

Sou'wester

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Angels of us all...



Dan Sylvestre
COMMUNITY
CORRESPONDENT

FORT ROUGE

They are waiting to take us into the severed garden.

Do you know how pale and wanton thrilling comes death on a strange hour?

Unannounced, unplanned for . . .

Death makes angels of us all and gives us wings where we had shoulders smooth as raven's claws.

No more money, no more fancy dress,

This other kingdom seems by far the best...

— Jim Morrison, *A Feast of Friends*, 1970

Or so we hope for those close to us who have passed on from this life.

This article is dedicated to my mother-in-law, Brigitte Biloki (1944-2021). R.I.P.

How strange is life. Here one minute, gone the next. We do our best while we're here with what we have and the grim reaper visits us all so randomly, so unknown; and we all will go through it one way or another.

Each culture seems to have its own unique beliefs of the afterlife although the majority

would agree on something unexplained after death.

No matter, as we may or may never know one day what the next life could bring, reincarnated or some other thing, we will most likely be unable to share it with someone here on Earth. If we could, what kind of advice might we share with each other?

From the deceased to the living: Enjoy every day to the fullest. Love your close ones and your life with all your heart, make the most of every opportunity and take the time to cherish the special moments.

From the living to the deceased: We will miss you and hope that you're in a better place. Where did you go? Are you OK? Please help me through this mess and by the way, did you possibly write a will?

And this leads me to my lesson of the day — write a will to help your loved ones with this difficult time.

Whether you have one child or a dozen, an apartment or a mansion, cars or bikes, turtles or turkeys, an igloo or an island; you get the idea. I did a quick Google search and there are several options. Anything is better than nothing and detail is appreciated to the fullest.

You never know when you may be called up to the "severed garden" and this time will be hard enough for your loved ones, having a plan for them when your time comes will ease their stress during a very difficult time.



Supplied photo

Dan Sylvestre pays tribute to his mother-in-law, Brigitte Biloki (with daughter Tamika), who recently passed away.

I come back to the idea of making the most out of each day. It's easy to say; try your best to enjoy each day and be good to others, always and during these difficult days, as we make our way through this world we call life.

One day we will be nothing but a memory.

Dan Sylvestre is a teacher at Collège Churchill High School and a community correspondent for Fort Rouge.

I Love to Read month inspires



Sarah Guillemard
FORT RICHMOND MLA
CONSTITUENCY
REPORT

Feb. 17 is I Read Canadian Day, a national celebration of Canadian books for young people that celebrates the richness, diversity, and breadth of Canadian literature.

As well, February is I Love to Read Month, with 2021's theme of *Joyful Reading in a New World*. This year's theme encourages readers to try new book formats and engage in different activities that promote reading, writing, and the sharing of the joy of literacy within the current pandemic situation.

I have embraced this year's theme of trying new formats to reach young readers in Fort Richmond, using a combination of recorded readings and live video calls with schools and daycares. Visiting young students during I Love to Read Month is my very favourite

part of the year, and I am happy to continue to participate.

My feelings were summed up wonderfully when I greeted a childcare class virtually, asking them, "Do you know why I come visit you each year in February?"

A little boy bounced up from his spot and eagerly answered, "Because you miss us!"

Yes, yes, I do miss you.

I also met with the 386th Sparks Unit, who have been working on a theme of *Exploring Identities — Gender Power*, which is about discovering the power in being who we are as individuals. They discussed women leaders in our neighbourhood as well as amazing women involved in guiding and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). We talked about the environment and keeping Earth healthy, as well as getting along with our siblings. I was honoured to connect with these future leaders.

If you would like your school or group to meet with me, please reach out at 204-221-8881 or email contact@sarahguillemard.com

While we do celebrate a lot this month,

winter is often the toughest time for mental health and many of us are missing the regular activities and visits that get us through the freezing, dark months. If you do need help or want to talk to someone, please call the adult crisis line at 204-940-1781 or find more information at www.manitoba.ca/covid19/bewell/index.html

To find ways to participate in I Love to Read Month, please visit the Reading Council of Greater Winnipeg's website, www.rcgw.weebly.com, for a fun calendar of recommended activities.

On this site you can also find resources for Black History Month, a time when parents and educators celebrate the many contributions made by Black people and honour Black Canadian history.

Once again, thank you for continuing to follow the health orders and recommendations. For accurate and timely information surrounding COVID-19, please visit www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html