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# ALBERTA Street News



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**HAPPY  
VALENTINES DAY**

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# ALBERTA STREET NEWS

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## Letter to the editor

I am emailing because the number of homeless in this city/town of Lloydminster is quite scary considering it's size. Not to mention we only have a women's shelter that will take abused women and leaves homeless or otherwise vulnerable women with nowhere to go. We have a men's shelter but it doesn't seem to be able to hold enough men. I come from the UK where The Big Issue is nation wide helping homeless and vulnerable housed people. I was, and still am, shocked that where there are these types of magazines and newspapers here, they are few and far between and seem to mostly stick to their own city/province.

I don't know how all these things work regarding restrictions but I do know that while the system here is seriously failing even the hard working people, there are the homeless and vulnerable in Lloyd that would greatly benefit from the opportunity to sell a paper/magazine and have the chance to change their lives.

If there would be any way for your magazine or another to make its way to Lloyd it could help many, many people.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,

Mhairi Craige

## The Meaning of Christmas

By Maria B.

The meaning of Christmas is unique to each person; for some people Christmas means the time for the utmost saddest times, times of loneliness, times of abandonment, times of incredible hurts, times of regrets, times of bickering. (For me this Christmas symbolizes the death of my beautiful girl, Tikki.

We must rise above and make this Christmas an incredible part of our journey where it does not matter what happens and how sad we are, the creation of miracles continues.

It is time to view Christmas as a time where the distance has no barriers. It does not matter how close or how far we are. We can be together in the Spirit of Christmas.

It is time where we are fully willing to express our feelings and convey to others the special meaning that they have in our lives. It is a time to convey the truth of who we are and allow this incredible power to takes us where our heart is com



pletely open and in unison with the people that we love.

Christmas is the time when miracles happen, when we demonstrate our gratefulness and our love for one another.

Opening our heart to miracles, we are opening our hearts to every miracle that comes our way.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Due to the cost of printing, Alberta Street News has become a bi-monthly paper. Place an ad to help pay printing costs. Call Linda at 780-428-0805 for ad rates.

THE VIEWS PRESENTED ARE THOSE OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.



# February and Leap Year

By Joanne Bengler

It is February, which is Adopt-a-Rabbit Month, Black History Month, National Embroidery Month, Friendship Month, Health Month, Heart Month, Jump Rope for Health Month, and Psychology Month among other things. The first week is Eating Disorder Awareness Week as well as White Cane Week.

Now two bits of advice. Never trust a man who pronounces both r's in February and don't borrow on the first three days of February for you'll never pay it off.

February 2 is Groundhog Day. In Europe it was Hedgehog Day but there are no hedgehogs in Canada so early settlers transferred the superstition to the groundhog, which is called a woodchuck, marmot or rock chuck in different parts of the country. No matter what you call it, if this creature sees its shadow we'll have six more weeks of winter. Pray for a cloudy day.

February 4 is World Cancer Day. In the past the superstitious thought cancer was caused by horse bites, fungus, eating raw pork and consuming too much salt. There was also the belief that cancer was "badness coming out of you" which is why it was such a taboo subject.

February 7 is Ballet Day. Dance or watch a ballet video.

February 9 is National Pizza Day as well as Boeing 747 Day. Its first flight was February 9, 1969.

February 10 is Umbrella Day which usually doesn't apply in our land of snow.

February 11 is National Inventors Day. There are so many wonderful things just waiting to be invented like edible plastic, wings for our feet, cars that run on water. Put on your thinking cap and invent something today.

February 11 and 12 are U.S. President's birthdays. Abe Lincoln's birthday is celebrated February 12 but George Washington's real birthday is not celebrated on February 11. In 1752 it was moved to February 22, making him 11 days younger. Only in the U.S.!

February 13 is Oil and Gas Celebration Day. Crude oil was discovered at Leduc February 13, 1947 and Oilberta was born.

February 14 is Valentine's Day. Pick up a phone and tell someone "I love you." Because you may not get a second chance. Love abounds in His Kingdom. This is Acts of Kindness Week.

February 15 is National Flag Day of Canada. The new maple leaf flag was first raised February 15, 1965. Live by the leaf.

February 16, 600 AD Pope Gregory the Great decreed "God bless you" to be the correct response to a sneeze, and 1450 years later we are still saying it.

February 17 is Family Day and many families are having a no-phone family day as they put their screens down.

February 18, 1930 Pluto was discovered and it was named by an eleven year old

Oxford girl called Varetia Burney, whose grandfather passed on her suggestion to Herbert Hall Turner, Oxford professor of astronomy. Happy 90th birthday Pluto.

February 19 is National Margarita Day as well as Girl Guides Thinking Day, when they reflect on their principles of sharing, honesty and making a difference in the world.

February 24 is Tortilla Chips Day. Enjoy.

February 25 is Pink Shirt Day. We must end all bullying.

February 25 is also Pancake Eating Day. Eating a pancake today will guarantee your luck for the coming year and prevent you from running out of money or food. The pancake must be consumed before 8 p.m. or bad luck will follow.

February 26 is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Some people give up a pleasure for Lent, like eating chocolate. Others wear no new clothes throughout Lent.

February 29 is a very lucky day. Leap Year has always been considered to be a lucky year in which to start a new project, but choosing February 29 itself as a starting date is the luckiest of all. You are sure to prosper. Children born on February 29 will enjoy special blessings throughout their lives. And single girls who propose today will get a new husband if he says yes and a new dress if he says no, so you can't lose.

## Leap Year

By Joanne Bengler

Rejoice, all you single ladies for February 29th is our day. It only happens once every four years, so we must be prepared to make the most of it.

On February 29 we can propose to any man. If he accepts we have a husband. If he refuses, he must buy us a new dress. It is a win-win situation. We end up with a new husband or a new dress. And with modern text messaging or the internet, you can propose and get accepted or rejected in a matter of minutes. Then if you have been refused, you can go on to the next name on your list and if he refuses, too, you will have two dresses. Keep on going and your whole wardrobe will be replenished with all those lovely new dresses and you'll be able to spend the rest of the year going to fancy places where you might find that elusive Mr. Right.

One lady told me she'd love a new dress but she is terrified

the man might say 'yes'. I must admit I have the same fear.

I decided to take the matter to a lady who's an expert on marriage. She is a wealthy widow who has been married three times. This is her advice: "Marry for money, not love." Here is the logic. Marriage is only until death do us part. When a husband dies you lose his loving presence but he can't take his money with him.

I have no plans to remarry but, following her advice, I see where I could be persuaded. I'm not fussy. Let's say I met a millionaire with no heirs. His looks are immaterial. Bad health and advancing age are acceptable, but he should be strong enough to sign his signature on both marriage license and will. Yes, I just might be talked into risking a proposal. He should provide me with a good quality dress when he declines, but should he accept I would have to marry his money and learn how to live with it. It would be a great sacrifice, but one must keep one's word.

Happy leap year to single ladies everywhere. I hope you get your heart's delight whether it be a new dress or a new man.

# Free speech in small claims court

By John Zapantis

Having the unique gifted ability in always speaking on my own behalf has given me the reputation of having a silver tongue!

Over 30 years ago, I had that incentive in taking on a number of legal challenges in both small claims court and traffic court. I went up against an apartment management company that refused to give me back a damage deposit after I had been evicted and had cleaned my suite, a traffic cop who wrongfully issued out a traffic fine for an old address printed on my new operator's licence ID and a deceptive con artist who wouldn't pay me for 10,000 flyers that I had successfully delivered on behalf of her advertising agency.

My troubles in taking on some of the most deceptive people in Edmonton's public relations arena started back in the late eighties, when my first legal fight took place. I was trying to get money owed to me by Metro Management, who simply refused to give back my \$300 dollar damage deposit.

That problem with management, who felt that they had a right to withhold the damage deposit, originally made its unfortunate origins from a previous incident, the month before. My ex-common law wife had gone on a violent alcoholic rant about wanting to go on her usual alcoholic bender. She grabbed an empty beer bottle from the bathroom's counter and then hurled it forcefully against our bathroom's shower wall. It broke into a million pieces.

That incident cost us an eviction notice, but more agony for me along the way came 30 days later. When I asked for my damage deposit back, the manager of Metro Management, whom I will not name, to protect her identity, refused to honour my right to the damage deposit that was technically owing to me because my suite was consistently cleaned, as stipulated by the management company's apartment tenant's accordence.

So with hungry determination to drive the message home I told the manager that she'd see her day in court, I took their company, to small claims court and soon

was appearing in front of a small claims judge. At one point during the court's session, I laughed to myself, when that management company sent two female representatives to challenge me in a two on one.

After the judge had introduced the disputing parties, the plaintiff John Zapantis versus the Defendants Metro Management, I was given the first opportunity to state my case to the judge.

I made my disclosure to the Judge, as quoted, "Your honour, I, the plaintiff, was given a one month eviction by Metro Management, for a noise complaint filed by several of the tenants, which I understand were in their right about the noise and ruckus caused by myself and my common law wife, who went on a tangent about wanting to go on her alcoholic bender and then hurled a empty beer bottle at our bathroom's shower wall, breaking the bottle into a million pieces, I agree with the eviction, but, the management's tenant's accordence stipulates here that with the exception that the suite is cleaned up after vacating the premises I'm entitled to the damage deposit. After this was completed I went to the manager and she refused to give me my damage deposit."

The judge then lifted his eyebrows from underneath his glasses and asked me to hand over the accordence so that he could read it over for validity.

He replied, "Let me see that, so that I can read it?"

The judge then held up the document, reading it over silently, while his eyes quickly shifted from side to side absorbing the material in front of him.

He then looked over at me, while cracking a flashy smile, and then looked over at the two female Metro Management representatives, while slamming down his gavel, and said, "In favour of the plaintiff John Zapantis, Metro Management please make out a cheque to John Zapantis in the order of \$300 dollars plus court costs."

I was relieved by the whole ridiculous ordeal and looked over at the two female representatives, who were looking a little bit embarrassed by the end result of my case.

This first time at bat while fighting for a claim, now would encourage a trust in knowing that if this were to ever happen again, I'd know there would always be the incentive for a fair claims procedure that could always work in my favour, when wronged by a deceptive party.

Some police officers think they know it all, like in the case of one traffic officer, who driving towards me on the opposing two way lane, suddenly put his cherry lights on signifying that he was now trailing behind me, while racing up to the tail end of my car, forcing me to the shoulder of the road, where I came to an abrupt stop.

I then rolled down my driver's door window, asking him what the commotion was all about.

He replied, "I pulled you over because your front end left light beam isn't working."

I was baffled by his allegation and asked if I could come out of my vehicle to check out the situation of the faulty light. He immediately agreed as I filed out the door, then noticed the front beam that should have been on was completely burnt out. I apologized to the officer, for not keeping a proper maintenance of my vehicle.

He then asked me for my operator's licence ID, vehicle registration and auto insurance policy. I immediately handed over my operator's licence ID, vehicle registration and auto insurance and he took everything away and insisted that I wait in my vehicle so that he could radio all the information in to see if it was valid.

Five minutes later, the officer returned with all my documents and said, "I'm fining you for the faulty light and I'm fining you for not having your current address printed on your new driver's licence ID. Is that agreed?"

"Yes officer, only to a point."

The officer fired off, aggressively shouting out, "What do you mean by that?"

I then confidently replied in a calm tone, "I agree to pay for that faulty light of mine, but I'm not paying for that fine you just issued to me on the inadequate licence ID that was issued out by the motor vehicles branch. You see, officer, during the time that I was purchasing a new licence ID it never occurred to me that the branch failed to see the old address on my new operators licence ID. The said address on this new licence ID is my old address, not the new address where I currently reside. That's not my fault. I wasn't aware of at that time, because I never immediately checked my new ID over, when it was first issued, That's their incompetency not mine."

The officer's face turned a dark red and he grimaced while shouting out at me, "You talk too much and you don't listen

enough. Now you make sure you pay that fine, too.”

I had an immediate answer for his ignorance and said, “We’ll see who talks too much and doesn’t listen when the judge asks you come court time why you never allowed me to explain my side of the story.”

A month passed by after that officer had issued out those two tickets and it was finally our day in traffic court.

The traffic judge started the proceeding by having me come up to the front and allowing me to state my case. I started off by saying, “Your honour, I agree to pay the fine for the faulty front left light beam on my car, but I’m not paying that second fine, because when I went to the motor vehicles branch to have my new operators licence ID revised, they incorrectly printed my old residence address onto the current operator’s licence ID. I put my full trust in them by not checking over my ID carefully, thinking that everything was done properly. I tried explaining this to the officer, who kept insisting that I talked too much and that’s why I’m standing here in front of you with this officer.”

The judge look sternly at the officer and said firmly and loudly, “Is that true constable? Did you not give him the opportunity to explain his side of the story, by telling him he talked too much?”

The officer, feeling embarrassed by my allegation, softly replied, “Yes, your honour.”

The judge then cracked an immediate momentary smile while looking over at me and said, “Ok, you pay the fine for that faulty light, but we’ll dismiss the fine he wrote out to you for that inadequate issuing of that old address that was printed on your new operator’s licence ID, when the Motor Vehicles Branch should have printed the new address on your current operator’s licence ID.”

That solved everything for me and showed me that even a traffic cop isn’t above the law and really helped restore my faith in the legal system!

Finally there was the lady that ran her own advertising agency called Information Network International. The owner and operator of that company was Brenda Moisey during the late 80’s.

I was operating my own flyer delivery business called All Flyer Distributing. The owner of that advertising firm assigned me a 10,000 flyer delivery contract throughout different areas of Edmonton’s inner-city, where I was primarily delivering flyers to apartments and high-rises within that radius.

While always trying to get the trust of my clients for proposed delivery, I’d essentially provide the clients with an area layout of the addresses of apartments and high-rises assigned for proposed delivery, so that they could monitor where their flyers were being delivered.

When the contract was handed over to me by the owner of this company, we had agreed that I’d be paid every two weeks for my services.

Two weeks later I phoned to collect on the accounts and when the owner picked up the phone to answer to my call about making arrangements to pick up my pay for the previous flyer distribution that she assigned me, all she could do was tell me to F-off.

I week later, I completed the 10,000 flyer delivery contract and called her again and mentioned to her that if I wasn’t paid for the flyers completed for delivery in that proposed area, I’d be taking her to small claims court. Right after my challenge to take her to court, she did the same thing as before and told me to F-off.”

The following morning I went to my car to take on a different flyer delivery contract and I noticed my front driver side wheel was flattened. Then, enraged by the sight, I looked to see if the other tires were targeted and my instincts were right. After doing a clockwork motion I noticed the left rear tire flattened followed by the back right tire and then the front right tire to add to the total four tires now all flattened.

I was totally freaked out by this act of aggression. My mind raced to two suspects that were possibly driving the message to me, the first one maybe that weird woman that was staring menacingly at me from her second floor apartment window, after we moved in there the week before when my common-law wife got us our new apartment.

I also picked another suspect, of all people. Brenda Moisey of Information Network International may have been behind this, using this as a scare tactic, sending the message to avoid paying me out for those 10,000 flyers delivered after telling me to F-off while trying to collect on the accounts.

I knew that there would be no possible way of narrowing my theory down to one suspect because both of them seemed to have hated me equally. so I decided not to pass judgement on any one of them!

The day came and it was now court time. The judge announced that court was in session and announced that Brenda Moisey of Information Network International was

not present in the courtroom.

When I told the judge that I had the area layout of the 10,000 flyers that I was assigned by that company and suggested to the judge that if he had any doubts about the flyers not being delivered to the proposed areas, all he’d have to do was go to the area while cross referencing the area layout for delivery with the buildings that I had marked down along with their individual addresses.

The judge looked over at me beaming a pleasant smile and replied, “That’s all right. I believe your word.”

The judge then made an unexpected announcement to the court and said, “It doesn’t seem to me that the defendant Brenda Moisey of Information Network International is present in this courtroom, so I find by default in favour of the Plaintiff John Zapantis of All Flyer Distributing that the defendant Brenda Moisey of Information Network International pay the full balance owing of \$300 dollars for ten thousand flyers plus court costs. We’ll issue out a judgement of certificate to John Zapantis. Case dismissed.”

Despite winning my claim and having a judgement certificate forcing Information Network International to pay out the said balance of what was owing for those 10,000 flyers that I had delivered, I never was encouraged to execute the writs that would have paid me for those flyers, because Brenda, from what I was told from her former employees, never received their payouts as well.

She had packed up and left town and had her new Ferrerro ceased, because she couldn’t continue her payments on this new posh vehicle.

She seemed to have lost everything. My loss was minimal compared to what she was experiencing at the time.

My legacy in writing this footnote of those legal histories of cases that I’ve personally challenged and defeated may one day serve as a reminder for those who may encounter some future legal battle. Small claims is the route to go, when empowering yourself to have that last word in a court of law, when settling the score and for the record!

**HAPPY  
VALENTINES  
DAY**



# What is a minority group?

By Joanne Bengler

I have lived my entire life as a blue-eyed blonde, who is a white English speaking Canadian. I never questioned this until I began writing for Alberta Street News and went to Global Street Newspaper Summits. I really enjoyed Athens in 2016. I was proud to be a Canadian and I loved our image. People of all races were so relaxed around me that when we discussed racist topics they would get their us and them mixed up.

In Manchester I once again enjoyed being a Canadian at the summit. One day I stood at a bus stop with a group of people and a young woman ignored the rest and came up to me to ask, "Can you help me? I'm from the Ukraine and I'm hungry?" Of course I gave her money. I'm a Canadian, after all. One of the English people remarked that refugees from eastern Europe were becoming a nuisance.

Soon after I woke up with a sore throat and went to the local convenience store

for some cough drops. The young brown clerk asked, "Are you from the Ukraine?" I answered, "No I am from Canada."

This was an automatic answer for there were writers from the Ukraine at the summit. Then I saw his look and hastily added, "But my grandparents on my mother's side came from the Ukraine in 2005."

He told me he had already applied to come to Canada so I told him he's be welcome. Then I briefly gave him my family history in Canada. My grandparents were illiterate and came for free land – the ten dollar homestead. My mother's generation learned to read but most never finished high school. My generation got to university. As I spoke I saw the happy hopeful look on his face and realized that in his mind, in a world of us and them, we were on the same side. I will never know if he got into Canada and is one of us now for we never exchanged names. I wish we had for I know that wherever he is, when he looked at the TV and saw Jasmeet Singh running for Prime Minister, I am sure he thought of me as I thought of him.

In Manchester there was a great influx of Ukrainian refugees at the time of the

2017 summit and both the girl at the bus stop and the young store clerk identified me as looking like the refugees. To the people at the bus stop the refugees from eastern Europe were a different race even though they were white. They were unwanted aliens.

I came home feeling very grateful that my grandparents came to Canada and Alberta had so many immigrants from eastern Europe that our features became the norm. In fact I am so race blind I didn't even know how I differ from the western European look. It's strange to think that here I am just an ordinary Canadian but in Europe I belong to a minority group.

At the 2019 Global Street Paper summit in Hannover I was writing about the Nazi concentration camps and realized that's where many of my relatives ended up. My grandmother once remarked we had no relatives left in the Ukraine after WW2 and her brother died while being relocated. I assumed he was exterminated for his radical views. Now I realize it was more likely he was sentenced to die because eastern Europeans with Slavic cheekbones were considered an inferior race just like the Jews and gypsies;

## ***Macho Men don't Die***

By Joanne Bengler

**I bid farewell to my motorcycle**

**I bid farewell to my wife**

**I bid farewell to my family**

**I bid farewell to my life**

**I packed up my saddlebags**

**I packed my mementoes and joys**

**I left you my values and dreams**

**I left you my money and toys**

**I mounted God's motorcycle**

**I rode through the golden gate**

**No time to say good byes**

**I'd been called and I was late.**

**You laid the green sod on me**

**You carved my name in stone**

**On earth it was sad farewell**

**In Heaven welcome home.**

**When it's time I'll come for you**

**Pit stop, dismount in the gloam**

**Then lift you and heart to heart**

**Black and chrome, carry you home**

## **City opens Edmonton Commonwealth Rec Centre in response to extreme cold**

By Linda Dumont

Edmonton Commonwealth Community Rec Centre was opened for emergency overnight housing for the homeless during the January cold snap when temperatures dropped to -35 C. On the first night, 45 people came in from the cold with a total of 233 over that weekend, the largest number on Sunday when 115 sought shelter at the rec centre.

The rc centre remained open as long as was necessary until January 20, when the weather warmed up and will reopen if there is another cold snap.

During extreme cold, call 911 if you see a person in distress, or 211 if the person needs transportation to the shelter.

Pets are welcome at the Rec centre for those who have animals with them. I spoke with one homeless man, who had spent the cold nights at the rec centre with his dog. He said he was very pleased with the way they had been treated. He was even able to use the showers.

## Fiction

# Love in Action

by Sharon Austin

Billy and Twyla looked at each other questioningly. Both were journalism students who worked part time at the Fossil City Gazette; Twyla to gain experience toward a career in fashion magazines and Billy out of necessity. Mr. Patterson, the editor entered; his usual scowl etched even more deeply on his grim face.

"I'm sorry to tell you this but paper sales are down what with people turning to online news, and I will have to let one of you go. Both of you have done a good job so I'm going to make my decision on the outcome of my next assignment. What with Valentine's Day coming I want a story about love; real love not the hearts and flowers kind of foolishness that ends at the altar. Heaven knows that's where your troubles begin."

He was silent a moment and Billy wondered if he was thinking of his own experience. Everyone knew Mr. Patterson was going through a bitter divorce. "Anyway," Mr. Patterson continued, "I want a story about love that will touch hearts."

Twyla smiled confidently twirling the big diamond ring on her finger. "I know all about love, Mr. P, you can count on me."

Twyla was one of those girls who had it all, she was smart, beautiful and rich and she knew it. Billy, on the other hand, lived with his mom in a little house on the edge of town. She was a single mom who had worked hard to give him a good life filled with love and kindness and he'd always had a dog until old Bowser passed away last month. As for romantic love, with all his classes and part time job there was little time left for that.

"This is going to be a tough assignment," Billy thought as he rode his bicycle down the street for home.

Suddenly, Billy noticed a commotion near Green's Delicatessen. Mr. Green was running down the sidewalk waving a big wooden spoon. "Get back here, you Mutt! Stop thief!" he shouted. "That little brown dog ran in here and stole some links of sausage and it's not the first time." he said as Billy stopped to talk. "Last week it was a loaf of french bread and before that some salami." Mr. Green continued.

"I'll see where he's going," Billy said

hurridly as he lept on his bike and took off after the tiny brown speck rushing down the sidewalk. All across town and through the park Billy followed the little dog. For once he was glad that he didn't have a car as he rode across a grassy field toward some old abandoned sheds. Looking around, Billy couldn't see the little dog anywhere, then he heard a "woof" from under the shed. Using the flashlight on his cell phone Billy could see the little brown dog but he was not alone. A big dog with long red fur lay beside him and he looked hurt. Billy crawled in speaking softly and putting out his hand slowly for the dogs to sniff. The little dog had dropped the sausage by the big dog's head and was nuzzling him to try to make him eat.

"You're in pretty bad shape," Billy spoke softly as he saw the dog's leg was broken and he seemed to have a fever. Quickly he called his friend Jim and asked him to come with his truck and bring a sled and a tarp. Together, they carried the dog into the vet's office with the little dog close on their heels. Even as the vet examined the big dog, the little dog refused to leave his side, howling terribly if they tried to take him out of the room.

"Just let him stay," Mary, the vet, finally said. "There's such a bond between these two they could never be separated. The little fellow was trying to take care of him in the only way he knew how. Now that's love in action!"

"Love in action," Billy repeated as he took out his notebook and began to write. The whole time Mary worked to stabilize the big dog he continued to write. In his article he called the little dog Jeff and the big dog Mutt after two characters in an old cartoon his grandma used to read. The words flowed effortlessly across the pages: "Love is not found in pretty valentines filled with effusive verse nor gifts of gold and glittering diamonds or empty words. Valentines will fade, jewelery will tarnish and whispered words of love will fade like morning mist but love in action will never be forgotten. I found an example of this love between the two abandoned dogs I found, which I have named Mutt and Jeff. Little Jeff, although hungry himself snuck into Green's Delicatessen to find food for his injured friend and refused to leave his side." Billy continued to write until the vet touched his arm.

"He's in pretty rough shape, Billy, and I'm going to have to put a pin in that injured leg. It's going to be expensive."

"I've got some savings," Billy said without hesitation. "I was saving for a car but this is more important."

Eagerly he wrote the whole story of Mutt and Jeff, then finished it off with other examples of love in action. He wrote: "Love is the single mother giving up her own dreams to make the best life for her child; love is the parent of a wayward child, always forgiving and believing that child will come home. Love is the husband caring for his ailing wife until the last breath, love is the stranger that stops to change your tire in a snowstorm and when you offer him money he says "just pass it on." Love is the volunteers who give food and warm clothing to those in need. Love is not tough and asks no payment. If one really wants to know what love is we find a good description in the Bible. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast, it is not proud. it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 N IV"

The next day after class Billy walked into The Fossil City Gazette to see a crowd around his desk. Everyone began to clap as he walked in and Mr. Patterson slapped him on the back. "You've done it Billy," he crowed, "Your story and the pictures of the dogs has gone viral. It's been picked up by every paper I know. Someone even set up a Go Fund Me page to cover the vet bills."

Even Twyla was smiling at him. "You won fair and square Billy," she said. "My story on Valentine Gifts is on the last page."

Although many people offered to adopt the two dogs Billy and his mom decided to keep them. As Mutt recovered Jeff was always at his side. One morning Billy noticed that Jeff had snuck out once again and he knew just where he'd be.

"I'll pay for the hot dogs he's trying to sneak out with," he told Mr. Green.

"Are you kidding?" Mr. Green laughed. "Business has never been so good. People are coming from all around just to get a picture of the little thief. Next week it'll be some talking goldfinch taking the internet by storm but I'll ride this wave as long as I can."

Billy smiled to himself as he walked home with Jeff. Love really was an action word.

# Till we meet again

By Angelique Branston, photo by Linda Dumont



## Spot - You were by my side for fifteen years.

I had the privilege of watching you grow up.

Sweet and curious you explored your new home.

Your favorite game was tag, we had to catch you. How you loved to run, and stop just out of reach. You would look back, pink tongue lolling out as you smiled and watched us run to catch you. Much the same way a baby plays go fetch as it continuously throw a toy down and watches expectantly as we reach down and retrieve the toy once more.

You gave warning that there was an intruder in a closet, the woman had run in for safety hiding from someone. So we knew to call the police, and when I thought of looking myself you bared my way. You saved my life. The lady held a knife and was prepared to use it. She relinquished it only for the safety of law enforcement.

You drove the spooks away a night as you cuddled by my side on the bed.

You gave unconditional love.

Similar I think as to how God loves

Unconditional.

You are gone now to roam paradise

You even have a few friends that are waiting for you, Fox and Squeek - two kitties we had the honor of knowing. Squeek came to us beaten and malnourished. He slowly came to know that not all humans were bad. And Fox was the ugly duckling. My son's cat had kittens and when they were old enough we gave them away. All but one that no one wanted. All said how ugly he was.

My sister came to love him greatly and said how beautiful he was. You see his nose was much to big for his face. So my sister adopted him. As he grew his nose stayed the same size and became this cute little nose with a small point. His fur was reddish brown he was indeed a beautiful cat. Fox was an amazing kitty, who wanted to go everywhere with us. When he had the chance he stowed away on trips to the mall and stores, only showing himself once past the door, looking around with curious eyes.

They both became friends with you.

So I know that you are not alone, and will one day greet me as I too return home.

You will be missed

You made my life richer

My constant companion

You were loved

Till we meet again.



## My special miracle

By Norma Harms

A few weeks ago I had to go to the Dyna lab to get some blood tests done. This was on a Friday and I was phoning my bank to check on the balance. I

found out that my rent had bounced. I was so upset I was sitting there crying. A lady came by and gave me a cheque for \$200. She told me I would need the cheque, and left. A complete stranger – a guardian angel?

A few days later I decided to go back to the TD bank, the one I had not used for one and a half years, and open a new account. I told the teller I was an

old member of the TD and she asked me my old address. I told her. She said I had a balance of \$2.76. My account was still open – Praise the Lord! I deposited the cheque for \$200 and there was no five days of holding on it. I could use the money right away!



# To Smile or Not to Smile

By Donna Threlkeld

Ever get to a place where you could smile however no smile comes?

Ever feel so much discomfort and you think you are pushing through however this time you just don't make it through?

Ever been to a place where you realize that if you can just give even half a smile you know your day will be far better?

Well, I have been there and the challenge for me was I was in my head thinking.

As soon as I took that thought and turned it into action the most amazing experiences became part of my day, a part of my journey, a part of my story.

To smile or not to smile is the question that can take your day from just being an average day, to a day that can touch a heart of another and bring such impact!



To smile or not to smile might not be your most important part of your day in your mind however when you can turn that thought to action you can touch the heart of another and bring such impact!

To smile or not to smile is the question that can change your day, can have the power to change someone else's day or even more can change someone else's life.

## Christmas contest winners receive jackets

Story and photos by John Zapantis

There's nothing that feels better than giving the gift that keeps giving, especially when you're given a once in a life time opportunity in playing the distinctive role of public philanthropist. While hosting and creating my own Alberta Street News Christmas Quiz Contest, I had the good experience of giving out two Alberta Street News Jackets to two lucky winners, who answered five skill testing questions that determined their right to these free prized jackets.

The contest officially kicked off between December 1st to December 31st of last year in 2019. I'm happy to say that the two winners are Sandy Hallen from Edmonton who won a Double Extra Large ASN women's jacket and our second winner was Neil Bergen also from Edmonton who won an Extra Large ASN men's jacket.

The contestants were required to phone our Alberta Street News Christmas

Quiz Contest hot line, where they had to correctly answer our five skill testing questions placed in this order, (1) What's Santa's role when sneaking into people's homes? That answer to question one was-Delivering Christmas presents. (2) What goes on top of a Christmas tree? That answer to question two was a star. (3) What region of the world is Santa from? That answer to question three was, North Pole. (4) To finish the lyric in this popular Christmas song, what are the last words that finishes this line in the song, "I saw mommy kissing S-C." That answer to question four was, Santa Claus. (5) What are the items that are under the Christmas tree usually called? The answer to question five was, presents.

This contest giveaway was my way of expressing a sincere appreciation to all of our readers for the support they've given our paper since its inception back on November 16th of 2003.

Again, congratulations to our two deserving winners, Sandy Hallen and Neil Bergen for entering our contest and helping to make it a successful one.



Above: Sandy Hallen won this Double Extra Large women's jacket.

Below: Neil Bergen won this Extra Large men's jacket



# Knock Knock. Who's there? The Working Class

By Timothy wild

If nothing else, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau does have a sharp sense of political irony. His comments explaining the impact his privileged upbringing had on his use of “brown face”, his earnest promise – in 2015 – regarding the inevitability of significant electoral reform, his treatment – as a self-professed feminist – of female Cabinet colleagues Jane Philpott and Jody Wilson-Raybould, the cultural appropriation of Indian clothing en famille, his promotion of the specious concept of two truths in response to #Me-Too, his defence of some of the actions of SNC-Lavelin in terms of providing jobs for Quebecers, and his general constitutional inaction on anti-diversity legislation in Quebec are all examples of the Prime Minister’s essentially Dadaist approach to politics. As a French commentator once lamented, people often fail to see the humour in the “zigs and zags” of politics. It seems Justin Trudeau doesn’t. And, recently he has added another chestnut to his comedic legacy – the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity. Taken together, if it all wasn’t so farcical and absurd, it would be funny. But, obviously, it isn’t humorous at all. It is tragic.

I continue to argue that one of the most regressive and damaging notions in Canadian politics is the lie that we are all middle-class. Yet this notion of us all being in this together provides a certain amount of comfort. We Canadians love the quaint idea that we are all middle-class; from minimum wage workers and reluctant participants in the uncertainty of the gig economy, to the CEOs of large corporations and holders of large amounts of inherited wealth. We are assured that there is a certain level of common socio-economic status that comes with simply being Canadian. We also adore the notion, lingering from the days of the rigid and judgemental Protestant work ethic, that we can improve our economic lot within the large middle-class by working hard, being careful with our spending, and

making economic and political choices that reflect the rationality and desirability of a market economy. However, the focus of the federal Liberals on the prosperity of the putative “middle class” will serve as a brake on the development of the more progressive and transformative social policy necessary for greater inclusion and justice. And this will have negative consequences for the actually existing working classes.

As the American political scientist Barrington Moore suggested, based on his panoramic historical overview of revolutions and the development of subsequent national political systems, “no bourgeoisie, no democracy”. Moore argued that the middle class serves as an engine for economic growth due to its self-interest, but also advocates for a measure of economic redistribution and social rights for the working classes. Perhaps – people still believe in the trickle-down theory I guess. And, I am certainly not denying that a middle class exists. After all, in economics at least, it is a relative term. Income (and wealth) can be divided into fifths, and the third band is reflective of the middle. But objective economic description and subjective political use are completely different issues. For example, a brief issued by The University of Calgary’s School of Public Policy illustrated the fact that the average wealth of this middle income group (assets minus debts) in 2016 was \$573,475. Additionally, as reflected in Statistics Canada data, the median income in Alberta was \$70,200 in 2016 (the Canadian median was \$57,000). The median household income for 2017 in Calgary, according to the Province of Alberta, was \$100,320. Therefore, when we look at these income and wealth figures we can clearly see that the notion of all of us being middle class is completely and utterly false. There is also greater wealth in fewer hands, which further skews the concept of the middle. Nevertheless, we continue to see ourselves as middle class, and this diverts actual attention from the basic fact that, economically at least, many of us are working class. Sure, some of us are doing all right. But it certainly isn’t easy for all of us to pay for the basics of accommodation, transportation, utilities, food and insurance.

This elite based diversion then leads us away from the potential of an organized and aware working class acting as an agent of much needed political change. But

this is what the Liberal Party wants; after all, it is a core element of the capitalist playbook. Antonio Gramsci persuasively argued that elites maintain their power through a combination of coercion and consent. The state has the police, the armed forces and the legal system to enforce their position. And a quick look at history shows that the government is more than ready to use these tools to maintain power, market stability and profit, particularly as an immediate response. However, it is also more advisable, in the long-term, to use more subtle forms to obtain the consent and the compliance of the masses for a system that is clearly not in their best interests. The Romans used bread and circuses. The settler government in Northern Rhodesia used a royal tour by the Prince of Wales. And the Liberals use the idea of a putative middle class. Essentially, as suggested by Stuart Hall, this construction is based on “shared codes of meaning” and “the unwritten cultural rules”. It is not the economics of being middle class that holds such sway as much as the culture of being middle class. The making (and unmaking) of the Canadian “middle class” is a powerful tool and is central in maintaining ongoing income and wealth inequality. The very flexibility of the concept – economics aside – makes it particularly dangerous when it comes to the development of progressive and transformative public policy. This is why it is essential to interrogate the cultural norms that serve as a foundation for the concept of the middle class. Let us not let socially constructed cultural notions mask the true impact and reality of economic inequality.

The hegemonic construction of an all-inclusive middle class is, ultimately, problematic for those who don’t have the financial means to be able to act in a bourgeois / middle class economic fashion. And the constitutional rights supported by a middle class are not necessarily of value when other, basic social and economic rights of citizenship are not available or truly attainable. To my mind what is needed is a focus on the development of the consciousness, capacity and willingness of the working-class to work as an agent for social and transformative justice. Class matters. And it is, lest we forget, the working class who have been the prime movers of social and economic change.

# March, the Month of All Weather

By Joanne Bengner

Welcome to the season of all weather. March may come in like a lion and go out like a lamb or come in like a lamb and go out like a lion, or simply give us a taste of the worst and best of all weather.

March is Epilepsy Awareness Month, Irish American Heritage Month, National Kidney Month, National Nutrition Month and Red Cross Month.

The second week of March is World Glaucoma Week. Once a diagnosis of glaucoma meant blindness but now, thanks to diet, eye drops and surgery, there is hope for all. Have your eyes tested yearly.

March 1 is St. David's Day. He lived on nothing but bread and leeks. Eat leeks and wear a daffodil in honour of the Welsh saint.

March 1 is also World Compliment Day. Victor Hugo said, "A compliment is like a kiss through a veil." Today is the day to tell everyone how much you appreciate them and the good work they do.

March 3 is Cat in the Hat Day. Let your inner child out and read a picture book.

March 4 is a command. March forth, be brave and tackle it.

March 6 the Oreo cookie is 108 years old and as delicious as ever.

March 8 Daylight Saving Time begins. The rule is, spring forward.

March 8 is also International Women's Day. All women must be empowered with self esteem and confidence.

March 9 is full moon and the name for the March full moon is Sugar Maple Moon. Spring has come and the maple syrup is running.

Purim begins at sundown on March 9. Purim, the Feast of Lots, takes place on the 14th of Adar. It is a time of merrymaking, feasting and wearing costumes.

March 9 is also Barbie Doll's birthday. She is 61 and as beautiful as ever. Happy birthday Barbie.

March 12 is World Kidney Day. Once the kidneys were believed to be the seat of feelings as the heart is now. In Britain they still speak of "men of another kidney" and "men of the same kidney".

March 14 is 3.14, PI Day, Enjoy your favourite pie today.

March 17 is the 17th of Ireland, St. Patrick's Day. St. Patrick was kidnapped from Britain by Irish raiders and became a slave. He escaped, but forgave his enemies and returned to Christianize the Irish.

March 19 is the vernal equinox, the first day of spring, when day and night are of equal length.

March 21, the fourth Sunday in lent, is British Mothering Sunday. Girls, who were in service as maids, got the day off to visit their mothers and they usually brought a gift of simmel cake.

March 25 is Old New Year's Day. Celebration lasted until April Fool's Day.

## Matrimonial advise for single men

By Joanne Bengner

1. Don't marry a poor woman. She's after your money. Don't marry a rich woman. You'll earn every dollar.
2. Don't marry a skinny woman. She'll put you on a diet. Don't marry a fat woman. She'll fatten you up and ruin your health.
3. Don't marry a woman with dependents galore. They'll keep you busy and poor. Don't marry a woman with no relatives. There will be no support in times of need.
4. Don't marry a good housekeeper. She'll nag you day and night. Don't marry a sloppy housekeeper. You will never be able to find anything.
5. Don't marry a woman who is too healthy. She will never give you any rest. Don't marry a woman who is too sickly. You'll end up fetching and carrying for her.
6. Don't marry a beautiful woman. You'll live in her shadow. Don't marry an ugly woman. She won't reflect well on you.
7. Don't marry a high maintenance woman. You can't afford to keep her. Don't marry a low maintenances woman. You will be ashamed of her.
8. Don't marry a good cook. You will ruin your health by over eating. Don't marry a poor cook. You will go hungry.
9. Don't marry a famous woman. You will become her lackey. Don't marry a woman who is a total failure. She will bring you down.
10. Don't marry an athlete. She'll keep you hopping. Don't marry a couch potato. You will die of boredom.

Now what does that leave?

## Wild Flowers

By Angelique Branston

*We were never made to live forever  
But are Like the flowers that bloom  
wonderful and beautiful, full of color  
Pink and blue, their scents perfume  
the air*

*Just for the one season  
Full of life and vigor  
Spreading cheer and peace to all that  
are fortunate to come upon them  
To partake in another's life  
To help each other along.  
For just as we are enriched by the  
wild flowers*

*So, too, they respond and bloom  
more  
Their lives are enhanced as well.  
Just a few months, then they send off  
their seeds,  
and they wither and die.  
So let us embrace what has been  
given to us  
While we are yet here  
And take example of the wild flowers  
And try and live our lives in love and  
kindness for all,,man or beast.*



# Christmas meal served at the Mission Hall

By Linda Dumont

My daughter, Freya, and I decided to work at The Mission Hall on Christmas day to oversee the serving of the meal that was put on by Thrive Outreach Foundation. We started work at 10 a.m. and worked straight through until 8:30 p.m.

First, with the help of a few volunteers, we set up tables and decorated, putting on white linen table clothes with a red placemat on each, LED candles and bowls of candy canes. By 2:30 p.m. nearly everything was ready with the dressing prepared, food in the

warming pans, and drinks poured into cups ready to be served.

Volunteers started arriving. Four members of the Jolly Fellows Lions Club, who had sponsored the event, came out to help with serving. Martin was in a wheel chair so we gave him the responsibility of handing out the gift bags as each person walked past the gift table. The gift bags were collected by Alberta Street News from yoga students at the locations where Freya teaches – West End Seniors Activity Centre, and the YMCAs. Some of the students had generously donated a half dozen or more gift bags, each containing personal care items, gloves, treats and whatever else the person decided to add.

Some of the yoga students came out to volunteer as well. One woman brought her friend, who was blind and came with his

service dog. After some thought, Freya gave him and his dog the job of handing out a meal ticket to each person as he or she came in. The person then took a seat and was served at a table.

There were other volunteers as well for a total of 17 people.

The meal was served from 4p.m. until 7 p.m., Everyone worked together very smoothly, and most of the volunteers stayed right until the end to help with clean up and mopping up.

Thank you to all of the people who contributed to make the day a success, to those who donated gifts, or the gift of their time as a volunteer.

**Below: Volunteers at The Mission Hall**





# THRIVE

Christmas Day 2019, Thrive Outreach Foundation brought Christmas to the community at four different locations: Hazeldean Community League, Boyle Street Community Services, West End Outreach and The Mission Hall.

Thank you to all of those who helped to make the Christmas dinners possible, to the volunteers who came out and prepared and served the meals, and to those who donated presents and other items. Yes, the economy did not hold back the generous sponsorship

Thank you to our sponsors

Jolly Fellows Lions Club not only sponsored the Christmas dinner at The Mission Hall, but came out and helped serve the meal. Alberta Street News provided gift bags for all who attended the dinner.

Edmonton South Edmonton Lions Club, Edmonton Mill Woods Lions Breakfast Club and Edmonton Mill Woods Lions Club - yes, all three teamed up to sponsor this event at Hazeldean, demonstrating the motto, "We serve."

Boardwalk sponsored all four locations. Edmonton Office Darlene Dove and team are dedicated and committed to serve for this event yearly, and, yes, that is indeed what they did - professionalism and service with a smile. Nothing but excellence with this team, even while participating in handing out Christmas gifts as well

Families and staff of Meyonohk School teamed up and donated hand warmers.

A huge thank you to the others who donated to make the Christmas dinner possible: Wheaton Family Foundation, Little Potato Company (750 lbs), Arcadia Bar, Refuge Mission House Foundation, Hitek Urethane Global Ltd, Gold Star Jewellers, Bon Ton Bakery, Edmonton Food Bank, Santas Anonymous, Edmonton Eskimos, Dansons, Dan Thiessen and family, Shoppers Drug Mart Bonnie Doon Mall, The Alter Church, Gayle Holyk, South Side Canadian Wholesale, Fusion Fellowship Church, Special Event Rentals, Brian MacPhee, Triwest, Dr. Krista Leitch, DJ Rob Aromin and Calvary Baptist Church.

Jared LaCroix flies in annually from Halifax to serve at this special event. And thank you to all of the other volunteers, who came out to help prepare and serve the meals! For more on the Christmas Dinners by Thrive go to our web page:

[albertastreetnews.org](http://albertastreetnews.org)

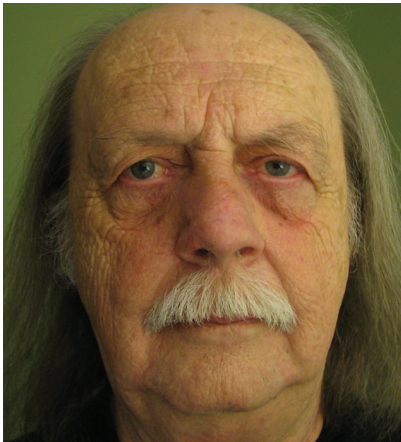
**Below left: The Boardwalk team seared at Hazeldean.**

**Below right: People enjoying their Christmas dinner at the West End Outreach.**





# Memo to Premier Kenney: It's past time for an oil-patch poop patrol



By Allan Sheppard

Someone under 40 might be surprised to learn there was a time in this land when pet-walkers did not pick up calling cards dropped willy-nilly by their charges; nor were they expected to. Let me remind everyone that it was so; that positive change is not impossible; that doing the right thing can still prevail, even in Alberta. Even in Jason Kenney's Alberta.

We once lived—or, depending on one's perspective on the matter, enjoyed, accepted, tolerated, or endured—a culture of impunity with respect to pet feces. We could allow our pets to walk and poop wherever they (or we) wished: on streets, sidewalks, alleys; in parks, playgrounds, schoolyards; in neighbours' yards and gardens; in churchyards and cemeteries; anywhere and everywhere. Few dared complain. Those who did were ignored. Or ridiculed. A few conscientious souls accepted a

civic duty to clean up after their pets and themselves. But they would have been considered eccentric or worse: provocative do-gooders going out of their way to show up almost everyone for what they did and had done forever; too socially, if not quite politically, correct.

I don't recall a specific campaign or incident that made the change happen, but behaviour and attitudes that had been socially acceptable became unacceptable. Dog walkers were expected to “stoop and scoop” their pets' feces and dispose of them responsibly. Those who did not conform to the new normal were now the ones to be challenged or shunned, sometimes even fined by poop patrollers.

Smokers once enjoyed a culture of impunity with respect to the impact of their habit on others: potentially toxic second-hand smoke and cigarette butts everywhere, always an unsightly mess, sometimes a significant fire hazard. That too has changed. Smoking in and near public spaces is discouraged or strictly prohibited, as is the irresponsible disposal of butts and other smokers' trash. We still hear some grumbles about arbitrary restrictions on individual freedoms, but most smokers seem to accept or tolerate what is after all the will of the majority and, as many smokers readily admit, a reasonable limit on an individual's right to impose undesirable consequences of personal choices and behaviour on others.

The lesson most parents try to drum into children—that we are personally responsible for the messes we make, and we must clean up after ourselves—is generally, if sometimes begrudgingly, practiced by most of us most of the time.

Governments, however reluctantly, have responded to community expectations for accountable personal behaviour; acknowledging that legislation, regulation, enforcement, and education are in the public interest.

So why do they not or can they not

do the same for corporate behaviour: legislate, regulate, enforce, and educate: discourage making messes and encourage, forcefully and diligently as necessary, cleaning up any messes that cannot practically be avoided: to meet public expectations in the public interest?

Individuals and corporations are both, after all, persons under the law; but the personhood of corporations, it seems, outranks the personhood of individuals. Especially in Alberta. Most especially in Jason Kenney's Alberta, which is the only one we have—for most of the next four years.

Resource-based industries—mining, pulp milling, petroleum and bitumen exploration and production—have a particularly shoddy record, aided and abetted as the must be to succeed, by compliant federal and provincial governments. They pollute and destroy prodigiously, profligately. They resist cleaning up after themselves on grounds that it is expensive and could undermine their ability to survive.

They deflect and defer responsibility and accountability. When their always finite resource supplies run down or out, many of them shuffle their liabilities to corporate shells or sell out to small entities that lack financial strength even for minimal redress. Some declare bankruptcy, in order to avoid cleaning up or paying up.

Canada is littered with evidence of historic and current irresponsibility in the resource sector and supposedly responsible governments.

Fifty years after Dryden Chemical Company's Dryden, Ontario pulp mill began polluting the Wabigoon-English River system, Grassy Narrows and Whitedog First Nations ([bit.ly/2sp4jxb](https://bit.ly/2sp4jxb)) are still waiting for action to clean up the company's mess and relieve their ongoing exposure to mercury poisoning. Dryden Chemical and successor companies are long gone; the mill is closed; governments drag their feet.



**The short- and long-term costs, including watershed and other damage of the 2014 Mount Polley tailings pond dam collapse in British Columbia ([bit.ly/371b4o3](http://bit.ly/371b4o3)) that have been minimized by the province and the company have likely been underestimated. The ongoing leaching of pollutants from the abandoned Tulsequah Chief mine, also in British Columbia, into the salmon-rich Taku River ([bit.ly/2FLt1Lg](http://bit.ly/2FLt1Lg)) has persisted for decades.**

In 2012 the Supreme Court ruled ([bit.ly/3acj1Zv](http://bit.ly/3acj1Zv)) that provinces do not have priority over other creditors when seeking funds from companies in bankruptcy for environmental remediation, thereby validating a popular strategy for avoiding corporate responsibility and accountability. Closer to home, Alberta may be facing an environmental, financial, and political disaster that makes those I have named and others small change in comparison.

An estimated 155,000 wells, about one-third of the total drilled in every corner of our province, are no longer active but have yet to be properly decommissioned ([bit.ly/38dTYDp](http://bit.ly/38dTYDp)). The corporate owners of the wells are legally responsible for decommissioning them, but Alberta's record in enforcing such responsibilities is abysmal. Add to that the fact that Alberta has collected from producers a fund of only \$30 million against estimated costs that range between \$100 million and \$300 million to close all existing and future abandoned wells: the potential cost to Albertans and Canadians is staggering.

None of which, incidentally, allows for the likely greater costs of cleaning up the so-called tailings "ponds" where toxic collateral pollutants from oil-sand production are stored pending the end of production, when something may (or may not) be done to clean them up.

Our oil patch is arguably a major disaster waiting to happen. Yet no one

in authority seems willing or able to do anything—or even to admit that a clean-up problem exists.

The corporate position is perhaps easiest to explain. We live in a time and place where shareholder primacy is deemed the guiding principle of corporate governance. As stated by conservative economist Milton Friedman, "corporations have no higher purpose than maximizing profits for their shareholders" ([bit.ly/35QsiDa](http://bit.ly/35QsiDa) | [bit.ly/30jG3sK](http://bit.ly/30jG3sK) | [bit.ly/30n55ra](http://bit.ly/30n55ra)). Friedman's disciples accept no social limits; if an action is legal and in the interest of shareholders, corporate leaders must, by their narrow ethics, without exception, be done. Anything that can be done legally to avoid the costs of cleaning up after themselves, has to be done by corporations in the interests of their shareholders.

The operative word here is "legally," and the inconvenient fact is that is that legality in these, as in all, matters is established by governments, through legislation, regulation, and enforcement, any of which may be ignored, modified, or manipulated as governments decide, with or without encouragement by corporate lobbyists.

I do not agree that protecting shareholder interests is, or should be, the only concern of corporate governance. But, if the pendulum has swung to that extreme, surely we have the right, as citizens in a democracy, to expect someone—namely our governments—to look after and maximize our interests and benefits as diligently as corporate managers look after shareholders.

The legal paradox of corporate personhood means that governments must respect corporate rights too. But surely they must maintain a judicious balance. Surely they must recognize that the interests of ordinary citizens—and of the commons in which we all share—must be represented and advocated as assertively as the interests of corporate shareholders, and that governments are the only entities that have the means and the strength to do

that.

Most governments today fall short of reasonable expectation, none more so than the government of Jason Kenney. I have time and space for only one example. But it should suffice. As reported by the CBC (<https://bit.ly/30tiA8r>), "the country's top court ruled (in November last year that) energy companies must fulfill their environmental obligations before paying back creditors in the case of insolvency or bankruptcy." The court effectively negated its 2012 ruling mentioned above, and with good reason. But not good enough for our UCP government of Premier Kenney. The CBC also reports that Kenney has promised the industry he will do everything he can to "mitigate" the impact of that decision.

According to former provincial Liberal leader and MLA David Swann, Alberta now collects around three per cent in royalties, so it isn't clear what Kenney can or will do to mitigate, knowing there will be significant costs. He is already giving away pretty much everything we have in money and leverage.

Will he waive royalties entirely? Will he have the province (us, its taxpayers) assume the costs of decommissioning abandoned wells and cleaning up tailings? From where will the money come for that? Will we simply accept the toxic risks and consequences and let those who should be responsible do nothing? Or will we ask the feds and other provinces to help pay the costs? Any, all, or none of the above?

Who knows?

We can be sure of only one thing: Jason Kenney and the UCP will do anything to cater to the interests of the oil patch and its shareholders. Leaving somebody else—us—to scoop their corporate poop.

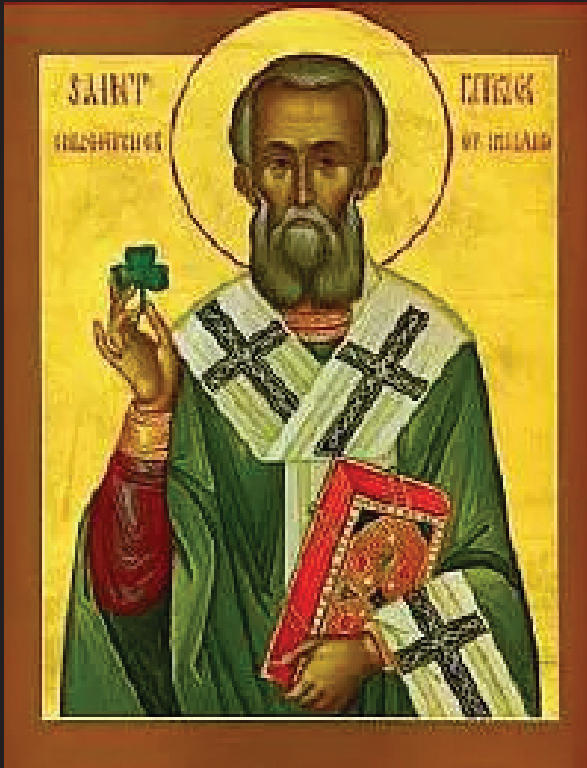
Mother would not approve. Neither would a properly constituted oil-patch poop patrol.

# Street News

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## History of St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in honor of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. Patrick's birth name was Maewyn Succat and he was born in Britain to wealthy parents in the late 300's. He died on March 17, 461 A.D. When Maewyn was 16 years old, he was taken prisoner by a group of Irish raiders who were after his family's property. They took to Ireland where he spent six years in captivity. While a prisoner, he worked as a shepherd alone in the countryside. He turned to Christianity for solace and became a devout Christian. While guiding his sheep, He dreamed of being an evangelist .

## Irish Wisdom and Blessings

By Joanne Bengner

1. Talk is cheap. It takes money to buy good whiskey.
2. There is no road that will lead you past your heart.
3. Money can't buy happiness, 'tis true, but it certainly quiets the nerves.
4. Your feet will bring you to where your heart is.
5. Don't be superstitious. It's bad luck.
6. Don't brag. The little people are always listening.
7. A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures for the doctor's book.
8. If you get a reputation as an early riser, you can sleep til noon.
- 9.. May the saints protect you and sorrow neglect you and bad luck to the one who doesn't respect you.
10. May you have walls for the wind  
And a roof for the rain  
And drinks beside the fire  
Laughter to cheer you  
Those you love near you  
And all your hearts desire.