



Make someone happy today!



maintained that we are as young as we feel, and a physically active life will bring its rewards in later life.

The other day I was talking about the snow to someone who shall remain nameless, and the response was "Oh, the farmers will be happy!" Will someone please tell me what there is to be happy about when we have, it seems, a dumping of snow happening every week since the turn of the year. My Canadian Tire snow shovel is wearing out fast and I might need to purchase a new one before the end of the winter season. So before making the purchase I turned to nature for the definitive forecast:

Here in sunny Canada the sun rises in the East (Duh!! Did I just say that?) and so, on Groundhog Day, **Shubenacadie Sam** (being furthest to the EAST!!) is first up in the morning and, joy of joys, he could not see his shadow giving us to believe that spring will be upon us early this year. **Wiarthon Willie**, the resident rodent in Wiarthon, Ontario, is hailed as the dean of Canadian forecasters and, several minutes after Shubenacadie Sam, he also was unable to see his shadow on the ground.

Ahhha....but....to the south of us, Pennsylvania's **Punxsutawney Phil** is arguably (according to our USA cousins) the most famous of the furry prophets. He even has a movie in his honour - Bill Murray's 1993 epic called appropriately: "Groundhog Day." Phil had a divergent view on the length of the winter season after seeing his shadow at about 7:30 a.m. E.T. on Saturday February 2nd during a ceremony on Gobbler's Knob, a wooded knoll just outside Punxsutawney "**Six more weeks of winter,**" according to him, and he is running true to past form with that forecast. Out of 112 years of 'divining' the future, 97 of them have been for longer winters and only 15 have caused his audience to smile.

Elsewhere in Canada the people were waiting with frosty baited breath for the weather's long range forecast from:- Moose Jaw's **Snewsie**; Saskatchewan's **Watson Wil-low** from Watson, Saskatoon; **Balzac Billy** in Balzac, Alberta, and Manitoba's **Merv** in Oak Hammond Marsh, Manitoba. I did not research what they said would happen and I am going to stake my old snow shovel on WW being correct.

For those of us who are neither interested in what the Groundhogs indicate nor in the farming business, there has to be something positive to take away from all of this white stuff. Looking at how dirty some of the snow seems, I naively guess that it is helping to clean the atmosphere around us. But seriously, the REAL joy in all of this is that **I can** shovel the stuff away as the day may come when I and many of my friends will have to rely on others to do this task for us. It's called 'age' folks, but I have always

I watch my farmer friend who lives close by and is somewhat older than I am (although he might not admit he is!); I watch him out in all kinds of weather looking after his livestock that rely on him. After a lifetime of hard work he is still like the energizer bunny....he just keeps going and going, and long may it be that way.

As many of the readers of this column will know, I speak from time to time on having received the Gift of Life from another...and I am not talking about my parents. I am speaking about the person who donated their organs to me when they died, so that I might be able to enjoy a few more productive years. I sometimes wonder what my donor would have thought about all this snow shoveling which his amazing lungs allow me to do. They permit me and many other people across Ontario who also received the Gift of Life through organ donation, to once again try to be that very best that we can be and honour the gift we have been given.

I think it was the apostle Luke who said: *And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them saying, "This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."*

We don't have to be organ transplant recipients to remember that in life itself we have been given an amazing gift that allows us to be in community with each other and the world. That 'gift' I happen to believe also comes with a responsibility called 'LOVE.' We need to love ourselves (you'd be amazed how many people don't really like themselves!) and we need to expand on that love to encompass all those who share our space through being family, friends or acquaintances. It is amazing what a little smile or a helping hand will do, and I am blessed to have been on the receiving end of so many of these. As recently as this week as I was once again snow shoveling, a young person came by and asked if I needed any help. Thank you...you know who you are and you did an awesome job.

So when you are bent over the snow shovel, perhaps groaning about the work; STOP for a while and lean on the shovel; look up and around and give thanks for this moment in your life. It will never come again, you now understand this, and that is what makes it so special.

- Pastor Ian.

And p.s. Say a little prayer for those who wish they could.