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Vendor Bill Cunningham - photo by Kaitlyn Carter

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On Being Canadian and First Nations

By Linda Dumont

I wasn't born into a First Nations family - my father was a Danish immigrant, and my mother's parents were Ukrainian immigrants but according to the government of Canada, I am also a treaty Indian as are my children.

Because I married my first husband before 1985 when Bill C-31 was passed, when he discovered his biological mother, who had full treaty rights, the whole family became instant Indians. She is from the Swan River band at Kinuso.

Before Bill C-31, Aboriginal women with treaty status lost their status if they married men without status, and women who were non treaty as well as children born from that union were granted treaty status through the marriage. Some native women did not marry but lived common law to retain status for themselves and their children.

Bill C-31 changed that. Since then, women with treaty status no longer lose it if they marry non treaty men, and women no longer are granted treaty status if they marry men with it. Children of those unions are no longer full treaty Indians, but have C-31 status, and their children, unless they marry a full treaty spouse, will have no status. The irony is that while many saw the bill as righting a wrong, in effect it will completely wipe out treaty status in a few more generations since the only way for children to have full treaty status will be if both parents have it.

I remarried in 1989 to a non status husband, but because I was already a treaty Indian according to the government, due to the passage of Bill C-31, I have retained that treaty status. My two grandsons both have Bill C-31 status.

I really wasn't sure how I felt about being a treaty Indian but once I studied native communications at Grant McEwan college, and later attended the Truth and Reconciliation conference here in Edmonton, I realized that through marriage I had taken on all of the residual problems of the residential school survivors. My children's grandmother is a residential school survivor, and my ex-husband was part of the child welfare sweep. Once the government realized the residential schools were not 'taking the Indian from the child', they tried another method - placing the children into white foster homes. He was raised in foster care with Caucasian parents.

Recently I sat down with my son to work on an application for a grant from the Canadian Council for the Arts for Aboriginal people. He happily told me he can hire me as an Aboriginal artist to create posters and other illustrations for the project.



THE VIEWS PRESENTED ARE THOSE OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

Canada at 150: Hold the applause and demand better

By Allan Sheppard

Halfway through my eightieth year, I no longer think often or avidly about the future. Nor do I think much about the past. I try to live in the moment, as much as my remaining faculties and resources (including friends and family members) can support or tolerate. I'll make an exception for Canada's sesquicentennial, to acknowledge this, the first month of Canada's second 150 years, and look forward to our national bicentennial in 2067.

In my mind—and in the minds of many Canadians of my generation—the high point of a long life occurred in 1967, the year of our centennial. Perhaps I should say, occurred as 1967, for the entire year was a series of highlights. The highest light of all was Expo 67, in Montreal. Although I lived in Toronto then, work enabled me to spend many weekends and some weeks on site and in Montreal's downtown, which blossomed and thrived through it all.

Now recognized by many participants and observers as the most successful world's fair ever, Expo's theme was *Man and His World*. Cringeworthy though it may seem in more rhetorically equitable times, that theme pointed to a departure from the usual international expositions that preceded and followed it: Expo 67 was about people, more than technology. And, as things worked out, it was more about peoples—peoples of the world—than about a people. I have long argued that, more than any single thing, event, or act, Expo 67 opened Canadian eyes, minds, and hearts to the benefits and possibilities of multiculturalism. It certainly did for me.

If I recall the background correctly, Expo was conceived by Montreal's visionary mayor, Jean Drapeau, as a manifestation of Quebec's (and Canada's) French fact: as a demonstration of the achievements and possibilities of Canada and Canadians as a

bilingual and bicultural country and a bilingual and bicultural people. It became more than that.

Intended as a showcase for Canada and Canadians to the world, Expo met and exceeded expectations. What was not expected, yet was achieved magnificently, was the extent to which the fair became a showcase for the world to Canadians, many of whom (like me at the time) had ventured only tentatively, if at all, beyond our provincial and national borders.

Not only did other countries surprise, enlighten, and captivate us with their exhibits (the spectacular Czech pavilion standing out among many), visitors from those countries rubbed shoulders with us and each other in ways that few had experienced in the same ways or to the same giddy extent before.

The tangible, palpable slices and glimpses life in and encounters with people from countries we only knew from reading about them or from framed images in movies and on television were invigorating and inspiring: unforgettable for me and, I know, for many others.

For the first time, many of us learned that difference could be something to embrace and celebrate, not to fear and deny: we could be happily united and enriched in diversity, not divided by it. Expo was our first taste of the benefits of cosmopolitanism, and we wanted more. We became more open to diversity and difference, more hospitable to visitors and immigrants from places that had once seemed outlandish and unacceptable.

We are better for having had the experience, as individuals and as a country. Not every Canadian agreed or agrees, and there been many bumps along our road toward an inclusive, multicultural society—now becoming also more multinational, multigenerational, multigendered, and multifaceted in many other ways—but we have made progress and, I trust, will

continue to do so.

With such happy and positive memories of Expo 67, Canada's centennial, and their outcome, I looked forward to 2017 and opportunities to open new horizons for Canada's one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary. It was wasted effort.

I have realized through the years, especially since the rejection of the Kelowna Accord by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his government and in the light of the so far disappointing reaction (long on rhetoric, short on action or, even more tellingly, on vision) of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his government to the release of the report of Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its 94 Calls for Action, that Canada would waste an opportunity in sesquicentennial activities and celebrations: an opportunity to assert Canada's Indigenous fact, undertaken in similar ways and with similar generosity and goodwill shown to Canada's French fact in and through Expo 67. All we have seen is a damp squib, embarrassing in its lack of vision or self-awareness; inflated with self-regard and self-righteousness: look at us, appreciate how clever we are to have survived. Just don't look behind the curtain at how we got here.

I will sit on my hands to acknowledge Canada 150, in sympathy and solidarity with Canada's Indigenous peoples—First Nations (with treaties and without), Inuit, Metis—and to protest the inaction, paternalism, and outright hostility that still too often characterize our attitudes toward and relations with the first peoples of our land. They are every bit as multicultural, as themselves and as Canadians, and every bit as entitled to recognition and acceptance as the rest of us—the myriad and diverse immigrants and descendants that all of us are and have been since 1867.

The map of Canada that we

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Happy Birthday Canada

by Sharon Austin



Happy 150th Birthday to Canada! I am planning to plant 150 more daffodils and tulip bulbs in assorted colors in my flower garden to commemorate the occasion. I like to think of their shining beauty gracing warm spring days long after I am gone. Time goes so fast, especially as we get older. I still remember celebrating Canada's 100th birthday so well as it was also the year that I graduated from high school.

How things have changed since then! Imagine our class with no computers, cell phones, or video games. My family did not have running water or indoor plumbing and our phone was a party line that we shared with 20 other people. Our ring was long-short-short-short-short-long and no one stayed on the phone very long. We purchased our first television, a black and white box TV with rabbit ears when I was 15. It had two channels and Dad and I loved to watch Bonanza together every Sunday night.

My class had started out with about 30 kids in grade nine but in those days a lot of the boys were just waiting until they were old enough to quit school and go to work on the farms or get a job. Some of the girls, too, quit school in grade nine or ten to start working. By the time we got to grade 12,

there were only 13 of us left in class. Some of the kids joked that 13 was an unlucky number and they hoped that someone would transfer in. About mid-year one of the girls quit school to get married. We all walked down to the big Catholic church in that little one horse town to watch the ceremony. She was only 17 and barely five feet tall and I remember thinking she looked like a fairy princess in her billowy gown with a long veil floating out behind her. Even the saints seemed to be smiling down on their union as the bright sun streamed in the beautiful stained glass windows. Her smiling groom looked scared to death as they crossed the threshold from childhood to married life. It was rumoured that she was "in the family way" and back then people took responsibility for their actions. We were all so happy for her, for in those days every story ended with marriage and happy -ever-after.

Not two months later we all marched down to that church again through a howling snowstorm, but this time in shock and sorrow. One of our classmates, beautiful tall Pauline who aspired to be a nurse, had been killed in a car accident along with her boyfriend. It was a real shock to all of us as we had somehow thought that

death was only for the old, like my 83 year old grandma who passed away when I was six. I remember staring at her in the shiny oak coffin, looking for all the world like she would wake up any moment. She was dressed in a beautiful white lace wedding gown and veil, as that was the custom back then, that a young girl who never married would be buried in a wedding gown. A bouquet of deep red roses lay in her still white hands and a single string of pearls glowed softly at her throat.

There were no grief counsellors in those days so we all dealt with her loss in our own way. I remember staring at her desk, as she sat right in front of me, and thinking that her desk was somehow waiting for her return. After about a week someone took the desk away and that seemed even worse as it seemed so final.

So, we were down to eleven graduates, five boys and six girls. My dress cost \$15.00 from Army and Navy, and my shoes came from Eaton's catalog for \$3.99; a far cry from what they spend now-a-days. All of our dresses were similar; floor length with empire waists and all were pastel colors. Although we were so few, the school went all out with a lovely banquet and graduation ceremonies. I was chosen to give the thank-you speech to the parents and I remember looking down at my mom, so pretty in her pale pink dress and hat and my dad looking so proud with his big smile.

I'm glad she didn't know that one short year later he would be gone and our world would turn upside down. I wish I would have kept that speech. I was the only girl that went on to university and I became a teacher like my sisters before me. I guess I thought it was expected of me to be a teacher but it was the wrong choice for me. Being quiet, gentle and soft spoken, I did not enjoy teaching and I only taught for one year. After a few awful years of substitute teaching, I found a job

Canada at 150 - continued from page 3

display with pride in 2017 is not the map of our country in 1867. That map comprised Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and narrow strips of territory on both sides of the St. Lawrence River and along the shores of the Canadian Great Lakes. The map that accompanies this essay shows just how minuscule and (yes) insignificant Canada was then. It also demonstrates, for anyone whose mind is open enough to acknowledge and accept the reality, that the map that Canada has become is largely and dramatically the result (excepting the addition of Newfoundland and Labrador in 1959, which was more a merger of colonial entities) of colonial expansion—more accurately, appropriation and exploitation. Yes, I know, the alternative, absorption into the Manifest-Destiny driven embrace of the United States, could have been—probably would have been—worse for the Indigenous peoples in the lands that became our Canada. But the lesser of two colonial evils is still colonialism, more appropriately acknowledged in humility than superiority.

Deniers who reject suggestions

that our Canada is the product of colonialism need only meditate on the maps of our country circa 1867 and 2017 to open their minds to expansionist reality so obvious that only ingrates will not see it. There are many of those; I hope not too many.

Having wasted an opportunity to recognize Canada's Indigenous fact for our sesquicentennial, what next? I might call on the federal government to initiate and fund for our bicentennial a dramatic, visionary activity or event inspired by Expo 67 to showcase our nation's Indigenous fact, perhaps somehow embracing all the world's Indigenous peoples, and to open settler societies up to the strengths of and opportunities in their (our) neglected and op-

pressed Indigenous brothers and sisters, as Expo 67 introduced us to the French fact—and international cultures—during our centennial.

That would be wasted effort. Vision is not a quality possessed or pursued by political leaders today. As an alternative, I look to Canada's Indigenous peoples themselves to envision and produce an event or events that might achieve for them and other Indigenous peoples what Expo 67 achieved for Canadians. I won't live to see it. But I can still hope.



Happy Birthday Canada

Continued from page 4

I enjoyed, working with children with mental and physical disabilities. In that job it was an asset to be quiet, patient and compassionate. To any new graduate I would say know who you really are before you choose a career. What might be right for others may not be right for you.

The most important thing I learned from my centennial graduation class is that that life is a beautiful journey that can end at any time. Remember the quote "How we spend our days is how we spend our life." Someday you too will be looking back 50 years and wondering where the time went.

Happy Birthday Canada, may you always be the wonderful blessed country you are today!

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Why I am Canadian

By Joanne Bengert

Sir Clifford Sifton was Canada's minister of the interior from 1896 to 1905. He felt the best immigrants would come from the harsher climates of central and eastern Europe and he described the perfect immigrant as "a stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations with a stout wife and a half-dozen children."

My illiterate Ukrainian grandparents met these requirements. They got new sheepskin coats and sailed to Canada in 1905. Not counting those who died as infants, they had a half dozen children, three born in the Ukraine and three born in Canada. Five reached adulthood. My mother was the youngest child.

Dad was the fourth son of a Danish dairy farmer. He came to Canada in 1927. Earlier his Uncle Jens had emigrated to the U.S. where he was a farmer in Montana. Dad and his brother Christian wanted to join their Uncle, but they did not meet the US immigration standards. Then they applied to come to Canada. Canada accepted Dad but refused Christian for health reasons. He had a partially paralyzed face like our former prime minister, Jean Chrétien.



Happy 150th birthday, Canada

By Joanne Bengert

1. When Canada was being named in 1867, the acronym "Tupona" was considered. It stood for The United Provinces of North America.
2. There are 663 official place names that contain the word "Moose" in Canada. Move over Moose Jaw.
3. The word "moose" comes from the Cree word, moosoa, which means stripper of leaves.
4. Canada has more rivers and lakes than any other country in the world. Canada is 8,29% covered by water, of which 755,165 square kilometres are lakes and rivers.
5. Canada is 3,851,787 square miles big. This makes it the largest country in North America. Move over U.S.A.
6. We Canadians work well with others. We happily share the world's largest group of lakes, the Great lakes, with the U.S.A.
7. Both Alberta and Saskatchewan are the only provinces that do not touch on salt water.
8. Prince Edward Island is smaller than Vancouver island. Size doesn't matter.
9. Explorer David Thompson discovered the foot prints of Bigfoot in the Rockies in 1811.
10. The Salish Indians call the bigfoot Sasquatch, which means "wild man of the woods".
11. The zipper was invented by Gideon Sundback, a Swedish-born Canadian in 1900. He called it a Separable Fastener.
12. Joseph Armand Bombardier patented the snow-mobile in 1937. He called it an Auto Neige.
13. John J. McLaughlin, a Toronto druggist, invented Canada Dry Pale Ginger Ale in 1905.
14. Frederick Banting was the First Canadian to win the Nobel Prize for treating Diabetes with insulin in 1922.

Invisible City Tours

Take a guided walk through Edmonton's inner city to see where the shelters and organizations are that serve the homeless. You may also see homeless people with shelters erected from tarps and shopping carts or just sleeping under a blanket.

Cost: \$10 per person or a minimum charge of \$40 for fewer than four persons.

Call Linda to arrange a time for your tour.

780-428-0805 or email Linda at dumontlc@hotmail.com

Some Canadian Thoughts

By Joanne Benger

1. Most of us who were born in Canada are not natives of Canada.
2. We have Air Canada and the Canada goose sharing our sky.
3. The CPP – Canada Pension Plan – is why we have so many crotchety poor people.
4. We have two railways in Canada – the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific – competing for the most derailments.
5. The Queen of Canada lives in England.
6. The Canadian clipper brings dreaded, feared and expected weather.
7. The Canadarm is why the space race was won.
8. We are the only country in the world that has Canadian Tire money.
9. Canada produced the two Justins – Justin B entertains, Justin T. is our prime minister.
10. Canadian bacon is world famous.

On May 15, 1930, the first airline hostesses boarded planes with the following set of instructions:

1. Keep the clock and the altimeter wound up.
2. Carry a railroad timetable in case the plane is grounded.
3. Warn passengers against throwing cigars and cigarettes out the windows.
4. Keep an eye on passengers when they go to the lavatory to be sure they don't go out the emergency exit.

All About Sin

By Preacher Joe

In Mark 17:21 we have a list of seven deadly sins – evil thoughts and acts of fornication, theft, murder, adultery, ruthless greed and malice. The song says, “Brother, they can't put you in jail for what you're thinking.”

But I say, “Brothers and sisters and friends, beware, evil thoughts will put you on the Express Train to Hell.”

Remember the Sunday school song:

“Four little rabbits in the fields of corn

Jealously, envy, malice and scorn

Dig them out, get them gone,

All those little rabbits in the fields of corn.”

Malice is “ill will” or the desire to harm others”, and brothers and sisters and friends, beware for malice will put you on the Express Train to Hell.

Just as I am

By Angelique Branstion

Sometimes because selling the paper is very front line work, I have people, who I am sure genuinely mean to be helpful to me, give random advice for me to sift through. Some of it is not worth thinking about let alone writing.

A few weeks ago now one such person told me that I should live my life as an example to others. I smiled politely and nodded my head. The more I thought about it, the more flawed that logic is. In the autobiographies I have read, not one of them made decisions about living as an example to others. Whether it was Churchill or Alexander the Great, Moses, or Aristotle, they chose to live their lives regardless

of what others thought about them.

I think because of this the world has chosen to remember them.

This brings to mind for me an old parable my mom used to tell me when I was a child ;

There once lived an old man with a young boy and together they tended to their farm work . As they journeyed back and forth to the fields with their donkey they passed people. One looked at them leading the donkey and told them they were being silly - they should let the donkey carry them to work. So that is what they did. The next person shook his head when he saw the man and the boy riding the donkey, and said they were working the donkey to death. So the man got off. The next

person saw the old man stumble as he walked and said how horrible the young boy was. The boy got off and the father rode the donkey, and a person said how cruel a father he was to make his boy walk. Finally, the man and the boy picked up the donkey and carried it.

The moral of the story my mom told me was to live my life regardless of what others around me may think - the same way she has lived her own life. Because she has not cared about how she was viewed she has been able to make a real and lasting difference to the people in her life.

I cannot live my life worried about what others may think of me. It is a waste of time.

Happy Birthday Canada



By Sharon Spencer

Who can believe it is 150 years that Canada has existed? In my opinion it is the best country in the world. What are you doing to celebrate? There is certainly enough to choose from or maybe you want to have your own party. However you celebrate, everyone in Canada will be aware that Canada's got a pretty important birthday.

Do you know that the motto

for Canada is taken from the King James Bible? A piece of scripture Psalm 72:4 "He shall have dominion from sea to sea."

The founding Fathers were in agreement that He (God) would have dominion from sea to sea. They all knew He was needed if

they were going to succeed in creating this wonderful country from sea to sea.

Dominion according to the Mirriam-Websters dictionary is

1: DOMAIN

2 law : supreme authority : SOVEREIGNTY having dominion over the natural world
3 dominions plural, Christianity : an order of angels — see CELESTIAL HIERARCHY

4 often capitalized, gov-

ernment : a self-governing nation of the Commonwealth of Nations other than the United Kingdom that acknowledges the British monarch as chief of state
5. law : absolute ownership

That is what the world knew as dominion. They all agreed that in order to obtain success, God had to be included into their plans. They recognized His authority and accepted that without God there would be no success.

Back in the days when I was in school there were a few things that were compulsory: a handkerchief, clean fingernails and we had to sit quietly at the start of the day as the teacher read from scriptures. I would dare say every person in Canada was made aware of the ten commandments.

We had been given moral guidelines, which we would carry throughout our lives. Unfortunately, there were some people that decided these guidelines were unconstitutional and as a result, prayers were removed from the schools. So God was kicked out of the schools and it seemed almost immediately moral integrity decayed and crime rates rose!

That is where we are at today. I think that as Christians we need to rise up and defend this so that God once more can reign from sea to sea over Canada!

Gods greatest gift to the entire world still stands even today - His gift of grace through His son Jesus' sacrificial death for your sins. He is ready and waiting for you to receive it. Make this a Canada day that you will never forget. Change your destiny. Simply and humbly admit you are a sinner and need Christ's substitution (death.) Ask Him to forgive you and to come into your life and bring change with Him. Repent, hate the things you have done, be sorry for doing those things.

Christ is our ticket to everlasting life with God. He longs to have you recognize His authority and give Him control, just as the founding fathers recognized it as well.

As for me I am waiting. My ticket is bought and paid for. I am on my way to glory!

HEALING WORDS



BY THE CMHA
WRITING FOR RECOVERY GROUP

Lighting the Way or Lighting the Fire

By Lanky

Oh the agony within,
The unmet desire of carnal sin.
No matter how much I redirect,
It seems I must continue to self correct.
What of this war that wages within?
Warring from different kinds of desires.
The unmet desire of carnal sin.
I grow weary from time to time.
Thanks to good friends built in good times.
Those who cherish moral compass.
Warring with different kinds of desires.
Whatever, substance, thought

or deed.
Some lighting your way some lighting you afire.

Words

By Lanky

A nervous chuckle
By and bye.
A glance away and back again.
A brief thought
Pondered and cast away.
A signal to proceed.
And one to decist.
A passage read and nothing gleaned.
Or so it seemed.
At a glance.
But really just Words.

No Judgement

By Angelique Branston

Sometimes it is good to accept that we are just human.
To accept our own flaws.
To accept other's flaws.
For we are all born the same way wheher king or pauper, bond or free.
We live, we breathe, we bleed and feel sorrow and grief, joy and moments of peace.
It is not my place to judge you or yours to judge me.
For where one sees weakness another sees strength.
How boring and mundane this world.would be if everyone were the same.
It is in the differences that together we find our strength.
No one wonders why there are both butterflies and wolves with equal rights to exsist and live.
Why then do we wonder over the differences in me and you?
Let them just be like the butterfly and wolf for there is no shame in differences.
But intolerance and hatred and all of their many offspring,
Let us wipe from our hearts and minds.
Let us shove it back to the darkness from whence it came.
We can then allow each other the grace to live without fear of judgement or reproval.
We can just be.



How We Can Create Change: Alberta

By: Sam Goertz

After exploring the municipal level opportunities for eliminating poverty in part two of our series, we move on to the provincial level this month. In this article I will delve into the current provincial framework for dealing with poverty, I'll do this by examining the current poverty situation in Alberta as well as provincial legislation governing it, before digging into 'what we can do' Let's dive right in!

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Poverty is a costly beast. It is most costly for those primarily affected by it, of course, but it is also costly for us societally. Alberta Poverty Progress estimates that poverty costs Alberta around \$10 billion every year, not to mention the greater social expenses. Calculating the cost of poverty is a tricky thing, but doing so is critical for shaping the discussion around solutions going forward. The costs of poverty borne by societally writ large are found in ballooned health care usage and cost, housing, lost government revenue, and most significantly, lost productivity. In an Alberta with no poverty, we would see a much larger economic output and more revenues for the government, not to mention the incalculable benefits for those who are lifted out of it.

In discussing the current state of poverty in Alberta, there are numerous silver linings; from our current progress to what our future will hold. One of the brightest is that, according to the Conference Board of Canada, Alberta ranks as the best province for poverty reduction in Canada. Alberta was given an "A" whereas Canada as a whole received a "C". While this is a nice piece of news, it does little

to comfort those who are affected by poverty in Alberta, nor does it address the problems arising from Alberta's economic slump (that we are currently fast leaving).

By addressing the costs borne by all of society, socially and economically, we can best combat the problem of poverty with a unified, non-partisan front. Eliminating poverty in Alberta will just not benefit those who are no longer impoverished, it will benefit all of us richly.

Currently, those below the LICO in Alberta has fallen from 11.1% in 2000 to around 5% today. We have also seen welfare usage rates drop from a peak of 73,350 in 2010 to 58,653 in 2015, when stats were last available, a drop of some 20.1%. With Alberta also pacing Canada for economic growth in 2017 these are good signs. However, Food Bank reliance in both percentage terms and raw numbers is at an all-time high and homelessness remains a major issue, pointing to the underlying challenges.

In addition to the big poverty-reduction plans proposed by Edmonton and Calgary, six other provincial municipalities have similar plans. Canmore, Grand Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Wood Buffalo, and Red Deer have all developed plans aimed at reducing poverty. Decentralizing poverty action plans allows for more flexible policy that best fits each area. Municipalities, of course, garner all of their legislative power from the Province of Alberta as outlined in the Municipal Government Act (MGA) and the Big City Charter. In this way, solutions from the Province and from municipalities act symbiotically.

WHAT WE CAN DO

Contacting Provincial representatives is the among the best ways to make your voice heard in government. To find your local Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) if you don't already know who they are, you can look them up on streetkey.elections.ab.ca simply by entering your address. You can also look on an Electoral Divisions Map, email the Chief Electoral Officer at info@elections.ab.ca, or call 780-427-7191.

Calling or emailing your local MLA is a great way to make your views known and to hold that elected official accountable. There are many ways to get in touch however and to affect change provincially, so if you feel like you're not getting through as an individual, try these strategies: Join an interest group: Find a credible poverty-action group like Artists Against Poverty and lend your time and skills to them. By joining an established group rather than going it alone you are speaking with a more amplified, and therefore harder to dismiss voice. Oftentimes Politicians just don't have time for the many individual meeting requests they receive, but by pooling resources and being a part of an interest group you will have a much easier time getting heard. Start an interest group: No groups that are taking action the way you want to? Start your own! Every interest group has to start somewhere, so why not with you? This will require more time and dedication than joining an established group but if you feel strongly enough it can be immensely rewarding.

Form intergroup partnerships: So you've got your organization and everything seems to be going well but you just can't seem to get far enough with what you want. In this case you can partner up with other like-minded organizations and form a coalition acting together against poverty. This is an ideal approach for large-scale projects.

There is power in a union

By Timothy Wild

As a lifelong socialist, I must admit that I have a confused, fluid and ambivalent attitude towards organized labour. I come from a solidly pro-union background. It is in my blood, and stems out of my family's hard fought experiences in the mills and mines of northern England. I have seen the role that unions have played politically in helping to organize and expand the Keynesian Welfare State. I know, more locally, how unions critically helped in the implementation of public medical insurance in Saskatchewan. Such a wonderful legacy.

Labour has long been at the forefront of transformative social change.

I also understand the role that unions have played in the development of the practical dimensions of social rights of citizenship, such as pensions, occupational health and safety, and maternity leave. A solid foundation

of justice and inclusion.

However, I am also aware that much of this broader social dimension of unionism is being lost to crass self interest and a modern day aristocracy of labour. There is considerably less organizing amongst the unorganized sectors of the working class. There is more attention to raiding other unions than organizing. And given the obsession with seniority, there is also the protection of longer term, incompetent employees than supporting newer, better staff. In this economic climate, this is a problem. The practical application of the scope of unions seems to be a lot less noble these days.

But labour has long been at the forefront of transformative social change. Hence my ambivalence. Going back to England, I remember watching a show called Blue Peter when I got home from school. One of the features I vividly recall was a story about a group of agricultural labourers from Tolpuddle in the south of England who formed a type of union in the early 1830s. Obviously, this didn't sit well with the landed elites, and they were convicted of illegal organization and transported to Australia. Eventually, their convictions were overturned and they returned to Dorset.

But they sacrificed so much, and that is what keeps my hope in unions

alive. There is still a need to provide more options for people on the margins, and labour can do that. But they need to be more explicitly political and anti-capitalist. You can't do that by being a company union. Seniority is less important than socialism.

I guess it is a bit of a British theme today, but Labour did quite well in the recent UK Election. Sure, they didn't win but they increased their number of seats and have forced the Conservative Prime Minister, Theresa May, to rely on the support of a sectarian coalition partner to remain in power. I think, in large part, this is because Labour talked about community and collectivity. They promised hope over fear, and both the promise and premise of socialism. I think people are hungry for that message of community, participation and inclusion. Unions in Alberta need to do the same thing. Because organized labour can and should be the motor of change. But are they up to the challenge? They have been rather quiet lately.

Anyway, let's keep the ambivalence as our little secret, okay? I really want to believe. I think we may be on the right side of history this time. Fingers crossed.

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Participate in the next election: If you compelled to make your voice heard provincially in the fight against poverty and other issues then consider running for elected office in 2019. Find a party whose platform you identify with (or help shape it) and then make a run for elected office. This is a surefire way to shape the dis-

course around homelessness and low-income issues. Beyond that voting and volunteering are other great ways.

Get involved in a political organization: Love politics and see its power for creating change but don't want to run yourself? Consider joining a political organization and shaping policy from the inside out. This could mean becoming a policy advisor, volunteer, Riding President, and even more.

With that we are done the third part of our four part series on 'How We Can Create Change'. If you haven't read the past instalments, I recommend checking out the Alberta Street News website: albertastreetnews.org where the articles will be out later on. Next up we're going to be looking at all of Canada with the investigation into ending poverty, stay tuned!

HONOURING FATHER'S DAY

By Maria B.

A true father is not the one that wears the title but the man that has the commitment to be there for his children until the end of time.

In a child's eyes a father is the projection and manifestation of strength, who imparts a mantle of security with his courage, kindness, understanding and unconditional acceptance. He is like a divine aura of protection that embraces us and brightens our lives imparting physical and emotional peace and creating the kind of environment in a home that children need in order to develop into the magnificent human beings they are meant to be.

A Father essence resides in each member of what constitute a family; it is the thread of gold that forms the tapestry of what God intended for us to have as a family.

A Father is a creator of cherished memories of peace and understanding that will remain in our heart until the end of time providing us with hope and faith in our path of life.

The way children and their mother are treated by a father serves to shape children's view of the world. Unconditional love and acceptance serves to develop their own personal identification as children see themselves through the eyes and beliefs of their parents. Every small action and/or words that impart love and understanding serve to strengthen not only the trust but the bond that is developed between children and parents.

I honour men that choose to become the leaders and champions of their families because they are making a difference not only in the lives of their families but they are making a difference in the world by executing the lead role that God himself has bestowed upon them.

No relationship is more pivotal to a child's emotional development and identity than their relationship with their parents.

Fathers come in many forms, but the ones that only "wear the tag" have a common characteristic; they have failed to realize that to be "fathers" is not just a name but a life long commitment and when they choose to medicate themselves with alcohol or/and drugs they failed to put their children's best interest first. Instead of being the protectors, they become the bullies, the enforcers, the cowards that are the protagonists of domestic terrorism in their homes. Being aware of what is the true essence of a father is honoring those men that with their sole presence and unconditional love for their children, make living a magical and truly rewarding home setting.

I honour my husband, the man that chose to forsake his opportunity to have children of his own to become the father and protector of my three children. His commitment, unconditional love and true devotion to our family have unfolded right from the core of his heart. He is the source of love and admiration from every one of our children and grandchildren and adding a new member of our family that we have adopted into our hearts as a granddaughter. She is four years old and her essence as a child is truly illuminating. We are so truly blessed.

This little girl is in the center of her mother's life but the father has been absent in her life and even though she does not know what it is to have a father in her life, she talks about her daddy and she wants to be like the other little children that have a daddy in their life. They start longing for that "father" figure so early in life.

The question is will the presence of the absent father be able to enrich her life or cause her more pain by coming into her life and leaving again, this time leaving a deeper void. There are million of children feeling the void that the absent father has left. I know we can not make a difference in all of their lives but if we can make a difference in this little girl's life that is all I ask to be able to do.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY TO ALL THOSE MEN THOSE WHO ARE COMMITTED TO BE THE TRUE LEADERS OF THEIR HOMES AND MAKE THEIR HOMES A HARBOUR FOR THEIR CHILDREN.



Memorial service held to remember lives lost to homelessness

By Linda Dumont

On June 2nd, about 200 people gathered at the Boyle Street Community Services, then walked to the

Homeless Memorial Sculpture to remember the 106 people who died due to homelessness in 2016. This was the 12th annual memorial service to commemorate the lives of people who have died in situations where homelessness or poor housing had a significant role.

After a prayer by an Aboriginal elder, drummers played and sang, then flowers were handed out to everyone and they were invited to walk to the Memorial Sculpture for a ceremony after which the flowers were placed at the base of the sculpture.

Out of the 106 people commemorated there were 78 men and 28 women. People remembered were identified by a process involving

organizations, who work with people having housing problems, to ensure there are no duplications and that housing is a significant issue in the death.

Since the annual service began, a total of 599 people have been remembered.

At the service, individuals are not identified, but family and friends were invited to take part in a simple action of tribute and all interested people were welcome to join them.

Below: Opening ceremonies for the Memorial for the Homeless.

Photo by Linda Dumont

Homeless

By Norma Harms

Hungry, homeless
I wait for tomorrow
For God's light to shine down
Through my darkness.
I felt lost and alone
Praying for someone
To reach out to me
Through these trials
With no house to go to
I am going through.
Lost, alone
Hungry and homeless
No home to go to
To rest my weary soul.
And then finally
I saw God's light
Shining through
My darkness
As I visited the mission
And received God's light.



2017 Walk for ALS raises over \$400,000 for ALS loan equipment and support groups

By John Zapantis

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a neurodegenerative disease that is a merciless predator that robs its victims of the right to carry on with their once normal lives. The disease often plays the role of judge, jury and hangman while sadistically sentencing its victims to a difficult obstacle course on a journey to a shortened period of time.

On Saturday June 10th, 1000 people were out for a very important cause while challenging that predator and raising public awareness about its impact on the many innocent victims it has taken down in its time. That cause was publicly known as the 17th Annual Walk for ALS on Saturday June 10th at William Hawrelak Park in Edmonton. The five kilometre walk commenced at 10 a.m., when the walkers took off from the starter's line for their walk around the park.

When the walk was completed at 1 p.m. opening ceremonies were hosted by Global Television's Station Manager and MC, Tim Spelliscy, who introduced several speakers to the stage, consisting of ALS representatives and people living with ALS in our communities. Speakers included the ALS Society of Alberta staff member, Christy Reschke, who made a presentation awarding ALS Walk Ambassador and ALS survivor Fred Gillis the Eye Candy Award for his devoted contributions in helping to raise public awareness about ALS.

Other speakers included ALS board member and ALS survi-

vor, Dave Williams, ALS Society of Alberta Manager of the North Region, Brandee Fossen, and Dr. Wendy Johnston a representative from the ALS Clinic.

The ALS Society of Alberta confirms that Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a rapid always fatal neurodegenerative disease. It attacks the nerves of the body that would normally send messages from the brain to the muscle, resulting in weakness and wasting. Eventually the individual with ALS is left completely immobilized with loss of speech and an inability to swallow and breathe. These are just a few of the many problems people face while living with ALS.

Additional facts reveal, ALS can strike anyone at any time regardless of age, sex, or ethnic origin. People usually afflicted range from 55 to 65, but people under 20 have been known to be diagnosed. In 90% of cases it strikes people with no family history of the disease. 80% of people with ALS die within three to five years from the time of diagnoses. Approximately 2,500 to 3,000 of Canadians over 18 currently live with ALS.

ALS Walk Ambassador Fred Gillis, 53, lives with ALS. Prior to the opening ceremonies, he took time out for an interview with ASN. The former RCMP officer is married with three children. He was forced into retirement when he became afflicted by the neurodegenerative at age 51.

Prior to being diagnosed for ALS, Gillis led a healthy and happy lifestyle. The productive and committed happily married fam-

ily man, always kept a physically active lifestyle, taking his kids to hockey tournaments, team practices and games. His problems started right after receiving a hip surgery. It was while playing in a friendly game of hockey, while shooting a puck in the rink, he suddenly noticed he couldn't shoot with the same amount of strength he once had. Both his arms felt weak. Later on he also noticed that his ability to brush his teeth required the use of both hands.

After moving his family from Ottawa to Edmonton in July 2015, Fred and his family moved into a newer house. He made an effort to move furniture from the family van and while picking up some two by fours, he hurt his back. Then he experienced a lack of strength in his arms while struggling to lift those two by fours.

In November 2015, Fred and his family went to a doctor to have him diagnosed to determine the cause of his multiple problems. The doctor conducted a battery of tests and confirmed that Fred was having some of the symptoms of ALS. He was diagnosed with Flail Arm Syndrome.

Six months later, in addition to his inability to function with both arms, the problem spread to his legs and his ability to cough was becoming difficult. He was also diagnosed for Limb On Set.

He currently takes medication. He claims that Riluzole increases his life span by three to four months.

Despite feeling cheated, his family motivates his desire to

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rise above adversity. Gillis said, "I felt cheated when I was initially diagnosed. Then, you know it's something you have to learn to live with. You have to make the best of the time you have left. You have to not want to have your children see you in dire circumstance. You want them to see you doing things the right way. You know, every step of the way you take with your wife. You know it's tough, but it's something you have to go through together."

Fred spends most of his time in a wheelchair, but that doesn't stop him from getting out once in a while for a stretch and making an effort of walking out of his chair for a distance of 200 feet and back to his chair.

The obstacles of this disease have spared him from losing his mental function or his capacity to speak. He had no problems expressing this to our readers, Gillis said, "I can't do anything. Like I can't feed myself. I need assistance going to the bathroom. I need assistance going up and down the stairs. Like anything that's slightly difficult, I need assistance with anything that's fairly simple. I can do it, but I don't have much endurance."

Fred has earned the title of ALS Walk Ambassador. In looking at his track record, he attends monthly ALS support groups and is an inspiration to others like himself, while showing his courage, strength and humour to those who need his moral and emotional support.

His other priorities in helping to make a big difference in the ALS community involve his commitment to MRI studies and clinical drug trials, Gillis said, "There are also other things that I'm involved in. I'm involved in an MRI study

that tracks the progression of ALS. So I'm an unhealthy subject. Then we have healthy subjects who volunteer for MRI's. Each study involves the MRI's. I'm on my second of three MRI's. So in a couple of months, I'll go back for another one. Then I'm also involved in a clinical drug trial. That drug trial stimulates my muscles. I'll be in it briefly. Like, my muscles are still in decline, but it does provide me with some benefit because your diaphragm is an important muscle. I know there is some stimulation for my diaphragm so that it's supposed to prolong life as well."

His family's support and the support he receives from the ALS Society of Alberta mean the world to him. He is still functioning mentally at full capacity. Gillis said, "It's physical, thank goodness. It doesn't affect my mental abilities you know. Like any curve ball you get thrown at you in your life, you have to face it. You have to do your best to do it. So that's my best advice - to keep your chin up and do the best you can. It's for your family. It's

for your friends. It's for everyone."

Once again, the 17th annual Walk for ALS was a huge success in reaching its goal of more than \$400,000. Proceeds from the walk will go to support the ALS loan equipment program and its helpful ALS support groups. This fund-raising event couldn't have been possible without the 1000 walk participants, volunteers and local sponsors, who always keep the spirit, hope and encouragement alive in one day finding a cure for ALS.

Team Gillis: left to right

Front row: Fred's wife Lana, Fred Gillis, Fred's brother, Leon Gillis. Back row: former sister-in-law Sara Gillis, daughter Lindsay Gillis, Fred's son, Nolan Gillis, Fred's son Cory Gillis, Fred's sister Barb, and Fred's nephew Sean.

Photo by John Zapantis





Edmonton

As members of City Council, we have a goal to end poverty within a generation. It's shared vision of prosperity for all, where every Edmontonian has an equal opportunity to live, work, participate and thrive. Ending poverty benefits us all, and we've started a city-wide conversation about it. Our approaches to ending poverty — even the ways we talk about poverty — are evolving. We know there is no one simple solution. We invite you to raise your voice, share your opinions and be part of this conversation. Let's end poverty together.

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