

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: A Fall To Remember

By Kathryn Wishlow

There are certain events that embed themselves deeply in our memories, and help us to remember specific times in our lives. Some are rare and epic in nature, like September 11, 2001 or the COVID-19 years. Some are more personal ... like the year you graduated, moved into a new house, or to a new location. Maybe the first funeral or wedding attended mark a time you will never forget.

Like mile markers on your personal timeline, even weather events take on special importance. Most of us can recall a major blackout from an unprecedented ice storm. Every time I was in Florida, it seemed that somewhere in eastern Canada, some wretched weather was causing mayhem in a major city or area. Somehow, the really negative situations tend to register more deeply with us, than the pleasant ones do.

Perhaps that is because of a chemical reaction in our brain that permits us to store the series of events leading to anything potentially catastrophic ... maybe a form of primal warning for protection. For example, every time a huge lumber truck rumbling past causes my house to vibrate, I am

reminded of the time the earthquake from the Ottawa area affected us here in Bancroft. I instantly become wary, and highly alert. Yet, that was years ago!

I will never forget that day, as my whole house shook. It lasted for minutes. The dishes in my cupboards clattered and items on my counters vibrated until they fell on the floor. The noise was so bad, I wondered if a helicopter was about to land on my roof. I looked out the window to see my huge oak tree violently vibrating as if some giant invisible hand was shaking it. I felt sick to my stomach, and went to lie down but my dog would not let me leave the doorway.

Since my house is built on a huge rock that actually juts into my basement, I felt the effects far more than my mother in Bird's Creek did since her house was built on sand. That completely deadened the vibration of the quake for her. So I guess you have to take into consideration that everyone experiences the very same event, quite differently. It depends on where you are, or even how sensitive you are. This is why we need to *not* judge another person's reaction to stress.

This September and October will

stay in my memory for more positive reasons. The weather has been exceptional. But, not a year for spectacular colour like the fall of 2020. All through my travels from here to Sault Ste. Marie, there were lots of rusts, burgundies and yellows. Even the sumach bushes were a pathetic, dull colour instead of the usual flaming red. Only the plentiful pumpkins provided the best orange shades this year.

My flowering bushes came back again and again. No really hard frost fell until the week before Halloween. And, was this not one of the mildest Halloween nights you can ever remember? The children that came to my door were excited, very polite, and sported some of the best original costumes I have seen in years. There were no chattering teeth and chilblained hands clutching treat bags. Best of all? It was over by 7:30 p.m. as a torrential downpour ended the evening. Yes, this was certainly a fall to remember!

(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. Follow them on FaceBook or www.whitepinewriters.ca)