

# Serendipity and The Men of the Deeps

Ser-en-dip-i-ty, noun: serendipity: the occurrence and development of events by chance, in a happy or beneficial way.

I believe things happen for a reason - perhaps even divine intervention.

Last week, The Sidekick and I experienced a phenomenon I call serendipity.

It started when one of my nephews checked online to see what shows were playing at Burlington Performing Arts Centre. He'd spent some time in the Maritimes, and developed a taste for maritime music. He spotted a show, The Men of the Deeps, a coal miners' choir from Cape Breton Island. It was a Christmas show, and he invited his parents to go. He also invited my other sister and her husband, along with The Sidekick and me.

We enjoy maritime music, and were delighted to attend.

The Men of the Deeps choir consists of working and retired coal miners from Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia. Organized in 1966, the choir's goal is to preserve the folklore and music of the island's coal mining communities. At one point, Rita McNeil performed with them. Two of the members of the choir are charter members.

We settled into our seats, and as the choir came onstage by the light of the miner's lamps on their helmets, they started into their repertoire, a mix of Christmas songs and traditional coal miner songs.

It was quite a show.

Throughout the performance, one of the members



**TED BROWN**  
A Ted Bit

would introduce a song, tell a story of Christmas in a coal mining town, or perform a solo.

The director introduced the various members; most were from Glace Bay, but two were from New Waterford.

One was Nipper MacLeod.

The Sidekick perked up at the mention of New Waterford. Danell, one of her longtime friends, grew up in New Waterford, and The Sidekick attended her wedding there. She also met Danell's father, Stewart Cameron.

During the intermission, the choir members mingled with the patrons, and The Sidekick tracked down 'Nipper.'

"Did you ever know of Stewart Cameron?" she asked Nipper.

"Oh my God!" said Nipper, "I sang at his funeral. He was such a lovely man."

The Sidekick talked to Nipper a bit more about Stewart, then texted Danell, to tell her about meeting Nipper. It'd been a couple years since she'd talked to Danell, but she responded in minutes.

"I cannot believe you sent me this text," wrote Danell. "Today my dad would have been 79. I miss

him terribly. We lost him five years ago, Dec. 27. He died in his sleep. Thanks so much for sending this."

The Sidekick told Danell about talking to Nipper.

"He sang at my dad's funeral," wrote Danell, "What a wonderful man."

The Sidekick replied.

"I guess me connecting you by text on his birthday is your dad's way of saying he's watching over you," she wrote. "And it reminds us that old friendships are never lost, and will always only be a call or text message away."

Danell, The Sidekick and I all had a warm, fuzzy feelings as we pondered the chain of events.

The next day at work, The Sidekick told her co-workers about Nipper singing at Stewart's funeral, and the serendipity.

It doesn't stop there: one of her co-workers had a grandfather who grew up in New Waterford. His brothers all worked in the coal mine - Mine #12.

After checking with Danell, they learned Stewart also worked at Mine #12. They all worked together.

Although we live in a very large country, it never ceases to amaze me how close we are to one another.

Call it coincidence or serendipity, but when two old friends reconnect - especially moving into the Christmas season - it's wonderful.

And in doing so, one resurrected warm, comforting memories of her late father and the other was delighted to have been a part of it ...

Well, that's serendipity.



Metroland file photo

Reader says the Prime Minister should apologize for lives lost to abortion.

## LETTER

### Take a chance on university grads

University graduation no longer seems like an accomplishment, but the beginning of a never-ending horror movie.

Job availability in today's workforce has become slim to none, leaving many graduates struggling to find a way into their desired field.

A multitude of factors has contributed to the decrease in the supply of jobs but the key factor is the aging workforce. Overqualified graduates are forced to seek part-time, minimum wage jobs, leaving them with little income and no relevant job experience.

Not only is the issue disheartening the graduates, but it's also setting up the economy for failure in the future - for they are the future.

We should begin to think before we hire the older more experienced worker and take a chance on the millennials; give them the opportunity to succeed.

They need to learn before there is no one left to teach them.

**Valerie Harris**  
Brock University student

### Prime Minister should apologize to babies of abortion as well

I watched and listened to PM Justin Trudeau's apology to the LGBTQ2 community in the House of Commons on Nov. 28. During his historical summary, I could not help but write down his statements that were used to encompass the proposed reconciliation.

Here are some quotes: "lives were ruined at the hands of their own government," "lost their dignity," "subjected to violence and aggression," "causing irreparable pain," "making you invisible," "state-sponsored oppression," "above all, you were innocent," "we were wrong," "we have failed you," "we have betrayed you," "the government's responsibility is to keep their citizens safe," and "never again will Canadian government be responsible for so much pain." "We are sorry."

I would pray and hope that PM Trudeau could find it in his heart to apply the same apology to all the babies of abortion, since it was his father Pierre, in his role as justice minister and then as prime minister, who legislated Liberal abortion laws.

**Reta Dunn**

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