the street, who does volunteer work at the library, gave me twenty out dated word puzzle books. They have become my new social life and I have enjoyed learning how to do cryptograms and acrostics. Then there is TV. I watch the Shopping Channel and all the glamour shows I can find as I plan my new wardrobe I'll buy when this isolation is over and I dream of the places I'll wear it.

I'm amazed at how people phone to see if I am okay and if I need anything. Of course, Linda Dumont phoned but so did John Zapantis so I know ASN is thinking of me. Friends, relatives, neighbours and people I barely know have called as well. Most calls begin with us comparing how we're coping. Then we end up laughing and planning what we'll do when this is over! I'm going to be a regular social butterfly if half of those activities take place.

I pray a lot and my prayers are getting answered. My grandson and his wife were first year missionary teachers in the country we used to call Java. We all worried they would get trapped there, but March 23 they were repatriated and entered quarantine in Alberta. My whole family is now safe in Canada where they will have ventilators if they need them in the future. Who could ask for more!

I often feel I was in the right place at the right time when this pandemic struck and I pray for those who are less fortunate. I've seen the ambulance visit a house down the street twice last week. A healthy lady had elective surgery just before the pandemic was declared and she has had complications. We have to stay home and keep distance so none of us neighbours can visit or comfort this person. It is a helpless feeling.

Still, I tell myself, this too shall end and we'll all emerge as a kinder, gentler society. I pray that people everywhere will be able to stay off ventilators and come through this with grace.

## Mom's Wisdom

By Joanne Benger

1. Apologize and say you are sorry.
2. Give up your seat for others.
3. Stop fidgeting.
4. Tuck your shirt in.
5. Don't chew with your mouth open.
6. Say please and thank you.
7. Don't talk with your mouth full.
8. Keep your elbows off the table.
9. Look at me when I talk to you.
10. Tie your shoe laces.
11. Keep your knees together.
12. Close the door. You're letting flies in.
13. Close the door. You're letting cold in.
14. Excuse yourself.
15. Wash your hands and comb your hair.
16. Put your toys away.
17. Brush your teeth.
18. Wipe the mud off your feet.
19. Don't track the clean floor.
20. Sit up straight.
21. Stand up straight. Don't slouch.
22. Don't cross your eyes. They will stay that way.
23. Don't stick out your tongue.

Due to the cost of printing, Alberta Street News has become a bi-monthly paper. Place an ad to help pay printing costs. Call Linda at 780-428-0805 for ad rates.

## Happy Mothers' Day

By Joanne Bengner

In Roman mythology Maie was the mother of Mercury and the month of Maie was named for her. Early Roman Christian calendars renamed the month, the month of Mary, for the mother of Jesus. In England, May Day was the day people welcomed spring by going out at dawn to watch the sun rise, and soon the month of Mary became the month of May.

May Day actually began on April 30, May Day eve, with Walpurgis night, which, like Halloween, was considered a night given over to the forces of evil. Witches rode broomsticks and male goats from dusk to dawn. On May Day there was the May Queen and then the Maypole Dance. It was a day of flowers and romance.

May is an important month if your health is dodgy for the saying is: "March will search you, April will try you, May will tell whether live or die you". You can improve the odds with this advice: If you would live aye, eat sage in May and avoid oysters for it is never safe to eat them.

May is Asian Heritage Month, Jewish Heritage Month and Komagata Maru Memorial. It is also Hearing Awareness Month. The first week is Be Kind to Animals Week. Remember animals are people, too, and as George Orwell said, "Four legs are better than two legs."

May 1 is Hats On for Mental Health Day, when teachers and students wear hats to raise awareness of the importance of good mental health.

May 2 is National Scrapbooking Day. Organize your memories.

May 3 is National Day of Freedom and National Day of Prayer. Empress your gratitude today.

May 5 is Cinco de Mayo when Mexicans remember the May 5, 1862 Mexican army's victory over the French forces in the Battle of Puebla. Eat Mexican food today.

May 8 is the 75th Anniversary of VE Day that ended World War II May 8, 1945. Honour a vet today.

## Happy as a June Bug

By Joanne Bengner

It's June. May you all be happy as June bugs. What will the weather be like? Expect rain for the sayings are, "A dripping June keeps all in tune." And "Mist in May and Rain in June bring all things into tune."

June is Seniors' Month, Pride month and Dads Month and lets not forget the anniversary of June brides. The first week in June is Seniors Week. Enjoy.

June 1 is World Milk Day. Drink it but don't spell it. Spilling milk brings sever days of bad luck.

June 4, 470 B.C. Socrates was born. He said, "How many things can I do without?" and "The unexamined lie is not worth living."

June 5 is National doughnut Day. Indulge without guilt.

June 6, 1944 was D-Day, the date of the final allied campaign of WWII. Phone a veteran.

June 8 is lemonade Day. This is followed by Green Onion Cake Day on June 10. Some say green onion cake should be Alberta's official food.

June 11 is St. Barnabas Day. Days are long now. "Barnaby bright, all day and no night." Get your mower out. The old rule was "St. Barnabus, mow your first grass." This is followed by St. Vitus Day on June 14. "If St. Vitus be rainy weather, it will rain for 30 days altogether." June 14 is also the Queen's official birthday. Happy birthday your majesty.

June 15 is Bloomsday in Ireland. Go outside and smell the flowers but keep you social distance.

June 19 is Ding Free Day. Park with care when you go for your take out ice cream for today is also National Ice Cream Day. Nero invented the first ice cream. Runners brought mountain snow which was flavoured, often with fruit juice.

June 20 s the first day of summer, which will last for 92 days. The word summer comes from the Sanskrit word for half-year. This year June 20 is the third Saturday in June so it is "Wear Plaid for Dad Day."

June 21, the third Sunday in June has been Fathers Day since 1909. Fathers haven't changed much since Homer sad good-bye to his infant son before going off to fight Greece. He held his son tightly and prayed, "Someday let the Trojans say of him 'He is a better man than has father'."

June 23 is an new holiday with new roots. T s our National Hot Dog

May 10 is Mother's Day. As young mothers we reconnect with our inner child, rejoice in the little moments and live vicariously through our children. Then they grow up and as the Chinese proverb says, "There's nothing more blessed on earth than a mother, but there is nothing more blessed in heaven than a mother who knows when to let go."

The second week of May is Nurses Week. Honour a Nurse today.

May 12 is St. Dunstan Day when spring cleaning officially begins. No more excuses. We have to get after those dust bunnies now.

May 14 is Dance Like a Chicken Day. Enjoy.

May 18 is Victoria Day when it is usually safe to set our transplants without fear of frost. However the first full moon, June 5, after Victoria Day can bring frost if the sky is clear so keep those blankets handy.

May 20 is Bee Day. Plant some bee-friendly flowers.

May 21 is Plato's birthday. He said, "The good is the beautiful." And "Time brings everything."

May 24 is Brothers' Day so connect with your brother or celebrate the brotherhood of mankind.

The fourth week of may is Aboriginal Awareness Week. Read up on Canadian history.

May 19 is Digestive Cookie Day. Enjoy some today.

May 31 is World No Tobacco day. If you don't smoke, don't start and if you do smoke, butt out.

May 31 is Whitsunday, a Christianization of the Jewish Feat of Weeks linked to the giving of the tablets of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. This Jewish feast took place 50 days after Passover. Whitsunday takes place seven weeks after Easter.

Now May is done so you can put your winter clothes away, the saying being "Change not a clout until May is out..." and "Who doffs his coat on a winters day will gladly put it on in May."

Day which many celebrate with a wiener roast. In times past June 23 was Midsummer's Eve when bonfires were let to keep evil away as well as to encourage the sun to stay. Wood for the fire was collected by everyone for it was unlucky not to bring a stick to the fire. Often a witch's hat and broom were placed on top of the wood and after it was lit, flowers and herbs were thrown into the flames. Finally a new sickle was thrown into the fire to ensure good crops. Then the fire was allowed to de down.

June 24 is the birthday of St. John the Baptist, the wild-eyed prophet who lived in the desert, wore a camel hair coat and ate honey and wild locusts.

June 24 is also flying saucer day. Pilot Ken Arnold is credited with naming them for he reported seeing nine shiny discs flying at 1000 miles per hour on June 24, 1967 near mount Rainer, Washington. He referred to them as fling saucers n a newspaper interview and the name stuck. In the past they had other names. Aristotle witnessed seeing 'heavenly discs that landed, rose, and landed at another spot'. And Cicero reported seeing 'flying spheres' at night.

June 26 should be the happiest day of the year for it is the last Friday in June. We should all be as happy as June bugs. It's Friday, it's pay-day, the July holiday is coming and school is out. Kate Greenaway wrote, "School is over, oh what fun! Lessons finished, Play begun. Who'll run fastest? You or I? Who'll laugh loudest? Let us try." Let's enjoy it as best we can this year and hope 2021 will find us once again **as happy as June bugs**.

June 27 is Happy Birthday to You for this song was invented on this date in 1859 by Mildred J. Mills and has been sung on birthdays ever since.

June 27 is also Canadian Multicultural Day. A Canadian s a Canadian is a Canadian. Wear you face with pride and celebrate your differences

June 29 is St.. Peter's Day and people eat haddock because it was in a haddock's mouth that St. Peter found a piece of money (Matthew 12:27). To this day haddock have two marks on their neck that are said to be the impressions of St. Peter's fingers.

June 30 is Meteor Day. Be sure to wish upon a falling star when you see one.

# When one door closed another opened as God answered my prayer

Story and photo by John Zapantis

God works in mysterious ways and evident of his miraculous works. I recently prayed to the higher power that I needed to pay off a total of \$12,400 on my VISA credit card statement, because the constant thought of just struggling to pay off my minimum every month during the last ten years was sheer insanity.

Well, inevitably one day that prayer would soon be answered. It was on Friday, December 13th, 2019 at 3 p.m. in the afternoon, I had been driving in my 2016 Toyota Corolla CE southbound along 102 Street, while about to cross over 114 avenue, on my way to visit my girlfriend, who was hospitalized at the Royal Alex. My mind was absorbed by the music on my radio. I looked up towards my front window and to my shock, I noticed a car crossing the intersection in front of me, trying to quickly move out of the way to avoid my vehicle from running into it. My car then

rammed right into the left driver's passenger door of this lady's vehicle, forcing her car to the side of the street.

At this point, after the cars had collided into one another, I quickly looked over my left shoulder and noticed the woman still in her car. I then raced out of my car, to see if the lady was all right. She was getting out of her car, while looking over at me as I ran towards her to give her a supportive hug and explain to her that it was all of my fault because my mind wasn't on my driving.

I was concerned about the lady's physical condition but she told me she was okay.

I was mentally shaken by the accident. I looked over at my damaged vehicle and noticed the front grill was dangling at a 45 degree angle. Other than that my car was perfectly intact. I looked over at the lady's damaged vehicle and all you could see was that there was a long indented scrape on her left driver's door, from when she was trying to prevent her car from being in a collision with mine.

When we went over the accident, she told me that she saw me pass the stop sign that I hadn't noticed, despite her having the right of way. She also noticed I hadn't seen her while carelessly crossing the intersection without even stopping my vehicle at that stop sign to my right and I continued to drive my vehicle right into her car.

When we both started to calm down, after exchanging our views on this unfortunate scenario, we exchanged information, assuring one another of our proper status as vehicle operators. That included our operator license ID's, auto insurance policies and car registration.

This lady was most helpful and insisted on calling a tow truck company that she had often dealt with for past flat tire repairs and battery boosts. She recommended that I use her company to have my car towed to a storage place, since my car was now inoperable.

The tow trucks that she called both arrived within the following hour and both of our vehicles were safely towed away to separate storage places., We would later be contacted by our respective auto insurance companies, whose insurance adjusters would conduct an assessment to determine if the cars were operable for repairs, or if not repairable, a possibly write off on the vehicles so that we could be paid out.

The lady and I eventually went our separate ways, shaking hands as I again apologized for any inconvenience I had caused her.

She remained a good sport about things and told me not to worry, that things like this do happen and to watch where I was driving next time.

A week later my auto insurance company phoned me leaving a message on my phone's answering machine, confirming that my vehicle was taken out of storage and towed to the Londonderry Chrysler body shop to see if my car's damaged body could be repaired. They mentioned that an insurance adjuster would be looking over the damage to my vehicle to determine if it was repairable. Then, about a month later, I received another phone call from my insurance company to confirm some news on the progress of my vehicle that was still at the body shop They told me that the car was no longer repairable. It was considered a total



ASN Media Relations Coordinator John Zapantis is one happy camper seated inside his new 2020 Toyota Corolla model L, 4 door sedan while giving his thumbs up to Sherwood Park Toyota staff members Product Advisor Tyler Shellnutt and Assistant Sales Manager Jo Cariou.

write-off and that I'd be receiving a payout on my damaged vehicle.

One week after that phone call, the insurance adjuster told me that my insurance company would be giving me a payout of \$12,048.79 for my written off car. It then immediately dawned on me, and I remembered that I had asked the Good Lord about a year ago to get me out of VISA credit card debt.

I was worried endlessly while struggling to pay the minimum of \$200 plus a month that continually held a balance of \$12,400 a month. Despite managing to pay off the minimum every month during that 10 year period, the total balance remained the same because of the high interest rate added to my payments.

So, while remembering that I had prayed to the Lord asking him to rid me of this debt, I realized that my prayer from a year ago was finally answered. I set out to not only pay off most of my VISA credit card balance of \$12,400, I also decided to buy a new 2020 Toyota Corolla-L- model 4 door sedan.

To start with the essentials, I had forwarded the remaining balance of \$2,400 with 6 months left to pay off my old damaged 2016 Toyota. Then I put a down payment of \$2,000 on a new 2020 Toyota Corolla L model 4 door sedan. The remaining \$8,000 on that balance of my payout I put towards the balance of my VISA credit card totaling \$12,400 which now left me with a balance owing of

\$4,400 on my VISA payment statement.

Goes to show that God had a plan after all and gave me a choice. Not only did he take care of my debts, after throwing me into that unpredictable tailspin, but managed to find me the right kind of salesman for the right type of state of the art car.

The Good Lord on occasion has been sending me to deal with an honest salesman named Jo Cariou, who currently works at Sherwood Park Toyota. He previously sold me that old 2016 Toyota Corolla CE that I had finally paid off that was involved in this accident.

Today Jo Cariou works as the Assistant Sales Manager and recently referred me to Sherwood Park Toyota Product Advisor Tyler Shellnutt, who gave me a presentation on my new 2020 Toyota Corolla L model 4 door sedan that I purchased from Jo Cariou on February 3, 2020.

One thing that I especially love about this car, is the many safety features that make it so safe to drive.

Tyler gave me a courteous guided tour of the car's interior and exterior and in particular pointed out the car's unique safety features that includes a safety light indicator on your dash that'll turn on and show the illustration of a road with markings that light up with a beeping noise that follows indicating to careless drivers that your car is coming to close to the shoulder of the road when not paying

attention to your driving.

After I took possession of of my new car that was sold to me, I took it out for a test drive to Camrose, Alberta. I happened to be listening to the radio while driving on my way to that city. Somewhere along that drive, while distracted by the radio's music, my car started to pull off to the side of the highway's shoulder. Then, at that crucial moment, the light illustration of the road on my dash lit up along with that beeping sound that prevented me from dangerously driving off the shoulder of that highway.

That's when I remembered Sherwood Park Toyota Product Advisor Tyler Shellnutt giving me that important rundown on my car's safety features and how his professionalism in keeping me safety informed, inevitably saved my life that day on that highway.

Oh and thanks to Assistant Sales Manager Jo Cariou and Finance Manager John Pulongbarit for approving my credit for the purchase of new car and helping to open that door to a newer road in life, evidence of that commercial slogan at Sherwood Park Toyota that rings true, 'Life is full of choices-Let us be yours!' Last but not least, I thank God for answering my prayer and for putting me back on that road again!

## We have a new normal

By Linda Dumont

It's a changed world. Every day or two there is yet another rule to follow, like not giving rides to people who are not from your own household, and the social distancing everywhere we go. I did give a friend a ride a few weeks back, and she had to be distanced to the back seat, which she found very uncomfortable because I drive a small Ford Fiesta and she is a large woman. It took her at least five minutes to maneuver her feet out of the car when we got to the clinic for her appointment, and she complained the whole time. Since then, I practice social distancing more rigidly, and just say, "I am not comfortable giving rides to anyone at this time."

On my last trip to the stores, I had to get my reading glasses fixed. I bought them at Superstore, but their optical centre is closed so I called Walmart. Optical. They are still open for emergency repairs only. I got to the store, and dutifully stood on in the line up of carefully distanced people for about 20 minutes before I was admitted. When I walked over to the optical center, I thought it was closed because the sliding door was shut. Then I noticed it was

open a crack, and a sign by the opening read, Emergency Repairs Only, so I stood there and called out, "Is anyone there?"

A man appeared and took my glasses. I told him to put on a new temple and it didn't have to match. He returned 20 minutes later and I paid him \$20. My glasses now have one gray temple and one black one, but they work.

My next stop was to pick up a heater at Best Buy that my daughter had ordered. I stood on a chalk marked X on the sidewalk in the line up to get purchases. A trio of people ahead of me had not pre ordered so stepped out of the line up to place an order with their cell phone. When I reached the entrance, two men stood there, while another man went to get the heater. I paid with a bank card.

Next I went to the bank. Two ninja like security guards stood at the door, but they let me pass when I explained that I just needed the bank machine.

Home at last where everything is still normal! But then I got a call from The Mission Hall. One of the volunteers was unable to work so could I cover that evening. It's Front line work so we are still doing what we can. The health inspector makes regular visits to ensure that all safety precautions are in effect.

At the Mission Hall we no longer let people inside unless they are going to stay for the gospel message. Only about five people are

permitted inside where they sit on strategically distanced chairs. The rest just come to the back door and are handed a bag lunch and coffee, then go on their way.

Other than such necessary forays out into the community, I have been keeping social distancing by staying home, painting and writing, exercising with yoga videos, doing yard work and enjoying retirement since I was laid off from the YMCA on March 21. I have been able to collect Employment Insurance and am earning more money now than when I was working! I have adjusted to the new normal, and for the first time in years plan to plant flowers!

## Street Papers affected world wide

Covid19 has been a challenge for street newspapers world wide. As of April, most papers stopped printing. Alberta Street News published an on-line version only for our April issue, but due to the demand for papers from the few vendors who are still managing to sell papers, we are publishing a limited edition for the May/June paper, and will see what happens next.

At present there is no end date set for the virus and the necessary health precautions that are in effect.

# Blame China. Blame Ottawa. Blame Dr. Tam. (Anyone except US.)

Allan Sheppard

When the going gets tough, the tough in heart and spirit get going: they act. They do things: sometimes the right things, sometimes the wrong. By getting some things right, and by learning from mistakes, they lead. When things go well, tough leaders surf the momentum; when things go badly, they seek new directions or look back for an actionable recovery point.

The wannabe tough...talk. They do not act. They do nothing. They wait for mistakes: if made by themselves, they repeat them; if by others, they complain.

When things get seriously tough, wannabes blame. They shame. They point fingers everywhere but at themselves.

The obvious, inescapable example (mis)rules and (mis)leads our neighbour to the south. But there are others: in Brazil, in the Philippines, in India, in parts of Europe, and among English Brexiteers. All experience serious economic, social, cultural, and political failures and conflicts that cry out for fair, reasonable, and equitable responses. All have chosen or tolerated leaders who blame enemies, real or imagined, traditional or newly discovered, internal or external, for legitimate and urgent challenges; leaders who claim that the way to deal with challenges is to overcome enemies, rather than acknowledge and confront objective causes.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a gift to such leaders, as an enemy in its own right, and as a cudgel to beat the same old bogeys. Which brings me to (my own private bogeyman?): Jason Kenney.

For the first few weeks, Mr. Kenney kept a low profile on Covid-19. He let Alberta's chief medical officer of health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, do the important talking, which meant generally following the advice of her federal counterpart, Dr. Theresa Tam. The results, to my admittedly inexpert eye, seemed good. By mid-April, as I write this, Alberta had more confirmed cases than more-populous British Columbia (perhaps reflecting more extensive testing) but fewer deaths (perhaps reflecting a younger population); by both measures, and in both provinces, a much better performance than in the national hotspots, Ontario and Quebec. Things could have been better—and should have, if we as provinces and as a nation had followed through on lessons learned and remained faithful to recom-

mended preparations for future pandemics begun after the SARS outbreak in 2002-2003. But they could have been much worse, as they were in other parts of the world (and still are).

Then things changed. Instead of continuing to hold himself, his government, and his officials focused on and accountable for what they could and should be doing now and in days, weeks and months to come, Mr. Kenney, enthusiastically joined by fellow-travelling federal Conservatives, chose to blame federal officials, specifically Dr. Tam, for things they had done and failed to do in the early days of the coronavirus outbreak in China, before it grew to epidemic, then pandemic, proportions and became identified as Covid-19, rather than the Wuhan- or Chinese-virus as it was first labelled.

Mr. Kenney blames Tam for acting too slowly, in particular to close Canadian borders to travellers from China. He implies Dr. Tam was too deferential to the Chinese and their politically spun deceptions and cover-ups or too compliant. She used Chinese "talking points" to make a false case to Canadians, according to Mr. Kenney (who seemed unaware of irony and hypocrisy inherent in using President Trump's talking points to attack Dr. Tam).

The time must come when Dr. Tam and other medical and political leaders at all levels from the international (the World Health Organization, in particular) and national to the provincial and municipal have to account for, defend, and perhaps apologize for things they did and did not do throughout the course of this pandemic. I suggest a fair outcome will reveal that those responsible, at least in Canada, did some (perhaps many) things right, some (perhaps many) things wrong, and all the while struggled with many challenges that were beyond their or anyone else's control.

Did they make mistakes? Will they make mistakes? Of course. Firing mistakes? The true test will not be how many mistakes were or will be made by whom, but what our leaders, experts, and we have learned and will learn to make things better in the immediate future and beyond.

Hindsight is easy; necessary, to be sure, but easy. Foresight is harder. And even more necessary.

The beginning of the end of the Covid-19 crisis may be near in Alberta and Canada. Now is not the time to look back, to blame others for mistakes. Now is the time to look forward, to imagine and create a world that is prepared and equipped to do better—and be better—when the next pandemic comes along, as we must know by now it inevitably will; a world in which the lessons of our mistakes will not fade away under pressures of time and cost, the sins of indifference and complacency, as they did after SARS, under all governments and leaders.

We must work toward a world in which the pre-existing conditions of poverty and prejudice do not again influence disproportionately who will die and where from plague, famine, pestilence, and war.

Much has been made of the fact that people over 70 have been hit hardest by Covid-19. Little has been made, so far, of the role of poverty in that reality: How else do we explain the fact that so many of the aged died in long-term care homes where they lived four-to-a-room?

How do we explain the fact that racialized and marginalized minorities of all ages have died in numbers far out of proportion to their numbers in society? Many, if not most, of them had pre-existing medical conditions (heart, lung, and kidney diseases; diabetes; obesity) associated with poverty. How many of those under 70 lived in crowded housing where physical distancing was impossible? Were homeless? Or could not distance themselves because they had to work in essential jobs or to pay bills?

Mr. Kenney does not ask such questions. All he can do is blame China. And Dr. Tam who happens, perhaps not coincidentally, to be Chinese (Hong Kong) by birth? Mr. Kenney and many conservatives seem anxious to stoke prejudice against Ottawa, China, and (we are invited to assume) an overly sympathetic or gullible bureaucrat of Chinese descent.

Why? Why take that low road? Why the dog-whistle rhetoric? Why such partisanship? Why not appeal to Albertans' and Canadians' best interests and instincts, instead of our worst?

It's a distraction. Already in a shambles, our economy is about to crater as U.S. oil prices fall into negative territory. (Producers now have to pay processors to take product, due to lack of storage capacity for ongoing production). Our situation has been worsened by the pandemic, but the economy was already on life support before the virus emerged in China in December. Mr. Kenney wants us to believe that the pandemic and its impact—and more than that, the whole economic mess we find ourselves in beyond the pandemic—are somehow the fault of Ottawa and other forces beyond his and our (but not their) control. To succeed he must distract us from the fact that Conservatives, Progressive and United, have held power in Alberta for all but four years since 1971. Dr. Tam could be just the handiest, easiest scapegoat to divert our attention from that inconvenient truth.

Successive governments in Ottawa have played a significant hand in the mismanagement of Alberta's petroleum resources and the long-lost long-term benefit we had a right to expect from development of our resource. I will not excuse or apologize for them.

Continued on page 7

# The Phone Booth

By Sharon Austin

"I can't imagine people having to use telephone booths," the kid was shaking his head in disbelief as he pocketed his cell phone.

"In my day everyone used phone booths," Bob smiled at the look on the summer student's face. "Some of my best memories involve phone booths; like the day I called and asked my girl to the prom, and coming back from trips I'd always call home. 'T'was a different time back then, no cell phones and a lot of folks didn't even have a home phone."

The kid was looking bored with his reminiscing. "Anyway, here's some change, go see if this one is still working, then we'll have lunch."

It was Bob's job to check on the location and status of all the phone booths in the area and make recommendations as to which ones were still vital to the community and which could be dismantled.

"Yeah, this one is working great. I'm going to get a burger at that diner; are you coming?" the kid asked.

"No, I've got my lunch here," Bob was hoping to catch a little catnap after his lunch. He was due to retire soon and he was starting to feel old and tired. Rolling down the windows he lay back and closed his eyes as the warm May breeze swirled around him and he was soon fast asleep.

A whisper soft white mist floated in the air and as the mist dissipated the phone booth on the corner of Hickory and Pine stood before him shiny and brand new. The silver metal panels gleamed in the sunlight and the plexi glass was unscratched and clean.

Suddenly a man in an old-fashioned suit rushed to the phone booth and quickly dug in his pockets for coins. The coins clinked down and relief flooded his face as someone answered.

"I just got off the bus, is Dad still all right? Oh, thank God, I got here in time. I'll wait right here."

Months and years scrolled by as if Bob were watching a movie of a procession of all the people coming to and from the phone booth. Next came a woman running down the dark deserted street, a paper shopping bag clutched under her arm. She dove into the phone booth and dialed, all the while looking furtively around her. Bob could see she had a black eye and there was blood on her lip. "Please," she whispered hoarsely, "Come and get me." She slid down to the floor of the booth clutching the phone as she tried to make herself as inconspicuous as possible.

Mist swirled and a young man with a huge smile pushed open the phone booth. In his hand he held a cigar tied with a thin blue ribbon. He dialed again and again each time saying proudly, "It's a boy, I've got a baby boy!"

A homeless man, stooped and ragged, stopped by the phone booth. His yellowed fingers dug into the coin return and a smile lit his wrinkled face as he pulled out a few quarters.

Slowly everything faded to serpia like he was looking at an old photograph. The phone booth had changed too into an old-fashioned wooden structure. Two young soldiers in uniform obviously returning from the war approached the phone booth. One young man leaned heavily on his crutches as his empty pant leg flapped in the breeze. They drew straws to see who would make the first call. "Mary, it's me. I got in early. I can't wait to see you," one soldier smiled into the phone his eyes sparkling with joy.

The other's face was etched with pain and suffering as he dialed the phone. "Please don't cry, Mom. I've lost my leg but I'll be all right. Send Dad to come and get me, I'm at the phone booth on Hickory and Pine."

Bob's dream took a sinister turn as a lone figure slid into the phone booth on the dark empty street. Pulling a revolver from his jacket, he lay it on the phone booth shelf. Moonlight glinted off the barrel as he snarled into the phone, "Bring the money, or I've got the cure!"

The date rolled now to the future, two days forward to Sunday. The midnight special bus stopped and a lone figure stepped down clutching a guitar case and a duffle bag. Rain slashed against him as the young man ran to the phone booth on the corner. He fought the guitar case through the door and lay his head against the tray that had so many years ago held the gun.

The last words his father had yelled at him rang in his mind. "That money we saved was for college, not for you to go traipsing around the country. If you leave with that drummer don't ever come back!"

Pushing the wet strands of hair from his face, he pulled out the last of his money; a handful of change. He had sold everything he could, even picked bottles just to get enough for a bus ticket home. Like the prodigal son he was coming home in defeat. It had been a year since he left to follow his dream that had fast become a nightmare. Hopefully they would welcome him home. The change clanged and he heard the phone ring, then his mother's sweet calm voice muffled with sleep. A hand seemed to clutch his heart and tears stung his eyes. His throat was so tight he could hardly speak. "Momma," he choked unable to say more.

"Jamie, is that you! Thank God you're all right. Where are you, son?" He took a deep shuddering breath to steady himself. "I'm in the phone booth near the bus stop.

"We love you Jamie, we'll be right there to get you. Your father's been so worried."

Looking at his watch, Jamie saw it was after midnight. It was Mother's Day. "Momma," he said, "Happy Mother's Day."

"This is the best gift you could ever give me Jamie," she said through her tears. "I'm so happy, son, we'll work things out."

As he waited, Jamie gave in to his tears that mingled with the rain on his cheeks. At length

he mopped his face with his damp sleeve. He still had the fist full of change warm from his hand and he lay it out on the tray. Who knew, someone else, desperate and alone, might need this phone tonight.

Just then the kid pulled the door open and Bob was jolted awake. He stared at the kid then at the phone booth standing placidly on the corner.

"Whew! he breathed, "It had all been a weird dream."

Still, the strange dream was unsettling and he knew what he had to do. This phone booth was steeped in too much joy and pain, too many hopes and dreams were born here to ever be forgotten. It held within it's walls too much of the human spirit to be dismantled. It was a vital part of the community.

"You know what, kid," Bob said making a quick decision, "This phone booth is going to stay on this corner for a long while yet. Let's take the rest of the afternoon off!"

As he drove away, Bob glanced at the phone booth in the rear view mirror. Everything looked the same but he was sure he heard the faintest breath of "thank you" floating on the breeze.

## Blame China - continued form page 6

But there is more than enough blame left over for Mr. Kenney and Albertans to accept their fair share.

Albertans and our governments have made many mistakes. We have not learned from them. Worse, we have refused to learn from them. We have done the same things, pointed the same fingers of blame, over and over again hoping for a better result next time. (Remember those send-us-another-oil-boom stickers?)

It's time to point those fingers back at ourselves. And at the leaders we have allowed to deceive themselves and us for decades.

We might learn something.

We might finally make some tough choices, instead of just talking tough.

### Novena

**St. Clare - Ask St. Clare for three favours - one business, two impossible. Say nine Hail Marys for nine days whether you have faith or not. Pray with candle lit and let burn to the end on the ninth day and put this notice in the paper J.B.**

# Self Determination

By Maria B.

To me

**It is about becoming the trailblazers That set the path Of everyone's SELF DETERMINATION**

It is the realization that every individual is equal before and under the law . It is about making this the actualization That every individual has the right for equal protection and equal opportunities to their Own self determination.

This is an encapsulation of our needs,

interests and the principles of the fundamental rights of every human being.

Courage and strength will become the well springs of knowledge where the difference in every person becomes a resource of incredible value and experience.

Peace with each other and in the world require a true connection with each other and respect for our DIVERSITIES so instead of seeing them as differences, they become a realization of commonalities where value and experience are recognized.

Recognizing that we are the Progressive and endless sources of abilities and recognizing that every person has different kinds of abilities.

**AS HUMAN BEINGS WE ARE TAKING OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE WORLD AND MAKING OUR SELF DETERMINATION THE KIND OF LEADERSHIP THAT WE NEED TO CREATE PRODUCTIVE INSTITUTIONS IN OUR COUNTRY, IN OUR PROVINCE AND IN OUR COMMUNITY.**



# Expo Centre visit

By Linda Dumont

The Expo Centre has been opened for more than a month as a drop in and place for homeless people to sleep and to receive necessary services.

Elaine, a co-worker at the Mission Hall, and I went to see what it is like at the Expo Centre for the homeless people using the drop in and sleeping there.

As you go in the door you are asked for your name, then allowed to walk right in. Inside, people were sitting at tables throughout a very large room. This was the drop in area. There was a row of six portable toilets along one wall.

A man told us that he could wash clothes in a mobile unit to the north of the

building, and that there were showers at the south end of the building.

From the large drop in room, we went through to the area where people lined up for meals and coffee. They are served three meals a day. A man was putting out cups of coffee, but no one was around.

Beyond that was a smaller cultural room where a woman was teaching how to make a bead necklace. Only one man sat there doing bead work.

Past that was the sleeping area that was a big room with rows of metal cots, many with people lying on them. We was told that people could sleep for three or four hours, but if someone was really tired, he or she could sleep longer.

We also saw a housing area, with a row of tables each with an intake worker so

people could talk to someone about housing needs There were also some tables with people, who could help out with income taxes.

The main thing we noticed was the barrenness of the area, with many of the people just sitting doing nothing. A few were amusing themselves coloring in books, or taking to others around the larger round table. There were no television sets or other forms of entertainment.

People are free to come and go. For those who live downtown, there is a bus leaving the Boyle Street Community Services every 20 minutes.

# Letter to the Editor

My name is Eric Protein Moseley and the Coronavirus has affected me in a way like no other. I am a Social Impact Homeless Documentary Film Maker who has to see first hand the neglect for which the homeless go through by not receiving adequate information about the virus. I continue to go out amongst the

homeless but it has become challenging to get someone to go along with me. But I still somehow get it done.

I was recently on the news in San Francisco for education of the homeless about the Coronavirus and it was brought to my attention that only 5 out of 10 homeless people had even heard of the virus.

I have since returned to Los Angeles to go down on Skid Row to further educate the homeless about the deadly Coronavirus.

Below are two televised news stories about what I do and a trailer for a Coronavirus documentary which is about air in San Francisco  
<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.kron4.com/news/outreach-advocates-survey-finds-half-of-san-franciscos-homeless-are-unaware-of-coronavirus-outbreak/amp/>  
<https://www.kron4.com/news/homeless-in-tenderloin-more-aware-of-coronavirus->