

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: Feeling Fortunate!

By Kathryn Wishlow

Most of us use important time markers such as the seasons, birthdays, anniversaries or holidays to stop and think about times gone by, or ones to come. Because we are nearing the end of a year, I find myself in the mood to contemplate events from this whole past year.

I recently hosted a dinner party where members of the board and their spouses or guests gather annually to celebrate another successful year end. Everyone had contributed beverages, a favourite dish, salads, snacks or a desert tray. After we sat down, hands were joined, and as has always been the custom at every gathering in my house, each person in turn was invited to share something they were grateful for. This always makes you stop and think.

The first person to share was grateful for the ability of the group to work together so well as a team, and be able to even share a precious evening at this time of year when so many other social events are happening. They were happy to have “friends who are family, and family who are friends”. The next person was delighted to be included in this dinner party, and was grateful their personal health allowed them to enjoy a good meal in good company.

That of course, stimulated my mind to think back over my several health challenges that had cropped up over the fall, and in my own mind I silently said “thank you” that I live in a country and province that allows me to get medical issues investigated and solved FOR FREE! Also, I mentally thanked the amazing collection of healthcare workers that had shared their time and knowledge with me ... no matter how long I had waited to get that attention.

Another guest expressed gratitude for arriving at my house safely despite icy conditions and another “no school bus” day because of treacherous back roads. That sent my mind scattering off in different directions, thinking back on the thousands of kilometres I had travelled this year. I remembered dodging that doe in Nova Scotia, narrowly missing the dog on Prince Edward Island, avoiding a massive hole in the road north near Wawa, and my “catastrophic engine failure” south of Madoc. Fortunately, so many challenges had all turned out well, and I silently smiled in thankfulness. While reliving the near misses, I missed what another had shared.

The next person was delighted to have a new person in their life after

losing their significant other several years ago. Of course, that made me think of recent losses I had experienced, which could have saddened me greatly. But, I chose to celebrate having those people in my life instead of dwelling on the hole in my heart. The next person felt the heaviness and made us all laugh with their humorous, grateful sharing.

What staid with me was the last person's expression of gratitude. Just when I was thinking I sure was glad we were not at war, had food on the table no matter how expensive, were warm enough, and had a solid roof over our heads ... He simply said, “I guess I am most grateful that I have enough to be able to share with those who have less”. In my humble opinion, he who spoke last, spoke best!

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