

April 12, 2021

Trinity Musings #52

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Serving Trinity United Church: Collingwood

Our cat, Morgan, whose best friend in the world is our dog, is also friends with a mole that lives in a den under our garden. Over the last couple of weeks I've seen them sitting beside each other a few times.

The first time I thought the mole was a goner but it ran right under Morgan's body, without suffering any tragic consequences. The cat just jumped a foot and then sat back down to watch. Running at and under the cat appeared to be a game the mole was playing.

Given Morgan's rather long and chequered history with other rodents and small birds, that mole is one brave little dude.

This mole looks a lot like every other mole I've ever seen, but apparently there is something about him that appeals to Morgan. And the opposite seems to be true too.

We've taken to calling the mole "Harrison" (no relation to Jimmy but there are some behavioural similarities).

On Saturday, Morgan carried Harrison around a hundred feet from his hole and put him down on the lawn. Harrison, unharmed in transit, didn't appear to be the least bit worried about the trip (or us). He spent the next twenty minutes, or so, munching on fresh clover and exploring the lawn.

Morgan followed him and checked in with him often, but did not interfere with his journey or try to pick him up again. Harrison and Morgan actually touched noses a number of times during the long adventure. Eventually, Harrison went back down his hole and Morgan carried on about her day.

Andrea has turned the rest of our garden with a shovel but she left the area around mole's home intact. I'm not much of a fan of rodents but Harrison has become a family friend!

I know there are lots of stories about unlikely neighbours enjoying each other's company. I believe, there is an innate capacity for kindness, friendship and play in all-living things. Humans aren't the only beings who rejoice in being alive.

When I used to kayak on the standing waves in the Saint John River (in the section known as the reversing falls), seals would sometimes join me and we'd surf side by side for minutes at a time. There was no purpose to either of us doing it except it was fun. They were much better at catching and holding that "sweet place" on a wave than me and when I'd lose my paddle-rudder and fall off, I swear I saw them grin.

I watch squirrels, the same ones I curse for raiding my bird feeders, "playing" on our neighbour's hammock. One will be on top and the other on the bottom and they get it rocking side to side as they race around chasing each other. It looks like good fun and I can't help but smiling when I see them. I still call them "rats with good PR" but since I started paying attention to them, I have also gained a deeper appreciation for them as creatures with a sense of humour.

When I lived in St. Catharines, our neighbour's cat was good friends with a skunk that lived under their front porch. On many nights, the cat and skunk would playfully chase each other around the yard. When they ran out of breath, they rested beside each other on the lawn.

There are zillions of stories like this...polar bears playing with huskies...ravens rolling down snow covered slopes...otters sliding down river banks...lab rats that are ticklish and laugh...you probably have lots of stories too. Youtube is full of images like these and so is Facebook. It's no wonder they are shared so often because they bring so much joy.

I know there is much to worry about during this pandemic and it is literally life and death for some...but it sure would be nice to hear some good stories or see someone smile during a news conference, at least now and then.

Maybe Doug Ford or Justin Trudeau could start wearing T-shirts with clever sayings on them? Like **"You're On Mute!"** or **"Maybe This Is All Happening Because I Didn't Forward That email To 10 People?"** or

“After This Covid-Time Is Starting To Sound Like...When the Leafs Win The Cup”.

Dr. Bonnie Henry knows how to dress in a pleasant way, while sharing tough news, and she often says... “Be kind. Be calm. Be safe.”

What she doesn't say with words, she says with her funky clothes and demeanour... “Be hopeful, happy and smile”.

There is playfulness and joy that we can miss if we don't open our eyes to the extraordinary gift that life itself really is.

If moles can get along with cats, I can imagine a day when I quit disliking Bruin fans so much. They could help by ditching all the T-shirts that read “It was 4 to 1...” It would be a start.