

# Pandemic Thanksgiving



by Erna da Burger Fex



It's 2020 – a year like no other we have ever experienced. However, on this Thanksgiving Day there are still many things for which we can be grateful in our lives this year.

Speaking personally, I am thankful that my husband and I still love each other after 57 years of marriage. Fortunately, we are both in good health, certainly a reason to be appreciative. The annoyances of old age such as hearing aids and glasses, and for me occasionally a cane, are not huge problems. But – wearing a mask, hearing aids AND glasses have caused each of us to lose one hearing aid. As we must remove our masks several times daily, inevitably at least one of those aids dislodges from an ear. Bet those of you who don't need to wear three things behind your ears have ever thought of that! I have stopped wearing earrings, just one more thing to worry about losing. (Alex never wears them either – in fact, he never did! Really! Think of it what a problem they'd be under his hockey helmet – I'm kidding – of course, I'm kidding!

My husband has begun to play hockey again several times a week. At his age of 79, that's a blessing for him, and for me, as it gives me some time to myself to clean (sometimes!) **read**, **write** or do whatever I want. You know what, Alex and I still like each other – most of the time anyway. Sunny days always make me happy. Dark days, not so much but even so, those days make me enjoy the sun so much more.

Our three daughters and their spouses are happy, productive and healthy. The five grandchildren they have given us are precious and provide us with joy whenever we get to spend time with them. We also have a wonderful great grandson who will soon be 11 – hard to believe! He and his mom Emily live closer to us and we are happy about that as we are able to see them more often. We must visit with them outside but at least we get to chat. Our caring granddaughter Rachel calls regularly from Vancouver and we love that! It's long-distance contact but we enjoy and **need** that!

This pandemic has limited our occasions to be together immensely as a family and in order to keep safe, all of us have followed the protocols from Health Canada. The restrictions caused by this situation have made it impossible to hug our family members and close friends. Touching our loved ones is something we miss very much. I know it is important for our mental health and I must admit occasionally I feel sad but it passes. The connections are different but are still happening.

Zoom gatherings and meetings have become a regular occurrence in our lives. Family zooms were organized by our daughter Michelle and it's fantastic to be able to see and catch up with our own and our extended family members. We had never heard of zoom before this. They are called virtual gatherings - new vocabulary has become common. Now, other family members are arranging the family zoom engagements and I appreciate that very much. Even our doctors' appointments are by phone or video. Not as satisfying as in person but at least we have contact with our health professionals as we need them.

COVID – 19 is what this terrible virus is called. The first wave in Spring and Summer made numerous people all over the world very ill. Many died. Now, we are in the Second wave of it as had been predicted and the number of infected cases keeps rising daily. So, we must be very cautious and stay home unless it's necessary to go out. I admit it does become tiresome and sometimes I feel isolated. Fortunately, Alex and I are both at home and that mitigates that sense of loneliness. I am immensely grateful for our togetherness.

Hopefully, we will never have to go through another Pandemic Thanksgiving.