

VENDORS PAY 50¢

PER PAPER

# ALBERTA Street News

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Canada 150 Seniors Cultural Diversity Celebration pages 8-9  
Linda Dumont performed a hatha dance routine. Photo by John Zapantis

## ALBERTA STREET NEWS

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

### Writers:

Maria B.  
John Zapantis  
Joanne Bengner  
Allan Sheppard  
Angelique Branston  
Sharon Spencer  
Lisa Anderson  
Sharon Austin

### Photos:

Maria B.  
John Zapantis  
Linda Dumont

### Cover photo:

John Zapantis

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

Web:  
albertastreetnews.org

THE VIEWS  
PRESENTED ARE THOSE  
OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

# Freegans and Food Insecurity

By Joanne Bengner

One of the United Nations goals is “zero hunger”. Ideally the goal is to achieve food security and improve nutrition in a way that is agriculturally sustainable now and in the future.

“Food security” is a term that was first defined in their 1996 World Security Summit. Food security exists when “all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs in a productive and healthy life”.

Edmonton opened Canada’s first “Food Bank in 1982. By 2016 Food Banks, Canada had 450 centres all across Canada with 863,462 people as clients. Users are of all ages. One third are children, one third are seniors and one third are of the age usually found in the work force.

It has been estimated that at least four million Canadians are not food secure and one out of every six children is at risk for food insecurity. This is troubling because without good nutrition children cannot reach their full potential as the adults of tomorrow.

The true number of people who are food insecure is probably greater than estimated because there are the invisible hungry who live off friends and relatives. Then add those who are dumpster divers.

In fact dumpster diving has become so much a part of modern society that Christopher Foyle had a new word in his 2008 book *Further Philavery* – Freegan, noun, a person who eats the discarded food found in litter bins and thrown out from restaurants and supermarkets.

## Happy thoughts

By Joanne Bengner

1. It costs no more to be happy than sad.
2. Sunshine and fresh air are free.
3. There is no Laughter Tax.
4. Birdsong is free music and you can watch the clouds as you listen.
5. If you expect miracles, miracles come.
6. No one gets upset if I laugh at myself.
7. Heaven has no admission fee.



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# Regrets

By Sharon Spencer

The first thing you notice is the smell of sulphur, human waste and possibly rotting flesh all wrapped together in dank dark dry heat. That has the ability to burn your throat every time you're brave enough to breathe, yet breathe you must. The darkness that surrounds you is not a usual darkness, but bottomless that seems to claw at your very soul with pit bottom depression; the kind that sears your mind like a red hot poker stating this is it, it's over.

Finally, like a freight train, it hits you, jarring every nerve awake and says over and over again, 'No way out I'm dead, I'm dead! This must be hell the place we joked about. Where are all the others? Where's my bro's? I must be dreaming.' Then you realize, 'I've never been this thirsty before. My tongue is cleaving to the roof of my mouth. Wake me up, please wake me up. I don't want to see anymore!!'

But it's not a dream; your time has come; your life is over. You never would accept Christ. You always thought someday, not now, I mean really there's that cute chick you could maybe play house with. Looked like she really dug ya. And always one more party. There was plenty of time to liver up while ya can. Ha Ha. Didn't everyone say that the real hell was on earth? No such place as hell. That was all for those religious old farts that didn't ever have any fun. Soups good though. Fear and condemnation overwhelm him.

'Man I'm really regretting it now. Think of the things I could have done to warn people from coming here. If we only listened. God please give me a second chance. I'll work so hard for you. I'll never stop.'

God answered back, 'I gave you many a chance Remember The mission and that sweet lady that bent over backward to love on ya? Who do you think sent her there? Like, I made the plan foolproof - all the work was done for ya. Jesus did it all so simple.

'All you had to do was pray a simple prayer confessing your sins inviting Jesus in to your heart, man, but your pride held you back. Look where pride got ya. The streets down here are lined with sin and pride. You wanted to do it on your own well how's that work'in for ya.'

All of a sudden from a far off he heard distant voices. "Stand back. Give him the juice just one more time." A huge surge of electricity flooded through his body arching him into the air. Slowly, he saw the two ER guys over him. One spoke to the other, "What a waste of time? We'll be back here again doing this all over."

The other one, a Christian, said, "You just never know."

It's a new year and we have many regrets. Don't go into a new year without the assurance of Heaven. Some day God's mercy will end and where will you stand?

**John3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes on him shall not perish but have everlasting life**



## Ode to writing Group

By Lisa Anderson

(to the tune of 12 Days of Christmas)

12 minds are open  
11 prose is written  
10 poets reading  
9 hands writing  
8 prompts are followed  
7 ears are listening  
6 support is given  
5 journals filling  
4 shared poems  
3 blue pens  
2 haikus  
and a piece published in E News

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

**The next issue of Alberta Street News will be published March 1st. unless we get some ad sales or donations for printing costs.**

**Make a donation or place an ad to help keep Alberta Street News in print. \$642 pays for one issue. Call 780 428-0805**

# Canada 150 Seniors Cultural Diversity Celebration

## gave seniors of different cultures every reason to celebrate

Story and photos by John Zapanis

Seniors are considered our most treasured and vital resource, when teaching us about their personal experiences, which can become an essential part of our social and productive growth. They've seen it all, good or bad and have made remarkable contributions in different fields of work in different professions helping to enhance the quality of life in Canada.

The Canada 150 Seniors Cultural Diversity Celebration was a unique celebratory event to help remind us all of what seniors and cultural diversity should mean to Canadians living in this prosperous and peaceful country. It was hosted and organized by the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation. The foundation's purpose is to promote multiculturalism and to raise public awareness in its fight to eliminate racism among visible minorities.

The event commenced on Saturday December 2nd at 11:15 a.m. in suite 401 at the Millwoods Senior's Multicultural Centre in Edmonton's Millwoods Community Library. Several people of prominence, representing their respective cultures and political communities interpreted culture in its various forms, from keynote speakers, musicians and poets to arts and crafts vendors.

Millwoods Mosaic community newspaper Founder/Editor Arnim Joop hosted the event as MC, introducing a number of speakers to the stage to give their greetings as well as various entertainers, who interpreted culture through musical and poetic performances.

The speakers included Millwoods Mosaic Founder/Editor Arnim Joop, Edmonton City Councillor Moe Banga, Millwoods MLA Christina Gray, Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation President Beryl Scott, event prize presenter Jeanette Dotimas and Edmonton/Ellerslie MLA Rod Loyola.

Some of the entertainers who sang while playing their musical instruments or who read poetry included guitarist Farley Magee, musician family trio Shahmurad Ayyubov, Hussem Ayyubov and Tar Ayyubov, guitarist Eric Andersen, poet Gary Garrison guitarist Erasmr Coco, Aboriginal spiritual drummer Sharon Pasula and

poet Leif Gregersen.

Arnim Joop introduced City Councillor Moe Banga to the stage to give his greetings, elaborating on Canada's seniors, the country's cultural diversity and the great opportunities that Canada offers to Canadians. Banga said, "On behalf of the city, I am pleased to be here for this unique event. 2017 is a very special year for our country. It makes the 150th anniversary of Canada's official foundation as a nation. Of course the land we know as Canada has been occupied for a lot longer than 150 years. The Indigenous Peoples of Canada have a history here that stretches back to thousands and thousands of years. So as we reflect on Canada's 150th anniversary and all that came before it, we think about the qualities that make Canada a unique and great country.

"This country is known as a place of freedom and opportunity, where people are able to express themselves as they choose, regardless of their country of origin, religion, gender, or any of the features of their identity.

"Edmonton, like Canada, was shaped by people from many different backgrounds, who together built their city into the thriving metropolis it is today. As the seniors of our community you offer a welcome experience and knowledge to share from the past, for the next generation of Edmontonians.

"I think you're doing a great job of addressing the needs of seniors and new Canadians, as we are known for being a city that raises the multicultural identity. Not only is our population of seniors growing, but with advances in nutrition and health-care, they are also living longer and are more active and engaged in the world that I think really has evolved overtime.

"Our seniors are probably doing more things that we ever imagined they'd be doing. Seniors are truly engaged in their communities, whether it's working or providing caregivers, or caring for grandchildren, or volunteering in the community. Seniors are the backbone of our communities.

"Beyond this, seniors are present in all our lives, as our parents, grandparents mentors and especially our neighbours. So it's very important. We need to include

people of all stages of life including our seniors, who can enjoy and contribute to Edmonton's quality of life. This is why events like this are so important.

"Today we get an amazing opportunity to see some amazing work. It's a reminder that older people are contributing members of our society. They have a wealth of knowledge, talent and skills to share. Seniors will always have a place in our hearts. Thanks."

Our very own Alberta Street News Founder/Editor Linda Dumont, who also is employed as a yoga instructor, performed a yoga performance synchronized to music. Her performance consisted of a variety of movements that had the eyes of the audience focused on her consistent and graceful movements.

Aaron Chiu is a Chinese immigrant, who came to Canada from Hong Kong, when he was 18, back in 1972. The young immigrant was determined in establishing a family, then in completing his grade 12. He attended the U of A and finally enrolled for a baker's program at N.A.I.T. When he later graduated and found employment as a baker at a Safeway, where he worked for 30 years.

He's lived in Edmonton for 45 years and has never left the city since. The great opportunities here, compared to his native China, are primarily the reason why he's never looked back in returning to China. The happily married family man was one of the many vendors onsite at the event, who had a display table of Chinese arts and crafts for sale in the senior's auditorium during the celebration.

He elaborated on his preferences for Canada's many diverse resources and the opportunities that a new land first offered to him when he came here as an immigrant. Chiu said, "I came to Edmonton Alberta in 1972, but I stayed here for 45 years. I've never left the city, only when I'm travelling away from the city. I like this place, because it's quiet compared to the place where I came from. I came from Hong Kong, which is a very busy crowded city, but in Edmonton it was only half a million people at that time and I really enjoyed the environment, the peace and the fresh air. The opportunity here is great, compared to where



I came from. So I enjoy staying here.”

Today Aaron is retired and his children are married with children and all are employed in either the construction or oil industry.

He occupies his retirement years with overseeing the operations of a senior's group called the GEM Society. The society offers nine different activities to its members. Some of the activities offered include, dance classes, tai chi, computer classes and arts and crafts.

Aaron Chiu elaborated on how Canadians benefit in learning more about inclusion and understanding the concept of culture that makes new Canadians and naturalised Canadian really appreciate Canada. Chiu said, “We should join different groups and get to know each other to find out what their culture is like and to learn from each other.”

Jim Gurnett, who planned this unique event, gave ASN an interview, elaborating on how isolated seniors could benefit from participating in this seniors and multicultural celebration, Gurnett said, “The Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation is the organization that's putting the event on. It's been around for a long time and does all kinds of different things to promote how cultures can live together in harmony.

“Another of their concerns is about seniors, older people in our community, sometimes get together and get pushed aside. So the idea of today's event is to say let's focus on the creative activities of older people, whether it's performing or artistic

crafts and things like that.

“That they're still a vibrant, active part of life in the community. That we can learn from. That we can enjoy. So that's the idea of the day. It's just to have a celebration, to say this is what Canada is made up of, it's grandparents and grandchildren doing arts and crafts together. It's families singing together. That we want to have more people engaged in that way, not seniors becoming isolated and discouraged and depressed, but involved with us and learning from them. So that's the idea of it.”



**Left to right Ming Ho, Aaron Chiu, his wife, Teresa Fung and Cecilia Li all worked at the Chinese Arts and Crafts table display during the Canada 150 Celebrating Seniors and Cultural Diversity.**

Thanks to Jim Gurnett who planned this meaningful event and to its many selfless volunteers at the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation, the event helped those in attendance have a little better understanding of what makes seniors and cultures so significant in making Canada one of the world leaders in both peaceful bridge building and cultural unity that makes all Canadians proud to be from Canada- Happy-150-Canada!



**Sharon Pasula, Aboriginal drummer, through drumming sounds interpreted her message about her people being the keepers of the earth and that they've been chosen to save the earth from all of its destructive elements.**



**Edmonton City Councillor Moe Banga delivers his greetings at the opening ceremony of the Canada 150 Celebrating Seniors and Cultural Diversity.**

# Home is where the hope is



By Allan Sheppard

There is a 1914 poem by Robert Frost that comes to my mind from time to time, especially when I try to make sense of paradoxes and inequities within the human condition. We all share that condition in our basic, common humanity, whether we know or like it or not; whether we admit or acknowledge it or not.

The poem is called *The Death of the Hired Man*. It is presented as a conversation between a crusty, old-time New England farmer and his wife about a former hired man who has just showed up at their farm after a long absence. The hired man, a difficult, cantankerous, opinionated, argumentative soul, had quit the farm after exchanging bitter words with his former employer. Now, years later, the wife senses that, having nowhere else to go,

“he has come home to die.”

The farmer bristles at his wife’s suggestion:

“Home is the place where, when you have to go there,

They have to take you in.”

Those words are often quoted by preachers and politicians to assert a notion that social responsibility is an obligation imposed on the righteous by or for the benefit of those who do not deserve respect or generosity; they become a backhanded way of saying,

“I am not my brother’s keeper.”

The wife’s response is equally simple and direct:

“I should have called it  
Something you somehow haven’t to deserve.”

I have borrowed that passage several

times over the years in writings for ASN and in other places. For me it captures nicely the essence of a question that has been debated probably since humans began living together in groups. Each generation has had to choose or find compromises between the positions expressed by the farmer and his wife: entitlement understood as an obligation to others or as an inherent right.

Each generation has also had to decide how inclusively it could or would expand or restrict its circle of home; whether it could, might or should embrace nuclear family, extended family, clan, tribe, nation, empire, or the world and everyone or everything in it.

I’m not certain which side of the debate Frost favours. Like all great artists, he leaves it up to his readers to decide, and the full body of the poem hints at subtle, nuanced arguments for and against both positions. I incline toward the wife’s generous, inclusive view that acknowledges rights and, in my interpretation, makes room in the home circle for everyone, everywhere: those whom we like and all the others. We are all human. In that basic sense we are all equal. But that does not mean we are all the same, which for too many of us simply means we are—or should be—like me.

There is room for difference; more to the point, there is need for difference. Difference is another way the light gets in to whatever community we call home, be it a family, a nation, or the whole world.

Equality that acknowledges, respects, and celebrates difference recognizes that, while we all have equal rights, we each have different needs and different gifts, according to which we take and contribute to what our home has to offer. An important (perhaps the important: discuss) role of leadership and government is to act not just as home builder and provider but as home-maker: to develop and manage resources sustainably in such a way as to optimize the benefits for everyone, family member or citizen, not because we deserve them, but because we have a right to them.

All of which brings me circuitously back to the point I had reached at the end of my December column: the dilemma we face, as individuals and in myriad groupings, in the several overlapping homes

that we occupy in a world where jobs are rapidly being displaced by automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence, making work as we have come to know it obsolete and redundant.

There are and will be individual exceptions, but as a species we are approaching a time when most of us will not be needed as producers of anything. But, having been displaced by technology, we will still be needed to play a critical role in economies: as consumers. Production of goods and services in our current economic regimes has no purpose or value unless it generates consumption; consumption is impossible without income in the hands of consumers; income is impossible if there is no work or jobs.

One possible solution to the paradox is the notion of a guaranteed annual income, which I discussed last month. The idea has many attractions and supporters, but as Toronto Star columnist Rick Salutin has pointed out, it has a basic flaw: it is essentially a form of charity and will inevitably be viewed as such, both by givers and receivers. It may be necessary as a means of survival, but like all charity it ultimately reinforces existing power relationships; in other words, it fits under the broad umbrella of “home” as understood by Frost’s farmer.

Salutin envisions a world in which people engage with the system and the existing powers to demand agency in relation to decisions about means and goals of production; to demand, not simply accept, their rightful place in society and its economies; to participate actively in its decision-making and governance, not simply to accept passively what is decided for them and begrudged to them. That is more assertive, perhaps, than the wife’s notion of not having to deserve, but it fits under that umbrella.

In a discussion around the issues raised by proposals for guaranteed annual incomes and related notions of charity and entitlement in a world without jobs and, therefore, without living wages, Salutin and I stumbled across the notion that the responsibility of leadership, both governmental and non-governmental, may be to find useful work to employ people, rather than to support them with charity, however



benign that might seem in appearance and intent.

What would such useful work be? Not certainly, the now obsolete kind of production that is being or will be done with automation. The machines do the work better, and much of it is back-breaking or soul-sapping drudgery anyway. But there is much work that goes undone or, when it is done, is done by volunteers (another form of charity) or inadequately paid citizens—as neither producers or consumers—in fields like health care, child care, elder care, special-needs care, education, community development, and environmental care and rehabilitation. What about mitigating and cleaning up the externalities of industrial and commercial production that are routinely

dumped on communities and societies that do not have the financial or labour resources to cope?

These amount to important work that can and should be done. Our current economic system, loosely thought of as capitalism, seemingly cannot (or will not) address or often even acknowledge such concerns, and our environment and social conditions suffer and deteriorate accordingly.

Is that a symptom of a potentially fatal flaw in the capitalist system? Does it point to a potentially fatal lack of imagination on the part of politicians, industrialists, economists, creative classes, or you and me?

The award-winning American writer generated headlines with a 2014 speech in

which she said,

“We live in capitalism.... Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings., It's up to authors,” the reporter who covered her speech wrote to summarize her point, “to spark the imagination of their readers and to help them envision alternatives to how we live.” ([tinyurl.com/o6yqoev](http://tinyurl.com/o6yqoev))

Far-fetched? Touchy-feely? Not workable in the real world? Perhaps. But no more so than carrying on as we are and have been for too long.

Emily Dickinson once wrote, “Hope is a thing with feathers.”

Maybe it's time to think of hope—and home—as a thing with teeth. And bones. And muscle. And demands.

I wish you a happy new year.

## Be prepared for winter storms

**By Sharon Austin**

With the winter season upon us it is once again time to think about the devastating winter storms that are occurring more frequently due to climate change. Where I live in rural New Brunswick ice storms do the most damage. The ice storm of 2013 knocked out power for days and thousands of people spent Christmas in the dark. On Christmas Eve I woke up to a strange white world with every tree branch coated with thick ice that glistened like diamonds in the pale morning sun. It was a beautiful but terrible scene of broken and bent trees, downed power lines and ice coated roads. Even the phone didn't work. Without electricity, we had no heat or water as our water is pumped from a well. We scrambled to get our small generator going and enough wood for the wood stove in the basement. We dug out our camp stove and lights and candles and all the extra propane cylinders. I keep one 5-gallon jug of water on hand for emergencies and I lugged in pails of snow to melt on the woodstove for washing and to pour down to flush. My daughter and her husband, Danny, came to stay with us as they had no way to heat their home. We all knew it was going to take a long time for the power crews to restore power. Being raised in the city, Danny found the power outage unbearable. He missed his television shows, hot water for showers and he checked the phone again and again.

On Christmas Day I cooked the turkey

in a roaster on top of the woodstove. It was like steamed turkey but it was tender and delicious and I made the potatoes, vegetables, and stove-top stuffing on the camp stove. I had stocked up on food for Christmas so we had lots to eat. We opened our presents, thankful that we were safe and warm in the midst of the storm. After four days the phone started working and the plow had cleared the roads. I heard poor Danny on the phone with his sister. “Please Angella,” he was practically begging, “We've had no power for four days, can I come and stay with you.” He hung up the phone in utter defeat. “She says she has no room,” he mumbled.

We all knew she lived in a huge mansion in an upscale part of town and they were very rich. Sadly, some people have no empathy for others beyond their own wants and needs. At least the roads were clear and he was able to go to town and spend time at Tim's and in the malls and bring us back much needed water and gas for the generator. He would also bring us delicious cups of hot chocolate or coffee and donuts. He told us that service stations were running out of gas and some people were arguing over the last cylinder of propane in the store. Many businesses were only able to take cash. Compared to some people we fared well but we could have used more clean water and gasoline.

Winter storm emergencies can happen anywhere so we should all be prepared.

### Emergency kit checklist:

\*Water--two litres of water per person per day for drinking. ( Add two additional litres per person per day for cooking and cleaning)

\*Food that won't spoil such as canned food, energy bars, and dried foods (replace once a year)

\*Manual can opener, wind-up or battery powered flashlight, wind-up or battery powered radio, mobile phone charger, small fuel operated stove and fuel, candles, matches, lighter

\* Cash in small bills, change

\*If you have an infant or pets make sure you have enough food and supplies to last at least 72 hours.

\* Change of clothing and footwear and a warm blanket or sleeping bag for each family member

\*Basic tools (hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdriver, pocket knife, work gloves, duct tape)

\* Hand-sanitizer, toilet tissue, garbage bags, personal hygiene items, paper plates and cups, medication

\*Whistle (to attract attention in an emergency)

For more emergency kit ideas you can go to [www.getprepared.gc](http://www.getprepared.gc). Hopefully you will never have occasion to use your emergency kit but it is always best to be prepared.

# Courageous and Committed Parents

By Maria B.

We are passing through a period when sexual immorality is spreading like wild fire; it has infected cultures in such an incredible rate. In the midst of what is going on more and more we are seeing children that are being abandoned by fathers and growing up with an empty space in their hearts. I do not understand how our society, which consists of families, suddenly seems to be forgetting their role in our society.

More and more children are struggling to survive in the kind of society in which everything goes and this starts at age three. For children the only chance they have to survive this era of sexual deviancy and immorality is having parents forming a very united and committed effort.

Parents have to come to the realization that children need a mom and a dad in order to survive the craziness that is infecting our society. More and more I hear talks about not needing men in our society and I feel that there is a very good reason why men were created and women were also created. Children need their fathers and mothers to demonstrate the path in life.

We need to model integrity, kindness, compassion and responsibility to our children. It seems that parents have lost their way and children are growing up in an abandoned state. As parents we are the virtual representation of God's model. We have been granted the

incredible gift of every one of our children and we must rise above and ensure that these children are trained with the virtual representation of our creator so they can be the incredible role models in our society.

As parents we must be courageous and determined to take the task of leaders and demonstrate to our children that we are quite capable of helping them when they need our help or/and our guidance. Our role in our children's lives is in a position of influence and we can not allow anyone to turn our children into mindless deviants of society.

We are aware that parents play an irreplaceable role in the lives of their children. Their relationship is vital. A positive and caring attitude will impact on a child's physical, mental, and emotional well being. The right of parents to maintain a strong involvement in their children's lives has been acknowledged by the Supreme Court doctrine as this is deeply valued by millions of families.

The role of parents in a child's life is an irreplaceable one. Even when young children spend most of their waking hours in child care, parents remain the most influential adults in their lives. The relationship that parents share with their children is one that impacts a child throughout his or her lifetime. Studies show that the benefits of parental involvement are manifold, affecting numerous areas of a child's life, including health and development, academic progress, and life choices.

The Supreme Court has maintained that parents possess a fundamental constitutional right to raise their children. "The child is not the mere creature of the State" the Supreme Court concluded in 1925 ruling. "Those who nurture

him and direct the child's destiny have the right, complete with high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations."

The role of parents in the lives of their children has, historically, been one of unquestioned value, celebrated in cultures around the world. And the rights that come along with that responsibility

to direct the upbringing and education of one's own children—have been consistently honoured and upheld. Unfortunately changes are coming and they do not seem to be in favour of parents.

Within the U.S. Federal Court system, a gradual change has been taking place. Today, instead of a robust defence of parental rights, one finds eroding support for parental rights from judges across the nation. Many judges are now denying parental rights. Others are refusing to recognize the rights of the parents.

It is imperative that we be allowed to protect our children.

What we need is a constitutional amendment that explicitly protects the child-parent relationship.

A constitutional amendment will ensure that the rights of parents to raise their children are honoured by federal court judges. We must rise above and speak out on behalf of the safety of our children in every way.

This New Year make the best year for your Family.



## The Darkness

By Angelique Branston

The darkness lies in wait

Ever patient for its chance to strike

A falter in my step

A waver of emotions

It moves closer

Its entity writhing in anticipation of the kill.

The darkness looms and grows.

I have seen it overtake others.

Like living shells of who they once were.

- The darkness wraps itself around them

And drains their very life source.

Vigilant even then of its next prey.

The darkness spreads,

Just one strand... it rests upon the un-

known host... and waits.

It waits for its food

Hopelessness

Intolerance

Hate

Fear and pain

Negativity in anyway imaginable...

- I ground myself firmly

I remember that which is good and pure in this world

Love, hope, peace

Things of beauty and of grace

And of my loved ones and family

A warm light covers me and wraps me in its light and safety.

The darkness has been dispelled.

At least for one more day.