

What a wonderful world...Welcome to The Pas

In light of the Covid-19 Global Pandemic, I must say that the first half of 2020 has caused me to sit back, pause and reflect upon my own life. My reflections have been about what it means to me to continue to live in the North, specifically in The Pas.

I moved to The Pas in March 2007 for employment. I accepted a position with the Provincial Government of Manitoba. My initial task as the Provincial Coordinator was to manage, coordinate, oversee and roll out the Triple P Program (Positive Parenting Program) in communities above the 53rd parallel in Manitoba. This included the First Nations communities, on and off Reserves and Métis communities. Although I lived in Winnipeg, it made sense for me to move to The Pas, given the fact that I was going to be traveling throughout the North on a regular basis.

Fourteen months ago, I retired from this position. I am still living in The Pas as I feel the Town has become home to me. When I was working I travelled a lot; my home was a place to rest up, do laundry, and pack my suitcase for the next mandated adventure. In truth though, it is only now as a retired individual, that I am truly experiencing what it is like to be a full time resident of The Pas.

I would like to reflect and share my past observations and experiences in Town. I have seen changes and other things

flourish, as well changes/ losses of historical landmarks such as the Town Center and the Hawaiian.

One of my pastime pleasures is driving in and around The Pas to see what's new and what's happening. I remember when I first moved to The Pas, the many floral baskets hanging up and down both sides of Fischer Avenue. Service groups were hired to look after the flowers. My thoughts were how pretty, inviting and fragrant those flowers are. They showed a sense of community pride. It has left me questioning... Where have all the flowers gone? I think that having greenery and colourful flowers cheers people up. It kind of makes you want to smile more and is an inexpensive way to brighten our downtown core and beautify our community.

I'm not sure what this Town wants to be identified as. I think at one point in its history, The Pas was a mining town and a Trappers community. Is it still? Or is it time to re-build or re-brand the appearance of our Town?

My observation is that there definitely is more vacant land lots on both Fischer Avenue and Edwards Avenue where there once stood an historical hotel, and a restaurant, now sit vacant lots. So this brings me to the next question. Is our Town shrinking or expanding? I often find myself wondering what we could possibly do with those empty spaces?

At the same time we appear to have a growing population of newcomers in The Pas. I rarely see our new neighbours out

and about Town. I see many new shop owners, some work in our hospital, in the hospitality industries, child care centres, UCN, health and social services etc. I have often wondered... What do they do for recreation? Do they feel safe and welcome or are they fearful to venture out because of our differences in cultural beliefs, language and our appearances? I'm curious. Maybe when the threat of Covid 19 has passed, we can organize a community event to show case Folklorama activities. We could think about creating a community "Show and Tell" or even a quiz that residents can participate in where we ask each other questions. Then we have an opportunity without fear or reprisal to create awareness of our cultural diversity and make everyone feel safe, respected and valued as a resident of The Pas. Positive change happening in our community. Is this something we can think about doing?

A song lyric comes to mind as I sit and reflect, "who are the people in your neighbourhood. They are the people that you meet when your walking down the street, they are the people that you meet each day". Yep if that sounded familiar it was from Sesame Street. Welcome to The Pas.

Since retirement, I find myself thinking about doing things that until recently I have had to push to the back burner. Now that I have more time on my hands, I am trying new activities. I signed up for a yoga class which was totally new to me. Well I must say, I absolutely love it! I started practicing yoga at the Aurora Sacred Healing Centre. I had no idea that my yoga class could help me feel better about myself and increase my

physical strength and flexibility. I wonder how many more hidden gems in The Pas that are out there that I have yet to discover.

I have also reflected on the communication level with our elected officials. I would like to see more dialogue between community residents and Elected officials. Possibly pick a topic and discuss it at length. It can start with this conversation: “what two things are working well, make a list, followed by “ what can we do differently “. I feel that together with an open honest conversation and a plan of action, we can generate positive change.

Communication and action can provide results. I have seen this in my Northern experience. For example, the three communities working together on ideas and projects. Open communication between all three leaders and the people who reside within these communities. Let’s continue to practise this and watch it trickle into other communities.

My wish is to leave you with a verse from one of my favourite songs:

I see trees of green, red roses too, I see them bloom from me to you and I think to myself, what a wonderful world...

It sure can be!!

In kindness,
Louanne Beaucage
