

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: Over Already?

By Kathryn Wishlow

Summer is definitely waning fast. The signs are everywhere ... tree leaves are already turning colour a bit further north of us. I don't know about everyone else, but I think I might still be waiting for the rest of summer to happen? Sadly, with all of the smoke particles in the air in the last few months, constant precipitation prevented us from experiencing a lot more of those "hazy, lazy days of summer". That rain left my outside plants quite happy of course, but not me!

Back when I was in high school, we lived in Toronto. The beginning of the Canadian Exhibition was the most recognizable signal that summer was on the home stretch, and within two weeks, school would begin. For me, that was always exciting ... a new grade, new teachers, old friends plus a few new ones. I always loved everything about the autumn. Thanksgiving was only a month away ... Halloween and Christmas not long after that!

For my poor parents, the summer had sprouted taller kids with bigger feet, and shoe shopping had to be planned. My parents were teachers, and back in the "olden days" they only got pay cheques once a month

for ten months. So imagine their dread at reaching the end of the summer holidays, with no income until the end of September. Therefore a quick trip to my grandmother's house for some "back to school" funds for the bare necessities was inevitable.

I have not had to get my kids ready for school or university in over ten years. I miss it! I look longingly at the colourful backpacks and lunch boxes, pencil cases and binders, the pens, pencils and coloured pencils, rulers, erasers and blank notebook paper I see in the stores everywhere. I must confess, sometimes I do purchase a few things ...

I even still have my first calculator that I bought for five dollars the year they were finally allowed in schools! It was a cutting edge, solar powered, magic tool, and it is well over fifty years old now. It works perfectly, and I never had to waste my allowance buying batteries. I suppose the children use their cell phones to get all of the answers they need nowadays ... as long as they are charged!

Just for fun, I asked a young boy last week at the grocery store, if he was

looking forward to a new school year. He said "yes" and proudly announced he was going into grade three. I recognized that big grin and shining eyes. Once upon a time, I had them! Without the stress and worry of exams, he still loved school. Then as his mother rolled her eyes, he just had to show me his new school shoes. That small incident took me back to my own childhood where the interest of any grown-up in any part of my life, was very special.

Then comes the realization, that not only is another summer nearly over, but long gone are my happy "back to school in September" days. It brings a bit of nostalgic sadness, like the ending of a really good movie, or book. So many seasons and events in our lives feel like "forever" going through them ... until they are gone. Hmmm ... I wonder if I just need a new pair of shoes?

(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)