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EDITORIAL

Food for thought for our political leaders...

For a while now, we have been considering promoting the idea of beating back hate, vandalism, graffiti, and disrespect but we are at a loss as to how to engage the battle. We believe the battle can best be fought through schools and education. Our young people need to learn what these symptoms of hate are, how to recognize them, and how to deal with them effectively, constructively, and positively. Not only are our cities, our properties, and our public buildings being savaged by hate mongers, but hate, sexism, misogyny, and racism seem to be deeply rooted and vigorous in our society every day, everywhere.

Then along comes an article that re-affirms what has been under consideration here...

*Written by Steven Levy and recited by him on CBS **Sunday Morning** Commentary:*

My confession:

I don't like getting pushed around for being a Jew, and I don't think Christians like getting pushed around for being Christians. I think people who believe in God are sick and tired of getting pushed around, period. I have no idea where the concept came from, that America is an explicitly atheist country. I can't find it in the Constitution and I don't like it being shoved down my throat..

Or maybe I can put it another way: where did the idea come from that we should worship celebrities and we aren't allowed to worship God as we understand Him? I guess that's a sign that I'm getting old, too. But there are a lot of us who are wondering where these celebrities came from and where the America we knew went to.

In light of the many jokes we send to one another for a laugh, this is a little different: This is not intended to be a joke; it's not funny, it's intended to get you thinking.

In light of recent events... terrorists attack, school shootings, etc.. I think it started when Madeleine Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body found a few years ago) complained she didn't want prayer in our schools, and we said OK. Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school... The Bible says thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal, and love your neighbor as yourself. And we said OK.

Then Dr. Steven Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they

misbehave, because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide). We said an expert should know what he's talking about. And we said okay.

Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves.

Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with 'WE REAP WHAT WE SOW.'

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says. Funny how you can send 'jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing. Funny how lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene articles pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace.

Are you laughing yet?

Funny how when you forward this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it.

Funny how we can be more worried about what other people think of us than what God thinks of us.

Pass it on if you think it has merit.

If not, then just discard it.. no one will know you did. But, if you discard this thought process, don't sit back and complain about what bad shape the world is in.

An eloquent message that should not fall on deaf ears. If CBS can proselytize this message, is there any reason why we cannot follow suit?

Somewhere there are leaders in our communities, teachers, parents, and elected officials who need to take up the cause and heed the intent of this message. Otherwise, we are speeding along to hell in a hand basket.

The City Desk



Dear Neighbours:

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday and had some time for rest and relaxation with family and friends. In this newsletter, you will find highlights of our council meeting from January 23, 2023, updates on the Pickering Casino Resort, and events happening around the City this winter season. I am proud to serve as your Mayor and I, along with City Council, will continue to work hard to make our community the best place to live, work, play and learn.

Click → [Mayor's complete message](#)



Councillor Brenner's New Year's message is available at [BOOKz, COOKz, NOOKz](#) .

As importantly, here is an update from Brenner's desk.

Regional Councillor Maurice Brenner and Councillor Lisa Robinson had been promising better accountability of councillor activities to city residents. They kept their campaign promise and held Ward 1's first ever town hall.

Read the details at: [TOWN HALL WARD 1](#).

Maurice Brenner
Regional Councillor, Ward 1

Lisa Robinson
Councillor, Ward 1



It's hard to believe it's 2023! The end of 2022 saw a big milestone for me personally, the eighth consecutive time residents elected me as their Councillor, it is both an honour and honourable to continue serving our community on Pickering Council.

An even bigger blessing in November was the birth of Brenda's and my first grandchild, Asher, to loving parents, our daughter and son-in-law, Alison and Cooper. Our daughter Amanda and Stephen became engaged and are currently having an adventure living and working in Vancouver.

One of the early challenges facing the city is addressing the many changes the provincial government has announced and implemented to land use planning and housing with the intention of providing more housing, more quickly, and more obtainable. Many municipalities (including the City of Pickering), municipal organizations, and other agencies have raised concerns ranging from mayoral powers, impacts on taxpayers and city finances, environmental protection, and the loss of development charges for important community amenities. This along with recent high inflation and the increases in construction costs is going to make for tough city budget meetings.

Planning continues at the Region of Durham to bring lands in Northeast Pickering on either side of Highway 407 into the urban boundary as a new community known as Veraine. It is proposed to be a completely mix-use community to live, work and play. I have supported a much-needed new hospital in Pickering in this area, and I also recently supported in this area an applicant's request for a provincial MZO for a new 128-bed Long Term Care facility and affordable housing, but it was not supported by a majority of Pickering Council.

For those of you using *FaceBook*, you will know that I continue to visit and promote our many small business and talk with owners about the challenges and opportunities. Friend me on FB, if you have not already, to hear about these businesses and other interesting spots in Pickering.

I am hopeful this year will see several final plans and capital projects: a downtown centre with youth and seniors centres, a new library, a performing arts centre, and

a public square, the first new school in years Creekwood on Dersan Road, a new fire station on Brock Road, and other roads, recreational and municipal amenities. Stay tuned for more news.

Our city will always be a work in progress and I hope you will continue to work constructively with me to make our community great.

David Pickles

Regional Councillor, Ward 3



New from Ward 2 Regional Councillor Cook and Councillor Nagy

Regional Councillor Linda Cook and Councillor Mara Nagy hosted a town hall on Jan. 24th.

Read the details at: [TOWN HALL WARD 2](#).

Linda Cook

Regional Councillor, Ward 2

Mara Nagy

Councillor, Ward 2

TECHNOLOGY



ChatGPT – a ‘no charge’ writer at your command

Have you ever been stuck trying to write a short note, a description, an explanation, a poem, even a short article? Stuck no more...go to [LINK TO ChatGPT](#) and explore/experiment.

ChatGPT is a computer bot that will write an surprisingly good response to any writing query you ask. The *Artificial Intelligence* bot will respond with a very readable piece in seconds. Incredible! **Scary!**

Try it.

Here’s what it wrote in *3 seconds* when asked to write a short note about PICKERING, CANADA as a tourist destination,

“Pickering is a city located in the Durham Region of Ontario, Canada. It is known for its picturesque waterfront and beautiful beaches, such as Frenchman's Bay and Beachfront Park. The city also features several parks and conservation areas, including the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station Viewing Platform, which offers stunning views of the surrounding area. Visitors can also explore the Pickering Museum Village, a living history museum featuring restored 19th century buildings and exhibits showcasing the city's rich history and cultural heritage. Overall, Pickering is a great destination for outdoor enthusiasts, history buffs and anyone looking for a relaxing getaway.”

Asked to write a 4 stanza poem about Pickering,

Pickering by the lake, a sight so grand and fair,
With beaches white as snow, and water crystal clear.
The nuclear station stands, a mighty sight to see,
A symbol of the city's past and its industry.

The parks and conservation areas, a nature lover's dream,
A place to hike, to bike, to let off steam.
The village museum, a glimpse into the past,
A way to learn about Pickering's history that will last.

The city's growing fast, but still holds on to its roots,
A balance of old and new, with plenty of fruits.
Pickering, a city worth a visit, we can guarantee,
You'll fall in love with its beauty, its history, and its energy.

With friendly people, great food and endless things to do
Pickering, a city that will make your heart full and true.
A city that will make you want to stay, forever and a day.

Asked to describe the 10 best places to visit in Pickering, Canada, it responded:

Pickering, Canada offers a wide range of tourist attractions to visitors.
Here are ten of the best places to visit while in the city:

1. Frenchman's Bay: This beautiful waterfront area features a sandy beach, a marina, and a boardwalk. Visitors can enjoy swimming, sunbathing, and fishing.
2. Beachfront Park: This popular park offers a playground, picnic areas, and a splash pad for children. There is also a Bandshell where you can enjoy live music during the summer months.
3. Pickering Nuclear Generating Station Viewing Platform: This platform offers visitors a bird's-eye view of the nuclear power plant and the surrounding area.
4. Greenwood Conservation Area: This conservation area offers hiking trails, fishing, and picnic areas. Visitors can also see the historic Greenwood Dam and the beautiful waterfall.
5. Pickering Museum Village: This living history museum features restored

19th century buildings and exhibits showcasing the city's history and culture. Visitors can also take part in various workshops and events.

6. Rouge National Urban Park: This national park offers visitors the chance to hike, bike, and camp. There are also guided tours available to explore the park's rich wildlife and cultural heritage.
7. Pickering Flea Market: The Pickering Flea Market is a great place to find unique items and souvenirs. It's open on weekends and has a wide variety of vendors selling everything from antiques to clothing.
8. Pickering Art Gallery: This gallery features a rotating collection of local, national and international artists. Visitors can also participate in workshops and events.
9. Pickering City Hall: The Pickering City Hall is a modern and impressive building, visitors can take a guided tour to learn more about the City's history and the architecture.
10. Pickering Recreation Complex: This complex features an indoor pool, gym, and fitness classes. Visitors can also take part in various sports and activities.

These are just a few of the many tourist attractions that Pickering has to offer. The city is a great destination for outdoor enthusiasts, history buffs, and anyone looking for a relaxing getaway.

Those three samples were written in seconds. The writing may be open to some criticism but that stops when one considers the immediacy of its constructive response.

ChatGPT is frightening in what it seems to be able to do in response to a written request. It has some limitations: as it is in its infancy and training period, its database stops at 2021. Some data requests cannot be fulfilled but the AI will explain why it cannot complete the request.

The future

Imagine the potential in regard to academic assignments, a newspaper editor in need of copy, a TV journalist with a looming deadline.

It is scary to imagine what is around the corner in writing. Humans with computer access will be able to create almost any piece of writing in seconds and use it as a substitute for anything written by a human being. Journalism

will become dubious. School essays questionable. Email messages doubtful. Poetry suspicious. Readers will have reason to doubt the author of any piece of writing.

Go to [LINK TO ChatGPT](#) and try it. Explore and experiment and be prepared for a shock.

TRAVEL

Thinking about traveling again but hesitating because of the pandemic period? COVID fears? COVID risks?

Travel with professionals who take all the necessary precautions: masks, social distancing, sanitized equipment, using all medical safety protocols.



Specializing in small group tours

They are highly acclaimed because they...

- Immerse you in the culture of the tour location;
- Make your tours unforgettable and enjoyable
- Concentrate on small groups (22 persons max) to ensure personal attention;
- Design tours for the young-at-heart catering to heart and soul;
- Visit the must-see attractions and the hidden gems of each destination;

Currently scheduling:

- Tours to **Newfoundland**, the **Maritimes**;
- Host local **seasonal tours** (day trips)



Director and Tour Guide master *Cathy Massey-Spracklin*, a retired educator became passionate about travel and touring. This led to training and professional education in the field of travel at the International Guide Academy in Denver, Colorado from which she earned her certification as an International Tour Director and Tour Guide. After graduating with honours, she decided to launch her own tour company when she saw the need for specialized escorted tours for small groups. She has traveled and researched travel destinations all over North America, including Mexico and Hawaii as well.

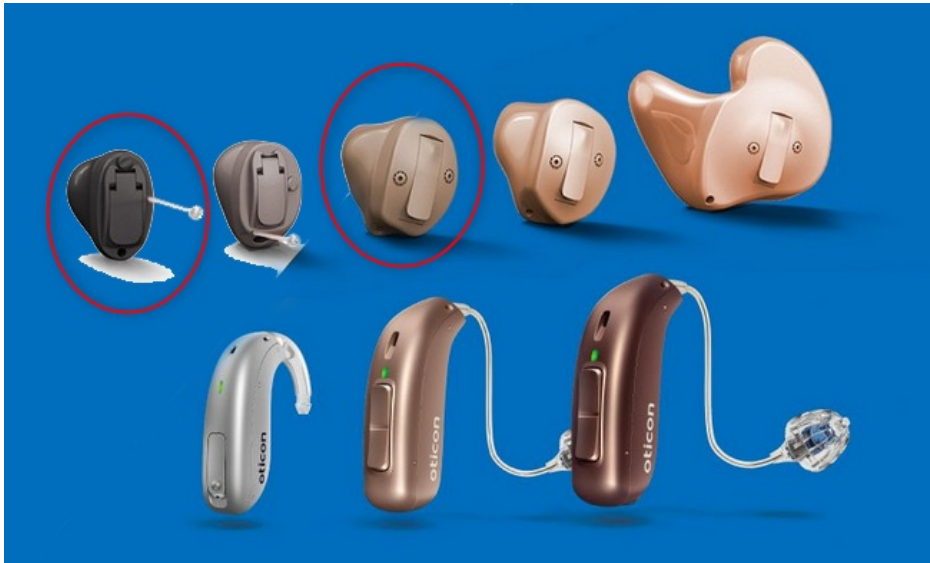
Newfoundland Discovery Tour (July, 2023)

Cathy is particularly enthusiastic about tours of Newfoundland, having led many tours to the Maritimes in general. Newfoundland is her passion and this tour is an outstanding one.



Visit the website for more information and current updates to their tours: www.canxplore.com

HEALTH: dealing with hearing loss



Can you hear me?

Are you troubled with your hearing? Unable to hear some conversations clearly? Troubled with hearing difficulties in certain environments? Restaurants? Auditoriums? Large meeting rooms? Can't hear people speak when they are a little distance away? Unable to hear certain types of voices? Women's voices? Men's? Children's? Certain volumes are more challenging? Whispers? Murmurs?

If your response to any of the above questions is yes, you may have a hearing problem, the best response to which would be to have a hearing test. These are available in many places and usually are free with no obligation to buy a hearing aid.

In the last few years, I suspected hearing difficulties, particularly with my left ear. Certain sounds, conversations were harder to hear: restaurant conversations, spousal conversations occasionally, TV volumes with some movie or TV scenes. A hearing test confirmed my suspicions: hearing loss in both ears.

The next step was to investigate hearing devices.

I disliked the idea of getting a visible external hearing aid. Being a senior, I am very

cognizant of ageism. A visible hearing device would likely exacerbate the situation. Our society treats seniors in denigrating ways enough already, second-class citizenship. A visible hearing device would relegate me to being spotted immediately as a senior. Hence, a visible device was off the table.

The issue came to pro vs. con considerations rather than getting a device.

Pros:

- Improved hearing:**
Hearing aids amplify sounds, making it easier to hear speech, music, and other sounds.
- Better communication:**
Communication is improved.
- Increased independence:**
Hearing aids improve independence as wearers rely less on assistance from other people.
- Cost-effective:**
Hearing aids are often less expensive than other hearing loss options such as surgery.

Cons:

- Cost:**
Hearing aids can be quite expensive, especially for newer, more advanced models. Financial assistance may be available such as government programs or insurance companies.
- Maintenance:**
Hearing aids require regular maintenance, such as cleaning and battery replacement. This is time-consuming and adds to their cost.
- Limited effectiveness:**
Hearing aids may not be effective for individuals with severe hearing loss or certain types of hearing loss. In such cases, other options need to be considered.
- Adjustment period:**
Adjusting to wearing hearing aids can take time and difficult for some people.

There are other factors that need to be considered when thinking about hearing aids:

- Environment:**
What is your usual daily environment? Are you surrounded by situations where your hearing is difficult, where it is important? In my case, I write and research on a computer alone for most of my working day.

However, people who are in environments where optimal hearing is important, need to give good hearing priority. For example, a teacher needs to hear the students; a musician needs to hear the music. A writer working alone may not necessarily need to hear clearly.

Technology has come a long way, as they say. Inner ear canal devices are almost completely invisible and deliver improved hearing, effectively and practically. Their use is enhanced by smartphone connectivity. Hence, wearers can fine-tune their devices to suit their situation or environment at the touch of a digital icon.

The likeliest and biggest factors people need to consider if they are thinking about getting hearing aids are cost, device management, and practicality. Subsidies and financial assistance can be found in the Ontario Government and some health insurance companies. Management and practicality issues can be handled by an audiologist.

The bottom line

If hearing is becoming a challenge or a problem for you, a hearing test and consultation with an auditory specialist may be the next essential step to improved hearing.

RATEPAYERS and COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

Remember “*Neighbourhood Associations*” of the past. Some are still ongoing. These associations were residents of a neighborhood joining together to help each other, with house watching, assistance with home maintenance, or just simple socialization.

Residents in some Pickering communities have tried resurrecting the concept which has lapsed in many areas of the city. Below is a list of the associations attempting a revival. The list below is not definitive and is intended to assist people who live in those areas where the attempts have been made.

The Rougemount Community and Recreation Association is still in the development stages to be launched in late spring.

<i>RATEPAYER ASSOCIATION</i>	<i>CONTACT</i>	<i>EMAIL</i>
Claremont and District Community Association	NO DATA AVAIL	
Fairport Beach Neighbourhood Association	PAUL WHITE	paulwhite4121@gmail.com
Pickering West Shore Community Association	SCOTT LOYST	scott.loyst@gmail.com
Whitevale Residents' Association	NICOLE BREWSTER	WDRAGrapevine@gmail.com
Altona Forest Stewardship Committee	NO DATA AVAIL	
Rougemount Community and Recreation Association	PEGGY BOWIE	pegbowie@rogers.com
SoRo - South Rosebank Neighbourhood Association	GAIL LAWLOR	info@sorogoodneighbours.com

Oscar winner for best-animated movie

There's an obvious message to this animated movie though many viewers miss it.

Click the link to view the movie: [wontheOscarforthebestanimatedmovie](#)

QUEEN ELIZABETH AWARD RECIPIENTS



The 70th Anniversary Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's reign was celebrated in 2022. In memory of Her Majesty and her dedicated life of Public Service, Jennifer O'Connell has launched awarding this honour to eligible recipients in her constituency. Award recipients have demonstrated outstanding contributions and good citizenship in the community.

Recipients of the award have contributed to the community as community builders, caregivers, educators, entrepreneurs, faith leaders, emergency responders, good neighbours, artists, athletes, coaches, students, seniors, and service clubs members.

We are fortunate to have an abundance of community-minded individuals who generously and willingly give their time, talents, and energy to improve the lives of others. A list of the recipients in our region is presented below. (The list will be updated as appropriate.)

Shazia Chohan-Hafeez	Amjad Muhammed
Cheryl Cocquyt	Dave Pickles
Sam Demma	Jave Salam
Lawrence Godin	Gaganjot Singh
Sofia Hovnanian	Pam Spence
Mahnoor Hussain	<i>Richard Szpin</i>
Dorsey James	Joyce Zhang
Dillon Mendes	Gail Lawlor

There are more recipients than those listed.

HEIR vs SPARE



Prince Harry's new publication, *Spare*, is either gossip mongering or airing of dirty laundry? Regardless, like People magazine or TV's 'The Social,' it may be riveting material.

Criticisms of Prince Harry's verbal expose will be unnecessary. Justifiable? One cannot help but wonder. Prince Is Harry just hanging out dirty laundry about the royal family. Should he? Your call.

All this may be cathartic for him, but is it justifiable? He decided it was worth writing about. Of course, there's money to be made. That's irrelevant. Besides, who are we to judge if he has done right or wrong in trying to augment the family coffers? It's his call.

Let's hope it brings him the comfort and solace he seeks.

However, there are some thoughts to be considered about all of this. Prince Harry needs revenue after his banishment from membership in the royal family. He chose to leave, for whatever reason and in doing so, his income was affected. His wife, at this time, has no acting roles and her *Suits* residuals likely are insufficient to support the lifestyle to which they are accustomed.

Skepticism is warranted with his claim that publishing 'Spare' was a catharsis that helped him deal with the death of his mother. There may be some truth in that but the more realistic and believable fact is that publishing the book means increased income in the multi-millions. Oprah interviews, 60 minutes, and multiple TV appearances are not simply book promotions. They are revenue-generation.

There is no reason to disparage what Harry is doing. He has the right to earn a living in any way he sees fit and if this revenue-generating shoe fits, he should wear it.

I have not read the book. My reluctance comes from not wanting to add to the coffers of any celebrity. I feel most earn enough from the work they already do in self-promotion. My curiosity limit will not be broken by any wish to hear Obama or Michelle speaking at the cost of \$500/ticket. If others choose to pay that freight, more power to them. But I won't be a party to it.

It is curious to watch to what extent Harry will go to disparage his family in

retaliation for the wrongs they may have caused him. Justified or not, it sounds like public dirty laundry hanging and there is something wrong with publicly criticizing one's family, let alone criticizing it for financial gain. The decision to read the book is a tough call.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	
10						11				
12					13		14			
15						16				
17					18					
19			20	21				22	23	24
			25					26		
	27	28				29	30			
31					32					
33						34				
35						36				

On Ice

By Derek Bowman

ACROSS

1. Parka size
6. In perfect condition
10. Robin Hood player Flynn
11. Historic periods
12. Key of Pachelbel's Canon
14. Chocolate variety
15. Snowflake Kingdom site
17. Reverse of WSW
18. Good Sam network
19. Long-skateway locale
25. Collection on vinyl

DOWN

1. Accounts book or Heath
2. Fashion designer Giorgio
3. For mature audiences
4. Berry seen at juice bars
5. SpaceX founder
6. Snake-haired Gorgon
7. Where the Tigris flows
8. Drug cop
9. Sound of reproach
13. Disqualified (oneself)
16. Start of a children's song

- 26. NFL's Manning
- 27. Annual February festival in 15-Across and Ottawa
- 31. Everest, in Abominable
- 32. Counted calories
- 33. Activist Brockovich
- 34. Out in the open
- 35. Mexican money
- 36. Trunk of the body

- 20. Weather Channel topic
- 21. Quite fitting
- 22. Like some German nouns
- 23. Birch-family trees
- 24. Snowed
- 27. Used to be
- 28. Reply to "That so?"
- 29. Very funny person
- 30. The L of L-dopa
- 31. "____, you better believe it!"

O	S	R	O	T			O	S	E	P
T	R	E	V	O			N	I	N	E
D	E	T	E	D			I	T	I	Y
E	D	E	L	U	D	E	T	N	I	W
I	L	E			S	L	P	L		
L	V	A	N	A	L	C	A	U	E	R
				S	C	B			E	N
				C	U	A	E	N	I	G
K	A	R	D		R	O	J	A	M	D
S	A	R	E			L	O	R	R	E
T	N	I	M			E	G	A	R	L

WORD POWER

Word Power: Test Your Knowledge of Royal Terms

By [Linda Besner, Reader's Digest Canada](#)

The challenge is to get all these royal terms correct.

Royal Term #1: Pomp

- A: Display of splendour
- B: Tall furry hat
- C: Royal fire brigade

Royal Term #2: Interregnum

- A: Interview with a head of state
- B: Burial ceremony
- C: Period between rulers

Royal Term #3: Clarence

- A: Prohibition of poaching
- B: House of Windsor china pattern
- C: Closed, four-wheeled horse-drawn carriage

Royal Term #4: Regent

- A: Palace caretaker
- B: Scarlet robe
- C: Person standing in for an underage, incapacitated, or absent monarch

Royal Term #5: Wonsam

- A: Ceremonial overcoat of Korea's female royalty and aristocracy
- B: Marsupial on a coat of arms
- C: Charming

Royal Term #6: Figurehead

- A: Symbolic leader without real power
- B: Monogrammed stationery
- C: Royal accountant

Royal Term #7: Noblesse oblige

- A: Idea that privilege entails obligations
- B: Duty of peasants to respect nobility
- C: Labour owed to a feudal lord

Royal Term #8: Livery

- A: Monarch's allowance
- B: Court etiquette
- C: Servant's uniform

Royal Term #9: Primogeniture

- A: Hereditary disease of Russian royalty
- B: Participation by royalty in democratic governments
- C: System in which the first-born child inherits all property or titles

Royal Term #10: Albertopolis

- A: Concentrated area of cultural sites in London
- B: Nickname for Calgary
- C: Prominent magazine for royal gossip

Royal Term #11: Tyrant

- A: Royal toddler
- B: Oppressive leader
- C: Formulaic speech

Royal Term #12: Dynasty

- A: Nostalgia
- B: Succession of hereditary rulers
- C: Conflation of church and state

Royal Term #13: Fanfare

- A: Public appearance by royals
- B: Crown-shaped pasta
- C: Ceremonial tune played on brass instruments

Royal Term #14: Crenellations

- A: Tattoo design of Inuit leadership
- B: Castle battlements
- C: Calls to abolish royalty

Royal Term #15: Welsh corgi

A: Royal guard

B: White pleated collar

C: Short-legged dog breed

1.A, 2.C, 3.C, 4.C, 5.A, 6.A, 7.A, 8.C, 9.C, 10.A, 11.B, 12.B, 13.C, 14.B, 15.C



Mother Nature and partner, Old Man Winter, finally got their dance steps synchronized returning us to more normal wintry conditions... whew!

No one could complain that we didn't need to wear heavy-duty winter gear when walking the dog or doing a walk for ourselves. I like that my snow boots have barely seen snow this year but this whole weather pattern scares me. There's this little nagging feeling that the state of the union, globally, may not be as it should. Meanwhile I will enjoy this more agreeable kind of winter.

Readers and website visitors

Lastly, a word of appreciation for the many comments and supportive messages I have received regarding the newsletter. It is very gratifying to hear people say how they are enjoying it and appreciate all that I research and post.

Thank you, everyone.

