

# Homeless but Happy: the spirit of the season remains

Part Four in a Series

Special to The Auroran

Our beloved town comes alive with festive beauty of the holiday spirit. The traditional Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, to the Menorah Lighting, to our 'Santa Claus Under the Stars' parade celebrating our diversities.

I gaze lovingly at the many storefronts decorated with the evergreen bows and red ribbons, with windows adorned with whimsical ornaments and messages of cheer.

I don't dare go inside the beautiful flower shop décor store. I know deep down inside my heart would break and I would suddenly shed too many tears from the sentimental reminders of past holiday traditions.

Close by is the stark contrast of an alleyway I would often walk past. I stopped at this moment to behold the colour faded bricks holding up the building history of many years. I placed my mitten hand against this fortification for all their strength to hold myself up from my own despair, as I lean against them for support. Whispering winds echo, snowflakes swirl silently dancing, I would remember the Little Match Girl story by Hans Christian Andersen. This small girl with her last matchstick to strike for warmth from the coldness of her sealed fate, along with the memory of the story's immoral consequences of mankind's ignorance, of passing by those in need.

I wondered too, how many of us now stand silently in the very same alleyway in search of warmth, need, but more importantly to examine our plans in how to change our condition of homelessness. Pity isn't what we want

'Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?'

'At this festive time of year, Mr. Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute.'

The opulence of former lavish Christmas parties, extravagant turkey dinners and expensive gifts bear no desire to my heart now. My genuine reflection of this season of advent is my faith and gratitude for what I do have. I'm content to be spiritually guided. I leave to continue walking on the pathway, making snow foot prints, my only mark of recent history that tells a tale that I'm existing. I enter my familiar landmark, the walls of written knowledge, our library, and become so cheered when I see the large adorned Christmas tree.

I sit down on the comfy leather couch thinking back to the many happy memories of my childhood Christmases, forgetting any inner pain.

One of my fondest was long ago, I believe I was three or nearing four. My father and I started out the door of our country rural home towards the back-pasture to fetch our Christmas tree in the woods.

Parka up in a tightly wrapped snow suit, father pulled me on a small sled down the road. You could see the fresh fallen snow covering the neighbour's houses, then fields of snow in sculpted drifts of magical whiteness. I cannot remember how long it took to get to where we were going, but I was in awe and wonder of this magical winter. The branches of the pine trees laden with snow, were like icing on a cake. My father looked at every pine tree deciding which one would fill our home for the merriment of Christmas. He chose a huge one that would be so large it would touch the ceiling at our home and was almost as wide.

I would watch him chop with his axe our Christmas tree and heave it onto the sled.

Included in this delightful moment, my father shared a thermos of hot chocolate before we prepared for our journey walking back together.

Our Christmas tree was my present that year, decorated with meaningful ornaments of the history of my family. My father has since passed, but he leaves me with this beautiful Christmas tree reminiscence. I'm happy thinking of him as I look upon the library's wonderful Christmas tree again.

I'm still homeless but happy, aware that my inner spirit is the shining star, ready to adorn the top branch of my envisioned Christmas tree.

Wishing each and everyone and all a very Merry Christmas with peace, blessings and happiness for the New Year of 2019.