

A Good Walk

Lately, as the days lengthen, like many of you I have found solace, inspiration and often good company in the habit of a daily walk.

2500 years ago, Hippocrates proposed 'Walking is man's best medicine'.

This wisdom has been reiterated throughout the ages, but now much scientific research has provided evidence of the profound benefits of walking to body, mind and spirit.

Four million years ago, our species became mostly upright on two feet. Our bodies evolved to walk upright and over those millions of years, we spent many of our waking hours doing just that. But in just 200 years, the industrial and technology revolutions have changed everything.

In his book "Born to walk: The transformative power of a pedestrian act", author Dan Rubinstein notes that when you move, "the yolk-like liquid in your knees and other joints gets warmer and thinner, more easily absorbed by the cartilage. This 'human motor oil' not only lubricates, it supplies oxygen and nutrients to maintain the cartilage's cushioning effect". Similarly, the heart, arteries, metabolism, and brain function all benefit. The muscle activity in walking "causes endorphins to flow into the brain, blocking pain signals and producing feelings of pleasure." While surgery is miraculous in the repair blown knees and bad hips and backs, it is never too late to optimize our body's overall function through regular walking.



<https://www.hikingnb.ca/images/FW-SimpsonHill/index.html>

Charlotte County is as blessed as anywhere in the world for natural beauty: shoreline, forest, mount, meadow and island wandering are at our doorstep. A periodic leisurely walk in the woods for 30-40 minutes, can reduce stress hormone levels and blood pressure, heart problems and other chronic conditions. The Japanese have proven that the forest walker breathes in remarkable benefits of anti-microbial, organic compounds emitted by trees – a practice is known as forest bathing.

In our larger urban centres, walking offers other benefits – not the least of which is reduction in vehicle emissions. For pedestrian visitors and residents of the city, walking the neighbourhoods builds cultural awareness, connectivity, understanding of ethnicity and disability. Meanwhile, town walks here in St Andrews are easy, safe, and convenient with perennially clear streets and sidewalks. This is a wonderful way to connect with folks.

A good walk in pleasant surroundings nourishes our spirit, creativity, fitness, mental health, brain cells, and best of all contributes to a good sleep. Moreover, by reducing our carbon footprint, walking is one of the best things we can do for our beloved planet.

Blessings.... Bev Tedford

What to Do About Climate Change?

Dare I say that we can see the light at the end of the tunnel on Covid? It seems that perseverance is what's called for now. And so my anxiety shifts from Covid back to climate change, arguably a more dangerous phenomenon...

The scientists warn us that the average annual temperature in New Brunswick will rise by about 5 degrees C by 2080. Goodbye snow. Hello ice. Goodbye birch and spruce and fir. Hello air conditioning, ticks and blue-green algae. Beyond temperature increases, we can expect significantly more rain, coming more and more as violent storms. That means flooding and coastal erosion. And, who knows about impacts on refugees and the food supply...?

I'm a "boomer", and even if I might be able to get out before the worst of it, do I have moral obligation to change my behaviour in an effort to slow climate change for future generations? I'd also like to be a grandfather someday. However, if my daughter-in-law were to ask me about the wisdom of bringing a child into the world, I wouldn't know what to say. All the predictions of the state of the environment in 20 or 50 or 100 years are pretty bleak. Do I care about the kind of world I'll be leaving my children and grandchildren to deal with, and if so, am I willing to work now towards fixing the problems largely made during my generation? Am I willing to take on some inconvenience in the hope of slowing climate change?

A few of us in Charlotte County have been talking about these issues (mostly via Zoom), and we all share feelings of frustration, ignorance and hopelessness. Climate change is such a big problem. What can I do about it? We decided that, even if we can't save the whole world, we might be able to act locally. We liked the idea of focusing on New Brunswick, because we know it, we love it, and we like to think our politicians in Fredericton care about what we think.

So we have formed Climate Action NB. They say that politicians pay attention to letters from voters. That's why, as a first step, we are organising a letter-writing campaign to politicians and media. The more letters we can generate the more likely we will effect change.

It didn't take much to learn that the provincial government has a "Climate Change Action Plan", which has support across the parties, and which lays out 118 action items for the Government to tackle, all related to climate change. A Progress Report has just come out, and the whole Plan is to be revised this year. We all know that governments promise a lot more than they can deliver, and now we know that implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan is way behind schedule. So, our timing for action appears to be excellent, and we are looking for others to join us to encourage the Government to get on with it. Of course, while the Government's Action Plan may be our primary focus, there may be other climate issues that demand our attention, and it would be nice to find others with whom we can share concerns and action.

If you want to do something about climate change in New Brunswick, please join us and contact any of Sharon Hannan, Lance Howard, Bob Johnson, or Joanne Raye. We can put you on the emailing list, send you a link for our next Zoom talk, and invite you to the new Facebook link. We're all trying to tell the NB government that climate change is important, not only for us, but for the generations behind us.

Lance S Howard
Bocabec - January 2021

Erin Tweedie is raising funds for the Oceans of Love Orphanage in the Philippines in memory of her Uncle William who recently passed away. If you wish to help her, please visit the link at
gofundme.com/f/oceans-of-love-orphanage

