

## Random Rumbings

by SHERALYN ROMAN

It's been a little while since I've indulged the spinning inner hamster wheel that is my mind. I occasionally write a series of random rumbings for no other reason than the random parade of thoughts in my head just becomes too loud to ignore. Like any good parade there is a myriad of participants from fantastic-sounding marching bands, to goofy clowns and beautiful themed floats. Such is my column today ? a virtual parade of random thoughts, some beautiful and some not, but all of which I just couldn't ignore. None alone are ?full column worthy? but strike me as important enough to not be ignored ? surely, I can't be the only one who experiences such random rumbings?

While out and about running errands recently, I left the house without my phone. Had I been a pre-teen or teenager, first it would never have happened and second, such an oversight would have necessitated an immediate return to home base. As for me, I smugly reasoned that I could do without it for a few hours and that in fact it would do me good to be alone with my thoughts.

Hence this column ? you be the judge as to whether I should ever again be allowed to be alone with only my own thoughts for company!

But actually, here's what really occurred to me: when I realized that I did indeed need to make a rather important phone call, I discovered there are no longer any pay phones, anywhere. Not even in the hospital. Embarrassingly late, I now realize there are folks without access to a cell phone and if they need to make a call, there are no community resources available to enable them to do so. How do they connect with needed resources, make an emergency call, or maintain a connection with a vulnerable senior, their teen or pre-teen while at school or work?

It occurred to me how much we take for granted that with a cell phone we can text or call literally whenever we want or need to, and also that the person receiving the call or text has equally easy access to technology to answer us.

As for everyone else, it appears they no longer even have the option of paying for the privilege of using a pay phone. They simply don't exist.

Speaking of lack of access, I mentioned the hospital in the previous paragraph. This past week, it featured prominently in my life and part of the reason it did so was because it appears walk-in clinics no longer accept walk-in patients! Like - ever. Post pandemic, this is my second rodeo attempting to take a sick family member to WALK IN to a walk-in clinic. On both occasions, in two separate towns and with multiple attempts at various locations, we discovered no one takes walk-in appointments anymore.

We were told variously; ?You need an appointment,? ?That doesn't qualify,? or as in one case, the doors were locked even though the sign was flashing open and people were inside. The best line we heard from one staffer was, ?You should go to the hospital, what are they going to do, refuse to see you?? Because this has now happened to me twice I'm left wondering whether our provincial government is purposely trying to overwhelm the hospital system to the point of collapse, and if so, why? Perhaps so Doug and Sylvia can swoop in ?to the rescue offering a quick fix, for a price? Pay per visit hospital care for those with a valid credit card ? coming soon to a hospital near you?.

And why would we even need pay per visit hospital care when the Financial Accountability Office announced this week that the Ford government is sitting on approximately \$22 BILLION in unspent funds? Just think what the money could (and should) do for health care and maybe education. Just think where that money was supposed to have been allocated. Just think what those long-forgotten mandate letters must say about all that money?.

Yet more random, and decidedly more furious ramblings, relate to the recent transfer of a heinous criminal whom I won't even deign to mention by name, from a maximum security facility to a medium security one. Why is this even a thing? Why does anyone think

he deserves anything other than rotting, alone in a maximum security prison cell, for 23 hours a day, 7 days a week for the rest of his life? Seriously.

In happier news, for many at least, it's Fathers' Day this weekend. Don't get him a tie. He never wanted a tie, no one even needs a tie for work anymore (if they ever did!) He wants you ? your company and your attention. Visit your Dad. Talk to your Dad. Spend time with your Dad or the person in your life who is a father figure to you because that's what they really want and when they're gone, they're gone. I miss mine. Every. Single. Day.

Finally, after a parade of clowns, poorly designed floats and not a marching band in sight I'll leave you with one final random rumble, a quiet one now and one that I sincerely hope doesn't become louder in the future, as in blasting quarry loud. Alton - how do I love thee? Let me count the ways. Awesome neighbours who bring you cake - CAKE! Quaint cafes, restaurants and antique mills housing artisans. Water views, lovely trails and a fancy spa nearby plus - a complete absence of traffic. Let's hope quarries aren't allowed to ruin it.