

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: Travel Plans ...Surprise!

By Kathryn Wishlow

Everyone who knows me understands that planning road trips is one of my favourite things to do. The best part? Choosing the destination. Every year, as long as I am able, going to thoroughly explore another part of Canada has become a happily anticipated adventure.

Before COVID struck, we had already decided to meander west again with Drumheller, Alberta the specific target of our journey. My sister and I have always been interested in geology. Anything to do with rock formations, crystals or fossils, has always fascinated us. Needless to say, the pandemic limited our roads trips to Ontario stay-cations. No dinosaur bones for us!

Last year we made the decision to finally go west in 2024. Roadmaps were ordered from CAA. Yes, we still prefer having paper in hand, instead of counting on any electronic device. Their accuracy and dependability has proven to be very unreliable in the past, so now we only use GPS or Google maps as back up. Besides, we like to use a highlighter to document the route actually taken as opposed to the route originally intended.

Another trip to cover the east coast of New Brunswick, driving over to Prince Edward Island on the bridge, and back on the ferry was also planned. Exploring the entire

perimeter of Nova Scotia and possibly Cape Breton Island before returning to Ontario was intended. That trip was thwarted last fall because of all of the devastating fires. Hotels and other accommodations were full of people who had lost their homes. We decided to postpone going until this year.

My daughter and her husband were going to a wedding in Newfoundland this summer, and they seemed really interested in our eastern route. That surprised me since I would have thought our fossil trip west would have been more important to them, given their interests. I explained our intended route carefully.

“Not going over to Newfoundland while you are so close?” she asked several times, and several different ways over the last few months. I assumed it was because they were going to be there in August and were hoping we could connect. They knew I had absolutely loved it when we had been on “the rock” together ten years ago. I had expressed back then, the wish to not only return someday, but with the whole family.

My recent family birthday party included four gifts with cards, numbered in the order that I should open them in. Box one, had two small containers of Old Bay seafood

seasonings inside. Number two contained a yellow rain hat to match my slicker. The third box had the “Newfie Dictionary” and the last one had a stuffed puffin inside. The theme was obvious, right?

Yahoo! Tickets to the upcoming “Come From Away” musical I had tried to see before, but it had always been sold out! I was delighted! But, THAT was NOT the surprise!? My kids had rented a huge house overlooking the Atlantic ocean from all sides. The whole family is flying to Newfoundland for a memorable week together ... my wildest dream come true! Views to die for from every window, day excursions together, cooking and consuming a plethora of seafood, nightly games when the little ones have gone to bed, a fire pit out back, and surrounded by a deck to sit on no matter where the wind is coming from ... fantastic! Only ninety-nine more sleeps until we leave ... I counted!

(Kathryn Wishlow belongs to White Pine Writers Inc., a local group of like-minded authors who encourage and support all facets of writing and publishing literary efforts. Follow them on Facebook or www.whitepinewriters.ca