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**Colourfully costumed dancers performed at the Beltane Festival
at Borden Park on May 1.**

ALBERTA STREET NEWS

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Dancers at the Beltane
Festival

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A mother's love

By Angelique Branston

A mother's love is warm like sunshine
Warm and giving
Her love helps guide you, protects you and supports you.
Her love gives strength when needed
A tender hug
And you know that you are not alone.
A firm warning that like the lighthouse light that steers you away from certain doom
upon the jagged shoreline.
Thank you my mother, the one who gave me life for your unconditional love.

She has the power

By Melissa Hill

She had the power,
but they took it away;
And she let them.
Because she didn't know she had it to begin with.
Now she's taking it back.
Because she has the power to change.
She has the power to allow herself to evolve and grow.
She has the power to forgive herself.
She has the power to accept herself for who she is.

Igniting the embers of creativity

Shattered Rainbows Creative Society was registered in late November and it's amazing to see how the embers of creativity are igniting. Already they have the Nintendogenesis Video Game Project with Freya Giroux, Joshua Branston and Khayman Giroux researching the history of video games and buying old games. They will be doing their first presentation at the children's summer camp at the YMCA this summer.

Freya's Giroux's Wild Krampus dance group held their first performance at the Beltane Festival on May 1. There are ten committed dancers as well as others who drop by occasionally. Linda Dumont has started a hatha dance group that will be choreographing yoga postures into routines set to music. Both dance groups will be performing over the summer at various farmers' markets throughout the city.

Alberta Street News writers are invited to join the writers' group that will be meeting bi-monthly as soon as all COVID19 restrictions are in the past. Writers will be able to share ideas, talk shop and read poetry.

The music group has not yet come together as they need an amp and two microphones. And for the art group they need art supplies such as paint and brushes and venues that will show the paintings.

With Shattered Rainbows there is no limit to what can be done.

The name Shattered Rainbows is from Dumont's signature poem by the same title, as well as the chap book of poetry titled Shattered Rainbows that she published in 1999. She said, "If you shatter a rainbow into pieces, every piece is still beautiful. It is that way with people whose lives have been shattered – there are still those embers of creativity just waiting to be fanned into flame."

Alberta Shattered Rainbows Creative Society is in need of donations of money, an amp and mikes, and art supplies. If you would like to contribute call Linda Dumont at 780-975-3903 or contact Shattered Rainbows at ShatteredRainbows@shaw.ca.

If you are interested in joining Shattered Rainbows or have a creative idea you would like to develop – the skies the limit – call or email.

The views expressed are those of the contributors.

Here we go a-Maying

By Joanne Bengner

"Here we go a-maying, collecting flowers in May." The flowers can be used to decorate your house or left on doorsteps as gifts as we celebrate May. The merry month of May probably gets its name from either Maïesta, the Roman goddess of honour or Maia, the wife of Vulcan and mother of Mercury so it is a good month in which to honour mothers. Watch the weather for "Mist in May, heat in June, Make the harvest come right soon." "A cold May and windy, A full barn will find ye." And "Rain in May makes good hay," as all gardeners know. May is Asian Heritage Month, and Hearing Awareness month. "Have your ears tested at 60 years."

May 1 is May Day or Beltane and the traditional meal is roast pork with apple sauce. Be kind to cats today for if you tease a cat on May Day, she will turn into a witch. Be kind to children for May 1 has been Child Health Day since 1928. Some schools have Hats on for Mental Health Day with all students wearing hats. At the local level, May 1, 2016 Fort McMurray had their fire evacuation, followed by their April 28, 2020 flood evacuation so we think of preparedness for all summer disasters on this date.

May 2 Ramadan ends. It was a month. it was a month of self-reflection and prayers.

May 4 is Yom Hazikarn, also spelled Yom Ha'atzmut, Israel Memorial Day followed by Yom Ha Atzmaut, Israel Independence Day on May 6.

May 5 is Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican celebration of the Mexican army's victory over the French in the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862.

May 6, the first Friday in May, is no Pants Day, a mock holiday invented in the 80's. This is followed by National Scrapbooking Day on May 7. May 7 is VE Day for May 7, 1945 Germany surrendered unconditionally and WW2 was over.

May 8 is Mother's Day. George Washington said, "All I have I owe to my mother." And he called her "The most beautiful woman I ever saw." Let your mother know how much you, too, appreciate her.

May 9 is Dance Like A Chicken Day as well as World Migrating Day. Some bird watch today and others dance.

May 15 is Pesah Semi (second Passover) and May 19 is Lay ba Omer, the third day of the Omer.

May 16 is Full Moon, Planting of Flowers Moon.

May 17 is National Pack Rat Day, which celebrates all of us who hoard and have too much clutter. This is followed by Bible Study Day on May 18.

May 20 is Endangered Species Day and World Bee Day, which makes us aware of the alarming number of bees declining world-wide. We need bees to pollinate plants as well as to make honey.

May 22 is Ascension Day. If it is sunny the summer will be long and hot. If it rains crops will do badly. May 22 is also International Day for Biological Diversity. Go for a nature walk.

May 22 – 28 is Aboriginal Awareness Week, when we confront Canada's shameful past and seek forgiveness for residential schools.

May 23 is Victoria Day, a holiday when gardens are planted because the danger of frost is past. The old poem goes, "Hurrah, hurrah, for the Queen's birthday, If you don't give us a holiday we'll take one anyway."

May 23 is National Patriots Day in Quebec.

May 29 is Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day. It is also Digestive Cookie Day. Enjoy.

May 31 is Memorial Day in the U.S. Originally they just honoured the war dead but now they honour all who have died. Many celebrate with a picnic lunch in the cemetery.



Omigosh its Omicome

By Joanne Bengner

In isolation I have been entertaining myself by inventing new variations of omicron for different groups. Here goes: Telemarketers – omicon, Nun – omicross, Janitor – omicrud, Queen – omicrown, Bird watcher – omicrow, Abo-

iginal – omicree, Singer – omicroon, Farmer- omicow, Cow- omicream, Baker – omicrumb, Simple Simon- omicrust, Fisherman – omicreel, Robber- omicrime, Knitter – omicraft, Snowbird – omicruise, Druggie- omicrack, Baby- omicrib, Construction worker – omicrane, googler – omichrome. I decided if I catch it, I will have to omiwrite and I will CU in ICU. Q. How did omicron spread so fast? It

used Delta.

Q. Why didn't the tired man get his third dose? He dosed off.

Q. Why did the little girl think she had two new relatives? Everyone was talking about Auntie Vax and Auntie Mask.

Q. What test is there that you can't study for? The covid test.

Q. Why was the single lady sad to see restrictions lifted? She was still waiting for that man-date.

Texas- or mini-doughnuts?

By Timothy Wild

I recently took a course, co-presented by the Institute for Community Prosperity at Mount Royal University and Momentum, on the “economics of social change”. The five-part series covered a wide range of topics related to the socio-economic vitality of the community. These included local investment, social entrepreneurship and the various manifestations of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The course also considered ways that funds could be harnessed more effectively for the promotion of the common good, as opposed to being largely a means for the enrichment of short-term investors.

I must admit that I was a bit skeptical going in. After all, I have heard the siren song of CSR for most of my life, while, at the same time, I have also seen the damage caused by post-industrial capitalism in terms of environmental degradation, the commodification of labour, the global exploitation of workers and the destruction of national economies. I have witnessed democracy being subverted to the callous “logic” of the market. I have experienced that selfsame market exacerbate poverty and greatly increase inequality in terms of both income and wealth. On reflection, perhaps I was more than a bit cynical! That being said, while I still think CSR is a complete and utter public relations scam, I do have a more nuanced understanding, particularly at the local level, of how economic initiatives can contribute to the common good and the common wealth. It was an excellent course.

Another benefit of the course was that I was introduced to the work of the British Economist Kate Raworth. In a number of TEDx talks, Raworth explains her concept of “doughnut economics”. However, if folks are interested in a more fulsome explanation of her work, I would suggest they obtain a copy of her 2017 masterpiece “Doughnut Economics: 7 ways to think like a 21st Century economist”.

Basically, Raworth suggests that the optimal shape of a functionally healthy economic system can be thought of in terms of a doughnut. The diameter surrounding the “hole” in the middle of the doughnut is presented as being concerned with notions of authentic inclusion and agency. The idea is that no one should be consigned to the emptiness of the hole, and the inner

diameter represents the minimal aspects of the provision of basic needs and social, cultural, economic, psychological and political participation. Recognizing, the diameter of the hole as marking the basic requirements for inclusion, “shortfalls” in this area are harmful.

The outer rim of the doughnut, which Raworth labels as the ecological ceiling, marks the sustainable boundaries of our continued existence on Earth. A key part of Raworth’s argument is related to the obvious fact that our economy is completely embedded within the limits of our planet; that growth, or whatever determinant is pursued, must be crafted with a recognition of both finite resources and the optimal environmental balance. This is where pollution, the depletion of the ozone layer and the loss of biodiversity is illustrated as problematic if not deadly. Recognizing the outer rim of a sustainable planet, with a sustainable economy, “overshoots” in this area are harmful.

Raworth argues that “between these two sets of boundaries lies a sweet spot... that is both an ecologically safe and socially just space for humanity”. The rest of the book explores ways to create and sustain that “safe and just space”. This is an important book.

Reference to the book is also timely, given the unbalance of the requirements of environmental sustainability with the dictates of prevailing economic relations of production. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently noted “Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all”.

In a response to this pressing need, the Federal Government recently released a raft of aspirations related to the reduction of emissions through proposed legislation, economic support, financial measures and attempts to change the behaviour and consumption patterns of Canadians. The aspirational end point of these initiatives is that by 2030 emissions will be at 40-45% of those of 2005, and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. I agree with those targets. I think there is merit to promoting a wholesale switch to electric vehicles. The construction of green buildings, suited to our climate, is something to aim for. Coal could be replaced by cleaner sources of energy – wind, solar and, dare I say it, nuclear. But my question is how can this be achieved in a sustainable way, that meets the needs of ordinary people, within the

global economy? How can we achieve these targets without those on the margins paying a heavier price than the bourgeois cool?

Raworth notes that there are a number of competing answers to that question, including perspectives from green growth to “degrowth”. This is where I think greater public policy discourse attention needs to be given. I am firmly in the “degrowth” camp. I do not think we can economically “grow” our way out of this environmental mess.

I also don’t think it is either just or advisable to create a fools’ paradise in Fortress North America. We need to recognize the global implications of the growing climate crisis, and we must implement a preferential option for the poor when it comes to paying the price of that “degrowth” – both locally and globally. It is naïve, if not delusional, to believe that we can tell folks in the Global South not to go through the same process of industrialization and economic growth as we have experienced in the Global North, to varying degrees, since the Industrial Revolution. There must be measures of compensation. We are already overshooting several dimensions of our doughnut’s outer rim. To carry on this way is sheer folly. So, what are some options?

Well, first, I believe we can look at the market as a place for the exchange of goods and not as a tool to gain massive profits, increasingly through the specter of financialization. Secondly, drawing upon the work of the political theorist Adrian Little, we can make plans for some form of guaranteed financial provision, independent of participation in the work-income nexus, to compensate for the necessary reductions in consumption and production. Additionally, as argued by Little, we can ensure the extension of social rights of citizenship to animate political voice and agency, at both the local and global levels. Finally, we can draw upon the core human trait of “relationship” to ensure well-being and inclusion for all. This relationship can be animated globally but also across time, in terms of ensuring a healthy and sustainable future for our descendants.

I think the Liberals are going in the right direction. But I am not sure we have time to wait for 2030 to see how Canada does, and even longer to see how the other parts of the world do. I happen to like this planet, and a safe and just doughnut appeals to me.

Homelessness

By Darlene Collins

There used to be a time when I was homeless myself. Back then we appreciated the help we got from the community: the parking lot, the Bissell and Boyle Street Centres, to name a few.

Some people were homeless by choice not by chance. It's quite wonderful in the spring and summer when you can sleep

till all hours, eat when you wanted to or just do whatever you wanted, when you wanted. It was wonderful.

Nowadays, with the next generation taking over, it seems that most homeless people don't appreciate what's given to them. You didn't see all the garbage, clothes, food, safety for a person. There's nothing but chaos in today's society. There are people walking around talking to themselves, people getting beat up for whatever, people smoking drugs and

drinking out in the open. What's up with that? And absolutely no respect for the elderly or the police.

What's wrong with you people. I'm sure you were raised the right way. Come on, people, get with the program and don't blame COVID. Nothing has changed from then to now. In a way COVID has made changes to the world. Just accept it and do just that – change.

Mothers' Day Musing

By Joanne Bengert

1. Motherhood is hereditary. If your mother had not become a mother, you could not be a mother because you would not have been born.
2. Although motherhood is hereditary only roughly 50% of a mother's offspring can become mothers. The other 50% unfortunately will have to settle to becoming fathers.
3. All people have mothers. There is still no way to get born without a mother.
4. Mothers come in all sizes shapes and colours. Still, every child knows his or her mother is the perfect shape, size and colour for him or her.
5. Some children have more than one mother. There are surrogate mothers, birth mothers, step mothers, legal mothers, and foster mothers to name a few. All of these mothers have one thing in common. They are mothers who wanted to be mothers. A mother is a mother no matter how she became a mother.
6. Every mother knows her child is the most wonderful child in the whole world and she wouldn't change a thing.
7. Some mothers are stay at home moms, others are working moms, and still others are part time moms with shared custody. A mother can be full time or part time and still love her child with her whole heart thanks to quality time.
8. Motherhood never ends. Even if a mother is 100 years old and the child a mere 80, the mother is still a mother and will worry about her child and hope for the best for him or her.

Four famous mothers

By Joanne Bengert

Mother Goose

Mother Goose's nursery rhymes were published in 1719 by T. Fleet of Boston as "Mother Goose's Melodies for Children." Then it was found they previously appeared in Perrault's "Contes de ma mere l'oye" (Tales by my Mother goose) in 1697. Both books had recorded nursery rhymes that had been imbedded in oral tradition for centuries. Many of the poems and stories would vanish for a time only to reappear with changes that made them fit the new times. The term Mother Goose is believed to come from the fact that many were classified as old wives tales and women were often referred to as silly geese. At one time it was believed that Mother Goose was the pen name of Queen Bertha of France.

Mother Hubbard

The Mother Goose nursery rhyme introduced us to Mother Hubbard whose cupboard was so bare she didn't even have a bone for her dog. People still identify with Mother Hubbard.

Mother Bunch

Mother Bunch was a long lived ale wife in the 16th century. Her laughter could be heard for miles and we are told, "She dwelt in Cornhill neere the exchange and sold strong ale and lived to a hundred and seventy and five yeares, two days and a quarter, and halfe a minute." Many books have been named after her. She wrote about art, nature, philosophy and she even wrote a book telling young people how to find a good marriage partner. If your interest is longevity, I must point out we are told she sold strong ale not that she drank it.

Mother Shipton (1488 to 1561)

Mother Shipton was born in a cave in Knaresbrough, Yorks in 1488 and baptized as Ursula Southiel. At 24 she married Tony Shipton. For tourists there is even a fake "Mother Shipton's Tomb" at Williton, Somerset so we know that she did exist. Mother Shipton was considered a witch as well as a prophetess and her fame was first recorded in 1641. Then, in 1677 Richard Head published "Life and Death of Mother Shipton" which contains her predictions, many of which have only come to pass in this century. Predictions: Carriages without horses shall go, and accidents fill the world with woe. Around the world thoughts will fly in the twinkling of an eye. Through hills men shall ride and no horse or ass be by their side. Under water men shall walk, shall ride, shall sleep, shall talk. In the air men shall be seen in white, in black, in green. Iron in the water shall float as easy as a wooden boat....

Mother Shipton also wrote predictions that sound like global warnings about fearful weather to come "Thunder shall shake the earth, lighting shall rend asunder, Water shall fill the earth, fire shall do its work. Waters shall flow where corn shall grow. Corn shall grow where water doth flow. Houses shall appear in the vales below. And covered by hail and snow. it shall be black then turn gray and a fair lady be married thrice." At least she gives us hope - amid all those fires and floods and disasters we have the three wedding to look forward to!

The homeless can be resourceful

By John Zapanis

There's the common stigma in how the homeless are often depicted by the ignorance of everyday society. That misconception can create nothing but havoc for those just trying to simply survive a day's rejection from those that never have ever walked in their shoes. You see it every day in the metropolis city of downtown Calgary. The downtrodden, a lot of them through no fault of their own, are out on its various street corners plying their trade just asking for a few dollars to get that cup of coffee, or even that donut to complete that full meal deal for a very hungry man's hungry appetite.

But along with that full-fledged effort and know how in asking for these favours, sometimes comes that unruly holy awakening when the odd passerby puts them to the test, by ignoring their polite and diplomatic plea, while throwing it all back with a volley of sarcastic comments that inevitably turns into a hostile crossfire between the beggar and the passerby.

Uncalled for rude and sarcastic comments range from, 'Get a job you lazy bum' to a group of friends, walking past a beggar and laughing out loud, while making the obvious comment that the beggars plea for a few bucks to get a coffee and a donut is every desperate man's idea of a main course meal that his life depends on. With another outburst of torrential laughter that group leave him behind, only to react to this abuse in disappointment.

Despite all the rejection and confusion that this creates for a beggar with high hopes, he still manages to put on the charm, and wins the admiration of a young female high school student who sympathizes with his stories of rejection and shows some human empathy for the homeless beggar's plight by rewarding with a \$10 donation after hearing interesting, entertaining and informative stories that leave the girl with a better understanding of why homeless peoples' unavoidable circumstances make them spiral into a life of homelessness and begging to survive.

While going temporarily homeless myself in Calgary, after getting into conflict with a female relative at my mother's place, where I had resided for over 10 years, I was

told I had to leave and get my own place. I left immediately to avoid further conflict. I ended up losing my residence and immediately headed off to Calgary to find my own place.

Being that I'm currently still a ASN Media Relations Coordinator/Reporter/Photographer and have been with this paper since December of 2010, I've been using the resources of the Calgary Salvation Army, while writing stories from their Wi-Fi computer room. I first came to the centre during the first week of March and I'm allowed residence at this facility for 90 days free with free access to a breakfast, lunch and supper all cooked and provided by certified chefs.

The dorms on the second and third floors are occupied by three roommates per room that have been minimized because of COVID-19 restrictions. There to greet you after your first day of registration are bathrooms with private showers on each of the second and third floors within this facility. A chapel where you can go and worship the Holy Spirit is there for your convenience and free laundry services are available to any tenant in need of getting their clothes washed, when the time is needed.

A resource specialist is also provided to news residents looking to get their life back in order. The specialist, as a priority, will suggest an array of public service referrals to those who need to inquire on an array of services that could include counselling, subsidized housing, educational upgrading, and employment opportunities, just to name a few. But with all of the essentials required to turn your life around, mine has been a lighter issue as opposed to the more serious issues that the tenants here at the Sally Ann are facing.

I've been given the good grace as a viable option to reside here as a renter for a minimum of \$500 and over with three daily square meals included, but managed to find a place on my own through a newsletter advertisement that confirmed a seniors low cost subsidized bachelors' suite for \$600 dollars a month located in Edmonton. To qualify for this deal, I was told by this management company that I need to have three forms filled out to qualify for seniors low cost rent. The forms include three previous income tax return forms for the years 2021, 2020 and 2019 to show I had income for those three years, a police check to show that I'm trustworthy to be a good standing tenant and a medical form that verifies that I'm mentally and physically independently competent in fulfilling

my tasks as a reliable tenant.

I'm happy to say that those forms were handed in two weeks ago when I took an E-Bus down to Edmonton to personally hand over those forms to the manager of my future apartment. He then mentioned that I'd have to contact him again when my seniors pensions come in on the 26th of April, so that I can personally see him again to put \$400 dollars down on a holding deposit. He mentioned back then that I could move in with the rest of that deposit and rent money for the ending of May the following month.

But getting back to the homeless and what I've come to understand about the other aspect of how they sometimes have to strategize their game plan for survival, I've seen groups of them huddling together at a bus shelter adjacent to a Tim Hortons that I frequent for coffee's in the morning. This articulate group of homeless, who work in a group dynamic, supporting one another, often keep an observant eye on the passersby, who walk by their bus shelter on their way into the Tim Horton's next door.

When it's been decided between the group of homeless beggars about which one gets to take a turn at getting someone to buy them a meal, while heading inside, the beggar follows a customer, who passed by their bus shelter, walking behind them. As the beggar and the customer make their way through those Tim Horton's doors, the customer going to that front counter is then greeted by a tap on the shoulder only to find out that there's a beggar behind him or her asking them politely for a coffee and a meal because they are simply going hungry.

The approach applied by the beggar is enough for the apathetic donor to insist on donating their time to listen to the desperate beggar's plea as in most of those times the articulate approach to getting a meal for that day works in favour of the beggar. From what I've been witnessing, while out on the many streets of Calgary as a temporary homeless person, this approach with that same group of beggars has worked for them at least 90 % of the time.

When thinking about those amazing odds working in their favour, I can also recall being approached from behind while lining up to buy a meal at that same Tim Horton's downtown and being tapped on the shoulder by a female Aboriginal beggar who asked me for a coffee and a cheese bacon melt sandwich. I could only manage to buy her a large triple- triple coffee because of my own financial disparity.

Let's our voice be heard

By Maria B.

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and in particular without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex age or mental or physical disabilities.

Our limitations do not stem from 'our disability' but rather from the stereotyping that leads to stigmatization and discrimination in our community.

It is not possible for us to influence any long term changes in stigmatizing behaviour unless we have the awareness and the courage to challenge people's beliefs. Whenever we accept the designation that shatters who we are in the eyes of our creator, we are adopting the title that only serves to keep us in a stigmatized state

Our strength comes from within, from knowing that we are worthy individuals and we must hold on to this belief that even if we are different we have the right to seek and live a truly fulfilling life.

We must embrace our differences.

We must become the voice of our awareness of the struggle that people with disabilities go through. Change starts with each one of us.

We are not our disabilities. We have unlimited skills and are quite able to thrive in a community but we need acknowledgement, support and most of all equality.

Of all human weaknesses, none are more destructive to the dignity of the individual than stigma, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

I have suffered with the problem of dystonia of the vocal chords for 31 years, and I have been scarred, I have been embarrassed, I have met prejudice and blatant discrimination but at the same time I will say that I have met people that have treated me with the respect that I truly deserve.

Homeless people

continued from page 6

Oddly enough after doing this deed for that openly polite beggar I handed her the coffee and half an hour after finishing my drink of coffee, left Tim Horton's only to later find out that the beggar, who asked me to buy her that coffee and grilled cheese and bacon sandwich was that female Aboriginal beggar who was now in the company of those homeless beggars, all standing around her inside that same bus shelter with con-

Dystonia is not something that you can see on a person but as soon as I speak you would know there is something wrong. I have blessed my accent as a lot of times people just think it is my heavy accent.

My dystonia started after my youngest daughter was sexually molested. She went through hell and at first it was very hard for me to know what she was going through as I did not know the effects of sexual abuse.

The first thing that I did was that I went to the library and took about six books on the subject and while I was learning about the subject, I was opening many memories of my childhood that contained sexual abuse. I was able to reach for my older sister and ask her about a person, and before even me telling her about myself, she told me that this person had sexually molested her. It is not easy to uncup these feelings as you are not aware of what to do with them. The anxiety, the helplessness that I felt was horrible. Suddenly I was not only helping my daughter but I was going through what happened to her.

Yes, through the process I lost the ability to speak properly but in the process my daughter regained her voice and she has been an incredible advocate for victims on the subject.

We cannot change what happens to us but what we can do is realize that sexual assault is not our fault - it is the perpetrator's fault, Society has taught us that we have to take responsibility for what happens to us but I can tell you that sexual assault is not our responsibility, especially between an adult and a child.

Being sexually assaulted changes your life completely; you carry what happened to you for the rest of your life. It changes who you are meant to be but I tell you I feel good been able to speak about it. I carried my secret for such a long time and I ensured that the person that sexually molested my child paid for what he did. Unfortunately what we have as a Justice System does not make justice for the victims. These perpetrators get away with so much but at the same time I see my daughter, how strong she is. She is

tent satisfied smiles on their faces as they waved at me, acknowledge those homeless beggars, all standing around her inside that same bus shelter with contented satisfied smiles on their faces as they waved at me, acknowledging my support for their friend.

I've seen this same routine applied by other groups of beggars throughout my many walks up and around downtown Calgary. It makes you realize that a commune type of lifestyle for homeless beggars can really carry a mile, where money and success mean nothing to this persistent group of

Shattered Dreams

By Lindsey Whitson
Amazing what once I
possessed,
With what once was my chance
at success,
An array of disappointing
paths,
No opportunity would last,
Lived in darkness because of
the past,
Alas, my troubled mind has felt
confidence
In the fragility of my own
competence

an incredibly compassionate person and I am glad that after what happened to her, she has ceased carrying it as a burden.

Sometimes some of the most horrid things teach us very hard lessons. When this happened, I believed my daughter and I did everything I needed to do to help her. Many parents decide not to want to believe the child and I will say that it is incredibly important for parents to believe their children and do whatever you have to do to deal with the issue appropriately. Children need their mother to help them deal with this situation. This is something that children should not keep silent and carry for the rest of their lives. It is something that affects every aspect of your life, changes how you deal with other people and how you feel about yourself.

For children their harbour is their parents. Make sure that the light you emanate is welcoming for your children in every way.

As parents we are the best models for our children. It is not what we tell them but how they see us act. My legacy to my children will be the fact that every one of them is aware of the incredible love that I have for them.

survivors and the only currency that exists in their books is love for thy neighbour and real brotherhood!

When life gets back to normal and I'm once again reunited with my co-workers at Alberta Street News along with my new residence in Edmonton, the next time someone argues with me over nonsense while living at a newer residence, I'll gladly trade in my silly pride and keep my place in check!

The Garden Party

Fiction by Sharon Austin

Pale shafts of morning sunlight slanted through the new leaves of the tall trees that bordered the garden. Birds twittered and chirped to greet the new day and a flock of crows were busily gathering twigs and soft grass for their nest. The garden was awash with colour with the bright gold of daffodils and the pink and purple tulips nodding gently in the breeze. At the far end of the lush green lawn an old white-haired man knelt beside a bed of white tulips; turning the soft soil with his spade. Clem, the gardener, always rose with the sun to tend the vast gardens of the Chester Estate. He loved this time of day when all was quiet save for the calls of the birds. He was not looking forward to this day as Madam Chester was throwing one of her annual garden parties to raise funds for the historical society. There would be folks everywhere partaking of her lavish catered lunch and drinking tall glasses of champagne. After the speeches, pledges would be taken as a big decorated donation box appeared on the head table. Clem didn't like the loud music, the blaring speeches and the litter left behind. Worst of all, someone would invariably stray off the cobblestone path and trample on the flowers. He sighed and started the task of setting up all the rented chairs.

Before long, Madam Chester appeared in the garden wearing a hot pink blouse and black flowing skirt. She liked to wear bright colours thinking they made her look younger. Her grey-blond was covered with a white straw hat with bright pink flowers. As Madam Chester walked in the garden inspecting the preparations the crows began to caw in alarm. They were not used to seeing her as she rarely spent time in the garden. Soon other crows hearing the alarm began to gather in the trees.

"Clem," she screeched. "You must get rid of these crows for they will surely ruin the garden party. With all that racket and even worse, bird droppings on the tables, it will be a complete fiasco. You must climb up that tree and knock down the nest to get rid of them." Clem loved the garden birds and he had no intention of bothering them. He eyed the tree where the flock of crows watched the loud bright woman with suspicion.

"I am a very old man, and that is a very tall tree," Clem told her quietly. "It is best just to leave them alone."

"Well then, get a gun and shoot some of them. That will surely scare them away," she screeched angrily.

"I don't have a gun and I don't kill birds," the old man said staunchly.

"Good heavens, man, you can't climb a tree and you can't shoot a gun. Why do I keep you on here?"

"You have the finest garden in the county, Madam," he reminded her. "If I were you, I would not anger the crows. Crows are very intelligent birds; almost as smart as dogs. They have great communication skills and if threatened they will call to others for help. Together, they will caw loudly and dive-bomb trying to scare the danger away. Not only that, they have long memories and they will not forget the danger. I even heard of a flock of crows that carried small pebbles in their beaks and pelted a man's new car because he had been yelling and swatting at them with brooms."

"What do you think you are, Clem, an ornithologist," Madam Chester sneered sarcastically. "Be gone with your foolish old wives' tales. Do I have to do everything myself? With that, she grabbed the water hose and began to shoot water at the crows. Grabbing the gardener's rake, Madam Chester began to move about yelling and swatting at the frightened birds. Sensing danger, the birds began to dive-bomb and fly about cawing loudly. "Do something, you old fool," Madam Chester yelled as she high-tailed it for the house.

"Perhaps I could build a scarecrow," Clem said meekly to her retreating form. In the garden shed Clem found a donation bag containing Madam Chester's too small clothes. She had been piling on the pounds lately due to her penchant for cream puffs and chocolate eclairs. Clem found a bright pink blouse and a black flowered skirt and even a white sun hat with big blue flowers. For hair he went to the stable for binder twine which he cut and fluffed out to look like blond hair. He made a face from a small tan bag stuffed with straw and with marker he gave the scarecrow big blue eyes and bright red lips. Clem stood the scarecrow in the far end of the garden away from the tables and podium in hopes that they would not bother the guests. As soon as he stood the scarecrow up the crows began to caw and dive-bomb the offending form but they stayed far away from the tables.

Madam Chester was very pleased with the garden party. She looked very regal in her white and gold blouse accented with a fancy diamond broach and her speech had been well received. Donations were pouring in, and a handsome older gentleman had taken quite a fancy to her. He had especially liked her entertaining scarecrow with the trained crows circling about it. He even asked if the gardener rented out his scarecrow and trained crows for other functions.

Madam Chester was quick to inform him that the gardener was very old and only worked on the Chester Estate. The very thought of scarecrows that looked so much like her popping up all over town was unnerving. Sometimes she felt that the hideous scarecrow wearing her clothes and sun hat was watching her, following her every move. She couldn't wait until Clem took it down. Later that night a very tired Madam Chester draped her clothes over a chair in her room. She placed the ornate diamond broach on the small table near the open window. Far below, in the silver glow of the moonlight she could see the scarecrow standing guard at the end of the garden. A puff of wind billowed her skirt and tilted back her hat as if she was staring up at the window. Shivering, Madam Chester crawled in to bed.

Being very tired from all the excitement, it was well past nine when she awoke. Looking out the window she was very pleased to see that Clem had taken the scarecrow down and the crows were quietly gathered in their tree. Madam Chester hung up her clothes then turned to the table by the window to put away her broach. One look at the table and she froze in her tracks. The beautiful diamond broach was gone and in its place was a shiny deep black feather. She remembered what Clem had said; "Don't bother the crows mam, they have long memories." A shiver of fear ran down her spine.

Sometimes when folks walk in the garden and the sun is high overhead there will be a bright flash of diamond fire tinted with pink and blue that seems to come from the tall trees. Is it a raindrop clinging for a moment to a high branch or a bit of Christmas tinsel dancing in the wind? Perhaps it is a diamond broach adorning the nest of a pair of crows who attended a fancy garden party. One thing is for sure, old Clem has no plans to climb up and find out.

The Month of Leaves and Roses

By Joanne Benger

Nathanial Parker Willis wrote, "It is the month of June. The month of leaves and roses, When pleasant sights salute the eyes, and pleasant smells the noses." June was named for Juno, the chief Roman goddess and it is National Indigenous History Month as well as Dad's Month, Men's Health Awareness Month, Grad's Month and Gay Pride Month. We have a lot of weather lore. A wet June makes a dry September for a dripping June brings all in tune. Look up on a June evening. Flying bats are a sure sign of good weather the next day whereas swallows flying low mean rain is coming.

June 1 is the day to repair doors and windows, check the roof and batten things down for it is Tempestos Day and she is goddess of storms and will test our buildings without mercy.

June 3 is Bicycle Day. Go for a long ride.

June 4 is Shavuot. It is a Jewish Festival of Lights that is a harvest festival as well as commemorating the Ten Commandments.

June 5 to 11 is Seniors Week as well as Canadian Environmental Week when we refocus on environmental stewardship, the ecosystem and conservation. Enjoy nature with a senior.

June 6 is D Day for it was on June 6, 1944 that the Battle of Normandy, the final Allied campaign, occurred. Prime Minister Mackenzie King said, "Let the hearts of all Canada be filled with silent prayer for the success of our own Allied forces and for early liberation of the people of Europe."

June 8 is Oceans' Day and brings us another weather forecast. If on the eighth of June it rain, it foretell a wet harvest, men sain.

June 8 to 14 is Rivers to Ocean Week which reminds us that we are all connected to the ocean. Every bit of run off sewage that enters our creeks and rivers will eventually end up in the ocean.

June 9 is National Chocolate Ice Cream Day. Enjoy.

June 14 is this month's full moon, the Wild Rose or Hot Moon.

June 18 is Wear Plaid Day for Dad Day. It is a reminder that even the strongest of Dads should have regular check-ups just in case.

June 19 is Father's Day and Frank A. Clark wrote, "A father is a man who expects his son to be as good a man as he is meant to be." I hope fathers everywhere are able to beam with pride today.

June 20 is World Refugee Day. Do something nice for a new Canadian today.

June 21 is National Indigenous People's Day for they welcome summer with a big celebration. It is Summer Solstice, the longest day of e year. In European lore, this is when there is a big battle between the Oak and Holly kings. The Holly King must win as the king of dark had to beat the king of light so days can begin decreasing. Many cultures have battles between winter and summer at this time.

June 24, the last Friday in June, is said to be the happiest day of the year. Laugh and celebrate being alive. It is St. Jean Baptiste

Day in Quebec and Midsummer Day when men jump over bonfires for luck and girls will dream of their true love if they sleep with seven different flowers under their pillow the eve before June 23.

June 24 is also Flying Saucer Day for on this date in 1947 Kenneth Arnold saw disc shaped objects flying in formation and called them flying saucers. The U.S. Air Force now calls them Unexplained Aerial Phenomenon but the magic remains. Dress up like your favourite ET and watch science fiction movies.

June 27 is another fun day. It is Discovery Day in Newfoundland and Canadian Multicultural Day, when we sample the foods of other cultures and hopefully can enjoy good times together.

June 30 is Meteor Day. The ancients called them rocks from heaven and to this day we all wish upon a falling star. If you need money, say the word money three times as the star is falling and you will get your wish.

All About Fathers

By Joanne Benger

1. A father is a father is a father and a father by any other name is still a father.
2. A father can clean anything, paint anything, fix anything, buy anything, mow anything, barbecue anything or paint anything.
3. A father can fix anything from a broken heart to a broken toy.
4. A father has a big wallet and makes sure you have everything you need but he can say NO.
5. A father only needs three things, WD40, duct tape and a Swiss army knife and he can make anything as good as new.
- 6 A father knows how to assemble new furniture and toys without reading the instructions even if they come in a big box with many small pieces.
7. A father is so smart he never gets lost and never has to ask directions when you go for a car ride.
8. A father can work all week and garden all week end and still find time to play with you.
9. A father tells you he needs children to teach him how to laugh and play.
10. A father has whiskers that tickle you to say, "I love you."
11. A father has shoulders just the right size for carrying you.
12. A father is so big and strong and fearless he can protect you from the world's greatest dangers like the boogeyman.
13. A father keeps his promises and never gives up so you can count on him to get rid of that boogeyman.
14. A father loves you most when you are good but he doesn't stop loving you when you are bad.
15. A father looks very happy when you give him a necktie for Fathers' Day even if he never wears a suit.
16. A father likes to get a t-shirt for Fathers' Day and he will wear it no matter what it says.
17. A father likes Fathers' Day so much he will say this was the best Fathers' Day ever no matter what you give him or what you eat.
- 18 .A father can barbecue and drink beer at the same time and if it rains he knows how to order take out.

A hostile argument left me homeless

By John Zapantis

I have some advice for renters, especially the younger generation who have experienced ongoing conflict with an across the hall tenant that may end up jeopardizing your place as a renter. Stop while you can, because whether you're right or wrong about your arguing, you could end up being unfairly evicted and just seconds away from living in a homeless shelter.

Take my advice, I'm that classic example of being victimized in that regard after having experienced an ongoing battle with a relative, who would persistently argue the point with me about nonsense. That finally got me booted out of my mother's place over some serious issues I'd rather not disclose in the writing of this article.

But like everything that surfaces unexpectedly, there are logical reasons why things happen and after realizing why it all went down the way it did and knowing what my relatives motives were that got me into her problem, it was simply my time to move on for the better and strive to get a place of my own.

This all happened during the first week of March. I was determined to prevent this unavoidable situation from escalating further into a much more serious situation by leaving my mom's house immediately after grabbing some personal belongings so that I could get as far away from Edmonton as possible. While leaving that volatile arguing behind me, I left her house at around 10 that evening and amazingly stayed up all night and into the following morning with plans to depart for Calgary on an E-Bus that I boarded for departure at 8:45 a.m.

My ride on that bus, while talking it up with some of the riders, lasted for about four hours until our arrival to Calgary.

I just couldn't believe it. There I was living at home for a ten year period, while looking after my parents in the best possible way imagined, and some relative, who is still living there, decided to hold control such as the power of attorney. She was constantly getting on my case just about every day over the littlest things that would inevitably start the cross fire of our non-stop arguing that seemed at times to have my parents on the edge, while having to hear this high intensity shouting between my relative and me.

I just couldn't believe that I'd become

homeless, once again, after not having been homeless since 1993. Then I was homeless for about a four year period, right after having had it with my ex common law wife's drinking and drugging. That's when I decided to quit on life and headed out across Canada as a homeless working drifter, leaving that bad memory behind me.

But back then discovering the incentive to write for various community newspapers as a short story writer and reporter encouraged a big change around and inevitably encouraged me to come back to Edmonton in June of 1995 when I first started writing as a regular contributing writer for a former and now defunct street newspaper called Spare Change, that I continued to write for from August of 1995 to December of 2003.

To this day I write for the Alberta Street News and in between 1995 through to this current date, I've had the experience of writing for 13 newsprint publications in my 27 years as a contributing free-lance writer.

As I stepped out of that E-Bus after arriving to Calgary at around 1:45 p.m. I headed off to my old haunts at the Calgary Drop In also known in short term jargon as the D.I.

Since coming to Calgary I've experienced some unusual encounters with all kinds of raging storms, the typical storms that the homeless often encounter while struggling to navigate those volatile situations that simply can't be prevented from happening.

It was there one day, while being served lunch by a drop in staff member, that a loud shouting could be heard in front of me. I noticed a small Asian man in about his late forties shouting out loud at some muscle bound guy. The Asian loudly protested that he had just been picked up and man handled by this jerk who picked him right off the floor while he was sleeping there and threw him aggressively right into an empty huge cardboard box. The poor man immediately went into shock and couldn't stop his rage over the uncalled for incident, yelling continuously that he wanted to take that monster out of the building and kick the daylights out of him. Despite the invitation that man stayed close to his side of the fence, challenging him on to the invitation.

People in that drop-in, who had witnessed the whole scenario, kept telling the Asian man to shut his trap, for there is no legal recourse when it comes to the laws of the jungle. You seem to always be on your own in this one!

Several staff members intervened and managed to keep the two apart until things died down between the two of them.

For the second night, while staying in

the D.I., a homeless woman in around her late thirties just couldn't stop arguing with the D.I. staff about whatever it was that she found irritating. After arguing non-stop with them for about a 10 minute period, while attracting the attention of a hostile crowd of homeless people, who wanted her to just simply shut the F-up, that unanimous approval from the crowd of concerned people encouraged four male staff members to pick her up by the scruff. You could see them escorting her quickly out of the second floor entrance with her feet hanging one foot off the floor, screaming erratically. Her high pitched screaming trailed off into the hallway as the door closed right behind her.

During those first two nights of sleeping on a cot and in the rough, it dawned on me later after leaving the drop in to kill some time, while walking around downtown Calgary that I had only had eight hours of sleep for two nights of sleepovers at that drop in. It simply wasn't enough sleep for someone, who was now feeling physically fatigued. I would occasionally fall asleep for about 10 to 15 minutes at a time while struggling to stay awake while reading the Calgary Sun at a McDonald's eatery.

At one point during my rest stops I remember having to forcefully sleep through the lights that are left on all night on the second floor of that drop in centre. I gave it some serious thought as to why a lot of homeless seemed to want to be confrontational with their homeless neighbours that would often lead to non-stop arguments throughout the night. Those intrusive lights stayed on all night into the morning right up to wake-up call for everyone. What came to mind with what obviously contributed to that stress would have had to have been those agonizing lights that could be the contributing factor to sleep deprivation.

One morning in the following week I asked one of the female staff that helps to watch over those that sleep in that lit up big room on the second floor "Why are lights left on at night all the time? It seems to leave everyone up all night and they start to get cranky."

She replied, "Because when we had the light off, someone was yelling out for help from one of the cots on the other side of this room and we couldn't get to him in time and he died of a drug overdose."

I then challenged her by presenting my argument about how that light interferes with my sleep, causing me to stay up all night and makes me a little cranky during the day, causing fatigue that sneaks up on me unexpectedly while forcing me to fall asleep during regular sessions when reading

the Calgary Sun at McDonalds during the morning after leaving the drop-in for the day.

She had no empathy for my testimony and never answered to the challenge but walked on to do something else.

A day later I met a young man named Shawn who told me that the Calgary Salvation Army was the real deal, when it came to three healthy heaping meals a day, a nice quiet dorm where the lights were never on while you snored the night away and private showering facilities, including the assurance of a 90 day free stay with the added conveniences of Wi Fi hook up for your computers and writers like myself, who could send stories like this to the Alberta Street News!

The Salvation Army has been the right fit all along. I've had the incentive of accessing other helpful supports through this helpful organization that hooked me up with a resource specialist that allowed me to use their free phone room for calling my doctor long distance to make arrangements to fill out a medical form verifying that I'm in good mental and physical health and capable of looking after myself. That is a must for qualifying for senior's subsidized housing, I've already made arrangements to move into an independent seniors living facility, which I discovered on my own a few days after my mother told me to try to find a place of my own.

I must say that this second experience of living homeless during this month has opened my eyes to the plight of Calgary's many homeless. Yes, it's true you'll typically see this scene in Calgary and many other cities across Canada, where the homeless walk together in colonies, co-dependent on one another as a means of survival on those streets.

At a nearby Tim Horton's in downtown



Calgary the scene unfolds where I'm walking by a bus shelter. There inside is a team of seven homeless people that I pass by each morning, when leaving the Salvation Army to go to Tim Horton's for my private morning coffee and a look into the Calgary Sun.

It never seems to fail. You see some customer all of the sudden accompanied by one of those familiar homeless faces that you saw earlier occupying that bus shelter that you just passed by, and then you get the whole picture. One of the homeless people is being treated to a full course meal by a true Calgarian, who pours his heart out to buy a meal for the homeless.

I learned something new about what team effort can bring to a group of homeless people, who show more heart for one another than others, who simply don't care. Anything is possible and there are no

Photo above: John Zapantis in Calgary. Photo by Peter Yu

limits to what the homeless can do for one another, when it comes to surviving those streets.

Yes, like I said in the beginning of my story, there were reasons why that conflict sent me out the door the day. I felt my world was coming down hard on me, but the learning curve of it all shows me that no matter how destitute we feel about our downfalls, there are people out there that are going through just as much upheaval, and can really set the precedent to encouraging new found hope, like those homeless in that shelter and that team dynamic that makes things all come together and more than anything, higher hopes for a better future for tomorrow!

Reflections

By Darlene Collins

Sorry I haven't gotten back to you in a while. I've been going through too much with these people plus all the deaths in my family. I'm going through lots of grieving. It feels like I can't get things done anymore.

Wherever I go, I'm followed by either these people, D, My daughter or the undercover police, who make it so obvious with the gray, blue, black, white or red trucks they use nowadays. And they sit right up to my

daughter's door in the west end.

I know it's a hate crime and I need to do something about it now. After five years, I won't take this anymore. Being harassed, bullied, thieved from and lied to and basically witting right in my living room. It's crazy. Here I am a 60 years old woman and these people think I'll give up. No way. I've accomplished a lot in my life. It's just a season.

I could put them all away if I so choose to. I'm just sick and tired of some of the childish games that some of these older men try to do to me. And what for? I'm not playing their

dumb games with them. I'm a grown woman, mature, alive and still beautiful. What they don't realize is that they only make me stronger. They give me more motivation to carry on with what I have planned for them.

And the support workers I've had through the George Spady Centre have failed me again. I have no phone, no heat, no food or money to buy food, everything gets stolen; even my mail gets stolen from the office itself, or Carmine is giving my mail to one of them. Probably D. Thank you for reading this. I feel better when I can write about it.

Alberta Street News preserved for future generations

Jan. 28, 2022 · The Pulse
By Andy Trussler Comments

Back issues of Alberta Street News and its predecessor, Edmonton Street News, have been digitally preserved, ensuring the history of a newspaper born to give a voice and income to marginalized people will live on.

The publication, born in 2003, features writing by people experiencing poverty or homelessness. Vendors in Edmonton and Calgary purchase papers at 50 cents a copy, then ask people to pay that plus a donation.

Founder, editor, and designer Linda Dumont has been the passionate driving force behind the street paper since its very first day.

"It gives people who are marginalized an opportunity to earn the money that they need," Dumont said. "Because what people need most is money. Not programs, not people telling them how to live, and not people organizing their lives — what they need most is money. If they had enough money, they wouldn't be poor."

Eric Rice, a former volunteer and writer, was the catalyst behind the preservation effort. "Knowing how hard Linda had worked over the years to publish ASN, how easy it was for print publications to disappear if they weren't preserved, and the wealth of stories that ASN contained, I thought it would be worthwhile to help facilitate the preservation," he said.

It was an article in Taproot about the digitization of See Magazine that inspired Rice to reach out to the U of A to preserve ASN.

"The significance of Linda's work lies in the importance of recording and preserving stories about people who are outside the mainstream and who may have nobody to remember them or sustain their memory," Rice said. "On a day-to-day basis, many homeless and marginalized people are passed by and ignored. Their lives deserve some recognition and remembrance."

You can now find back copies of Alberta Street News and Edmonton Street News on Internet Archive, thanks to digitization efforts from the University of Alberta Library. (University of Alberta Library Services/Internet Archive)

Dumont came to Edmonton with her three children in 1989. She started her street ministry, Christ Love Ministry, in 1993 and went on to vend and write for the Bissell Centre's paper. When the paper closed shop, Dumont wanted to keep helping people through writing.

"The paper is more than a paper," Dumont told Taproot. "I have been there to visit vendors in jail, help with funerals, and to give a voice to issues about homelessness and poverty."

Dumont works on a volunteer basis, as do the other writers and contributors, so the profits can go to the vendors. From 2012 to 2014, the paper received a grant while under the Edmonton Street News Society, which covered some costs. These days, Dumont manages the paper without outside assistance.

COVID-19 drastically cut opportunities for in-person sales. Dumont moved the paper entirely online except for the hard copies made for ASN's writers. "It's harder to find places to sell and the economy is so different," she said.

Although COVID-19 restrictions continue to fluctuate, ASN made a gradual return back to street sales last fall.

The project was straightforward because of all the work Rice and the team at Alberta Street News did to prepare everything, including listing every issue in an ordered spreadsheet, said Sarah Severson, a librarian with the digital initiatives project.

From there, the papers were transferred to the Internet Archive, a digital partner of the library, out of the Research and Collections Resource Facility. There, technicians use the Scribe to digitize works page-by-page.

While this digitization process took only a few weeks, larger projects like historical theses, textbooks, or postcard collections take much longer. But it's all worth it, said Severson.



“The exciting thing about making more of our historical record digitally accessible is that it opens it up to so many more types of people and research,” Severson said. “We can bring materials together from many different sources and people and read them from anywhere in the world.”

How Hot was it?

By Joanne Benger

1. Swimming pools became hot tubs.
2. Cooling centres became over heated.
3. Cars were used as barbecues.
4. Eggs were fried on sidewalks.
5. Rain evaporated before it hit the ground.
6. Ears of corn popped before they could be picked.
7. Tomatoes became sun dried in the garden.
8. Extreme heat warnings became the norm.
9. Clothes dried themselves between washer and dryer.
10. Dog barks evaporated and wouldn't be heard until fall.
11. Sweat stains became a status symbol.
12. “He sweats well.” was the ultimate compliment..
13. The new greeting was, “Hot enough for you?”
14. Water became the new gold standard.
15. There was a pandemic of dehydration.
16. People could no longer go cold turkey.
17. Cold cuts became hot cuts.
18. Garden hoses delivered boiling water good for coffee.
19. Plastic bags melted into puddles going from store to car.
20. Food cooked if left outside.
21. People were so scared of wild fires they even doused vapors.

The senior years – The good, the bad and the ugly

By Joanne Benger

June is Seniors Month and the first week of June is Seniors Week so we will be celebrating all things senior. Dignitaries and eloquent speakers will help us celebrate the rich and diverse history of our most experienced generation – seniors – as we honour their past, present and future contributions. We will be reminded that seniors are our greatest natural resource as they share their wisdom with us and we should be eternally grateful that these wise and wonderful people shaped our country and made it the great nation it now is. Then politicians will proudly tell us how much money is being spent on seniors and they will describe some of the wonderful local projects that honour our seniors with the life of dignity and respect that they deserve. Surrounded by a loving family and the reminders of your many accomplishments, you will happily complete your Bucket List and plan your legacy.

Then reality sets in. In mid June, the fifteenth most years, we have World Elder Abuse Day. Elder abuse has been defined as “a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring in any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.” The abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional or psychological. It can be medical abuse, forced isolation, or a forced change in living arrangements explained away as being for your own good. It may involve restraint or physical injuries but often it is verbal threats, humiliation, insults, or ridicule. Neglect is also considered abuse whether it is intentional or unintentional. About 90% of abusers are family members. Spouses, partners and grown children are the most common abusers

and many may not even realize they are doing wrong. In the past the treatment of an elderly family member was considered a family matter and it is estimated that less than 5% of cases were reported. Now help is available. There are abuse help lines, resources lines, emergency shelters and safe houses in many areas. Of course, if someone is in immediate danger, regardless of age, 911 or the police should be called. Not all elder abusers are family members. Seniors may be abused in nursing homes, shelters, seniors' lodges, hospitals and other supportive living settings. For them the Protection of Persons in Care Act and a complaints officer reviews all cases reported to protection for Persons in Care. 811 should put you in touch.

An even more common problem for seniors is simple poverty. Data released by Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy shows that among the nation's most vulnerable, when it come it poverty 36.3% are single people over the age of 45. According to Canada's 2022 food price report, Canadian food prices are expected to increase by 5 to 7 % in 2022. This will be the highest price increase in 20 years and the price of food in Alberta is expected to be even higher than the national average. Housing and utility costs have increased and are expected to remain high until 2023. The hardest hit will be people on fixed incomes – pensioners. Many, who are barely coping now, will be forced to make choices. – fill prescriptions, pay for utilities or pay the rent. Fortunately, help is at hand. Alberta Supports Contact Centre is toll free – 1-877-644-9092, and will give information on Seniors Financial Assistance Programs provided by the Alberta government. Resources vary across the province but seniors may learn about local community and social services by calling 211 or their local hot line or by asking the local MLA, health unit or FCSS for information. Seniors who are more social can often get information they need by talking to a minister or an informed senior at a seniors' centre.

The Pocket Blanket By Darlene Collins

All was quiet at the +55 Operation Friendship. My roomies and I were just sitting around when Gary asked me if I could do him a favour. I said, “Yes, of course.”

Gary brought out a lot of pockets from all sorts of pants. He said he's been collecting them for five years. When Gary asked me if I'd sew these pockets into a blanket. I was overjoyed. I love to sew. I just happened to have a blanket, so I chose a blue blanket and sorted out the pockets. I started to arrange and arrange the pockets and we thought we had the pattern, a heart for Valentine's Day. What I decided to do was to get other women to help. Then my friend, Courtney, helped me to get the supplies needed to sew. And the sewing was begun on February 2nd. Gary was the brains in this. I just sewed.

Then I was thinking about the blanket and what's going to happen to the blanket. My roomy mentioned getting donations to give to war orphans, which will benefit children in many different ways. The blanket was completed on Valentine's Day, Praise God!

June is National Indigenous History Month



By Linda Dumont

The month of June is National Indigenous History Month. We have all been impacted by the legacy of colonization and the residential school system and that history has become a lasting legacy of sorrow.

I have a status card that says I have 'Indian status', so according to the government of Canada I am an Indian. I find this ironic with all the name changes that have come and gone. Shouldn't the government use a more politically correct term? But which one is OK now? When I was a child in school we learned about Indians and Eskimos. Then, once I started writing for street newspapers, I had to be careful not to write about anyone being 'Indian'. Native was ok for a time, then that, too, was no longer a term to use. Instead, I wrote about Aboriginal people with a capital A, and now that term is still used some places, but Indigenous is preferred and people are also referred to as First Nations as well.

Soon there will be no distinctions permitted in writing – everyone will be just human or we will use the non-binary term they, and it will become wrong to describe anyone according to colour, size, gender, racial origin, or any other factor,

I was not born an Indigenous woman but that legacy became my legacy when I married a First Nations man. My new husband had been raised in foster homes and was unaware of his heredity. He told me he was Irish because that had been the nationality of the foster home where he lived the longest. When he finally met his birth mother, we already had three children. All of us became "instant Indians" because treaty rights are still under Indian Affairs. Because we married before 1984 when Bill C 31 was passed, as a non-status wife I was given treaty status. Then, after Bill C 31 the law changed so women who were status no longer lost treaty status if they married a man without status, and women marrying men with status no longer became 'treaty Indians' by marriage. Because of Bill C 31, when I divorced my first husband and remarried, I retained treaty status.

At first I was a bit hesitant to accept my treaty status, but the legacy of the residential schools has impacted not only the survivors and their descendants but also those who are in relationship with them. My husband's problems with alcohol, inability to handle money, to keep a job or to be a parent were common to residential school survivors and their families. Those problems ended our marriage.

I personally have not faced racial prejudice often but it exists in all races. When I attended Native Communications at Grant MacEwan College, I was one of two caucasian students in the classroom. At first I was regarded with suspicion. One woman asked me, "What are you

doing here?" Some students did not want to work with me in group projects. The journalism instructor planned a field trip to Europe to visit the groups who re-enact Indigenous culture in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The top students in the class were to go on the all expenses paid trip. Although I had top marks, I couldn't go because I was too white.

By the end of the year, the classmate who had been most antagonistic was working with me on projects and we even kept in touch after the course ended.

My daughters have encountered prejudice – being followed in downtown stores while shopping and having men assume they are sex trade workers. These assumptions are based on the perceptions some people have about Indigenous women. And, to our shame, Canada has more than 4000 missing and murdered Indigenous women. Some of them I knew personally, like Edna Bernard, whose burned body was found near Leduc. Her killer was never caught. Edna's brother went to school with my son, and she and her sisters went to the same church we attended when she was younger.

In 2015 Alberta Street News covered the story on the death of Cindy Gladue, who was killed by a trucker, Bradley Barton. He was acquitted of her murder, which caused outrage among Indigenous groups Canada wide. The verdict was successfully appealed and in a new trial in February 2021, Bradley Barton was convicted of manslaughter and is now serving out his 12 and a half year prison sentence.

At his first trial Gladue was referred to as Aboriginal, and as a prostitute, which had no bearing on the case but served as racial slurs to sway the verdict. Justice was long delayed.



Left: A photo taken by John Zapantis on his trip to Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park, Alberta back in the fall of 2019, shows a panoramic viewpoint overlooking the historic valley .

All that matters

Bu Angelique Branston

All that matters

Not all of us were born for greatness

Nor to play music to fill countless lives with joy

Few are those who will be remembered for countless centuries to come

Their names firmly planted in the history of the world as one who made great changes,
saved countless lives, or caused such horrible atrocities that the whole world wants to
always and forever remember.

I don't think that's why we are here, to be remembered.

Rather it is the now

In the many moments that make up the fabric of our life.

It is the manner in which we live

In the solitude of our homes

Or in the public eye

It is how we treat our family, and loved ones

As well as the other travellers on this earth.

Like the wild flowers

Some of us are trampled or crushed under foot

(yet even then the flower will try and against all odds stands tall once more

A living testament to the will to live)

Many grow. side by side so each others beauty compliments the others

Some stand alone

Whether a crocus, a common fireweed, or a ghost orchid

All are beautiful in their own way.

But their time here on this earth is but a season,

A mere ripple in the fabric of time.

It is in life their beauty for all to see

To bring but a moment of love and joy to another

Our reason to live

To give love and hope to the ones we come in contact with

To use the gifts and talents inherent to us

Whatever that leads to

Whether grand works of art or a
simple gift of helping others.

As long as it's our best

That is all we can hope for

All we can strive for.

All that matters.



Top right: This hoodoo resembles a human face.

Bottom right: This hoodoo looks like a human figure holding a container on its head.

These Hoodoos are at Writing on Stone Provincial Park.

Photos by John Zapantis.



Children are the greatest gift to the world

By Maria B.

And yet every gift contains silent cries of children trying to make every day a day where all their fears disappear? Is this the truth or are children the holders of secrets that makes the MIRAGE COMPLETE?

As parents, how do we feel when we come to the awareness that the identity of a child has been founded through the witnessing of domestic violence or the cruel realization that a child has been the silent victim of incredible domestic abuse?

Such a hard theme to talk about but isn't it harder to be converted into silent conspirators through our silence?

It takes incredible courage for the victim to disclose the abuse that she is going through at the hands of the father, the sibling or/and friends and instead of receiving comfort from the mother, she receives invalidation, disbelief and complete disgust. "No, he wouldn't do that" "This never happened" "Why are you lying?" "If you do not tell me the truth, how can I protect you?"

"If he has been hard on you is because he loves you and wants to protect you"

If the abuse did not break this five year old precious girl, the comments that she heard from the person that is supposed to keep her loved, safe and protected should serve to shatter her. She has learned that through all of this, she is all alone and speaking out against the perpetrator/s will only increase the abuse that she is under.

It is not only the abuse but the trauma of what has happened to her has served to identify what she is going through: She suffers from incredible fears that dominate her life through panic attacks, The verbal and physical abuse she has received is so incredibly toxic that it has served to completely destroy her self-image, the belief in herself, the belief of her personal worth, the belief in her learning skills and the core belief of who she is.

This results in chaotic thinking, incredible anger, frustration, hate for herself and nursing the feeling of NOT BEING GOOD ENOUGH.

It



results in thoughts and feelings of: wanting to hurt herself, nursing eating disorders, making friends that have gone through abuse, using their guidance because she has no trust in her self guidance, nursing only negative thoughts and feelings and getting into relationships where domestic abuse is present. She is being yelled at, treated with disdain, insulted, grabbed, thrown, choked and still nursing the believe of what her mother said to her:

"He is hard on you – BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU"

At home she is being blamed for the symptoms of trauma but being told, she is not going through trauma.

Her disclosure about her inability to defend herself and freeze, have been completely discarded.

At home the mother and the people that caused her the trauma are being considered wise enough to talk about this girl and put titles on her as being a trouble maker, a problem teen with incredible problems, Looking for trouble, putting herself in danger and yet every one of these protagonists of her abuse when she was a child have forgotten or completely ignored how their actions contributed to shatter the life of an innocent child.

The worst memories of her abusers remain unconsciously kept and the rest she has chosen to forgive in order to keep her family and holding on to the truth of her conscious memories that serve to bring to the surface the trauma that has become

a black shadow and a fervent companion continuing to bring chaos. She questions the way she think and why most of the time her feelings remain frozen in order to defend herself and take the insults and abuse that come her way. This child is not living, she is surviving her horrific abuse inflicted behind the close doors that she calls HOME.

For this precious child, life has presented her with very hard blows. I hope her history serves to represent every one of the beautiful gifts, those children tormented daily and carrying their cries for help in SILENCE to be able to remain in what they call HOME.

For this precious child, life has presented her with very hard blows. I hope her history serves to realize that no child deserves to go through horrible abuse in order to protect the people that committed the abuse. This is her history, my history and it could be the history of someone you know.

We have to feel free to talk about it, to validate their histories and to protect them.

DONATIONS NEEDED

The warming centres closed on March 22 Homeless people are camping outside. If you have clothing,, blankets, sleeping bags, back packs, tents or tarps to donate, please contact Linda at 780-975 3903 or dumontlc@hotmail.com. All donated items will be given free of charge to those in need.