

Thinking of thanks



By Nate Smelle

WITH SMOKE POURING from under the hood of my car I sat by the side of Detlor Road searching through the previously unopened owners' manual looking for the solution to the problem-at-hand. Flipping through the pages from front to back I could see that the answer I was seeking was not here. Unsure of my next move I raised my hands to the sky and prayed for Jesus, Allah, Buddha or any other saviour that may have been listening to swoop down from the clouds and fix my car.

While waiting for a response I remembered that it was Thanksgiving weekend.

?Lots to be thankful for today,? I mumbled to myself sarcastically.

As frustrated as I was with the situation my vehicle and I were in, deep down I was still grateful for all of the adventures we had gone through together. Purchasing the vehicle back in 2006 with 92,000 kilometres on it, the odometer registered just under 360,000 kilometres when the wheels stopped rolling. That's two thirds of the distance between here and the moon.

Thinking of the moon I noticed the sun was shining, the birds were singing and? the car had stopped smoking. All of a sudden I snapped out of the funk I was in.

There is always a lot to be thankful for when you take the time to think about it, I thought.

Engine cool, nerves now calm I hopped back in the car and turned the key.

Starting on the first turn I hit the gas right away in the direction of home. Almost at my destination I felt the power sputter again as I crawled up the slight incline of the driveway. Losing momentum as the engine died, I rolled back down the hill until I came to stop again on the side of the road.

Engine and nerves unsettled again I got out of the car and counted the steps from where I was and where I needed to be.

So close, yet so far.

Looking at the mounds of books and camping gear filling the car's interior I cringed at the thought of lugging trip after trip of gear a couple hundred metres up the hill. Not a big deal really, but still an un-needed annoyance at the end of a long day.

Unpacking my vehicle along the roadside I heard footsteps and a voice coming from out of nowhere. Temporarily blinded by the setting sunlight shining down the driveway, I could see the silhouette of a long-haired bearded man emerging from the brightness? It was my neighbour Hec offering his assistance.

Seeing that I had more than a few loads to carry up the hill he brought with him a cart to help me transport my things to the house. Good people? that's what/who I am thankful for most this Thanksgiving. The people who give their time and energy to others when they are in need; the people who go out of their way to make this world a better place for everyone; these are the people I appreciate most. Without them, all we would have left are the vile and loathsome parasitic scumbags sowing seeds of misery and mistrust to feed their own delusions at the expense of the health and happiness of those around them.

Turning the pages of Barbara Gunter Anderson's new book *Flames of the Past* it appears this communal spirit that resides in my friend and neighbour next door is not new to the area. Without White Duck, would there be a Gunter?

Without such unconditional, compassion, goodwill and mutual gratitude in the hearts of our neighbours would any of us be living here today?