

## **RANDOM REFLECTIONS: Just Not The Same!**

**By Kathryn Wishlow**

There are many things happening all around me lately that have me raising my eyebrows and shaking my head. Sometimes I wonder if it's just me, or are we all experiencing so many different and sudden changes? Then I share with a friend or neighbour, and I am now starting to believe that in many ways (as progressive as I have become) I am definitely an old-fashioned "traditionalist" at heart.

As an example, from the many friends I have made, the many students I have taught, and the variety of places I have lived in, I have established a list of people I stay in touch with several times a year by "snail" mail. I make a point of spending a few days before the end of November selecting cards with appropriate greetings to write notes in and mail. It is how we "stay in touch". Not all of the people on my list, have kids or even grandchildren nearby who can set them up on FaceBook.

Everyone knows I love to get mail. I send and get much less cards than I used to when I worked in Toronto. But, there are enough coming to the house that I have two strings about five feet long completely filled by late December. Stringing them up was a family tradition passed down from my grandmother to my mother, so I did it too. By

New Years, when the out-of-country stragglers finally arrive, they are placed on top overlapping the earlier cards.

This year, when the mail strike happened, I decided to wait and see when it ended before doing any cards. There might not be time for cards to be received with my holiday greetings and good wishes. Okay, so I saved a hundred bucks in postage. That is not the point. My double row of strings are sitting there with only two cards displayed. The first card my daughter handed to me before she moved to Red Lake the third week in November. The other card was hand delivered by a friend who did me a favour by shopping for me during a snow storm that lasted a few days.

Thinking about snow, I would rather not! So far I have paid more for plowing than I did for the whole year last year. The joke I was making when a friend visited was about looking for a part-time job to pay for snow removal this year. It is no longer a joke! With the layers of rain and freezing rain, the solid banks surrounding my house may not melt until late spring ... never mind trying to find my garbage can lid that disappeared last Wednesday!

The three days of constant snowing did add to the atmosphere for the Santa Claus parade this year. That is one tradition I was really happy to see went on as usual. This year both my granddaughters were bundled up and got to watch it from my front porch. The two and a half year old kept saying, "Santa coming Ho, ho, Ho!" but actually loved the school bus float filled with children the best. The firetrucks blaring their horns were also a big hit.

Although those of us over fifty do keep shaking our heads at how fast things are changing, I do hope we can keep some of the old traditions alive. Sadly, some of my distant friends are so elderly now, they will not be here when next card sending season arrives. Maybe I should send Valentines cards instead to surprise them? A brilliant replacement ... just not the same!

*(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](http://www.whitepinewriters.ca))*