

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: Good to see Unity!

By Kathryn Wishlow

Looking out of the window this morning, it was nice to see the predictions of a substantial winter storm actually manifested. A real “dilly-whopper” as my Dad used to say when we got walloped in Orillia in the 1960's. People were united in adversity and came together to help dig each other out when the drifts were completely over our back doors. As I looked across the street, it made me smile to see the snow piled high on fence posts, resembling gnome hats.

Over and over again in my life, I have seen adversity bring out the best in people. When my husband and I were young, when travelling in northern Ontario, we were pulled off the road and recruited to help. A serious fire was spreading rapidly and contributions by anyone in the area were desperately needed. I was put on the food, refreshment and first aid station while my husband was partnered with a firefighter because he had both axe and chainsaw experience. They had to prepare a firebreak line and start a back-burn to meet the approaching flames. Total strangers teamed up, worked hard together and did whatever was required to prevent the fire from spreading. Blackened by smoke and covered in sweat, and exhausted, we were totally united for a common cause.

When life is going fairly well, people tend to get busy and wrapped up in their own plans and personal issues. Collective camaraderie tends to show up only during sports events or at live theatre performances. However, I have noticed lately that people are paying attention to the insults being hurled north by our trading partner to the south. Hopefully the ridiculous references of inviting us to be the “51st state” have finally stirred Canadians' national pride enough to make them stand together and resist?

The attention has been noticeable on social media in the last couple of weeks. People are sharing which companies are actually owned and operated by Canadians. Because my father was employed by Royal Dutch Shell, I was already acutely aware of foreign owned petroleum. He was ethically against American gasoline many years ago. I was raised to read labels and be concerned about foods imported by foreign countries with lower standards than ours, but packaged in Canada. I saw many people were actually stopping to check labels in grocery stores in the last few weeks.

Even the CEO of Chapman's ice cream products has noticed a 10%

increase in sales since last November, when it is not even the traditional season to indulge in frozen treats. My sister and daughter had sourced their cat food origins in December and switched to a totally Canadian producer in British Columbia. At my business, I had already stopped serving Florida orange juice at breakfast, and served Allan's apple juice instead.

We may be a small country in comparison to our ten times larger southern neighbour, but size does not mean we do not affect others. A swarm of bees, mosquitos and even tiny fleas can cause a much larger animal great aggravation. Their effectiveness comes from their strength in numbers and *persistence*. We can make our point if we are united and avoid buying anything made in the USA for at least the next six months. They will feel it!

(Kathryn Wishlow belongs to White Pine Writers Inc., a local group of like-minded authors whose book “The Art of ... RePurposing Yourself!” is available locally & at Indigo Chapters. More items are coming soon, so follow them on FaceBook or www.whitepinewriters.ca)