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PER PAPER

ALBERTA

Street News

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Celebrating with Alberta Street News this Christmas season



By Linda Dumont

At this time I would like to thank all of the people who support our vendors through purchasing the papers and in so many other ways. I hear about people buying a vendor a cup of coffee, or giving out a gift certificate, or warm clothing or helping out in some other way, not just during the Christmas season but all year round.

One of the vendors just told me about how a woman bought her a new coat at Sears when she was out selling the paper at Kingsway Mall. She was dressed in layers of clothing, and the woman took her into the store, and

paid \$200 for the coat!

Even a smile and a greeting is an affirmation saying, "You are not invisible. You are of value."

As of November 16, 2015 Alberta Street News marked 12 years in publication. Over the past 12 years there have been changes – in 2012 we changed the name of the paper from Edmonton Street News to Alberta Street News, when vendors in Calgary picked up the paper to sell there. We have gone from being a non profit paper published by the Edmonton Street News Society until Sept. 2014 when the paper was picked up by Martyshuk Housing as one of their projects. Unfortunately, the paper ran at a loss for ten months, so I was given the option of resuming publication as an independent publisher with printing paid for by Martyshuk Housing. Back to working as a volunteer, I am able to continue publication. That is important, because we have vendors who depend on the income from paper sales.

As a street newspaper, we are not like other mainstream publications in that we are a community consisting of vendors, writers, and the people who support the vendors through purchase of the papers.

For vendors, being part of some-

thing bigger is important. Those vendor badges are an important mark of identification. They represent that the vendor is a self employed individual selling newspapers.

We also have events for our vendors. In 2015, we had an Easter dinner and a Thanksgiving dinner but we will not be having a Christmas dinner because so many other agencies and groups are holding Christmas dinners. Instead, we will be celebrating vendor appreciation week in February along with vendors world wide as a member paper of the International Network of Street Papers. John Zapantis is working on getting jackets donated for the vendors.

Our writers come from all socioeconomic backgrounds and range from professional writers like Allan Sheppard, Joanne Benger and John Zapantis, to those who have never had a story or poem published before. In this issue we have stories from the Wellness Network.

Our readers, too, come from all walks of life and backgrounds from university professors and politicians to homeless people reading the paper to learn about services.

**Thank you and Merry
Christmas!!**

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A first take on PM Trudeau II and friends

(And a good-bye and good riddance to Stevie What'sisname and the other fellas.)



By Allan sheppard

What a difference a moon or two can make!

The moon of election time has become the moon of wintertime. We've had little time and scant hard evidence to assess our new political and social environment. But one thing is clear: Things could be worse.

We could be at the beginning of another four years of what we endured for most of the last ten: mean-spirited Harper government; government that knew the (ideological) cost of everything and (spiritual) value of nothing; government that confused values (ideology) with value (real everyday worth to real everyday people, whoever and wherever they might be) and reflexively chose the former.

But the important question now is not, Are we worse off? Or are we better off? The question now is can we be proud of ourselves and our country again? I am cautiously hopeful. And watchful: these are still early days, and what we have seen so far is (of necessity) more style than substance. The political atmosphere seems cleaner and fresher. Whether that improvement is due to a breath of fresh air, courtesy of Justin Trudeau and his Liberals, or the departure of the bad smell that the Harper Conservative government had become, remains to be seen.

We shouldn't forget that Pierre Trudeau (PM Trudeau I) often observed that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Nor should we forget that being self-aware in that respect did not protect the elder Trudeau from the sin of arrogance during much of his time in

power.

Governments these days seem to have a shelf life of about ten years before rot—whether due to corruption, arrogance, failure to adapt, or a combination of all those factors—sets in and undermines them. It happened to Trudeau I/John Turner, Brian Mulroney/Kim Campbell, Jean Chrétien/John Turner, and (hallelujah!) Stephen Harper.

It could happen to PM Trudeau II. Perhaps it should: Maybe term limits are a good thing, whether legislated, as in the U.S., or because they have become the natural way of the modern political world, as may be the case in Canada.

One thing is clear (or at least we can hope it is): Canadians have demonstrated, through the last half-century, that, in spite of (or because of) their magnificent perversity in diversity (or their diversity in perversity), they can and will "throw the bums out," if the bums go too far.

We're not near that stage yet. If we are vigilant, we might enjoy a generous few years of good government, before the rot begins. And if/when that happens, we know what to do and how to do it. In the meantime, let's talk style points, as that's all we have to work with so far. Substance will follow in due course. (We trust.) I'm happy to award high marks for style, so far.

If he has done nothing else, and if he does nothing else of substance to celebrate in the future, Justin Trudeau deserves our gratitude for restoring an atmosphere of civility to public behaviour and discourse in Canada. By ensuring that he, his cabinet colleagues, and government bureaucrats and experts are more generously and responsively available to the media and Canadians generally than was the case under Stephen Harper he has turned a page on an era of confrontation, obstructionism, manipulation, distortion, and avoidance that demeaned the Harpites and ultimately diminished us all. In so doing, he has set an example.

Trudeau II seems to have learned well the lesson taught him and one of his brothers by their father when, as smart-ass youngsters, they bad-mouthed one

of Trudeau I's political opponents while lunching with Dad in the parliamentary cafeteria. Trudeau I, as his son recounts the story, lectured the boys sternly about respecting one's opponents and took them for a sheepish, shame-faced introduction to the target of their ill-considered wisecracks.

Trudeau II seemed to have forgotten that lesson four years ago, before he became leader, when he called Harper's then-environment minister Peter Kent a "piece of shit" in the House, during Question Period. I and others applauded him for that: he was reacting to a false and fatuously provocative claim by Kent that NDP environment critic Megan Leslie had chosen not attend a climate change summit in Durban, South Africa—after he had denied her and other opposition members the opportunity by refusing to accredit them.

But I and others like me do not have the aspiration or responsibility of leading the country; those who do must be made of sterner stuff. Trudeau II proved his mettle and an ability to avoid overreacting by refusing to respond to the many aggressively provocative attacks launched his way by the HarperCons, the NDP, and many in the media during the election campaign.

That strength not to respond to provocateurs pushing his buttons—whether it amounts to turning the other cheek or keeping his (and our) eye on the greater prize—is, perhaps the most admirable thing about Trudeau II during the campaign and the first two months in leadership.

Nowhere was that better demonstrated than in his responses to ISIS- and/or Al-Qaida-sponsored or -supported terror atrocities in Sinai, Beirut, Paris, and Bamako, Mali. He offered obligatory and sincere condolences, expressions of regret and commitments on the behalf of all Canadians to combat terrorism at home and, as appropriate, abroad. He did not, as his predecessor undoubtedly would have, resort to terror-mongering, sabre-rattling, and generic bellicose rhetoric designed

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A First Take on Trudeau

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more to impress his political base at home than to strike genuine fear in the hearts of jihadists everywhere. And he did not renege on his commitments to end Canada's participation in a futile air war against ISIS in Syria and to accept 25,000 Syrian refugees by year end.

I'm not an expert in military strategy, but it seems to me obvious that, in so-called "asymmetrical conflict"—where a few dozens or or hundreds of modestly equipped, but highly motivated and creatively flexible, guerrillas/terrorists take on huge conventional military forces armed to the teeth with the latest technology—the preferred, and too often successful, strategy is extreme provocation: to use limited resources, often including suicidal agents, to cause damage and death—sometimes on a large scale (as in 9/11 or some of the Paris attacks) but often involving no deaths other than to the suicidal actors themselves (as in the three suicide bombings at the Stade de France, in Paris, where only one bystander died).

The strategy seems not so much to maximize death and destruction, though that can be an obviously tactically desirable side benefit, but to maximize the amount of anger, fear, and outrage—basically terror in all its forms—such actions can provoke. In guerrilla wars, the goal is often to draw the stronger combatants away from secure positions where they can be ambushed and in the long term demoralized (as was at least partly the case in Vietnam). In terrorist wars the object remains to demoralize

the stronger power, but less by drawing it into ambush and more by turning it against itself: by enticing it to seek, find or create, and attack perceived enemies within itself in a self-defeating betrayal of its own standards and aspirations.

The strategy aims to destroy with a thousand small cuts either way; but the modern terrorist hopes the deepest cuts will be self-inflicted.

We see it happening in the U.S., where political candidates, members of congress, state governors, and their media cheerleaders have turned—and seem to be trying to persuade supporters to turn—on Syrians refugees, in particular, and all Muslims, whatever their stripe, in general. Donald Trump and Ben Carson have claimed personally to have seen Muslims celebrating after 9/11, as they campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. President Obama has rattled a few obligatory sabres, though he obviously realizes he has few options, short of all-out war on the ground, which he clearly (and rightly) does not want.

European leaders, with U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron in the front rank, have also overreacted verbally, if not yet militarily. President Hollande is a special case; he responded, as he had to, strongly and urgently to real threats at home, but he may not have achieved much, beyond homage to the gods of revenge, by ramping up France's bombing attacks on ISIS in Syria.

Justin Trudeau has, so far, been one of the few Western leaders who has kept their cool under political and ideological fire. He has not risen to the baited remarks and challenges tossed out by critics at home,

just as he did not overreact to the bait tossed out by terrorists with their recent spate of atrocities. So far.

That "so far" the big "but..." in this early look at the performance of our new government. We seem to be on the way to getting our Canada and our pride back—at least to the extent that the Trudeau Liberals have restored civil discourse and dialed back the terror-mongering, Muslim-bashing, and opponent-baiting rhetoric of the Harper Conservatives. I applaud and thank them for that. But I want more. Our new government has made some overdue moves and said some reassuring things about the needs and aspirations of Canada's First Nations and Aboriginal citizens, but others before them, including Liberals, have talked a good game and failed to walk it. I'll be watching them on that.

I worry too about economic matters, including trade (and the Trans-Pacific Partnership). Trudeau II talked much about supporting the middle class during his campaign and hardly at all about the poor and working poor who, I believe, substantially outnumber (and outneed) the middle class and the one percent in Canada. Income disparity is as starkly real and growing in Canada as in many other countries, and I fear that, at heart, the Liberal party still is, or aspires to be, at the centre of Canada's establishment. So, while I find much to celebrate in the early days of our new political era, I will stand on guard to make sure the new government—and the new parliament—live up to their promise. And promises.

MLA dies in traffic incident on Highway 2

By Allan Sheppard

Manmeet Bhullar was human services minister who rescinded a ban on publishing names of children who died in provincial care

Manmeet Bhullar, Calgary-Greenwood MLA (Progressive Conservative) and former Alberta government cabinet minister, died November 23, 2015, after being involved in a weather-related traffic incident on Highway 2, north of Red Deer. He had stopped

to help a driver whose car had rolled over into the median and was struck by an out-of-control vehicle as he crossed the highway.

Bhullar, 35, served in the cabinets of premiers Alison Redford and Jim Prentice.

ASN readers will remember him as minister of human services in 2014 when he helped rewrite legislation that had placed an automatic and absolute ban on releasing the names

of children who died in the care of the province.

As a result of the ban, parents and families had not been able to express their concerns or grief, if a child died in foster or group-home care.

"For those that feel that they have been wronged and their child has died as a result, they have an inherent right to speak up about that," Bhullar said at the time, as reported on line at CBCnews Edmonton.

You are somebody's Angel

By Sharon Hample

Alberta Street News is filled with so much interesting information about the life of street people. As a regular reader of the Street News, I've learned so much.

As a person who has a job, and a home, and plenty of food; it's so easy to not see the street people. We get so caught up in our comfortable little world that, really, we either don't see the street people or, sadly, we choose to not see them.

Then..... I bought my first Street News paper. I didn't read it. I just cast it aside with all my other garbage. Then I bought another. And another. Then I actually read one and was hooked on the information and different views and experiences of those invisible human beings I hadn't paid attention to before.

Reading the Street News made these people come alive and real for me. The most relevant message was that the street people had problems with feeling valued or feeling they had a purpose.

Well, here's one person who has learned to look at the less fortunate in a totally different way than she once did.

What I am about to tell you may, at first, seem offensive. But please keep in mind; these were the thoughts of one of the ignorant privileged.

Here are two true angel stories that came from my personal experiences with the underprivileged.

After one very busy day at work I was driving home focusing on all the IMPORTANT stuff I needed to do. And I wanted to get home as quickly as possible, because my life was very big and important. My office was on 117th. and Jasper Ave. My home was in Riverdale. Well, I'd get on 104 Ave. going east and boot it home so I could make supper for my family. If the lights were all green, I could make it

home in about 10 – 15 Minutes.

For some reason, that I can't remember, I made it a personal challenge to try and make it home as fast as I could accompanied by the occasional speeding ticket.

One day the lights were with me. YES. Here we go-----99th street, 98th street, 97th Street-----man I was HOT!!! Then---- on 96th Street, I still had the green light and as I was speeding towards the intersection, this slow, wobbling, "drunken Indian" weaves across the intersection against the RED light!!!! I HAD to slow down!! I wasn't going to make my perfect run!! As I slowed down a car whizzed through the intersection against the red light!!! If I hadn't slowed down for that "drunken Indian" I would have been hit. Broad side. On the driver's side. At the speed that car was going, I would have been killed or very seriously injured.

Suddenly my eyes were opened and I no longer saw a derelict person, but rather; an ANGEL. That man saved my life.

This summer I had another encounter with an angel. I was driving the best car I've ever had in my life. I loved that car. I washed it, and babied it. And took such good care of it. That car was my pride and joy. One day I was driving by the High Level Bridge just about to turn North on 110th when this drugged up street person



comes speeding out from a bike path right in front of me. I just about hit him!! Then he stays, pedalling his bike as fast as he can, right in front of me.

We both turned North on 110th with him in front of me trying to outrun my car. With cars parked on both sides the street was very narrow. He continued to weave in front of me. I got so annoyed. I honked, once, at him and he pulled off to the side. I silently thanked him but as I drove past him, HE KEYED MY CAR!!!! The whole length of it; from the front fender all the way to the back. He was angry and strong so the gouge was deep. I was SO mad, and LIVID, and crestfallen.

I wondered, to myself "What the hell???"

It would cost me \$8,000 to repaint my baby because the paint was pearlized. I could never afford to repaint it.

God has been slowly and gracefully working in my life. I say slowly because I think it takes so much to get through to me. He is so patient. It finally came to me. The light came on!! I was too attached to my car. I was putting too much value on material things. I needed to learn surrender. Now I drive around in a car with a battle scar to remind me to be humble.

These have been such important lessons to me. And it took another angel to wake me up and show me them. Now when I see street people I don't see the downtrodden or the underprivileged or the addict. I see God's messenger. An angel. So MY message to anyone who feels unworthy or without purposeplease know that you are somebody's angel just because you are alive.

I smile each time I see a street person because I now see my brothers and sisters.

Thank you. God don't make no junk.

“Krampuslaufen - The Unexplored Side of Christmas.”

By Shaun Giroux

December is a wonderful month as Christmas is just around the corner. People are rushing about collecting gifts and stuffing their faces from the many parties in celebration of the upcoming day.

We (as Canadians) have all heard the Christmas story of the birth of Jesus Christ the saviour. We know about the three wise men bringing gold frankincense and myrrh as gifts. They followed a bright star that showed them the way to a manger where Jesus lay.

We all know about the jolly fat man called Santa Claus; how he has a list that he checks twice to find out who is naughty or nice. He flies around the world in a flying sled with Rudolph the reindeer at its head. Santa brings all the good boys and girls presents by breaking into their houses and leaving presents under the tree. But to those poor kids who have been naughty he leaves a lump of coal.

Many years have I left him milk and

cookies, going to sleep with the anticipation of the wonderful toys he would bring me. None more memorable was the year he brought me the Millennium Falcon!

But this year on December 5th, the eve of St. Nicholas Day, an eastern, centuries old Christmas tradition has found its way here to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada once again - Krampuslaufen. This is a night where the counterpart to the kindly St. Nicholas comes out to play – Krampus. He is hairy, usually brown or black, and has the cloven hooves and horns of a goat. His long-pointed tongue lolls out. St. Nicholas is responsible for the good and Krampus is responsible for the bad. He seeks out naughty children, swatting them with switches and rusty chains before dragging them away in baskets never too been seen again. Or he leaves a rod or twig in their shoes to be found the next day in place of a gift from Saint Nic. He is a creature of fear to threaten boys and girls into being good or Krampus will get you.

For years, Krampus was suppressed by the Catholic Church, which forbade raucous celebrations in the creature's name. During World War II, Europe's fascists deplored Krampus as a creation of the Social Democrats. But the creature is making a comeback in his homeland. Austrian retailers are attempting to soften Krampus's persona by selling chocolates, figurines, and collectible horns. National Geographic has published a book in German about the Christmas beast.

In Austria, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic, many people celebrate Krampusnacht dressing as the creature, and taking over the streets in huge parades. They chase, taunt and roar at adoring fans that line the streets as we would here for the K-days parade. They array themselves in real fur costumes with huge bells attached to their backs. Their faces are covered by hand crafted wooden painted masks that instill fear to those who look upon them. Smoke fills



Photo by Robert Dugaj

the air from huge fire or fireworks as huge sleds are drawn through the streets. In amongst all this chaos Saint Nicolas and his angels calmly walk the street greeting people.

Here in Alberta "Krampus Nacht Edmonton" is working hard to bring Krampus back into the hearts and minds of holiday revellers. Krampus Nacht Edmonton was founded in the spring of 2012 and with months of planning they celebrated the first Krampuslaufen night in fall of the same year. They took to the streets of Edmonton with 10 furry creatures and St. Nicholas marauding down Whyte Ave., followed by a handful of photographers and a handler. It was a very successful first outing and has grown over the years holding well over 20 members of all ages and sexes. Krampus Nacht Edmonton is one of the most hard core groups in the world as they have no fear as to what the temperature is outside. They celebrated Krampuslaufen 2013 with the temperature hovering around -28 with wind chills well below -30.

Krampus Nacht Edmonton has made appearances at other events such as the "All is Bright" festival, the Snow King Masque parade in Golden and a winter festival on 118th Ave. They are fun loving group that is willing to come out to almost every event they get invited to, bringing the joy/fear of Krampus and educating the

public about who they are.

"With December 5th 2015 falling on a Saturday we are hoping to have a few events during the day before our traditional evening Lauf. There are also two Hollywood movies coming out this fall which should help bring Krampus more into the public's eye," says Robb Eggertson one of the original founding members, "Our goal is to make this part of Edmonton's winter festivals and to continue to grow the group. We are dedicated to growing the group carefully with interested members that are serious about having good costumes. Our founding and current members work hard at their costumes and the results show their efforts! We also want to stay true to the concept and ensure that the intensity of the characters do not get watered down or tamed; part of the allure of the Krampus creatures is the exciting and sometimes scary actions of the furry devils!"

Some may find Krampuslaufen strange but all you need to do is look and you will find that many cultures have their own Christmas monsters.

"JÓLAKÖTTURINN" The Yule Cat is a huge and vicious cat said to lurk about the snowy countryside during Christmas time and eat people who have not received any new clothes to wear before Christmas Eve. **"Frau Perchta"** is a white-robed female

spirit that is said to roam the countryside at midwinter, and to enter homes between the twelve days before Christmas. If you are good, she would give you a reward. If not, she would slit your bellies open.

"Belsnickel" is a man wearing furs and sometimes a mask with a long tongue, carrying a switch to frighten children and candy to reward them for good behaviour.

"Hans Trapp" is an evil counterpart to Santa who visits young children before Christmas, dressed as a scarecrow, to scare them into good behaviour, beating those who are bad.

"Père Fouettard" is a man with a sinister face dressed in dark robes with scraggly unkempt hair and a long beard. He is armed with either a whip, a large stick, or with bundles of switches. He is St. Nicholas' servant whose job it is to dispense punishment to bad children on St. Nicholas Day.

"Zwarte Piet" better known as "Black Peter", is Santa's helper who will punish you at Christmastime if you're not good.

The 13 Jólasveinar/Yule Lads " come to town to scare children into being good, stealing things and causing trouble during the last 13 nights before Christmas. These Icelandic trolls answer to

GRÝLA a mythical giantess.

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Photo by Justine Wondga

2015 Salvos Prelorentzos Peace Award honours two recipients for 2015

At the annual Project Ploughshares Salvos Prelorentzos Peace Award ceremony on Thursday, November 5, at Edmonton's City Hall, the award was presented to Soraya Zaki Hafez and Richard Awid.

Soraya is President of the Edmonton Chapter of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women. She developed curriculum for the Arabic-English program in Edmonton Public Schools, and taught Arabic for EPS. She is a member of the Arab-Jewish Women's Peace Coalition

and was very involved in moving Al Rashid, Canada's oldest mosque, to Fort Edmonton.

Richard is a retired teacher, author of "Through the eyes of the son: A factual history about Canadian Arabs" for the Arabic Language Advisory Council Society of Edmonton. He is a volunteer guide at the mosque at Fort Edmonton, and an amateur historian. He is on the boards of the Phoenix Multifaith Society and the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation.

Cecily Mills received the Project Ploughshares Lifetime Achievement Award. She is a long-time human rights advocate in Edmonton and globally, a familiar face at many peace-related events, a writer of articles about human rights, and regularly travels to other countries and reports back on her observations.

The keynote talk was by Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Professor of Political Science at University of Alberta. Her research interests centre on Canadian and comparative dimensions of ethnic and gender politics; nationalism, glo-

balization and processes of racialization; immigration policies and politics; surveillance and border control; and citizenship theory. She is Vice-President of the Canadian Political Science Association. Her funded research from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) includes a project addressing the United Nations and world conferences against racism and racial discrimination.

Nasra Adem, Edmonton's 2014 Poetry Slam Champion, who competed at the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word and recently placed first at a slam held at the legendary Nuyorican Poets Cafe in New York City, performed.

Project Ploughshares has presented the award annually since 1996 to recognize people and organizations that have contributed locally to peace and human rights.

Past recipients have included Camp Firefly, Paula Kirman, Patti Hartnagel, Michael Kalmanovich and Earth's General Store, Michael Phair, Change for Children, and Women in Black.



Photo by Sean Gordoni

Krampus - continued from page 7

She has the ability to detect children who are misbehaving year-round. During Christmas time, she comes from the mountains to search nearby towns for her meal.

Many of our Christmas traditions have origins in pre-Christmas festivals that were celebrated by pagan populations, who were later converted to Christianity. Is it any wonder that new traditions are finding their way over here to Canada? Not at all. Even Our fat and jolly Santa with the red suit and cap, thick black belt, sooty boots, rosy cheeks, luminous eyes and brighter-than-white teeth is the product of a genius advertising campaign created by Coca-Cola in the 1930s. But does this make Christmas any less a joyful time? Not at all. MERRY CHRISTMAS ALL AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT and remember to be good or Krampus may just pay you a visit.

Novenas

Nine Hour Novena

"Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it will be opened to you" Dear Lord, I ask, I seek, I knock and request that my petition be granted.

Repeat every hour for nine hours. J.M.

Novena

St. Jude – May the Special Heart of Jesus be Adored and Glorified, Loved and Preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus pray for us now and forever. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, helper of the hopeless, pray for us.

Say this prayer nine times per day for nine days, publish on the eighth or ninth day and your prayer will be answered. J.M.



Christmas – Bah- Humbug

By Joanne Bengner

1. You get your dates mixed up and go to the free Christmas dinner a day late.
2. You cook a fantastic turkey dinner, then discover your guests are vegans.
3. You are a large but everyone gives you size small presents.
4. Your e-card vanishes before you figure out who it is from.
5. You get a paper cut from your one real Christmas card.
6. Visitors feed your dog and your cat and they both spend a day throwing up on the carpet.
7. You get gifts you don't want from people you don't like and have to spend money you don't have to repay them.
8. You get four week-long visitors you barely know.
9. You lose your new mittens somewhere.
10. You get a tongue stud and your tongue is not pierced.
11. You lose a tooth chewing toffee and you have no dental coverage.
12. You drink too much spiked punch before the police man with the breathalyser stops you.
13. The oven stops working so you have to boil the turkey you got from the food bank.
14. You join in the carols with so much gusto your teeth fall out.
15. You go Christmas shopping and get caught up in a protest march.
16. You pass out and wake up engaged to a stranger.
17. The batteries aren't included.
18. You buy a tasteless gift on sale for someone you don't like and get two of them from other people.
19. Your fantastic light display blows the fuse.
20. Someone suggests you wear your lovely new pullover to an ugly sweater party.
21. You are alone under the mistletoe.
22. The furnace stops working so you freeze as you watch the fire log on TV.
23. You get three re-gifts you remember giving last year.
24. You read a list of suggestions on what to get the impossible to buy for, and realize it lists what you have received.
25. Visitors plug the toilet and the plumber can't come for two days.
26. The box says easy to assemble, but you can't put it together so you call the 800 number for help and are put on hold for three hours.



Christmas For All

By Sharon Spencer

Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a savior has been born to you; he is Christ the lord.

Well the Christmas season is nearly upon us. Hurray! Once more we will scrimp and save borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, all for that one 24 hour period that is cloaked in perfection by the media that drums away at us from the end of Halloween till Christmas Day telling us what the newest gadgets are, and how joyful our family's will be if under the tree they find these gifts. In the pursuit of capturing elation for a small period of time we almost drive



ourselves crazy, racking up bills that last long after the festivities are over, wearing ourselves out running to and fro hastily through crowded malls and shops. We are worried and stressed out at the dreaded thought of not meeting a loved one's expectations, of not being able to capture that excitement, joy and sparkle

in their eyes as seen on the TV. Concerts, parties and festivities leave us worn out long before the blessed day arrives, usually leaving parents too exhausted to enjoy that holy day. How much thought is given to the One for whom we celebrate, Precious Jesus King of Kings, Lord of Lords, who left the palaces of glory to be born in a dirty barn, far removed from the glamorous presentation of today. If Jesus came today I have to wonder would he be acknowledged or welcomed into your Christmas. The very

word means Christ mass, certainly not happy holidays that you hear from non christians, who try to leave Christ out of Christmas. They want the fun without acknowledging the reason for the season. How empty and sad. When the frantic holidays are over, with a sigh of relief, we put away all the ornaments and trimmings for another year .

Not everyone gets to enjoy this distortion of Christmas. Open your eyes and look around you. You won't have to look very far to see someone who dreads the very thought of Christmas. It, for them, is one of the loneliest times of the year. There are more suicides at Christmas than any other day of the year. What about the single parent who relies on food banks to take up the slack. Or the elderly, who have been forgotten by life and live in memories of what used to be. Or the homeless shunned by society that wonder if they will get a mat on a floor that night. Loneliness and hopelessness come in all sorts of packages. Look around you.

But in Luke 2 :10 the angel were announcing the first Christmas saying that Christ was born bringing with him great joy for all people, none excluded. At this Christmas, please carry the spirit of Christ in your heart and extend his love to those, who are the hurting and wounded or forgotten at Christmas. Invite them home, visit them, share what you have with them. In doing this find the true joy of Christmas in sharing the saviour's love.

Look around

The Pasta Diet

You walk pasta da bakery, pasta da candy store, pasta da fridge, and you will lose weight. Author unknown

Kindness is a language the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

Fame is fleeting - anonymous

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2. Get a subscription to ASN - for \$45 a year the paper will be mailed out.

3. Become a patron - make a commitment to donate monthly to help with production costs.

All money raised will go towards production costs for Alberta Street News and for vendor events.

**Contact Linda Dumont at 780-428-0805
dumontlc@hotmail.com**

My family were refugees

By Peter Hans Schultz

Our concern for refugees has motivated this article. I have mum's Journal in a pocket notebook in front of me. Emmy Schultz, then Adam, left Polen on August 24, 1943.

They butchered a pig and made a lot of sausages. She, her siblings and parents listened to the ranting of Hitler on the radio. He declared Danzig and other parts of Poland to belong to Germany, to give it direct access to the Ocean. Danzig used to be a "Free City". Shortly thereafter all German radios were confiscated.

Mum and her family could hear the canons from afar and watched fighter planes drop bombs, followed by loud booms. Mum said it looked like geese dropping eggs. They were terrified but knew that, according to Ro-

mans 8: 28 in the Bible, nothing could hurt them without God's permission. God was always central in our family. He was the head of our family, as real as anyone. Every morning and evening we read something from the Bible, talked to God, sang songs about Him, and talked to Him, like a child talks to their father.

Mum says they felt as if everyone had deserted them. They hid in a vegetable cellar, watching through cracks in the wall. Suddenly they noticed that their youngest sibling, Kurt was missing. Later they found him hiding in an outhouse.

Later when we went to Schoensee a few soldiers asked us where we had come from. When we answered: "Heinrichsberg, Lipienice" he accompanied us because they were picking

up a prisoner from there. Our family feared Polish gangs that were all over, resenting that Germans were some of their properties etc.. A Polish man told mum to call on him if any marauding gangs molested them. He then went to a neighbour, slaughtered a pig, distributing it to those in need.

That's how our refugee crises started. I will continue the story in the January issue.

Most refugees that came to Canada were like ourselves: honest, hard working and treated their neighbour as themselves, like Christ taught.

Please do the same for future refugees.



Peter's family from left to right: Emmy Schultz, Martha Zander, Otto Adam, Elizabeth Wieser, Kurt Adam, and Trudy Wollin. Photo courtesy of Emily Schultz

PERSONAL MEDICINE

The Wellness Network

Story and photo by

Karen Peterson

How does a mental health and/or addictions consumer access programs? In Edmonton, The Wellness Network (WN) has the answer to that question.

Accessible through their website, www.wellnessnetworkedmonton.com, by telephone, 780-488-0851, or in person at 10025-106 Street, WN provides individuals and families with “options to help achieve optimal wellness.”

Hospital day programs are no longer considered best practice, said Sherry Stasiuk, Peer Navigator. WN was conceived after focus groups addressed the issue of recovery based care. The Support Network and Addictions and Mental Health, Alberta Health Services, partnered and the website and physical location of WN were established in January of 2014. The mission of WN is “Connecting people through self-directed exploration to enhance and maintain optimal wellness.”

“We empower people to make choices,” Stasiuk said.

WN focuses on seven dimensions of wellness: emotional, financial, social/cultural, spiritual, career/academic, physical and environmental. The “wellness wheel” “increases awareness of what area to work on.” Programs may fall under more than one dimension of the “wellness wheel.” There are 55 programs from partner organizations, all of which are non-referral, low barrier access. Partners include the Canadian Mental Health Asso-

ciation, E4C, Community Linking, Momentum Counselling, the Pride Centre and Immigrant Women’s Integration Network (I-WIN), among others.

When a client visits the WN site, which is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, they are greeted by a Peer Navigator. A Peer Navigator is someone with a lived experience of mental illness who has completed Mental Health First Aid, the 18-hour self-management Wellness Recovery Action Plan training, and has developed an action plan to maintain their wellness. There are two permanent and two casual peer support workers at WN.

Stasiuk says she begins a meeting with a client by introducing herself and telling a bit of her personal journey. “We share our own

experiences in the wellness journey to help make a difference in other people’s lives,” she explained. “We can offer hope, compassion and understanding of the difficulties people have in accessing different services to help their health.”

She then listens to the client’s story to find out what they are looking for.

Clients are encouraged to complete the Wellness Quiz, which is also available on the WN website. The Peer Navigator then helps the client look for services according to where they live, and what area of the wellness wheel they want to work on. The number of visits to the office is steadily increasing.

**Below: Sherry Stasiuk
Peer Navigator for the
Wellness Network**





Writers from The Wellness Network share their stories

Continued from page 12

The website is comprehensive, including the wellness quiz, a calendar of program scheduling, blogs by peer navigators, and the option to subscribe to the WN newsletter.

WN is a valuable resource for “anyone looking to enhance their own wellness or looking for options for someone,” which would include individuals dealing with their own mental health and/or addiction concerns, family members, friends, care providers, etc., Stasiuk continued.

WN holds an open house the first and third Wednesdays of the month, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Contact the office if you would like to book a presentation, or if your organization would like to be a partner.

Back Alleys

by Lisa Anderson

I wake up and wonder
will I eat today
my stomach is growling

I leave my place
and walk
walk the back alleys

I see a man
in an apron
throwing out egg shells

I breathe in
that's my breakfast
I keep walking

I rest for a while
on a wooden bench
and then walk again

Another back alley
I see a woman
in an apron
throwing out burgers

I breathe in
that's my lunch
I keep walking

I go home
and sleep for a while
It's dark out

**“What we do is
our purpose ...
that is why we
are here”**

By Michelle Black



I am here because of the path that lies behind me. Finding out that from my struggles, I have found my strengths - the strengths that have brought me to where I am today.

A realization that my passion is to help others to realize their full potential - to find out what their gifts and talents are, and to use them wholeheartedly.

A realization that life is what we make it and finding that balance is a skill, constantly learning about myself and the challenges I face. Taking one step at a time, enjoying each and every moment that life has to offer!!!

I walk the back alley
I see a man
in an apron
throwing out steaks

I breathe in
that's my dinner
I go home to go to bed

Another story on page 14



A story from the Wellness Network - Halloween

By Lanky

Here we are! Post Halloween. I haven't heard of anyone being poisoned, drugged, murdered or razor bladed in an apple. You heard of anything?

Why do we have Halloween anyway? Are we Celts, fending off demons? There are no ghosts as far as I am concerned, wandering between earth, heaven and hell. There are only demons and their customarily agreed leader, Lucifer. Why do we have to scare off demons, anyway? Doesn't God promise to protect those who love him? Is popularizing Halloween really worth it to us? Or to someone else? Are we demanding it? Buying it?

Selling it? Is it worth weeks of fighting over candy with your kids? Checking apples for razor blades and then throwing them away anyway? They could be injected with anything.

Meanwhile, we're all dressing up as wanna be's, idolizing celebrities. Celebrating fantasy heroes that don't exist, all fantasy. Wearing scary masks, devils outfits, skeletons. And for what? A trip for one child to the dentist or the doctor for a razor cut. Or a trip to the morgue for someone else.

I am not surprised that Halloween is still around like Christmas and Santa Clause. Another lie. Another fantasy. We do it for the kids, we cry. Did you think that some of these kids and all of us adults, have real skeletons

in the closet, real fears we don't know of. Maybe some of those kids at Halloween feel the same. We keep the real skeletons in the closet and dress our kids up accordingly, to their wishes.

I think that Halloween should be rearranged or renamed or repurposed. What if Christians everywhere were not to participate in this Celtic festival and give all the money that would be used for candy, costumes, decorations and the like to that ranch for the sexually abused kids, the YMCA or the Hope Mission. Take a family outing to the Hope to make a donation with the kids.

As you can tell, knowing the difference, I don't do Halloween.

The Gift

By Linda Dumont

Tim came to visit. Late one afternoon, there he was at the back door. I've known him for over 20 years, and much of that time he was homeless, often busking, singing and playing the guitar, or occasionally selling papers. Then he vanished for five years.

He told me he was living in Vancouver now, and just in Edmonton for a few weeks until the next cheque day. He had found himself a good place to sleep, but he needed a warm blanket.

I invited him in for a cup of coffee,

found an old pink quilt, and gave him some spending money. He was soon on his way with the quilt in an Ikea bag.

A few days later Tim was back. This time he brought me a gift package with a small bag of Van Houtte coffee and a Van Houtte cup and saucer that he had won at Bingo at the seniors drop in where he had supper. I made him a cup of coffee, and drank mine from the new cup and saucer. He still had his quilt with him.

Sometimes, he left his quilt in the back yard during the day time so he

wouldn't have to carry it around.

I saw Tim once more before he went back to Vancouver. This time he came to say "Good-bye" and he told me he had given the quilt to another homeless person who needed it.

Now, when I use the Van Houtte cup and saucer, I always think of Tim somewhere on the streets of Vancouver.

Mission

Edmonton Street News Society provides a voice, employment and social support to those who need these, and communicates perspectives dealing with poverty and social justice, by education and communication activities, including publishing a street newspaper

Values/Beliefs/Guiding Principles

We believe in being inclusive and encouraging
 We believe that human rights are fundamental to living together
 We believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to earn and control their money
 We believe in journalistic and organizational professionalism and integrity
 We believe the public needs to know about issues around poverty and social justice
 We value community and connecting with others
 We value passion and determination
 We believe everyone deserves the opportunity to learn, develop and use communication skills

A Time to Remember

By Linda Roan

As the darkness began to creep over the city, more and more people entered Churchill Square. The fire barrel drew many of us to stand close together, the warmth taking the chill from our hands. We moved apart to make room for others to share the warmth. Children enjoyed looking through small air vents on the sides of the fire barrel through which they could see the red coals burning. Sparks flew up around us as more logs were added to the fire. As the music played, Mayor Iverson arrived and began to address the crowd. The crowd had swelled to fill the square and everyone seemed to be talking at once. The sound of their voices drowned out the music and the speech that Mayor Iverson was giving.

"I can't hear, I can't hear," I began to complain. We never heard another thing from the stage. Santa's arrival seemed to take forever, but after several shouts from the children, he appeared straight

from the North Pole. The time for lighting of the Christmas tree had come. As with one voice, we joined in the count down for the lighting of the tree.

The first of the mass of glittering lights drew an exclamation of delight from the crowd. Fireworks popped and crackled and lit the sky, while masses of colours surrounded us. If ever there was a time of feeling of community, it was at that moment. I realized what a trivial thing it was that we couldn't hear the music and speeches from the stage. Instead, we said, "Thank you Mayor Iverson, for keeping our taxes down. Thank you for not adding more expenditures to this delightful evening." How easy it is to complain instead of being thankful for the work that was put into creating a wonderful evening for family and friends to share.

Thank you to those who made this community event possible. Thank you for making A time to Remember.

Food Bank Use in Edmonton up 23%

The Hunger Count 2015 report from Food Banks Canada looked at food bank use in March compared to the same period a year earlier. "In March 2015, 852,137 people received food from a food bank in Canada. More than one-third of those helped were children," the report said.

In Alberta, food banks served nearly 68,000 people, a record-setting number, said Stephanie Rigby, executive director of Alberta Food Banks, which represents 66 food banks across Alberta. A third of food bank clients are working but can't make ends meet, Rigby said.

"The bleak numbers are worse now than they were in March, thanks largely to an economic downturn that has led to layoffs across Alberta," she said.

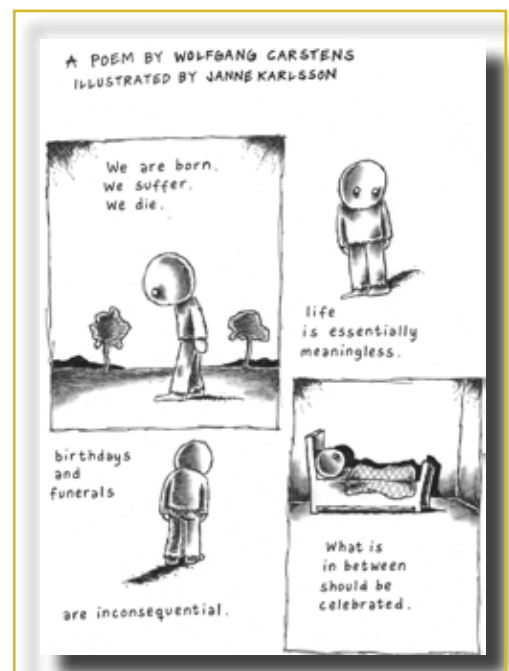
"Our food banks have reported continued increases since then," said Rigby. "In Alberta, the 23 per cent continues to grow. The two major food banks, in both Edmonton and Calgary, have reported at least 20 per cent increases in October, and it's been pretty consistent throughout this year."

Thriving

By Ryan Robertson

The sands
Of time
Are running out
On another year –
To some it
Was taken
In stride
To others
In fear....
They couldn't ride –
Especially now
We must think
Of those without –
For in these
Trying times

It could be
The well to do
To take a bout
We are all in it together
And we will survive
For we have a drive
Which makes
Us thrive.



Living in a State of Emotional Detachment



By Maria B.

Abused children come from all paths of life, although most abused children, who are reported to authorities come from families where there is high mobility, a lack of education, loneliness, poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing or social isolation, alcohol and drug abuse. Damaged parents create children with emotional and psychological effects.

All forms of abuse are likely to result in emotional problems for the child, in particular, a lack of self esteem and distrust of adults. The longer the abuse goes on, the more serious are the effects. Abused and neglected children are more likely than other children to be self destructive or aggressive, to abuse drugs and/or alcohol, or become young offenders or "street kids". In some situations abuse and neglect may result in permanent physical damage.

With physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect, boys are somewhat more at risk than girls. However there are more girls sexually abused than boys. Abuse may be directed at only one child in

the family. Children can be abused at any age. Many adolescents are victims of child abuse and neglect. Sometimes abuse commences during adolescence as parents may experience difficulties in dealing with the adolescent's behavior and desire for independence.

For children, parents or caregivers are the primary source of safety, security, love, understanding, nurturance and support. Therefore when children are abused by parents or caregivers, the trust at the core of a child's relationship and trust is violated in such a way that children will have a very hard time trusting others. The psychological impact of abuse on a child depends on a range of factors, including: the type of abuse, the severity of abuse, the relationship of the child to the abuser/s, the child's family environment and their relationship with their parents.

The impact of child abuse does not end when the abuse stops and the long-term effects can interfere with day-to-day functioning. To a person a conflict situation is reminiscent of the original threatening, hostile conflict situation in our family of origin, the situation that prompted our psychological solution of emotional detachment in the first place. If we expect that a person, who has been abused, suddenly would be able to open just like a flower opens to the sun, unfortunately this is not going to happen. We are how we are as a result of conditioning through a dysfunctional upbringing. Those old feeling of helplessness in a hostile world resurfaces, especially when strong negative emotions are being hurled our way, and our reaction is to burrow even more deeply

into our shell, not to suddenly burst out of it.

Remember that appearances are deceptive; what's going on under the surface for the person that has been abused is not the same as what you see; we become emotionally detached. It's uncomfortable anxiety that's bubbling up under there and the detachment is a way to get relief from it, a strategy that has been successful for the abused person so many times in the past. With the detachment some people develop a condition that is called "learned helplessness" The person has developed this condition as a way of reacting to situations that they feel are stressful, uncomfortable or difficult and very fearful to deal with. Learned helplessness is a perception of having no control over a situation and being powerless to finding a solution that can change our position. This sense of feeling helpless often leads to developing a victim role, fuels feelings of anxiety and is considered to be a significant contributor to depression.

Learned helplessness is a fairly common behavior seen in abusive relationships. The abused individual believes that they are powerless to change their lives. Children do not have the inner resources to stand up for themselves. When someone feels as though they have no control, the feeling comes from a perception and perceptions are formed as a result of sensory input from our experiences in the world. The truth is that there is no such thing as reality, only perceptions. **WE MUST TAKE CONTROL OF OUR LIFE, HEAL OUR INNER WOUNDS AND REGAIN OUR PERSONAL POWER.**

Rob's Corner



By Robert Champion

Yes, it's almost that time of year

Where did the year go? It went by so quickly! The Christmas season is almost upon us. It is the time of year to put aside your

grudges, your fighting and arguing with family and friends. It is that time of peace and joy, of getting together with family and friends, not to spend mega dollars on presents.

Rob's Say for the Day

Have a Merry Christmas and a Great New year. All the very best! |PS. Thank you for your continued support of the Alberta Street News.

2015 to 2016 – What's on my mind?

Looking forward to my 65th birthday coming up this January 24th. Don't feel my age. Feel more like mid 40's to early 50's. Looking to a good showing by the Calgary Flames, meeting and making new friends.

Hoping for a mild winter, and praying. Maybe look out and find a girlfriend or she finds me!

Joy, Joy – it's Here Again!

Over crowded parking lots, people dashing through the over crowded malls looking for that special gift for that special someone. Long line ups at the check out counters. Last minute shoppers in total panic mode. Joy, Joy, it's that time of year again!

Last Say of the Day

Do not judge your age by the number of years but by the number of friends you have.



Celebrate Peace **By Ryan Robertson**

The time
Has come
To celebrate
The birth
Of a saviour –
The one
Who takes
Sin away
And gives
Us hope
And teaches
Us to
Love one another –
Where every sister

Has a corresponding
brother
And together
They dream
Of peace
In a world
Where actual
forgiveness
Is on stream.....

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Helen's Last Gift



By Sharon Austin

There are some Christmas decorations that I would never part with; the animated Santa and Rudolph that stand on top of the fridge and the beautiful angel that graces the top of my tree. They bring back memories of a dear friend and the Christmas tradition that the whole family remembers with fondness. So many years have passed and so many things have changed but we always think of Helen at Christmas time. I first heard about Helen in the tiny store that catered to the campers that came in the summer. "Did you hear," the storekeeper's wife said excitedly, "There's an old widow woman that moved into the camp by the river. They say she's a witch and they ran her out of Lesleyville. The teenagers would throw rocks at her house and she'd chase them with her broom. They even tried to trap her cats and poison her well." Ruby always knew all the gossip.

"She just wants a safe place for her animals," her husband said more kindly. "She's got lots of cats and a couple of dogs."

"If she likes animals she's probably really nice," I said. I liked to make up my own mind about people. Besides, I had four cats and two dogs of my own.

I met Helen about a week later when I went up to visit her with a still

warm banana bread. She eyed me distrustfully from behind her screen door; a small thin woman with long grey hair and sharp features. As I patted her dogs and welcomed her to the neighbourhood, she soon realized I meant her no harm. As we talked about our dogs and cats and other things I realized we had a lot in common; we were both quiet people that liked country living and avoided crowds. We shared a deep abiding faith in God and we both liked to

read and watch Star Wars. Over the next few weeks we became friends and I invited her for Christmas dinner.

"Will there be lots of people there or just your family," she questioned. I always had a big Christmas gathering with my husband's parents and his brothers and their families. "I'm not good with people," she said "so I won't be able to come, but don't worry about me. My old friend Ed is coming over and I've got some hamburger for dinner."

When I told the family, we all agreed that no one was going to eat hamburger for Christmas, while we had a big feast not a mile away. I cooked a small turkey, and put together a Christmas dinner with stuffing and containers of mashed potatoes, vegetables, gravy, a couple of pies, and cookies decorated by the children. On Christmas Eve we set out through the softly falling snow pulling the Christmas feast behind us on a red plastic sled. As we neared Helen's house we all began to sing "Good King Wencesles" as we tramped through the snow. She couldn't believe her eyes as we all came caroling up to the door.

"You did all this for me," she said in shocked surprise. My youngest son Johnny had made a Santa with moveable arms and legs in his grade

one class and he gave it to Helen. She looked at it for a long time and told him that she would put it up every year and she did. She had a gift for our family too, a smiling animated Santa that moved its arms back and forth.

Bringing Christmas to Helen became a treasured family tradition over the next fifteen years. She became to us a kind and loving aunt that shared the milestones of our life. She braved her fear of crowds to be there for my daughters graduation and my son's piano recital. She cried with me when my youngest son moved out to B.C. to find work. "I'll never see Johnny again," she said as if she knew her time was short. She hadn't been well for a few months and I noticed that her complexion looked gray. Her old friend Ed had moved in to the camp a few years before and I was glad she wasn't alone.

That last Christmas Eve Ed drove her over and she came struggling up the stairs with a gift wrapped in a Canadian Tire bag. It was a beautiful tree top angel with golden hair and snowy white feather wings. I put the angel right up in place of the gold Christmas star that sparkled at the top of the tree and I knew in my heart that this would be Helen's last Christmas. Three months later Helen was gone. She had preplanned her whole funeral and had even hired mourners to sit in the front pew mourning for her. She needn't have bothered, though, there were enough real tears flowing that day.

A few years later, Ed's health began to fail and he decided to move to his brother's place where he would have running water and heat. He came with a small box of Christmas decorations and handed them to me. "Helen would want you to have these," he said. "She knew how you loved Christmas." Inside were old-fashioned decorations like the ones that had been on my tree when I was a little girl; long before we had electricity. At the bottom of the box I found every Christmas card that

Cruelty



By Angelique Branston

I sell papers almost every Saturday at the Old Strathcona Farmers Market, where they graciously allow me to sell inside year round, saving me from the ravages of cold weather. While selling, during lulls between talking with one person and talking with the next, sometimes up to one hour apart, I have an opportunity to observe people. Just as some people enjoy the passtime of watching wildlife, I watch the people who come to shop at the

farmers market. Many of the people I see are with friends and family, others are alone, but most look happy. A few seem to have the weight of the world on their shoulders.

Recently I sat, horrified, as I watched a middle aged man in the midst of buying produce, reach out and pat a stooped over, half-blind man. The homeless man jumped and looked around demanding in a terrified voice that the person attacking him show himself. The man told him he must be imagining things. The homeless man mumbled something, his voice garbled from almost losing all of his voice due to illness and from exposure to the elements.

At first I thought the middle aged man was scared of the homeless man and simply trying to evade him. Then I saw him make a snide remark to the ragged, obviously unkempt person, and turn to the middle aged woman beside him, poke his elbow against her arm, and laugh. Her mouth slid open in a malicious manner and she laughed as well.

The person selling the produce reminded them of the transactions

they were in the process of making so their attention was drawn away from the sick man. He came up to me, and talked for a bit, then bought his papers. He held his money out and asked if it was enough for the amount of papers he wanted because he could not tell what denomination the bills were. I wished him well as he went towards the doors to sell his papers.

The homeless man has a coveted outside spot. His figure was bent over and his gait was more like a shuffle. I cannot understand why the man doing his shopping chose to be so cruel. The whole scene reminded me of school, where anyone who was too different was picked on, and the cruelty spread like a disease from one person to the next. Luckily for most people they mature beyond such behaviours as they learn to accept others as they are, knowing the differences are not something to be feared. A disadvantaged person is seen as someone who needs some kind of help and compassion.

Though the incident was brief, I am glad to say that it was the first time I have seen anyone over the age of 17 years old behave that way, as well as the first time ever at the farmers

Helen's last Gift

Continued from page 22

I had given Helen tied up with thin red ribbon and little Johnny's Santa carefully laid out between two sheets of tissue paper. I had thought that the beautiful Christmas angel had been Helen's last gift to me but as I held the box and memories of all the Christmases past flooded my mind I realized that this was her last and best gift. She had treasured our family as if we were her own.

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The Liberal Party of Canada: Hope over gloom?

By Timothy Wild

Looking at history, it is clear that the Liberal Party of Canada is generally “forward thinking” and “progressive” at two particular times.

The first is when they are in opposition or in imminent danger of losing power. Then they are vocal in what they would do to regain or retain their mantle as the, so-called, “natural party” of government. For example, even though the Liberals had been in office since 1993, it was during the elections of 2004 and 2006 that the Liberals really highlighted their long ignored Red Book promise to develop and implement a comprehensive and national childcare strategy. However, prior to that, whilst solidly entrenched in office, and when they had the opportunity to implement such a plan and provide more choices for Canadian families, they didn't do it.

The second time they break free of their natural (and historically proven) conservative shackles is when they are in a minority position. Much of the progressive Liberal legislation occurred when they required support of other parties to either obtain or maintain greater power. Look, for example, at the need of William Lyon Mackenzie King to garner the support of Labour and Progressive MPs in the mid-1920s. This resulted in the implementation of the first significant of pension legislation in Canada, with the introduction of the Old Age Pensions Act (1927). The same was true in the 1960s with Lester Pearson and advances in

both Medicare and the creation of the Canada / Quebec Pension Plans (C/QPP). Finally, when the Pierre Trudeau Liberals found themselves in a minority position in the early 1970s, they were beholden to the support of David Lewis and the NDP, and introduced legislation that reflected a desire for more national control of both our economy and collective resources.

But when the Liberals are in government, in a majority position, then things change. They unabashedly tow the predictable and visionless pro-business ideological line. There are a number of examples of this, but one that readily springs to mind is the Chretien-Martin “reforms” to Unemployment Insurance in the 1990s. Not only did these changes make it more difficult for people to obtain support from a contributory insurance program, it also allowed the federal Liberal government the opportunity to allocate the putative surplus funds of this contributory insurance program to deficit reduction.

When the Liberals are in government, in a majority position, then things change.

In many ways, this is the logical result of old fashioned, first past the post, electoral politics. If a party has the numbers in the House of Commons, regardless of the actual percentage of votes, they can do what they want. I can certainly see why parties who win under this anachronistic system don't actually

want to change it. After all, some see governing as a zero-sum game, with the winner taking all rather than providing an opportunity to develop a collective vision of a just, humane and inclusive society. But, surely, we deserve more? Yes we do. Yet, as a student of history and politics, I am a bit worried.

Still, there could be opportunities for change. Perhaps the past is not necessarily a good predictor of the future? The recent massive victory of the Liberals, under Justin Trudeau, and their attainment of majority status, marks an opportunity for the Party to go against their history and use that status to usher in a golden era of inclusion, electoral reform and social justice.

Such action is sorely needed, especially after the long, cold and divisive days of the Harper government. We need a comprehensive, national anti-poverty strategy. The federal government needs to invest in social housing and municipal infrastructure. We should honour both the promise and premise of Kyoto, and be authentically open to the possibilities of Paris. We must also introduce proportional representation to ensure the growth of democracy in our country. The long form census needs to be brought back so that we can have a better picture of what's happening to whom in our country so we can develop and implement effective and efficient public policy. And, perhaps, most importantly, we must redesign our social, economic and cultural relationship with our indigenous fellow citizens.

Continued on page 21

Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre

Nearly 2,600 people call Edmonton streets home. Edmonton's inner city is overcrowded with the transient and homeless. Facilities to support the needs of this community have become stretched to their limits with inner city streets becoming increasingly dangerous. As a result, the poor and homeless gravitate to the Jasper Place area on Stony Plain Road to escape the stress which accompanies increasingly riskier inner city life.

To meet this need, businessman, Murray Soroka, created the Jasper Place Drop in Society realizing his vision for a reinvigorated Jasper Place community. In consultation with community leaders and volunteers he set goals to

1. bring a comprehensive social services solution to the Jasper Place Community through voluntary programs and partnerships with other agencies;
2. offer a safe, warm, caring environment to the homeless and indigent;
3. provide the homeless with a convenient temporary shelter from the elements that is accessible daily and in emergency situations;
4. promote God-centered relationships with guidance from the Christian community;
5. provide the homeless with an opportunity to change their lifestyle; and
6. Provide shelter and services at minimum cost to the community.

The Jasper Place Health and Well-

ness Center (JPHAWC) was founded in 2006 in response to the needs that were brought forward by the community. The JPHAWC is a community-based, community-driven, non-profit agency that endeavors to be an asset to the community.

The first goal at JPHAWC is to build community through relationships. At 4,000 sq ft, the center itself provides showers, laundry services, access to computers with internet, legal advice, food, storage, and medical services, all for free.

Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre is open from Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

A noon meal is served Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and some times on Thursday.

From November 1st until April 30, the warming centre at JPHAWC is open daily from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, and from 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. They will be closed on Christmas Day and on New Years Eve.

They have winter coats to give out to those who need coats.

About 80 people come for the lunch each day, and a total of about 100 people use the centre daily.

Paying It Forward, A Slice At A Time

Papa John's Pizza in Saint John, New Brunswick has found a great way to help feed the hungry. Patrons at Papa John's can pay three dollars to provide a meal ticket for someone in need. The yellow hasty notes are posted on a bulletin board and anyone who is hungry and strapped for cash can take a note and exchange it for a big slice of pizza, a bread stick and a fountain drink. Anyone can come and get a meal, there are no questions asked. The bulletin board is always crowded with notes as the people of Saint John have a reputation for being kind and generous. When the board gets too full the donated pizza is given to local schools that have a lunch program for children in need. Let's hope this kindness catches on!

The Liberal Party of Canada - continued from page 20

With their massive majority, the Liberal Party of Canada can become a transformative government that broadens the circle of participation and, in the words of former British Labour MP Roy Hattersley, provides an equal start and an open road. But for this to happen, they will have to fight their historical regression towards fiscal and

programmatic conservatism. We voted against that package when the country overwhelmingly rejected Stephen Harper. Hopefully, the Liberals will recognize this and act accordingly.

My friend in Ottawa was out for dinner recently, and he told me that a local Liberal restaurateur-politico asked him "Do you feel like

hope has triumphed over gloom?" He was guarded in his response and responded with a typical and non-committal "I don't know". For myself, given the history of the Liberals in office, I am not so sure either but for the time being I am staying guardedly optimistic. But only for a short time!

I influenced St. Albert City Council

to implement a mobile vendor test pilot project

Story by John Zapantis

Photo by Theresa Walsh Cooke

I managed to influence a mobile vendor test pilot project in the City of St. Albert and am still waiting to hear back from St. Albert City Council about ASN's rights to vend in that city

I set out to send a letter to St. Albert Mayor Nolan Crouse asking him if I could get a permit to sell Alberta Street News in the City of St. Albert. Months later The mayor replied to my letter of request and suggested that I appear live on Shaw Cable to give a five minute presentation on St. Albert Council Minutes at St. Albert Place city council chambers on July 3, 2012. Here is a transcript of my presentation to Mayor Nolan Crouse and city council. To view that recorded video presentation of me talking to St. Albert Mayor Nolan Crouse and members of St. Albert City Council, google John Zapantis video, then click it, then go to Alberta Street News John Zapantis and click that to activate the video.

After that rather controversial presentation to St. Albert City Council suggesting to Mayor Nolan Crouse that he introduce an All-Inclusive Vendor's Bylaw to permit all vendors to vend on the various street corners of the City of St. Albert, two years and six months later I was finally notified in a letter by St. Albert Deputy Mayor Tim Osborne dated Feb 4, 2015, who emphasized that I was invited to attend an open house for vendors. The letter of reply was entitled, all in large case block letters, RESIDENTS INVITED TO OPEN HOUSE TO LEARN ABOUT DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR MOBILE VENDORS

The letter threw me off for a minute because there was no mention of the letter mentioning anything having to do with amending guidelines for newspaper vendors, which created some real worries and some apprehension on my part. In spite of the confusion in trying to make that distinction, I attended the open house to represent our paper to see what our chances of sharing this pie would entail. The open house was held on February 11, 2015 at the St. Albert Business Centre from 4:30 to 7 p.m. in the City of St. Albert. I, along with two facilitators accompanied by several business people, were in

attendance seated in a small conference room inside the St. Albert Business Centre. Sheets of paper were handed to us by a facilitator, who wanted ideas for effective vending so that the committee in charge of amending guidelines for vending, could eventually draft them out for an upcoming mobile vendor test pilot project that would be scheduled to take place for a six month period from May 1st to October 31 of 2015.

I would soon find out that our paper, along with other types of vendors, was left out of the process, when I read an article in the St. Albert Gazette dated Wednesday March 25, 2015 by Viola Pruss entitled "Trucks can now park in the city, compete over few spaces."

Well, after reading that article, Mayor Nolan Crouse hit a raw nerve with me, when he quoted Gazette writer Viola Pruss in that interview with the not so living happily ever after ending, to close the interview about other vendors left out of the process. I quote Crouse as saying, "I was expecting to see something that dealt with windshield repair and flags and towels and Taber corn, he said. "I just felt disappointed when I read this."

Well, again you can imagine, I was shocked by the claims of the mayor, since there was absolutely no mention of Alberta Street News being left out of the process. With all that in mind I decided to do a little soul searching and investigating on my own. The irony of it all was that I was the one who came up with the concept of the "All Inclusive Vendor's Bylaw" and the Mayor and city council left our paper out of the process, while running with my idea to give territory to mobile vendors, who all went out there to give it their best while participating in the six month mobile vendor test pilot project from May 1st to October 31st in 2015,

I wasn't about to go down in defeat, I kept telling myself, so I decided some time in August of 2015 that I'd call the Mayor's office to once again appear on Council minutes televised on Shaw Cable TV (live). I wanted to find out why I wasn't included in the process with the rest of those vendors, who participated in that mobile vendors test pilot project. When I contacted the Mayor's office in person, a secretary greeted me and my

request to appear. I was told I would be appearing on Shaw Cable TV scheduled for October 26, 2015 at St. Albert Place in council chambers on the show's council minutes, where you can see me appearing in front of Mayor Nolan Crouse and city councillors Cam MacKay, Cathy Heron, Bob Russell, Tim Osborne, Wes Brodhead and Sheena Hughes.

Just before appearing on live television to stick the questions to the Mayor and his councillors, a month before I made that symbolic appearance, my girl friend Theresa Walsh Cooke, gave me some psychological coaching on the do's and don'ts for a more effective presentation. Oh yes, not to take any credit away from my girlfriend, when it came to my civilized presentation, I should give her credit for that wonderful five point system that she gave me - a run down on what not to do, followed by a three-piece suit makeover to add to my appearance.

Like a boxing coach in a boxer's corner, giving a serious rundown to her boxer in the final round, Theresa persistently hammered out the details in simple point form. Walsh Cooke said, "1) Smile when you get up there. 2) Talk slowly so they can understand what you are saying, not fast like you did in that bout you had with them the first time when you appeared on TV, 3) Be polite and not aggressive. 4) Be direct. Tell them what you want. 5) Wear a suit and look like them - last time you looked like an outsider, wearing that black leather coat!"

The day finally arrived and thanks to that woman's touch, with an over night change of attitude, I appeared in front of Mayor Nolan Crouse and members of St. Albert City Council to give my second presentation on vending and to ask why our paper was left out of the process when Mayor Nolan Crouse's committee drafted out guidelines for a test pilot that only include mobile vendors.

That day was October 26, 2015. I appeared on Council Minutes aired live on Shaw Cable Television inside council chambers for 2 p.m.

Here is that transcript of my presentation to the Mayor and members of St. Albert City council.

St. Albert Mayor Nolan Crouse starts with the introduction after welcoming me

aboard. "Mr. Zapantis, you have five minutes and please go ahead and thank you and, oh, we do have your Alberta Street News in front of us."

Alberta Street News Media Relations Coordinator John Zapantis, "Thanks for acknowledging that I do appreciate the time and effort you've put into this. Now first of all, Honourable Mayor Nolan Crouse, St. Albert City Council, I just want to summarize one thing in particular, my relationship with Honourable Mayor Nolan Crouse, when I first met him at the MS Society Walk and Run, or Run and Walk. Of course I have to put that in concise order. Initially he was there making a keynote presentation at the MS Walk and declared it MS Month. When you stepped off the stage, I approached you and I asked you if I could have a permit to sell the Alberta Street News, because I had told you at the same time, prior to asking for that permit, that I was covering the MS Walk on behalf of the newspaper and that I openly emphasized to you that I would put you into the story, which I did. I reached my objective of getting it out to the readers. I'm talking the whole story in particular, as well as yourself, just to clarify further. You kept your side of the bargain. You told me, "Come and see me in my office."

So I went to see Chris Belke, your Chief Legislative Officer, and he told me to appear on Council Minutes. Initially that took place months later on July 3, 2012. I gave a brief presentation and I did it in 2.36 timing, half of what was required. I asked you if I could introduce an All-Inclusive Vendor's Bylaw, permitting all vendors to sell their products in the city of St. Albert.

You openly acknowledged that you would conduct an open house later, which you did. In that open house there was a facilitator present taking ideas from various members of the St. Albert and Edmonton business community, who came forward and gave out their ideas about how they would like to see effective vending and how they would like to see guidelines implemented. So with that in turn, months later you had this uh, mobile vendor test pilot project that you had conducted and uh, only mobile vendors were allowed to be part of the process and you singled out the other vendors, such as the corn man, the flagman and the newspaper vendor, myself John Zapantis, that represents



Alberta Street News as the Media Relations Coordinator, writer and vendor. We write on relevant social issues that concern people living on the margins. So, so far, so good, with the City of St. Albert. We've kept our side of the bargain. Now my question to you is, now that you've amended guidelines, or you've appointed a committee, sorry about that, you appointed a committee to amend guidelines to allow mobile vendors to vend in parks, what about the rest of the vendors that you left out, which you emphasized in another article in the St. Albert Gazette interviewed by Viola Pruss? You had mentioned that regretfully the committee had left out the flagman and the glass man, but you never mentioned the newspaper man, me, and left me out of the process. You had your regrets about that, but your intentions were good, because you appointed a committee and you did make that effort and I commend you whole-heartedly. So I'd like to know, because I spoke to Cheryl Wong, your licence inspector, and I asked her, "Now that we've been left out of the process, will they re-consider another test pilot project?"

She said you guys will have another mobile vendor test pilot project in the following year, which would be in February 2016. Will we be included in the process and I'd like to know when? And when and if when that does happen, will you grant me a permit to sell on the street corner of St. Anne's, because I don't feel we should be assessed that way? I feel we should be given that permit, because it is public land and not private land and we're not competing with rival newspapers like the Journal or the Sun. We're just a micro dot compared to those giants. So I don't think there should be a fear factor at play here. So what's your take on this?"

Mayor Nolan Crouse, "Thank you very much Mr. Zapantis. Uh, just give us a few minutes. We'll also ask our staff some questions. Anybody have some questions for Mr. Zapantis?"

Okay, we have no questions at this point.

John Zapantis: No questions?

Mayor Nolan Crouse: No not right now, thank you. Anybody have any questions for administration business arising from the presentation? Uh, Councillor Osborne, Go ahead."

During the next three minutes of Council Minutes, the camera panned over to Guy Boston Executive Director Economic Development, who commented to some extent about my concerns with having the committee clarify to the listeners where all vendors would stand on the guidelines implemented for vending on private and public lands in St. Albert. St. Albert Councillor Tim Osborne joined in on the debate openly challenging Guy Boston on the policies of vending on private lands, while taking a stand on my behalf as the video transcript continues again.

Councillor Tim Osborne: "Thank you. I'm not sure if the question would be maybe for Mr. Boston. I think the mobile information came forwards from your department. I know that when we were first talking about this we had talked about the possibility of whether this would include newspaper vendors and others and ultimately what came forwards was specific to food trucks. So I'm just wondering, maybe you could provide us with an update, kind of the next steps."

Guy Boston Executive Director Ecopilot: That was brought forwards to council. We indicated that we would be coming back with the results of that pilot in cue of next year and recommendations for moving forwards on the full spectrum of vendors. So this vendor situation would be in consideration of the report that would be coming forward and how we would move forwards with that.

Councillor Tim Osborne, "Thank you for that. I'm just wanting to make sure that I'm understanding correctly, our current legislation as well. So my understanding is that uh, while we can't do business, licensing on public property at this point beyond the pilot, an individual vendor can seek out to sell their goods on private property.

Continued in the January, 2016 issue



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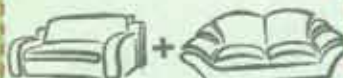
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