Published with permission from The Bancroft Times, May 2023

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: Patience is a Virtue?
By Kathryn Wishlow

Most of you might remember the following quotation from your childhood: “Patience is a virtue, find it if you can, often found in woman, seldom found in man!” It is likely no longer politically correct, and very gender discriminatory, but my grandmother used to say it every time she saw me getting frustrated about anything.

Some of these old sayings get stuck in my head, especially when applicable to current situations. Take for instance, the construction on our main street. I must admit, last year I really tried hard to avoid the south half of Hastings Street as much as possible. But, eventually I would break down, take a deep breath (not on a windy day because of blowing dirt) and bravely pick my way towards the TD Bank from a distant parking space. I cringed a few times as heavy equipment thundered past me.

I do realize that progress and change comes with chaos and construction first. That does not mean I have to like it, right? Of course, that project ended right about in front of Ashlie’s Bookstore, where I actually fell last year. Because of my disability, I stayed on the sidewalk until I could catch the owner’s (August) attention, and he rushed to my assistance. Thank goodness!

This year, the construction started in front of that same store. All I can say is, that for a reader and writer like me, difficult access to my local bookstore is most annoying to say the least. “Patience,” I start saying to myself in order to reduce my fury. Grandma would be proud!

Just a few days ago, I found myself saying it again. On my way back from physiotherapy, I was first in a long line that backed up from the lights by No Frills. SIX green light came and went, and I could not cross the intersection. People behind me could not see the problem, and honked or sped angrily past my left to turn, if they could.

I have to admit. That darn saying kept looping through my head as I grit my teeth, and tried to take deep breaths. I could not even open my window as the wind was blowing the sand, and scouring my front windshield. Eventually the traffic ahead of me cleared enough on a green light to proceed around to the next corner. I felt compassion for the person holding the “stop” and “slow” sign as they must have swallowed at least a bushel of sand.

By now, the line up on the opposite side was backed up towards the high school. For the most part, people were leaving gaps for you to turn left. But I decided to forgo my trip to the IDA, and just headed home. “This too shall pass!” was something my mother used to say. And I know that hopefully the benefits of a nice new main street will eventually outweigh the current inconveniences.

I believe the business owners on Hastings Street are bravely counting the days until this project is completed. So am I, although not so bravely. I am trying hard to behave with “patience” like the women in the old saying. I more likely resemble the “man”.

(Kathryn Wishlow belongs to White Pine Writers Inc., a local group of like-minded authors who encourage and support all facets of writing, editing and publishing literary efforts. She was a contributor to the book “The Art of … RePurposing Yourself! Follow them on FaceBook or www.whitepinewriters.ca)