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Life

Life Editor: Angela Stubbs

Homes hold own Stampede parade

ANGELA STUBBS
Of The News

It's a couple of days before the citizens of Medicine Hat flock downtown for the annual Stampede Parade.

Amidst chatter and laughter the residents and staff at Sunnyside, Haven and Garden Homes gather in the Heritage building adding last minute touches to costumes and floats.

However, they're not for the big parade, they're for the homes' own annual parade.

This is one that very rarely makes the news but it's been a special event for residents and staff for the past 10 years.

It's one of the highlights of the year and the residents just love it, says Shirley Moss, director of nursing.

Starting in May the staff brainstorm, bring in bits and pieces from home and sort through a variety of costumes.

It's always filmed and each year interest is raised by a special showing of the previous year's parade.

The scene was also set in June during Senior Citizens' Week when the home held Pioneer Days. Residents dressed up and recalled bygone days while they made butter and ice cream.

The recreation department at the homes organizes the parade.

"Every department has to enter and every wing. Even administration gets in on it," says Moss.

No one knows what the other's entry is going to be.

An invitation to enter is always extended to Central Park Lodge, the Auxiliary Hospital, Extended Care and Adult Day Care.

There are others invited to take part on a non-competitive basis and this year there was a representative from the city police and fire departments. Sherry Crocker and Leana Hayward, the Medicine Hat Stampede Queen and Princess plus Miss Rodeo Canada, Cheryl Robson joined in the fun. They were accompanied by Laurie Sharland, the Stampede Queen contest co-ordinator.

The children from Cornerstone summer camp took part as did a group of baton twirlers all neatly dressed in purple and white and a couple of boys from the BMX Club. There were clowns galore, a few 'exotic' animals, a decorated car, and an antique car.

Residents, staff, family and friends lined the route showing their appreciation enthusiastically as teepee cleaners, candy monsters, a gingerbread house, a decorated roller skate, a birthday cake wishing 101-year-old James Stenabough a happy birthday, and various other decorated people and modes of transportation passed by.

Prior to the parade a stampede king and queen are chosen. This year it was Peter Mykityshyn and Marion Fryer.

There are prizes awarded to residents and staff only. Each entry is a surprise and Moss says they surprise themselves with the ideas they come up with.

The resident winners this year were the Haven of Rest with their covered wagon and rose bedecked wheelchairs, and Central Park Lodge with their train of wheel chairs carrying storybook characters.

The winning staff teams were housekeeping with their sanitation float, the night staff with a 'patient' all tucked up in bed, and nursing with their assortment of 'injured' persons. Maintenance's Amos and Rasmos received honorable mention.

GINGER BREAD HOUSE — Joanne Redpath, left, 'cooks' in the pot while the wicked witch, Joanie Whittemore, travels on foot instead of broomstick alongside the ginger bread house entered by the dietary department at Sunnyside Nursing Home. The house was the department's entry in the home's annual parade this week. The 11-year-olds are friends, Joanie's mother works for the department.
— News photo Chuck Nisbett

Dr. W. Gifford-Jones

Victims of crime

Several weeks ago I wrote that violent crime leaves victims with psychological affects-effects. That it can interfere with a person's ability to lead a normal life following a personal attack. That some victims experience overwhelming helplessness and isolation.

I questioned whether weak, un-enforced laws were triggering this recent epidemic of crime. And readers from across the country responded with strong opinions.

A reader from Windsor writes, "Thank God you wrote this column. My 84 year old Aunt was capable and living alone. But after an intruder forcibly entered her home she was found wandering outside in the pouring rain. She was never again able to care for herself and died two months later in a nursing home. To me that intruder was a killer."

From Toronto," How encouraging to see a doctor tackle this serious affliction in our society. We need less research, fewer committees and boards and more common sense. When a deviate rapes and kills two or three times and is released again, the real criminals are the ones who let these killers loose. For armchair humanitarians I have this advice; take a trip to Saudi Arabia and see how the loss of a hand for stealing curtails the crime rate."

Numerous letters condemned the leniency of the court system and suggested a return to lashing. A reader from Walkerton, Ontario says, "Canadians have been confused and dismayed by a court system that is strong on mercy and weak on justice. A former governor of the county jail stated that he had never seen a person who received the lash return to court. And a man who received ten lashes, five at the beginning of the prison sentence and five at the end, said that the dread of the last five never allowed him to forget where he was, and what for."

I received numerous letters from parents whose daughters had been raped. One said, "Our daughter was raped while attending university. She suffered facial fractures and it was feared for several days that she might lose an eye. She then developed peritonitis and required emergency surgery. The operation saved her life but she will never be able to have children. The mental effect was even more disastrous. She was unable to be alone with men for several years. And for a long time she was in and out of the hands of psychiatrists."

The father continued, "We know all about the post-traumatic stress disorder that you mentioned in the column. Being a doctor I could have written a book about it. I won't weary you with a long recital of steps in the judicial process. But I wonder how often lawmakers stop to think that the trauma from such a crime affects the whole family."

A dissenter wrote, "I'm aware of the mental distress caused by crime. But punishment is not a deterrent. Petty crime in Belfast is dealt with by beatings and knee capping. Yet criminals carry on the same as soon as they can hobble about."

There wasn't much to laugh about as I read these and other letters. But one woman from Vancouver sent along a novel idea. She suggested that since the majority of criminal attacks, incest, child and wife abuse is done by males, perhaps a daily dose of estrogen for the perpetrator might have a beneficial effect.

What surprised me was the number of people who sat down to voice an opinion on this issue. And the depth of their psychological scars. One woman expressed a feeling that was shared by many other writers. She said," I moved from Winnipeg to Nanaimo, B.C., 11 years ago. In that 11 years I've been robbed four times. Thieves have taken all my mementoes gathered over 21 years of marriage. My son was killed in a car accident and now they even have the ring I gave him. Even my sons ashes were touched."

She continued," These thieves who entered my home have left their ghosts behind. I'm now leary every time I put my key in the door. I find it hard to sleep at night. Is it right that I'm the one who is paying the price yet I was the victim? One of the thieves was caught and I suggested he split the wood pile I'm working on. But there's no way that would happen."

Ann Landers

Stopped cold by letter

Dear Ann Landers: I was stopped cold by the letter from the woman in Kalamazoo whose mind snapped and she felt the urge to kill somebody. Anybody. Her psychiatrist said her sudden impulse was the result of years of bottled-up rage against her mother first, then her husband.

I was married to a man who paid absolutely no attention to me after we returned from our honeymoon. He refused to touch me, let alone have sex. I was treated like some sort of loathsome creature who had a contagious disease. If my hand accidentally brushed his, he would jump a foot.

One evening as I was preparing supper, I walked past him and my face touched his. He shouted, "Get away from me!" I was holding a carving knife at the time and was seized with the sudden impulse to stab him in the back. As much as I hated the man, such a thought had never before crossed my mind.

By the grace of God I pulled myself together and put the knife down. But when I read that letter in your column I remembered how close I had come to plunging the knife between my husband's shoulder blades.

Thank the good Lord I am out of that marriage now and seeing a wonderful man. I can't tell you how closely your column mirrors life and how much I've learned from it. Please keep writing for many years to come. — Grand Rapids Woman

Dear G.R.: Thanks for those kind words.

Congratulations for getting out of that miserable marriage and turning your life around.

Dear Ann Landers: Please help me save a friendship of 30 years. My friend has become deeply religious, which is her business, but she is now trying to convert everyone she knows.

Our children (three teenagers) leave when "Mrs. X" comes to the house. My husband has threatened to throw her out. I know she means well, but we are comfortable with our religious beliefs and have no interest in joining her church.

I have told Mrs. X as politely as I can that we don't want to hear any more about her new-found faith, but she is obsessed with the subject. I'd welcome any suggestions, Ann. My patience is wearing thin. — On the Ragged Edge in Ohio

Dear Edge: Obviously you have been too polite. It appears as if you are going to have to tell Mrs. X that the next time she starts to talk about religion you will ask her to leave. Then do it.

'Natural' toothpastes few contain fluoride

Scripps Howard News Service

Going "natural" in tooth care appeals to a lot of people who follow the same ethic in their diets, but there are reasons to be careful.

Health-food stores and some supermarkets and drug stores have been stocking "natural" toothpastes that feature plant ingredients such as herbs, seaweed, eggplant — even tree bark. The idea is to provide an alternative to standard commercial toothpastes containing dyes and preservatives, which many consumers want to avoid.

The problem is that few of the alternative toothpastes contain fluoride, which prevents tooth decay. Dentists call non-fluoride pastes "cosmetic" because they merely clean teeth and remove stains.

People who brush and floss their teeth thoroughly every day might be able to prevent cavities merely by cleaning their teeth. But most need the help of fluoride because "cleaning the teeth impeccably is very difficult to do," according to Thomas Schiff, a preventive dentistry specialist at the Washington University School of Dental Medicine in St. Louis.

The majority of American communities put fluoride in public water supplies, in small enough quantities to help protect teeth without affecting the rest of the body. But that may not be enough to do the job, especially given how little water most Americans drink today.

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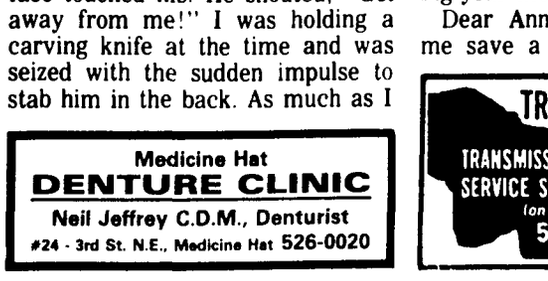

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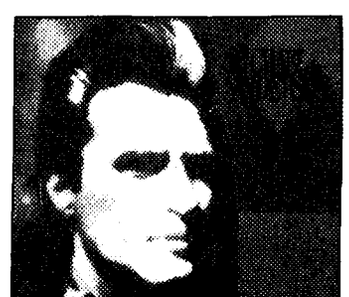

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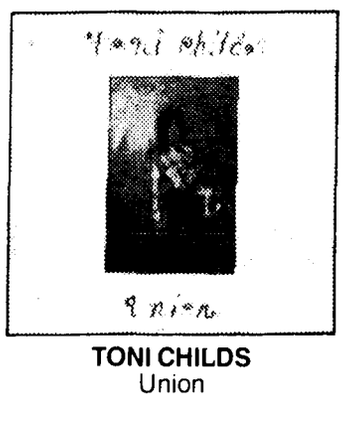

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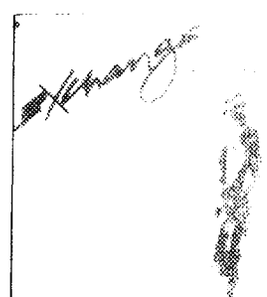

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