

# TRINITY LODGE

## RESIDENTS' NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO.13 FEBRUARY 2022

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For Residents.

By Residents.

Long before my time at Trinity, an extremely popular, local politician visited his mother, a resident. After lunch, he strolled through the dining room shaking hands with residents. Seeing a quizzical look, he asked one lady "Do you know who I am?" "No." she replied. "If you go to the desk, they'll tell you."

Wow! We sure started the New Year on a positive note!  
Positive does mean good, doesn't it?

The English language is so quirky. I do not mean to sound negative, but I am positive that I want to test negative.

Figure that one out!

Are you bored with having to spend so much time in your suite? Why not spend time writing of episodes in your life?

We need resident's stories. If you are unsure of your writing skills, I would love to help you with the composition. Call 403 253 0984 or email

[ronfreckleton@shaw.ca](mailto:ronfreckleton@shaw.ca)

Family members, I'm sure you have some stories of your loved one that we can share.

## News from an Old Friend

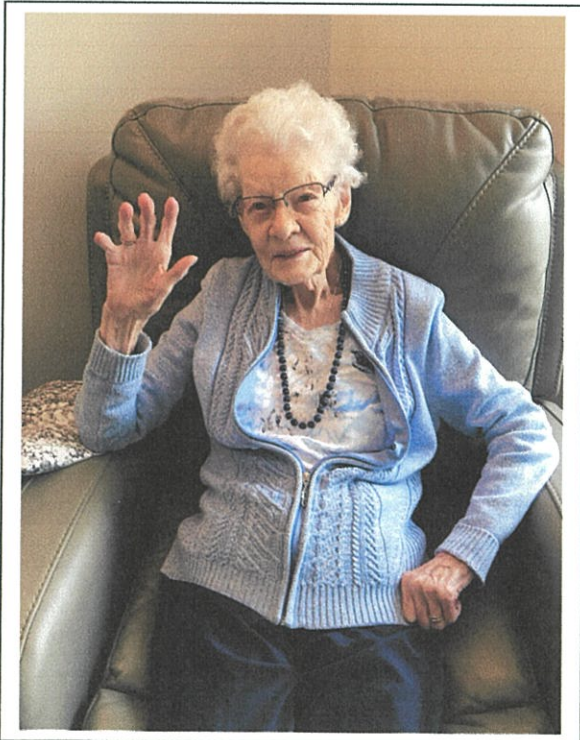
Through the years, we have so many friends that we no longer see. Privacy rules rightfully, often prevent us from knowing where and how they are. I was delighted to receive this note (via her daughter, Glo), from our good friend Irene Cummins.

### **Hello Trinity Lodge friends,**

As many of you are aware I have left Trinity Lodge after 5 1/2 years of being in your community. In December my health deteriorated which necessitated me moving into long term care at Southwood Care Centre. I miss all of you and the good times we shared together at Trinity, playing pool, Mexican train, singing in chapel, going on road trips, exercising, visiting in the hallways or lounge. Since the pandemic and my own hearing loss I was often able to do little more than wave to you across the dining room, but I so enjoyed your friendly faces and your nods or waves of acknowledgment. Thank you, staff, nurses, and residents for your kindnesses over all these years. I cherish those memories.

With fondness and gratitude,

**Irene Cummins**



**Exactly two years ago Covid-19 made it's first appearance in Trinity Lodge.**

**It seems to have been with us so much longer than that. Do you remember our first lockdown? I do. It lasted a little less than three weeks. To me, it seemed like three months. I was amazed how quickly Management and staff adapted and tended to our needs.**

**This latest variation, Omicron, has brought out the very best in Trinity Lodge teamwork. You wouldn't have known it, but at the height of the outbreak, Trinity was operating with a number of staff members isolating at home.**

**In the weeks prior to our having our meals in our suites, it was very uplifting to see managers and senior staff helping with dining room duties and sanitizing public areas of the Lodge.**



**Trinity Lodge  
GM Kim and  
Sandra, our  
Health and  
Wellness  
Manager  
adding another  
skill to their  
resumes**

**They have  
promised that  
they would not  
give up their  
day jobs**



**In July 2021, I was asked to speak to a group of U of C students. The subject was. "How Covid-19 has affected me as a resident in a retirement community". I gave the speech by video from my suite.**

**A print copy of my presentation is included in the online version of the newsletter.**

**After a further six months of varying degrees of disruption to our everyday lives, I'm not sure that I have changed my opinion.**

**I am sure that the resilience that we all have, will get us through this pandemic.**

I came to Trinity in September 2014. On my first Sunday lunch, I joined a table of three very, very mature ladies. Before I could introduce myself. One of them said.

"Hi, I haven't seen you before, are you visiting your mother?"

Wow! The best pick-up line I had ever heard.

"No, I'm a new resident, my name's Ron." I replied.

"Hi Ron, are you widowed?" says the second lady.

"Yes, my wife, Joanie died six months ago."

"Do you have a car? Was her next question.

"Yes." "Oh, good, we've got someone to take us to the mall."

"No, you don't." I lied. "My car insurance won't allow me to have passengers."

"It's about time we had another man in here." Says the third lady.

"We only have a few. They seem to die before we do." I bit my tongue.

"You know," she continued, "You look like my fourth husband."

"How many have you had?" I asked.

"Three, they all died."

"I'm so sorry. What did they die from?"

"Two of them died after eating poisoned mushrooms and the third one had a fractured skull."

"How tragic, a fractured skull, how did it happen?" I asked.

"He wouldn't eat the mushrooms."

On another occasion, I was dining with three different ladies, each with hearing problems.

The conversation went to hearing aids. One lady said she'd just purchased a new hearing aid.

"It's wonderful. I can hear every word, clear as a bell, worth every penny of the six thousand dollars I paid."

"Wow." I said. That's expensive. What kind is it?"

She looked at her watch. "Twelve-thirty."

The lady next to her said "I bought mine a month ago. About the same price. It works very well. I can hear a pin drop."

"That's wonderful, what does your family think?"

"I haven't told them yet, but I've changed my will three times."

The third lady chimed in.

"I bought mine at the Dollar Store. Works Perfectly. Cost me a dollar fifty plus GST."

We looked at her in disbelief.

"Yes" She said, "It's an earplug with a piece of string tied to it. I plug it into my ear and tuck the other end of the string down the front of my dress. When people see it, they shout."

**This was a speech I gave (virtually, from my suite) to a University of Calgary class in July 2021**

My first reaction when Dr. Toohey asked me to participate in your interdisciplinary aging program was, "Yes." My second thought was to google the phrase 'Interdisciplinary aging.'

I was a little disappointed. I thought it might be something to do with S and M for old folks.

**Covid-19. How has it impacted my life?**

It is not an easy question. The more I think about it, the more depressing it gets. I will do my best to give you my thoughts on what has been the strangest, most surreal eighteen months in all our lives.

First, let me say I feel blessed that I live in a retirement community. I have people around me. I feel sad for seniors living alone in their own homes.

This Covid thing must have really impacted their lives.

Covid has deprived me of personal contact with my friends and family. I see some of them on Facetime and Zoom, but it is not the same as being with them. I miss their hugs. Their nearness.

I have a friend who describes herself as a professional Happiness Guru. She advocates that we should give and receive at least twelve hugs each day.

COVID has cheated me out of 6500 hugs since it arrived.

I miss my aquacise classes at Acadia Pool. I know my fitness level, balance and mobility have diminished since the classes stopped, but what I really miss, is the social interaction with my classmates. The laughter and fun that friends share. I miss our visits to the coffee shop after class.

Here at Trinity Lodge, the necessary restrictions have curtailed our social activities. No live entertainment in the evenings has had a big impact. Video performances, watched from my suite, are not the same.

No going out to our favourite restaurant once a month.

No going to concerts or art shows. No trips out to the mountains.

There is so much stuff we are not doing.

I miss the hustle and bustle of family visitors. The joyful sounds of young ones, excited to be seeing great grandmother again. I miss the weekly visits of Audrey, the therapy dog. Her presence reduces my blood pressure far quicker than any prescription medication.

I miss treating my outside friends to dinner in our elegant private dining room or lunch in our cozy bistro. I could go on and on about the things that have disappeared from my life.

A couple of years ago, I spoke at an event at the U of C.

I talked of my resiliency. Covid-19 has revealed another of my traits, Stoicism. I am a stoic. Who knew?

My first thoughts when Covid came to our city were, if I catch it, it will do me in. I will be done like dinner.

I was eighty-seven years old when the Pandemic came to Canada. I am long past my "best before" date. I have chronic medical conditions that include COPD.

According to our friends in the media, my chances of survival are zero. I thought, so what? What will be, will be.

Despite my stoicism. I still felt trepidation after receiving my first Covid test. I remember the relief I felt when I tested negative. Our residence had been placed on our first lock-down. A staff member had tested positive and fifteen of approximately 180 residents, also tested positive. Just a couple with symptoms, the rest were non-symptomatic.

Our management and staff's responses to the outbreak were swift and efficient. All residents confined to their own suites with room service. No visitors. Mask wearing and sanitization protocols adhered to. All recreational programs and group activities were cancelled. I was impressed with all the information that was disseminated to us. I always felt that I was 'in the loop.'

That first three-week isolation, which came in June, was strange. First it was a novelty then it was a nuisance. I tried to establish a daily routine. After breakfast, I would write, with a couple of breaks for exercise. After lunch I would read with another break for exercise then, after supper, I would watch TV. My routine always included social media and telephone calls to friends and family. Often, during my exercises, I reviewed my state of mind. I gave myself mental check-ups. Towards the end of the three weeks, my thought processes became a little jumbled. Slightly off. I remember thinking, this is not me.

Thankfully, the lock down was lifted. A semblance of normal life was restored. Meals were still delivered to our rooms, but now we had a little contact with the outside world. Residents could walk the halls or the outside perimeter of the property. Social distancing and masks made conversing with friends a challenge. Just being in the presence of a fellow resident, even for a short time, was a big improvement to the solitude of my suite.

On my walks, I noticed that all the sofas and easy chairs had been removed from the common areas of the Lodge. There would be no informal gatherings.

Over the next few of months, I kept busy. Most of my time was spent on my desktop or my iPad. I was facetimeing, Zooming, messaging, emailing, or writing speeches. I also wrote a mystery novelette. I have not finished it yet. I am trying to find a happy ending.

In February, I started a monthly newsletter for the residents.

In 2019, I was invited to join United Way's speaker's bureau. I visited corporate boardrooms and various other locations. I am an impact speaker for the Alzheimer Society of Calgary. One of the many local organizations that United Way supports.

In 2020, and this year, all my speeches have been or will be, virtual from my suite. I also did a short exercise video just for fun and posted it on my Facebook page. An exercise guru who is a friend of mine, saw it and asked me to be a guest on her video fitness program.

I also did a "My Memories" project on my Facebook page. I scanned old pictures, added some text, and published them.

In retrospect, I was fortunate to have kept busy throughout our confinement. We had our second shots of vaccine in early April. Restrictions eased to a degree. Eating in the dining room, one person at each table initially, then in cohorts of two or three. It felt so good to hear laughter and conversation again.

My friends and I have resumed our walks on the footpaths around Glenmore Reservoir. We can see our Rockies again.

What a huge boost to my mental wellness.

### **I believe Covid has affected my decision making.**

In the latter part of last year, I decided to stop driving. I gave myself so many reasons why I was doing the right thing. My worsening spinal stenosis might cause me to have an accident. My insurance was due for renewal. I was only using my car for medical appointments. Uber and cabs were available. The economics of owning a car did not make sense, the list went on. I still don't know if I made the right decision. In my heart, I think it was the right one, but I still second guess myself.

**I will end on a dramatic note. Something to make you think.**

Although I did not have Covid, I believe it has stolen a huge percentage of what is left of my life.

Necessary restrictions have accelerated the deterioration of my ancient body.

Covid has not allowed me to maintain a fitness of mind and body that is necessary for long life.

I need to revise my "End of life" plan. Originally. I planned to live to be a hundred, then be shot by a jealous husband.

Thank you for listening. I wish you a wonderful, safe, and healthy life.