

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: A Different World!

By Kathryn Wishlow

From listening to all the experiences and stories from my friends and relatives lately, my only response seems to be shaking my head with a pursed-lipped smile. I know I wrote a few months ago that we must try to be flexible, adaptable and “expect the unexpected”. We all know change is inevitable, but the human tendency always seems to lean towards hanging on tight to the way things are, especially when life is going well.

Recently I was visiting my son's family and watching their two tiny humans being offered shiny pouches to suck their food from. The combinations of fruits and vegetables pureed inside were horrifying to me. I could not help but make a weird face when reading the ingredients. Who mixes sweet potatoes with pears and broccoli? Yuk! Never mind that it looks like something one expels when ill. Every pouch had at least three combined foods inside. Why?

I tried hard to keep as bland a face as possible when I asked my son what was wrong with mashing up what we were eating and feeding the kids with a spoon? That is how I fed my children when they were small and it seemed to work fine. I was informed that I did not know much about raising kids nowadays, and that it was a much different world. It took all that I had to not

make a comment out loud.

There are some modern things that are wonderful. The fact that you can FaceTime members of your family that are far away is one good example. This allows you to see, hear and watch children growing and changing even if you cannot actually be there in person. I remember when I was very young, my grandmother would call every two weeks, after nine o'clock on a Sunday, when the long distance rates were the cheapest. My siblings and I each had three minutes (Dad set an egg timer) to talk to her. And, she was always shocked when she came to stay at Easter when she saw how much we had grown and changed. We were also shocked every time we saw her and how much she had aged.

Certainly prices of everything under the sun are not even comparable. I remember my own grandmother shaking her head at how much bread, butter and eggs had gone up in cost since she was young. She remembered when things cost only pennies ... imagine! We don't even have pennies anymore. Too bad, as the antimicrobial properties of copper would be helpful these days. Now I sound like my grandmother when I mention to people that my food budget when I was first married was one hundred dollars a month.

Never mind the cost of our first two bedroom apartment. It was \$250. a month including water, heat and electricity. When we decided that my husband should go back to school to increase his skills, we had to cut back expenses by getting a tiny, basement apartment for only \$150. a month. Now I understand that trying to get an apartment in our town for less than \$1,500. a month *plus* utilities is nearly impossible. That is more than ten times the costs back then! Yes indeed, it is truly a very different world.

To avoid even thinking about how things have changed, I find myself escaping by watching “happy ever after” Hallmark Christmas movies lately. They are totally mind-numbing, unrealistic, and visually pleasing with all of the interesting locations, decorations and beautiful people. After all, “You did not cause this, you cannot fix it, so you must let it go!” as my Dad used to say. I do try ... but much more easily said than done!

(Kathryn Wishlow belongs to White Pine Writers Inc., a local group of like-minded authors who encourage and support all facets of writing and publishing literary efforts. Follow them on FaceBook or www.whitepinewriters.ca)