

# ALBERTA Street News

VOLUME 18

ISSUE 7/8

July/August 2022



# ALBERTA STREET NEWS

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

## Writers:

John Zapantis  
Joanne Benger  
Sharon Austin  
Timothy Wild  
Linda Dumont  
Darlene Collins  
DeShawn Vanconett  
Melissa Mills  
Pedro Schultz  
Real Sugar  
Angelique Branston

## Photos:

John Zapantis  
Linda Dumont  
Daryl Gauthier

**Deadline for the  
September/October issue is  
August 15, 2021**

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

**Web:**  
albertastreetnews.org

**VENDORS PAY 80**



International  
Network of  
Street Papers

# Happy Canada Day

By Angelique Branston

I know that there are many things that could be said of Canada that are not very good right now like the way minorities have been treated in the past and shamefully to this very day, the decline of funding for education, or people in powerful positions abusing and overspending funds allocated to other more necessary areas to name a few. But there are many things that make me proud to be a Canadian.

We live in a society that tries to be inclusive to all. Most buildings have elevators and wheel chair ramps now. We have a healthcare system that makes it possible to receive proper care whether you are homeless or the prime minister of Canada. Children of any gender are educated the same with many schools even providing a hot lunch program so no kids don't have to go to school with a margarine sandwich (if they were lucky) for lunch anymore. We have homeless shelters and a welfare system to help those who for whatever reason cannot work.

Now these systems may be flawed and the ideals not always met, but we have a basic standard of human rights that our country's laws try to uphold. In the holocaust it was not just Jews, but blacks, anyone disabled and anyone that cost the country rather than being an asset, who became a target. That is trying to set a monetary value on a person's life. I, being a person with a disability, feel lucky to live in Canada in the time I am in, where it is not just the work one can do that matters, but things harder to measure by pure facts and numbers.

So happy birthday Canada! And happy Canada Day to all.

## Pills, Pills, Pills

By Darlene Collins

There was a time when I'd see the doctor once a month and for some reason I have to see him once a week now and get my prescriptions four times a month. As a result I have too many pills. I can't keep

up. I've managed to wean myself off of one pill a day to one pill every two days. My question is, how many of us had to switch all of a sudden and why? Is it only First Nations who changed. I wonder what the bill is at Indigenous and Northern Affairs. Was it necessary? I'm tired of getting my medication every week.

## Dog days

By Joanne Benger

Q. Where do dogs go for new tails? A. Any retail store will do.  
Q. How do you shush young dogs? A. With Hush Puppies.  
Q. What do you call overheated hounds at a barbecue? A. Hot dogs.  
Q. What type of poetry do dogs like? A. A doggerel.  
Q. What do you call a hound's mother? A. A dogma.  
Q. Why was the mother dog arrested? A. For littering.  
Q. Why was the dog sad? A. He was in the dog house.  
Q. What do you call a dog that does magic tricks? A. A labracadabera.  
Q. What has four legs and pants? A. A dog during Dog Days.  
Q. Why is there so little laughter during Dog Days? A. The Dog Star is Sirius (serious).  
Q. What do you call a dog that goes to dog shows? A. A show-arf.  
Q. Why did the dog need a chair? A. He wanted to obey the command "sit".  
Q. Why was the collie a hopeless bingo caller? A. He would only call "E under the E".  
Q. What do you call a young pet dog? A. A pup pet.

**THE VIEWS PRESENTED ARE THOSE OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.**



# Good Health Month

By Joanne Benger

Celebrate. It is July. The northern hemisphere is tilted toward the sun and we are warm at last. We are at our healthiest for the fewest deaths occur in July, August and September. July was the month that Julius Caesar was born and it was named in his honour in 44 BC because he had reorganized the chaotic Roman calendar with the help of Alexandrian signs. The Julian calendar lasted over 1600 years. In 1582 it was replaced by the Gregorian calendar in Catholic countries and in 1792 it was replaced in England with the calendar we still use.

July 1 is a day of celebrations. It is Canada Day, formerly Dominion Day or Empire Day. We proudly display our maple leaf flag to show national pride as we stand proud and free. We wear t-shirts with slogans like Live Canada, Taste Canada, Feel Canada, Live by the Leaf, Be Canada Proud, and Everyone Loves a Canadian. We have parades, BBQs, picnics and sports days followed by fireworks and sky rockets. It is a day to celebrate being Canadian.

July 3 to August 15 we have Dog Days, the hottest days of the year as Sirius, the dog star, is seen in the night sky.

July 4 is Independence Day in the U.S. We think of the American flag, the stars and stripes, the star spangled banner, Betty Ross, George Washington and Benjamin Happy Birthday U.S.A.

July 7 is Global Forgiveness Day. We don't forgive people to help them. We forgive them to help ourselves. Unresolved anger can lead to health problems and addictions so forgiveness makes us healthier. Some like to follow up by doing something nice for the person they have forgiven.

July 9 is Nunavut Day in Nunavut and July 11 is Orangeman's Day in Newfoundland.

July 10 the Islamic Eid-Al-Aida begins and July 13 is the Buddhist Asalha Pujja Dharma Day.

July 12 is Different Coloured Eyes Day.

July 13 is Mary Burlie Day in Edmonton. Some refer to Mary Burlie as the Black Angel of Boyle Street. She was a humble woman who never judged and listened well. Do something nice for Boyle Street in her honour.

July 13 is also Full moon the Thunder, Deer or Buck Moon.

July 17 is National Tattoo Day as well as Emoji Day. This is followed by Ice Cream Day on July 18 and National Junk Food Day on July 21. Gorge and enjoy.

July 18 Thomas Edison invented a way to record sound and the word hello. Say hello to everyone you meet today whether friend, enemy or stranger.

July 20 is Columbia's Independence Day and we do love our Columbian coffee. Enjoy "Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair" as in Sterne's poem..

July 21 is Cousin's Day, International Self Care Day and National Tequila Day in the US. Enjoy a day of pampering with your cousin. This is followed by Hot Fudge Sundae Day on July 25. Pamper your taste buds.

July 27 is Saint Pantalone's Day. He is the patron saint of trousers. It is also Korean War Veterans Day. Wear pants and do something nice for a veteran.

July 30 is Muharram, the Islamic New Year. Happy New Year to you all.

July 30 is Tornado Day as we remember Black Friday on this day in 1987. Light a candle in memory of those who died as well as for those who survived and are still living with painful memories.

July 31 is also Avocado Day as well as National Food Day. We end the month with even more eating in Canada which some consider the bread basket of the world.



# We need a class project

By Timothy Wild

The “normal” of pre-pandemic times was hard enough for Alberta’s working class. Many workers toiled away full-time at jobs that did not even come close to providing a Living Wage. The risible minimum wage also created a downward drag on wage rates just above that minimum. And although inflation before 2020 was nowhere near today’s level, those on low and / or fixed incomes saw their purchasing power eroded on an annual basis. Before the pandemic, many working-class Albertans had difficulty meeting the basic costs of living, let alone having extra money (and time) for the more important and fulfilling dimensions of life, such as self-actualization and authentic community participation and inclusion. But this econo-cultural ostracism paled in comparison with the social and economic dislocation caused by the “new normal” of the pandemic. Due to the collapse of the service sector of the economy in the early days of COVID, many working folks saw their income either dip considerably or dry up completely.

And before the Liberal Government introduced the CERB, people had to dig into precious and precarious savings, seek support from charities, avail themselves of the fleeting respite of pay day loans or, simply, go without some of the basics. Even after the CERB was introduced (which was undoubtedly a solid public policy measure), not everyone qualified or, if they did receive a payment, had to pay back some of the Benefit. In many ways, the pandemic not only exacerbated income inequality in Alberta, it also added new demands on already brittle and inadequate incomes.

Yet, that wasn’t the end of the story. Due to several supply-side issues caused by both geo-politics and the lingering impact of COVID 19, inflation is now at a level that hasn’t been seen in decades. Perhaps this is the “new new normal”? And while we are waiting for the arrival of some type of economic equilibrium through the so-called logic of the market, governments at both the federal and provincial level are not acting in a man-

ner supportive of those on low incomes. Increases in the interest rate, for example, will not help the working classes, and government is loath to implement progressive taxation policies. Add to that measures of austerity, obsession with slaying the debt and fears of recession, and there will be trouble ahead.

One of the reasons that inflation is hitting the working class particularly hard is the fact that the dominant powers do not see a political reason to respond to that need. In large part, I think that this is due to the general absence of a working-class voice at the policy making table. And while there has been an extension of non-economic benefits to certain groups – through the promotion of identity politics – these advances have paved the way for broader inclusion within an unjust system, rather than laying the foundations for the creation of a new and more just economic model of society.

Don’t get me wrong. I am not suggesting that elements underscored by identity politics (including race, gender, sexual orientation) are not important. And I am certainly not suggesting that other “isms” do not place very real limits on the social, cultural, and political wellbeing of individuals within those categories of identification. However, I am arguing that overmuch attention to these individual dimensions of experience fail to capture the economic, day to day collective lived experience of workers (regardless of their non-class identities). I know that this is not a popular opinion, but I believe that class trumps other aspects of belonging in the game of politics in the material world.

Capitalism is remarkably resilient and can accommodate many of the dimensions of identity politics. Folks are welcome to join the capitalist circus, so long as they don’t question the economic assumptions and inherent unfairness of the system. Herein lies my concerns with the atomistic pursuit of individual “rights” (which may or may not be actually actionable as a “right”) at the expense of the collective pursuit of economic belonging and social participation. I think Bhaskar Sunkara puts it well when he writes “Without the bedrock of a class politics, identity politics has become an agenda of inclusionary neoliberalism in which individual qualms can be addressed but structural inequalities

cannot.” This bedrock of class politics is certainly missing in Alberta today. As a result, a vision of transformative politics informed by and rooted in the working class as a progressive entity is also missing.

I have long argued that some measure of proportional representation would provide space for this voice at the policy making table. As it is today, political parties in both Alberta and Canada tend to compete the vote rich centre, which makes sense with the existing electoral system. However, although it makes sense in terms of capturing votes, it muffles a working-class political voice which then impedes the development and implementation of pro-worker public policy. Without a working-class voice, economic marginalization continues. The dominant and destructive ideology of capitalism continues apace.

Some will say I am trying to fan the flames of a class-based politics. I am. However, I would also suggest that we already have a class-based politics that looks after the political, social and financial wellbeing of the middle and upper classes, and that this perpetuates income and wealth inequality in Alberta. There already is a class based political project going on. I am just suggesting that the working class needs to be intentionally represented in that cauldron of policy making too. This would result in inclusive public policy that would augment salary, wages and other forms of income.

Ultimately, transformative public policy stems from the dialectical messiness of culture and politics.

Indeed, as noted by the Jamaican historian Thomas C. Holt “freedom...is not guaranteed by legal codes and proclamations; rather it must be realized in the contested process of fashioning social relations.” For this to happen, there needs to be a political project that harnesses the class consciousness and disposition of workers to act collectively for our social, cultural, and economic freedom and well-being.

## Donate Today

Alberta Street News is collecting clothing, blankets and sleeping bags and camping gear for the homeless. All items are given directly to those in need.  
Call Linda at 780 975 3903



# You play the game, you go the distance

By John Zapantis

You play the game, you go the distance  
Someone wants you to go their way,  
but you decide to fake it and just  
make it their day.  
What ever the controversy in making  
it seem you're a part of that club.  
You become that actor, while  
relying on the spiritual support from  
up above.  
The oppressive subject matter could  
vary, depending on who you meet.  
It could be a stranger trying to get  
information about  
your credit history, you know it's some  
con man from around.  
Or maybe a racist who knows about  
your history as a writer who knows  
you support those who feel op-  
pressed,  
like the many visible homeless, who  
are often victims living in distress.  
So he pops the question to you mak-  
ing like he doesn't know you and  
asks you whose side you're on.  
Just to make his day and to play it  
safe with out cause for a scene,  
you obviously tell him what he wants  
to hear and he happily reacts with a  
fist bump telling you your a good man  
for going his way.  
That's how you play the game when  
you go the distance.  
Who said you have to be loud about it  
when agreeing in public.  
Just a quite conversation that will  
only last a minute.  
And we all know that misery enjoys  
company and when that happens,  
always remember under these cir-  
cumstances, you play the game, you  
go the distance.



Two new Calgary writers proudly wear their white Stetson hats for the upcoming Calgary Stampede days. Above: Melissa Hill, above right: DeShawn Vanconett. Photos by John Zapantis

## Mock Complaint to Alberta News

By Melissa Hill

In my overall analyses, I am thankful for Alberta Street News. However, I have particular issue with this paper that has to be addressed. I think it is a great injustice that Alberta Street News does not acknowledge the existence of Narnia. I am delusional and my delusions must be adhered to, for I am stubborn and conspiratorial. I know for a fact because I checked my grandmother's cupboard. Don't ask me how it all fits in there. I'll get back to you after I check the facts on my computer because I like to cherry pick at facts to suite my beliefs. The internet is great for that.



## Cancer Pain and Pieces

By DeShawn Vanconett

When I was a young boy I was in pain.  
I also couldn't look in a mirror.  
Because I was ashamed.  
I hate my name and I always will as  
long as it's the same.  
Every time I thought I was in LOVE  
they took my heart and ripped it up so  
I fell back in pain.  
I felt like I was dead so I looked up to  
the sky and asked JESUS CHRIST  
he said now you have a new life again.  
But up till Today I found it is hard for  
me to LOVE the same.  
So I don't think for the Rest of my life I  
will Be rearranged.  
But I still think I'm very much still in  
pain.  
BUT I WILL THANK GOD FOR  
HEALING MY CANCER TODAY.  
But I do know I will always cry even up  
to this day.  
There is not one day that I'm always  
going to cry, even my mental or physi-  
cal pain.  
Some days I want to be taken away.  
I wish sometimes it was that these  
Tears would not be the same day.  
And now people know why I pray  
every day.  
BUT THANKS TO GOD MY CANCER  
IS GONE TODAY.

# What's your longest trip?

By Darlene Collins

I actually went to Las Vegas and, yes, I gambled. Let me tell you about it. I was married and living on a small reserve at the time. There were several of us close friends. We'd play cards, eat, drink and gossip. There were five of us and one day one of the women said "Let's on on a trip." We all looked at each other and said, "Why not?"

So we planned on how to raise money. We put our heads together and decided to have bake sales and clothing sales. We'd go to the beach with cooler on hand and go to the pow wows and sell sell sell - Mr. Freezies, ice cream etc. We did good.

Finally when we had \$5000 one of the secretaries did the budgeting and we rented a car in Edmonton and then we were gone. Of course we stopped in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the world's biggest pow wow. Then we went to a famous bar. By the end of the night we went to party with them. Then, the next day we were off to Las Vegas. It was so exciting - the lights, most blinking.

I just had a premonition that if anyone were to get lost and find themselves left behind or just lost, anybody, even me, could and would make a living there. The people were so kind and lots of people, and yes, I gambled and had so much fun. We went back to our hotel room and rested.

The next day we headed back home to Good Fish Lake, Alberta. In total it took four days to get there and on the way back it took six days. We got a speeding ticket going there. It was \$250 and if we didn't pay it we would all end up in jail. So we paid it. On the way back we got another speeding ticket. We barely had enough money to pay it, but we made it. It was \$250.

In the end we all laughed about it. And we didn't tell this to our husbands. We told them it's your turn - of course not!



## Canadian facts

By Joanne Benger

1. Canada is the second largest country in the world. Only Russia has more land
2. Most Canadians live within 200 miles of the United States-Canada border, which is more than 4000 miles long.
3. The name Canada comes from the Iroquoian word Kanata or kanada, which means village or group of huts.
4. Canada became a nation in 1867 but remained politically tied to Britain until 1931 when the British parliament declared the Dominion of Canada an independent country.
5. Canada's flag was the British Union Jack or Red Ensign until February 15, 1965 when George Stanley designed our very own Canadian flag, the red and white Maple Leaf.
6. The Bank of Canada was established in 1935. It issued a \$500 bill with Sir John A. Macdonald's portrait and a \$1000 bill with Sir Wilfred Laurier's portrait.
7. On February 21, 1975 the beaver became the official symbol of Canada.
8. The Hudson's Bay Company was chartered in 1670. Its coat of arms contains two elk and four beaver, which is what their yearly rent was to consist of.
9. The Halifax Gazette was Canada's first newspaper with its first issue appearing March 18, 1752.
10. Governor Charles Jacques de Montgometry of Quebec imported Canada's first European horse in 1647.
11. The first Huron-French dictionary was written by a priest, Rev. J. Lecaron, in 1620.

## Freedom to choose Freedom mobile phone

By John Zapantis

I'd have to say that the Freedom Mobile phone company has inevitably lived by

its name, after serving my needs conveniently. The hookup for a mobile phone started back at the ending of March, when I needed to have a mobile Android phone for making calls and receiving messages for booking future stories and interviews with the Alberta Street News.

What got my curiosity going in wanting such a great deal was the sign in Calgary's Chinook Mall that advertised unlimited long distance calls, all for \$43.00 dollars a month.

Since ending up homeless in Calgary on March 5th due to a conflict I had experienced at my mother's place in Edmonton, I was forced to vacate her home as a dweller. I had returned to help both my parents as a boom-a-rang kid back in August of 2010. I set out determined as ever to at least keep my second home with the Alberta Street News as a Media Relations Coordinator and Reporter.

There are two employees whom I'd like to thank at the Chinook Mall's Freedom Mobile kiosk, who have served as a convenience in helping me with my phone hook up and the efficient service that has made my operating a Freedom Mobile phone more convenient. First a thank you to Freedom Mobile counter representative Steven Maffioli for hooking me up with my Android phone and giving me the entire rundown on how to operate my phone, which has served as an added asset in helping me to communicate my essential needs while reporting on upcoming writing assignments with my ASN Editor Linda Dumont. Then there's another fine Freedom Mobile employee, Avery Brennan, that needs to be commended for sorting out some confusion that I've had on my phone account that had been temporarily suspended since having made an emergency call to 911, where money was owing, which I wasn't aware of at the time. My power was later re-stored after Avery had explained to me that a small outstanding balance of 99 cents had to be paid out to him before my Android phone's power was to be re-activated.

Then finally to the rest of their staff, who would rather remain humble and just happy to be of service, which gives them the Freedom to all be just the way they'd like to be, and that's living by their name, Freedom Mobile and in my books the Freedom to choose!

# Collecting cash and gifts for the homeless

By Joanne Benger

May 7th was this county's Garage Sale Day with a garage sale in just about every community centre. I booked a table at the local Seniors Centre and divided it in half – half for cash for the homeless with Linda Dumont paintings and cards for sale and half for my typical yard sale junk. I don't drive so I carried my stuff to the sale homeless style, using my biggest wheeled suitcase.

The sale lasted six hours, from ten to four and I earned \$159 for the homeless. It will no doubt be used to pay for publishing Alberta Street News so vendors can keep vending. My half table brought \$35. \$10 went to pay for the table so I had \$35 to spend on gifts for the homeless.

Most of the other tables were also raising money for non-profits so when the sale ended and I spent \$19 for 19 items of clothing I was supporting both the Cancer Society and the Seniors Centre. Other sellers gave me donated items for free so I ended up with 33 gifts for the homeless all total. – two jackets, three shirts, 9 t-shirts (8 new), three pants, one skirt, rompers a pair of socks, a pair of boots, three purses, two picnic coolers, four cotton bags and an apron.

I had six dollars to spend on the homeless so I went to the local thrift store and bought two warm used blankets for a dollar each. I then did a bit more decluttering and found three used towels and two used blankets to donate. Fate helped, too. When I went on my daily walk I saw a duffle bag at the recycling centre's help yourself area and lugged it home.

I still have four dollars to spend at local garage sales and I have to beat last year's great buy. At the sale's end, I asked, "How much for all your socks?" and the wonderful lady sold me 54 pairs of socks for one dollar. I had to think I kept a lot of feet warm last winter.

It is just so heart warming to know there are so many wonderful people, who are eager and willing to help the homeless. Thanks to those who donated clothes for the homeless including Claire Lamoureux.

# I survived the Heat Wave of 2021

By Joanne Benger

I survived the heat wave of 2021 and I feel prepared to face the even worse heat wave that is predicted to arrive mid to late July. For me the worst was losing my looks. My hair got all fizzy and my ankles became swollen canklles. The hair solution was simple. I hid the frizz under a big sun hat. Then I cured me ankles with salt. Yes, salt. I was surprised to hear that swollen ankles can be caused by either too much or too little salt. My body had simply run out of salt. Even my sweat was no longer salty. The cure was adding a quarter teaspoon of salt and quarter teaspoon of sugar to every 500 ml. bottle of water that I drank.

Of course water was essential. An expert on TV told us to drink water even before we felt thirsty and then we should look at our pee. If it was the colour of weak lemonade we were drinking enough water. If it was darker we must drink more fluids. And we sweated, which is healthy. As they say, "sweat is nature's soap." They also say "Horses sweat, men perspire and women get dewy." I realized with a shock I am an unladylike horse in that respect.

I was one of the lucky ones. I never got to ride in an ambulance although they visited our street far too often. EMS doesn't give medical reports to nosey neighbours but I hear that heat and dehydration made all pre-existing conditions worse. Lots of people mentioned muscle spasms (lack of salt), fainting, and asthma (wildfire smoke) itches, heat rashes, headaches and insomnia.

The heat wave seemed to peak on Canada Day when we could finally go maskless and we felt the urge to mingle and watch the parade. Most of us wore t-shirts for comfort. Mine was Aboriginal orange and I soon looked like an orange sausage. Some wore patriotic red and others simply opted for cool colours. Soon all of us looked like wet beavers ready to enter a wet t-shirt competition as our glued on t-shirts revealed every muffin top.

Still we were in better shape than our yards. People ruefully said "at least we don't have to mow our brown grass." And there were two kinds of gardens, the watered ones that looked almost normal and the unwatered ones that were shrivelled

up and had bolted to weed. Mine was in the second group.

Some of us older folk remembered hearing about airplanes seeding clouds to create rain and Aboriginals performing rain dances but modern weather experts did neither. We saw no rain. Often we'd see black clouds and hope rain was coming but they always turned out to just be smoke from the wild fires. There were wild fires all around but none came close enough to cause evacuation. We just coughed and got red eyes.

It was too hot to cook inside and too hot to eat outside so we had no grill buddies. Brave people ran out to BBQ and with all their energy zapped by the heat staggered back in to chill out and eat. They say beer has the power to rehydrate and revive grill masters. This must be so.

Yes, that was the heat wave of 2021. Amazingly, though we complained a lot, we realized we were the lucky ones as we watched wildfires, tornados and floods on TV. Let us hope we are equally lucky this year.

# I'm confused

By Joanne Benger

1. What's the summer in summer sausage?
2. There are no flies in shoofly pie and no grasshoppers in grasshopper pie.
3. Are dragon flies half dragon, half fly and horse flies half horse, half fly?
4. A hornet is neither a horn nor a net.
5. Thunderstorms bring thunder, rain storms bring rain snow storms bring snow, brain storms bring ....?
6. We have sunburn but no moon freeze.
7. What does lemonade aid?
8. We have First Aide but no Second Aide.
9. We refer to a telephone as a phone but we don't call a television a vision.
10. We eat eats, pet pets, and fish fish but we don't sing sings.
11. We have libraries but no truthbaries.
12. How do you cut the mustard?
13. Who is this poor guy, Stan Dards, who is never met?
14. A cemetery is half a tery? We tarry there until Judgement Day.
15. Does a grave site have second sight?
16. What does a heat wave have in common with a permanent wave?
17. If weddings have a best man why don't they have a best lady?
18. We say she, her and hers but not he, sher and shers.



# The Silver Stones

**Fiction by Sharon Austin**

"Time for your walk, old boy," Jake called to his dog sleeping comfortably on the sofa. Rambo jumped down wagging his big bushy tale in anticipation. Suddenly there was a flurry of activity on the deck and the kitchen door swung inward. There stood Jake's grandson Billy with a big garbage full of stuff on his back. His face was red from exertion and it was obvious that he'd been crying.

"What's going on, little man?" He questioned. Billy was so upset he could hardly speak. Tears poured down his cheeks as he dumped out the garbage bag to reveal all his toy super heroes, Jurassic Park dinosaurs, GI Joes and vehicles of every colour. Even his favourite old Teddy Bear Rufus was flung carelessly on top of the heap.

Mom says I'm too old to play with these toys now and they make too much mess," he sputtered. I had them all hidden under my bed but she found them and put them all out for the charity pick up. I rescued them and came over here on my bike. All I've got left is those educational computer games and some Lego," he wailed.

"Now don't you worry," Jake comforted him. "You just put all those toys in your room here and you can play with them any time you want. They look like so much fun, I have a good mind to play with you." That brought a smile to Billy's tear-stained face and the two of them carried the toys to the small room Jake kept for the boy's visits. Jake felt sorry for Billy and the strict rules that his mother imposed. His daughter-in-law Myrna was a self-confessed minimalist neat freak and mighty proud of it. She was a real estate agent and she expected her home to look like the show homes in the magazines. She was always stressed and a few crumbs on her gleaming counters were cause for a meltdown. His son Tom and the boy were spending more and more time at his house watching movies and eating pizza on the sofa; things they couldn't do at home.

"Now Mom's sending me off to some horrible camp, called The Silver Stones

while she goes on her real estate convention. I wanted to stay with you but she says camp will be good for me. I don't want to go, Grandpa."

"The Silver Stones Camp! "Jake was incredulous. "Why, I went to that camp when I was your age."

"It must be awfully old then," Billy mused. Jake had to smile at that, fifty years to a ten-year old child was forever. How swiftly those fifty years had gone. He remembered the Silver Stones Camp as if it were yesterday. "I'll make us some lunch Billy and I'll tell you all about it."

The mists of time rolled slowly back and Jake was again that frightened ten-year-old boy standing alone and forlorn as he watched the taillights of his parent's car disappear down the long gravel road. They were going on a mission trip and he had been sent off to the newly built church camp. Like Billy, he didn't want to go and had no idea what to expect. He soon found out that every moment of the day was scheduled for some activity like chapel, arts and crafts, sports, scavenger hunts, hikes, swimming, campfire, and talent night. The more social kids were in their glory but being a quiet person, Jake longed for a few minutes alone to gather his thoughts and do something he wanted to do. One night the moon was very bright and was shining right in the window onto his top bunk. He could hear the camp counsellor Martin, snoring in his bed near the door so he quietly stole out into the quiet, silent night. The ocean was only a short walk away and soon he was sitting on the beach listening to the quiet murmur of the waves lapping against the shore. Far ahead the polished stones on the shore shone like silver in the moonlight. It was there that he dreamed up the fantasy that he had been taken from his home to a strange land and he must mark a trail to find his way back home.

Jake had made lots of inukshuks with his father just for fun. He knew the stories that indigenous peoples had used the strange stone figures as markers for centuries. Gathering as many of the gleaming silver stones as he could carry, Jake planned to make one figure each night and place them all along the gravel road to the highway. The campers were surprised to find the first stone figure standing at the edge of the driveway near the chapel. Most of the campers thought the counsellors were responsible but

some thought it was the work of spirits or ghosts. Someone made up a tale that the camp was built over an old graveyard and the figures were a warning not to disturb their rest. Night after night Jake walked down to the beach and gathered his silver stones to make the inukshuks. It was getting harder to do and taking longer because the statues were farther away from the camp grounds. He had written the whole story of the boy trying to escape by leaving stone markers in the moonlight in a campfire notebook.

One fateful night when he arrived back at the cabin he found Martin waiting for him and reading his story in the glow of a small flashlight. Martin convinced him that they would both be in terrible trouble if anyone found out who had been putting up the stone markers every night. He took Jake's story and changed it to be about a boy who had such a wonderful time at camp that he wanted everyone to follow the markers to the campgrounds. That last night at camp Martin read the new version of Jake's story and said it was he who had put up all the inukshuks. Everyone clapped wildly and Martin became the camp hero. The head supervisors of the camp decided to name the camp The Silver Stones Camp and it has been called that ever since. Grandpa Jake finished his tale with a far off look in his eye and a wistful smile on his lips.

"Wow, Grandpa, that makes you famous! Maybe I'll do that too."

"No Billy, you must promise me not to leave the campgrounds. Beside there's a high fence all around the grounds now so no one gets in or out. The silver stone inukshuks are now huge and made of pre-fab cement so everything has changed. You just might enjoy being at camp. After the third day I had made a friend and I actually had fun. I'm sure you will too. If you need some time to yourself maybe you could write in a journal or see how many of the constellations you can see out your window. I know how interested you are in astronomy. You'll find a way, and two weeks goes by real fast. Now let's take Rambo out for his walk!"

"Grandpa Jack had a way of making everything better," Billy thought, smiling. If Grandpa could make it through two weeks at camp then he could too. After all they were two of a kind.



# The Green Skies of August are here

By Joanne Benger

It is August. Look up in the evening. A green sky above the sunset presages a rainy morning in August." And "If a ring or halo appears around the moon in August it foretells coming rain." Let us hope for a red sky for "A red sky at night is a sailor's delight." And promises good weather the next day. August is the sixth month in the Roman calendar and was called Sextilis until 8 BC when it was reamed in honour of Augustus Caesar. July and August are named after Caesars and they are the two months when we eat the most Caesar salad. August is Overdose Awareness month when our thoughts turn to Moms Stop the harm, safe injection and treatment options.

August 1 is the first Monday in August so it is a civic or provincial holiday in all provinces but Quebec and Newfoundland. We call it Heritage Day in Alberta. It is Natal Day in Nova Scotia, a Civic holiday in Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island and simply British Columbia Day in British Columbia and New Brunswick Day in New Brunswick. Whatever we call it, it is a holiday Monday and long weekend usually spent outdoors. Some groups spend the day collecting garbage in local parks or woods with a prize for the one who collect the most.

August 1 was the old Lammas, the harvest festival when the traditional food is a gingerbread man shared with family and friends. Others prefer the Lammas loaf made of bread dough braided into the form of a man or a wheat stock.

August 1 is also Emancipation Day for on August 1, 1834 the slavery Abolition Act was passed. All British Empire slaves were freed and their slogan was 'Freedom, liberty and the right to live as I am.'

August 3 is Regatta Day in Newfoundland. Go boating today.

August 3 is Gordie Howe Day. Wear your jersey in honour of Mr. Hockey.

August 6-7 are Tisha B'Av, the Jewish days of fasting and mourning.. August 7-8 are the Islamic Ashura. August 11 is the Hindu Raksha Bandhan (Rakhil), August 15 we want sun for "On St. Mary's Day, sunshine brings much good wine."

August 12 is Middle Child Day, International Youth Day and the birthday of William Blake, born August 12, 1827. He wrote, "I have no me. I am but two days old. What shall I call thee! Joy is my name, sweet joy befall thee."

August 14 is Pakistan Independence Day and August 15 is both Korea's Liberation Day and Indian independence Day. August 24 in Ukrainian Independence Day.

August 17 is National Love Your Feet Day and Davy Crockett's birthday. Put on comfortable shoes and enjoy the outdoors. August 17 is also Thrift Day. Become CEO of your money and start saving.

August 18 is National Ice cream Day. I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream.

August 24 is St. Bartholemew's Day. Expect dryer weather.

August 25 is Banana Split Day as well as Second Hand Wardrobe Day. Wear re owned clothes as you enjoy a banana split.

August 25 is New moon. For luck don't forget to say, "White rabbit" before you say anything else today.

August 27, the last Saturday of the month, is Lemonade Stand Day in Edmonton. Raise money for a good cause.

August 28 is National Bow Tie Day as well as Mexican Grandparents Day and August 29 is National Lawyers Day in Argentina.

The last week of August is Pride Week. Be happy and gay, wear rainbows and celebrate the fact that you are you.

August 31 ends August. I can't believe they have Christmas decoration out already. Some begin Christmas shopping now.

## Mary looks for a healthy summer activity

By Joanne Benger

1. I could hike for health. No, I would get blistered heels, sun burn and mosquito bites.
2. I could go bird watching. I'd be in the wilds and I might sprain my ankle in the underbrush and get lost to boot.
3. I could try primitive camping in a tent. I might wake up in a rain drenched tent, lying in a rain soaked sleeping bag.
4. I could pick up litter in the park to help make the world a greener place. It would be just my luck to step on a needle or cut my hand with broken glass.
5. I could go skinny dipping in a nice blue lake. I might get leeches in private places and have a blue green algae rash.
6. I could play hide and seek in the tall grass. Ticks and Lyme disease are sitting there waiting for me.
7. I could collect wild mushrooms for a gourmet treat. Some are poisonous, some give you a psychedelic trip and others are edible, but what if I got them mixed up?
8. I could garden and eat organic. I hear you can get tetanus or worse if you puncture yourself with a garden fork.
9. I could go golfing. But what if an errant gold ball should hit me in the eye and blind me.
10. I could walk my friend's dog in the park. Huge vicious dogs might attack dog and handler alike and we could get rabies.
11. I could explore the wilds and photograph wild life. Even if I carry bear spray I might be too shaky to use it if a bear attacks.
12. I could go boating or river rafting. Both sports take place on water and water can drown you.
13. I could just go for a nice relaxing walk in the rain. Lightning strikes can be deadly.
14. I could ride a bicycle. I am not allowed on the sidewalk and I am scared to ride in front of a big rig on the road.
15. I could sit on my deck and drink iced tea. I won't get dehydrated or get attacked by a wild animal.

**Novena: Mother Theresa – Say nine Hail Mary's for nine days. Ask for three wishes, first for business, second and third for impossibles. Publish this article on the ninth day. Your wishes will come true even if you don't believe it. Amazing, but true. J. B.**

# A Thank you to the Mustard SEED (Calgary) Street Ministry

**By John Zapantis**

People, who work on the front lines in helping to make a difference in the lives of those struggling to rise above their own adversity, need to be commended for their services, when providing an array of services to Calgary's homeless population.

One of those many places of support is the downtown Mustard SEED (Calgary) Street Ministry that's provided me with an array of choices, while settling into their premises for an afternoon snack, a simple conversation with its drop in clients, of whom some are homeless, or even simply living on the margins, with homes of their own.

I've met a number of homeless, whom I can now consider my personal friends, while stranded out in Calgary as a temporarily homeless dweller myself.

I've stayed briefly at the Calgary Drop-In Centre, having access to their sleeping quarters at night, followed by the essential three meals that comes as a blessing - breakfast, lunch and supper. And just before leaving out that door in the morning, a shower to wake me up and get me ready for the day.

The Calgary Salvation Army has also opened its doors to me for about a two month period, where all amenities were provided that included the usual three meals a day, showering facilities and a nice quiet nights sleep in their dorms shared by three tenants at night, because of COVID-19 restrictions.

The availability of a wi fi room to play around on my laptop computer has also served as a convenience, when I wrote one of my stories for the Alberta Street News.

Currently, I'm frequently dependent on the various services of the Mustard SEED (Calgary) Street Ministry that vary from using their facility in dropping in for the odd snack, or even meeting new friends, who have from time to time shared an array of stories about their rise above adversity.

That experience alone has opened my eyes to new experiences that have taught me a lesson in realizing how fortunate I am to have had the supportive parents I've had, who always stood by me and believed in my

dreams. That has determined the outcome of how far I've come as an established freelance writer for various community newspapers in my last 27 years, while representing 13 newspaper publications in Edmonton.

One note in particular adds thrust to my story, I offered one of the volunteers, Kelvin Pyke of the Mustard SEED an opportunity to write for our paper.

What encouraged the idea of involving him in the process was his potential for telling an interesting story and his empathy for people struggling to rise above adversity.

He's a very interesting individual with a broad perspective on life. This was enough to encourage me to suggest that he get involved as a contributing writer for the Alberta Street News.

I then gave him a rundown on the paper's purpose and other social issues that are featured by our many writers. I, at one point, got so caught up in explaining the process that I accidentally overstepped my boundaries, by missing the 5 o'clock bus ride that is provided courtesy of the Mustard SEED Street Ministry.

The bus always gives me a free ride to the shelter that I'm currently staying at that's notably a wing of the Mustard Seed Street Ministry and is located in Calgary's South East industrial area. Looking at my watch, I noticed it was five minutes after five. When I rushed to look out the SEED'S front window onto the main street, I noticed that our bus was gone.

I was now mad as hell. I looked over at Kelvin, asking him why I wasn't reminded to get ready for my bus' arrival. He replied in an affirmative tone, "I told you earlier, but you weren't paying attention."

Without debating further, I realized how deeply I'd gone into the presentation about our paper's purpose, that has helped impact Calgary and Edmonton's marginalized and homeless populations.

My obsessiveness in showing loyalty to the cause was now an accidental trade off for the shorter end of the stick!

So I asked my table of friends to be excused and raced off to the front entrance of this building to communicate my issue with the two front door attendants, who work as paid Mustard SEED staff, Avery and Cass. Both women refused to use their last names for personal reasons.

When I approached Cass and told her that I got caught up in a discussion about involving one of their volunteers to write for our paper and missed my bus, because of an extensive conversation, she said, I could get on the 6 o'clock bus instead.

When I finally calmed down, I realized I was panicking for nothing. I had forgotten

that there were two buses that would drive Mustard SEED client's to the centre's, sister shelter out in South East Calgary.

Avery also assured me that when someone was to miss a 5 o'clock bus ride that they could have the option of riding the 6 o'clock bus.

So here is my sincere thank you to the Mustard SEED staff members, Avery and Cass for their support and assurances in getting me on board the 6 o'clock ride that quickly calmed me down and got me back to the place where I crash and lay my hat for now!

## Who are the real criminals

**By Real Sugar**

Abuse of power is defined as an unlawful act carried out in an official capacity, which affects official duties. In my ten years working as a Security guard in various cities and in Vancouver BC, I have seen many cases and read many reports about abuse of power by others working in my profession. I have seen first-hand how abuse of power can lead to low moral and problems in the work place. Security guards would come to work in the morning and brag about they beat up some underage kid because he questioned their authority. The security guards often got off with a warning after their hands were examined for bruises and cuts by the RCMP

Personal Relationships within the workplace with clients have the potential to encourage rule breakers. While patrolling a hotel in Burnaby, BC, I observed a fellow guard maintain a relationship with hotel employee. Some money went missing and all fingers pointed to that employee the security guard was dating, which was against company policy so we could stay neutral.

Women working in prisons were often victims of sexual harassment from male guards because they were the minority. There are a number of organizations that have been put together to combat these sort of problems: whistle blowers, the human rights commission. But at what cost to the whistleblowers and their families. Whistleblowers are often blacklisted.

These actions led me to question my own accountability. Companies that adhere to integrity, honesty and pride in the workplace are ones that everyone wants to work for because they are game changers.



# Computer HELL and ASN Editor Linda Dumont to the rescue

By John Zapantis

There' have been times I'd hear the disappointing news from ASN Editor Linda Dumont that a few of my stories hadn't arrived to her computer. There were past situations where she claimed one of my stories failed to arrive to her computer and the following day, she somehow ended up finding that lost story in her spam file.

This same situation has occurred at least a half dozen times, in the last 11 years since joining the ranks of the Alberta Street News as a regular contributing writer.

Sometimes I'd get into one with her, ranting about everything and anything that made logical sense to me at that time. Like I'd think one moment, could she be thinking that I have way too many stories for this issue, so maybe the alibi of hers would be to tell me that the story never arrived, so that she could fit someone else's story into that issue since they were first time arrivals to the paper as contributing writers.

Other times I'd be thinking because of my own productive ratio as a hard hitter at taking on two to three assignments an issue, could I possibly be taking up all that space so that others writers aren't getting the space needed when they need to work as regular contributing writers.

Well each time I'd soon find out that either her computer was on the blitz, or that my story truly never made it to her computer, because of the logistical and distinctive patterns that would start to make a lot of sense once she had claimed that my stories were finally either found in her spam file, or that she simply never looked hard enough in her other extensive files of stories from past writers that have been published and current writers that send inquiries to her from all over Alberta, or they never were sent.

That's quite the load to handle for an editor, which I'm starting to understand that you shouldn't panic under those circumstances.

So just this past month I sent her a sto-

ry three times, entitled Librarian Trouble shooters help computer users get back on track, the first time on Tuesday April 26th, but when I called her the next day she said she never received it. Then I revised that story often referred to as a second revised version and resent it again on Thursday May 26th and again the following day she said she hadn't received that one either. Then just recently on May 31st I sent it to her one more time and again to no avail. she simply couldn't find that story in her in box or even in her spam file.

To add more to the confusion, I was even told that the other story that I sent her entitled Room Mate at the Salvation Army inflicted by Covid-19 variant that was sent to her on Tuesday May 24th hadn't even arrived the same day she confirmed the news to me that that other story hadn't arrived so each time she wondered about what happened, I then felt subjected to answer to the call with an outburst, demanding an answer as to why this was all of the sudden spiralling out of control.

Each time, she'd say, "I just don't know, I checked all my files and the spam file. She'd then ask again, "What happened?"

My head felt like it was going through the roof telling her that I'd already explained to her that there was no need to go through the same questions and answers because I was just feeling all stressed out by this Hell raising experience.

If Hell was any indication of what the torment would be like down there, for my ranting and raving over all of this confusion and anathema, I'd just work on logical sense and really make an effort at critical thinking by looking at all of this from Linda's perspective.

Innocent until proven guilty for it sounded like she was just as seriously concerned as I was about those stories not arriving for whatever the technical issues at hand.

So this time she suggested that I resend those same two stories over the mail to her. I, in turn, suggested that I send those two stories to her registered mail just to play it on the safe side and I did later at the postal service from Calgary.

Two other items were also sent to her - a smaller story I did when I commended my new phone company for their support in making my services the more convenient and a poem I wrote, which both as well have been scheduled to be put into the upcoming ASN July/August 2022 is-

sue.

Well, I'll have to wait for Linda's answer, when those two other stories arrive through the registered mailing procedure which Linda has faith that those stories will finally arrive to her mail box and will make it on time for the ASN July/August 2022 issue as well.

So we know that this isn't the first time that this has happened and each time it has, she's always managed to finally work her magic at getting the stories to publication.

I have faith in ASN Editor Linda Dumont, so I'll just have to leave the rest of my troubles in her hands and let the outcome finally work to our advantage.

This isn't the first time that this has happened and it can be a common occurrence with other writers and editors from other papers. So, being that Linda seems to always bounce back as that 'Cat with Nine Lives', I have faith and confidence that my two stories may resurface again, through her email files like they have in the past. As a last option, she'll obviously receive them through the registered mail procedure that I relied on to get those two stories to her for that next upcoming issue.

Trusting in the editor's decision in having this done another way is when you are part of that team effort and not acting like an individual who could likely think from a delusional perspective, which could cause you a lot of unavoidable chaos and hurt feeling that do not need to be included when working in that team environment. I know Linda well, tolerance and patience is the key in getting those two stories to her!



Pet portraits by Linda Dumont

To have a portrait painted contact  
Linda at 780-428-0805.  
Prices vary according to size.

# Librarian trouble shooters help computer users get back on track

By John Zapantis

Librarians notably serve their purpose when called to duty in helping computer clients with an array of trouble shooting priorities in assisting them with their computer issues.

I know what kind of results I've had the good incentive in receiving their urgent help while living temporarily homeless, when experiencing this and meeting some of those persistent and hard working professionals, who have helped me in my most recent transition in establishing a newer Yahoo account, so I could obtain a new user name and password to continue writing my stories for Alberta Street News.

This required a change in user name and password that I was forcefully encouraged to do because I simply forgot what my original password was, whenever I had to rely on the support of computers at the library when writing my stories.

During the last 10 years, it had been a more simplified method in operating my own home computer in Edmonton.

I can attribute that to how I started to forget my old library computer password, because as soon as I started using my own home computer after buying one, I then had permanently conditioned to using that computer and eventually forgot the password to the library's computer.

The convenience of having your own computer can also be utilized when taking it to a library, where after using it a thousand times over, you simply condition to using your own personalized password from your computer and eventually forget the library password that you'd be using from the library's computer.

That's evidently the kind of chaos experienced by thousands of computer users, who have obviously fallen into those mind set traps over the years. One particular Calgary Public Librarian, who doesn't back down from a challenge in making life more convenient for library clients, when helping in the cause, is Augusto Casili

He showed me the essential steps in how to re-apply for my new Yahoo account, helping me to create a new user name and password.

His supportive efforts in helping me to access a new online account, now gives me the advantage of applying those skills to both my laptop computer and the library's computer of my choice.

Also, just recently before the publishing of this article, I started to experience another computer problem, when I was trying to download two photos that I had taken of our most recent ASN Contributing Writers, Melissa Hills.

While trying to send one photo I had

taken of Melissa, while trying to find the usual format that I'm accustomed to using when downloading and sending photos to accompany my stories written by me, for some strange reason the format wasn't on my screen when I went about the necessary procedures of activating this procedure.

Feeling like I was in Computer Hell for the next half hour, while endlessly challenging the confusion of it all, I finally threw my pride out that window and called for the librarian, Jasmine, to help and within about a five minute period, she somehow got back the regular format that had been wiped right off my screen and got me back on track, so I could now download and send those two photos I had taken of our two newest ASN Contributing Writers.

So, relieved and happy about getting put back on track, I sent the photos to ASN Editor Linda Dumont that would be enclosed along with the two stories that were sent to her earlier by our two writers.

I thank these two librarians Augusto Casili and Jasmine, who only wanted her first name used for our story, for their selfless efforts. Because of this big difference that these two helpful librarians have made, for the adjustment of this story, I can now easily put all these acknowledging words, by extending my sincere appreciation to these dedicated and professional librarians, who care about the people that they serve and who have put me back on track, so that I can continue to write the stories that need to be heard!

## Pysanky for Peace

By Linda Dumont

From April 18 to May 9, colourful nearly six foot high Ukrainian Easter Eggs, pysanky, were on display at The Kingsway Garden Mall. Kingsway Mall in partnership with the Alberta Arts Council for the Ukrainian Arts held a fundraiser, Pysanky for Peace, in support of humanitarian efforts for Ukraine. The pysanky were decorated by local artists. After being on display, they were auctioned off with the proceeds directed to Ukrainian Canadian Social Services, whose current focus is on supporting displaced families and individuals fleeing from the Ukraine and arriving here in Alberta.

Calgary Southcentre Mall hosted a parallel fund raiser with a silent auction.





# An uncover writer in a homeless man's body

By John Zapantis

Here I am in Calgary.

Endlessly walking up and down the downtown core.  
Subjected to the humiliating scornful mocking laughter  
from the lynch mob passersby, who need to reinforce who  
they really are.

And the homeless all know who they really are,  
the plastic People Brigade, that's actually made out of lemonade.  
Acting as the jury, the ignorant one's who feel they are the so-called  
Above.

They're the one's that sold their souls to have a place in this so-called  
just society.

The ultimate trade off-at the expense of innocent souls,  
who now walk these streets and are used as moving targets  
in this horrendous war zone of verbal assault,  
and sometimes physical abuse  
by the crowds who have it all.

But think again, all of you, who have cast judgement upon me as you walk by  
me,

laughing at me and thinking I'm a nothing at all,-

I am a something and the word is now getting out to the masses

Surprise- I'm an uncover writer in a homeless man's body  
and you wouldn't even have known it, cause I'm also a pretty good poet!



## Meka May

By Angelique Branstion

Photo by Linda Dumont

Her beautiful golden hair that forms little  
ringlets that sway wildly around her tiny face  
as she darts from activity to activity.

Even at such a young age you can see her  
personality caring and protective of her little  
brother.... most of the time.

The way her eyes sparkle as she sings along  
with one of her favourite books.

Brimming with life, eager to take in all this  
new world has to offer.

She has no problem voicing what she wants,  
or does not want.

Life has not whittled away from her soul  
Not yet.

Perhaps not at all

Would that I could spare her from the  
challenges

And struggles she will face.

But this is not possible

All I can do is love her.

It doesn't seem like enough, but it is all I have.  
But then it is all any of us has, to know we  
are not alone.

To know we are loved.

Meka May

Born in the heat of the summer  
Let your fierce enthusiasm of life  
Never fade.

## Note from Pedro

By Pedro Schultz

I haven't continued my autobiography for a few years so here goes: I've lived  
here in the Sparling Lodge of Operation Friendship for over eight years now and  
am fairly satisfied, especially since I get all my meals here, get my laundry done  
and have my room cleaned weekly at a reasonable rate. As well I have several  
really good friends in here, especially Bob, with whom I eat all my meals. I've  
been recording our conversations for a book I want to write about him.

On Tuesday through Thursday I usually eat at the Rock Breakfast Club  
and they usually give me extra pancakes, which I pass out at the Boyle Mc-  
Cauley Health Centre. I pass out fruit, juices and literature daily along 95 Street  
from 110A Avenue to 106 Avenue and go to the Hope Mission for a meal about  
once a week and to the Boyle Street Community Centre a few times a week.

I've been attending three Christian 12 Step groups weekly: one at the  
church on 117 Avenue and 95 street, on Tuesday at the Destiny Church on 106  
Avenue and 96 Street, and the Celebrate Recovery Group Fridays in the St.  
Faiths church on 93 Street south of 118 Avenue each at 7 p.m.

On Saturdays I've usually worked at the Mission Hall, south of the Bissell  
Centre on 105 Avenue and 96 St. I appreciate God's peace, love and joy most of  
the time but have had depression periods from my bipolar condition. I appreci-  
ate the many prayers people have given for me.

# Roommate at Salvation Army inflicted by a COVID-19 variant

By John Zapantis

Just when you thought that we pretty well had the last of those tidal waves of the COVID-19 variants, one of my three roommates seemed to be holding on for his dear life, while tossing and turning erratically in his bed, coughing and wheezing and mumbling with himself, while he seemed to be in some kind of war zone with an arch enemy.

I could also hear him say out loud that he felt like he was in the Arctic feeling the cold winds coming to destroy him and having the chills.

I first thought to myself, he must be having a bad nightmare while talking in his sleep. When I asked him if he was okay, he immediately acknowledged that he felt he was in some kind of ice storm. He said he was feeling the chills, but what could that all mean?

So as concerned as I was about his situation, I said, "Hey bud, were you having a nightmare that you were caught in some ice storm? He replied, "No, I was still awake, but the temperature around me feels like one."

I still couldn't make sense of it all. Feeling fatigued myself, I assured him if there was anything I could do to help in his struggle, I'd be around in case he needed me when the time came and he thanked me.

We both left it at that. I, somewhere along the way, dozed off into the rest of the morning for my good night's sleep.

The following morning, when I had awakened, I had decided to hit the showers at 6:30 a.m. While on my way out the dorm's door as I opened it, there on his way in was the other roommate breaking the shocking news to me that the guy was erratically coughing and wheezing, tossing and turning in his bed, which was now a probable case of COVID-19.

He'd suggested that I keep my dis-

tance from him until further notice. So I acknowledged in return that I'd follow up on his wise words of advice. After I finished showering and dried myself off, I immediately headed down to the front office of the Salvation Army, to inform the staff about what had occurred the night before, regarding my roommate's struggle with his coughing and wheezing, tossing and turning.

The staff had already been informed about my roommate's condition as they had tested him sometime earlier for some kind of COVID-19 variant, but they never confirmed to me exactly what type.

One of the female staff members then confirmed to me that I'd have to have a compulsory COVID-19 test conducted to determine to me that I'd have to have a compulsory COVID-19 test conducted to determine if I had contracted the deadly disease from my roommate.

She handed me two long sticks, swabs with cotton tips at the end of those sticks and suggested that I shove both of them up my nose through my nostrils as far as I could push them up my nose.

I essentially followed up on her helpful advice and shoved them both up my nostrils, one at a time and as far as I could, to complete my test to determine if I was inflicted or not.

I then assured staff that I'd do my best to avoid the dorm, since my other roommate, who was tested positive for that COVID-19 variant, was still resting in his bed.

I'd also suggested to the staff that I'd return at 3 p.m. that afternoon to check back on my COVID-19 test results and they agreed to my suggestion.

When I arrived back at 3 p.m. later that afternoon, my results were confirmed as negative. I was more than relieved by the good news that day, while at the same time asked about my roommates progress, while struggling with this very uncomfortable COVID-19 variant.

One of the female staff members who had conducted my COVID-19 test, confirmed to me that they had taken my roommate out of my dorm, transferring him into an isolation room, where he'd be isolated away from everyone for the next five days until progress was finally made.

When I think about it now, most of the residents at about 98% percent of that ratio, were not wearing N-95 masks, from the time I had checked into the Salvation

Army in Calgary since the first week of March of 2022.

I'd been persistently wearing a mask, from going downstairs to have breakfast in the dining room, to leaving the building and walking around Calgary's downtown core in getting my routine exercise each day, to getting back for lunch and supper while always taking preventative measures in hoping that this precaution would help me get past this COVID-19 storm without any regrets. So far so good.

I know we live in a democracy, where everyone in this country is entitled to an opinion, or freedom of speech, so when everyone, or most of that 98% of the tenant population weren't wearing those N-95 masks, I was wise enough not to remind anyone about what the consequences could possibly be.

And you certainly don't need to make enemies, when mostly everyone at the Salvation Army has issues of their own. I myself, because of a recent falling out with a relative, who holds power of attorney over my 92 year old mother am homeless. We weren't getting along from time to time.

I moved back to my mother's house back in August of 2010 and just recently got into a big conflict, where my mother finally suggested that I leave my mom's place and get a place of my own and that's what brought me to the Calgary Salvation Army, ending up homeless there.

But, like I wrote a story in the previous Alberta Street News Bi-Monthly May/June 2022 issue, I mentioned that after getting the boot from my mother, I'd searched around for further accommodation and managed to get a place on hold with a low cost senior's housing management company in Edmonton., while living in Calgary and occasionally leaving that city to go back to Edmonton and finally managing to find a place for suitable accommodations.

Finally, I believe my friend will pull through his battle to survive this COVID-19 variant, for I've thrown in my prayer for his safety to fully recover and my message to the readers is that this wave of COVID-19 isn't over yet, but just a reminder that we can't be turning our backs on all the advice given about this killer disease.

So keep your guard up and try not to leave your masks down, especially when walking by hundreds of people on your



# Book launch for Edmonton writer

By Linda Dumont

About fifty people gathered on June 1 at Kingsway Garden Mall for the book launch of Janet Brazil's book *Heal Your Brain Faster, Empower Your Mind Through Yoga*. In the book, Janet Brazil, a brain injury survivor, shares her journey of healing from a traumatic brain injury.

Brazil said, "I wanted to share what I had experienced and things I have overcome with other brain injury survivors and caretakers."

Originally from Newfoundland, Brazil has spent the last 35 years recovering from a car accident she was involved in when she was a teenager. She was able to do very little at first because her entire body had been traumatized. She could neither walk nor talk. After much persistence and repetition and yoga practice she felt like she had found her body again.

"Recovery from a brain injury takes time, patience, willpower, determination, courage and belief that it can happen," Brazil said.

Today Brazil is a certificated yoga instructor who teaches yoga as a volunteer to fellow brain injury and stroke survivors at the Brain Care Centre and Networks Activity Centre.

Brazil said, "The practice of yoga has made a difference in their lives. They feel more flexible and are better able to concentrate and focus. They learn how to stand and balance more easily and to

daily commute, to where ever you're going. Try your best to survive the odds, essentially social distancing, washing your hands for 20 seconds and coughing in the crook of your elbow. Try to show some respect for the right of way of others, especially for those wearing masks in public places and about.

Respect is the key and if we're all in this together, be consistent in avoiding the discussions on anti-masking. Just tell the

breathe more easily."

She started to practice yoga about 12 years ago with a yoga guru from India, Dr. Pitander Dutt Sharma, and discovered the healing powers of the practice of yoga, mentally and physically. After Dr. Sharma's death she continued her practice with Dr. Unmesh Kumar. In 2016, she completed her yoga instructors' training course with Linda Dumont and Shaun Giroux.

Brazil said it took a lot of patience and will power to write her story. "I was typing and my fingers and hands were so tired," she said. "I thought I would never finish it. It took so long."

Her daughter, who is a university student, was a great help in getting the book

finished.

"She told me 'I like your ideas,'" Brazil said. "My daughter edited the book, and then I sent it to Black Card Books."

The book contains photographs of yoga postures taken by Daryl Gauthier, a fellow brain injury survivor.

Brazil tried to find funding for her book but was unsuccessful. Publication was finally made possible with money left to her from her parents.

To order a copy of Brazil's book you can go to her website or Facebook page, or you can buy one from her through Alberta Street News.. The book sells for \$30 with part of proceeds donated to the Brain Care Centre.



**Edmonton writer Janet Brazil launched her book, *Heal Your Brain Faster*, at Kingsway Mall on June 1. Photo by Daryl Gauthier**

anti-maskers that every one is entitled to their own personal opinions, when anti maskers feel you have to answer to them. Then bid them a good day and move on. We don't need a war, just the war on preventative measures that will get all of us through this in finally defeating the enemy and that enemy is none other than COVID-19!

# Dysfunctional families and the victimization of children

By Maria B.

Identifying the characteristics of our dysfunctional family not only enlightens us but can compel us to seek the kind of resolution that will enable us to heal. It can also serve to break the cycle of abuse and victimization.

Now that our parents are deceased, it seems easier to recognize the dysfunction with clarity and put it away into a compartment in our memory with the realization that our parents constituted the dysfunction of our family. In all fairness one must take into consideration that these parents carried and put into motion not only the dark secrets of their own family dysfunction but a prevalent realization that their parenting was completely dysfunctional.

Their dysfunction included physical, emotional and verbal abuse; cowardly acts were committed on innocent children in the name of "parenting". These cowardly acts on children leave devastating impressions and effects that impact them for the rest of their lives.

When the parents are deceased, one might think that there are no more perpetrators and only victims remain. This is a fallacy as by focusing on our parents as the source of the dysfunction we are overlooking the aftermath of the dysfunction that remains in every member of our families, being handed down to our new generation. These dysfunctions are encased in the images that the controlling and abusive parents cast and created into roles for each member of the family.

My role was the "scapegoat". The scapegoat of the family becomes willing to take blame for anything and everything in order to keep the peace. Scapegoats live in constant chaos facing constant criticism and blame. Not knowing what to expect, they are ridden with fear, anxiety and shame; truth and trust become just a mirage. It is daunting and emotionally draining to keep trying to prove yourself or your truth. Lies eat steadily away at the very foundation of our well being. We

grow up feeling betrayed, stupid, used, tricked, tramped on and we become "shame based".

For the person that has held the role as "scapegoat", the role that holds the abuser and controller becomes very toxic as through put downs, criticisms, unqualified corrections, it keeps us in a guarding state, leaving us fearful of making any mistakes. In the process we tend to give up very important parts of ourselves.

Abusers deny our truth and try to cast a distorted image of who we are. Events are distorted and even lies are fabricated to obtain allegiance or/and acceptance from others. Their criticism, the denials, the verbal attacks, the fabrication of events serve to create a smoke screen of who they are and to cover not only their flaws and insecurities but the secrets that they keep. For them a scapegoat is necessary in order to feel in power and control. The abuser blames others for their anger as well for their behaviour and is never their fault.

A person quickly find themselves "walking on eggshells" in their presence. They become the "elephant in the room" that people try to ignore and/or pacify. The emotions that are generated are very toxic.

It is of great importance to begin dealing assertively with members of our dysfunctional family. Making excuses for the abuse and looking the other way or justifying the behaviour only perpetuates the abuse and the victimization. Acceptance, denial and abuse go hand in hand; these are three of the main symptoms of a dysfunctional family.

Each of us carries an intricate piece of a unique history of abuse and together we will come from the dark into the light of truth. No one has the right to deny our truth of how we were treated in our childhood. We are survivors and authors of our own lives holding a dignify and significant position. We must recognize the importance of developing our unique core beliefs in the foundation of our divinity as children of our divine creator and discard the old beliefs that have been cast to create a false image of ourselves.

Equanimity is the liberating quality that allows us to keep our hearts open in the midst of changes. We need to overcome hardship in the most positive manner possible so that things can be learned from it. Developing and ensuring that our relationships are free of abuse will serve to enrich our lives and the lives of others.



Family is a bond that works on mutual understanding and trust. The best principles are formulated and followed in harmony and respect for each other. The harmony works like a refuelling agent and the respect rekindles the fire of trust and hope.

The reframing of our family picture holds five intricate parts of my life of five divine creations that have evolved into incredible human beings each one holding unique piece of the truth of our childhood.

Each one proudly represents their resilience, their own uniqueness And their incredible spirit of survival.

But in the mirrors of our souls there is only one image that embodies our lives together holding the incredible gifts that kept us together, these being: unconditional love, kindness, trust, and compassion that we were able to give to each other in our childhood. This became the mantel of protection and hope that we needed in order to survive.

Every one of us holds the key to our personal freedom; we do not need to hold unto the links to our past through abuse and hurt. We have the power to develop the kind of bridges that will enable us to set our family foundation with the incredible gifts that our creator has given us.

All those gifts will give us not only the courage and strength but also the wisdom to use them and create the kind of memories of our family that describe the true value that we hold for one another.

We will become the trail blazers for our future generation, honouring who we are and living with dignity and respect