

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: January Blues..?!?!

By Kathryn Wishlow

As some of you already know, mid January contains the day that has been dubbed “Blue Monday”. Years ago, I heard that explained as “the most depressing day” of the year. As a person who tries hard to focus on the “positive” as much as possible, in the past, I did not really pay much attention to that particular day as being the cause of depression.

After all, as I got older, there were more depressing anniversaries ...like the day my husband of forty years suddenly dropped dead, or the date my dear Mom passed away. Yes, the social aspects, stresses and celebrations of the Christmas season are finally over. But, mid-January never held any particularly depressing memories for me, or reasons to feel sad.

Of course, last week I had help sorting and putting safely away in the attic all of my special holiday decorations. There is always a lot of nostalgia and past memories stirred up as you handle and carefully pack up those delicate ornaments, plus the hand crafted memorabilia. As I get older, I do experience a brief moment of gloom as I wonder if I will be able to bring them all out again next year...?

But that shadow is soon brightened by the open spaces created now

that the tree is gone, the needles cleaned up, and everything is back to where it fits and belongs. There is also a neat pile of carefully labelled boxes on their way up to the attic. And there is more room on the kitchen table with the holiday lantern gone.

Luckily this year we even had a few mild days last week to easily take down the outside lights. True, seeing coloured lights have always made me feel happy ever since I was a child. In those early days, my parents would bundle us kids up in our pyjamas and coats for that much anticipated Christmas Eve car tour of our town in order to appreciate and “Oooo and Ohhh” at people's displays. I do have a sense of loss when those pretty lights no longer come on at dusk. But then I remember to feel happy knowing my hydro bill will be less!

I truly understand why some folks could have a hard time keeping their spirits up when there seems to be so many endings after the New Year has begun. The mere fact that a person rarely sees a lot of sunlight, and there is not any special event or holiday coming, plus the weather curtails impromptu visits either to or from friends... well it just feels like there is not much to look forward to.

Even the mail does not cheer you up as the regular procession of bills arrive, but no more letters or cards with session's greetings are in the pile.

Everyone I have talked to in the last couple of weeks, dealt with many disruptions and plans that went awry over the holidays. If it wasn't the weather, then it was illness, or travel plans unexpectedly thwarted. All the people I know thought last December was an unusual monthmaybe because we expected life to return to the pre-COVID norm, and it did not? Hmm...

Since nothing seems to be like it “used to be” anymore, I am hoping that “Blue Monday” will not be a difficult time for anybody. My solution to that “blue and empty” feeling is to call a friend or neighbour and make a plan ...something to put on the calendar and look forward to.

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