

## Happy Anniversary To Us!

Written by Bob Alexander

Friday, 23 August 2013 13:19 - Last Updated Friday, 23 August 2013 13:24

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Two years ago today, August 22nd, we moved to Beautiful British Columbia. I'm only going to say this one more time as I can imagine everyone is getting awfully tired of hearing it:

**Every Single Day** I read at least one news item, oftentimes more, from The States that makes me very happy and relieved we don't live in the U.S. anymore.

And ...

**Every Single Day** I have a moment, some days a couple of moments, when I am grateful we now live in Canada.

I know a guy in Seattle who feels compelled to remind me that Canada isn't perfect. It's his way of countering whatever positive thing I've told him about living up here.

Canada is not perfect. I know. I live here. But guess what? Relatively speaking, after a lifetime of living in the U.S. ... **Yes It Is!**

The primary difference between the two countries is The United States is Politically Insane. This insanity has been imposed upon the people since the Reagan administration by psychopaths who are now in control of the country.

Now it's at this point where someone might say, "Sounds a bit paranoid there Bob."

And like all paranoids I say, "I'm not paranoid ... I've got **proof!**"

Where I now live sickness is not viewed as a money-making opportunity. In Seattle it cost us over \$13,000 a year for access to health care. Then came the co-pays, deductibles, and all the rest. Now our cost per year is ... nothing.

From May through July I had to undergo a series of medical tests and procedures that would have put a strain on our finances back in Seattle. Our cost up here? Nothing. 80% of our prescription costs are covered and I did have to pay \$14 for my glasses so everything isn't "free." Just almost everything.

A health care system designed to make a profit from pain and sickness is a health care system designed by psychopaths. You know the propaganda has taken hold when FOX viewers, who would be bankrupted by a medical catastrophe, parrot the FOX mouthpieces and decry the evils of a single payer health care system.

If you've got the stomach for it Google around and see the differences between the U.S. and Canada when it comes to banks, bankers, the banking industry, and how they're regulated in each country. If you live up here you can laugh. If you live down there I don't know how you

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could stop screaming.

But forget about The Big Issues for a moment. What's it like to live up here on a day to day basis?

Great.

Public transportation works. A 45 minute drive by car into downtown Vancouver is a smooth 22 minute ride on the Sky Train. If you're waiting for a bus and need to know when the next bus will arrive, by the time you get out your phone to check the bus "app" ... here comes the bus.

I like to go to the library. In Seattle my nearest branch started cutting hours and then days because of budget shortfalls. Up here the library closest to me is open 7 days a week.

In order to stave off geezerhood as long as I can we've been swimming at community pools 2 - 3 times a week. There are three community recreational centers near us with huge indoor pools, yoga rooms, exercise rooms filled with machines I Will Never Use, and basketball, handball, and racquetball courts. And there are dozens of municipal recreational centers all over the greater Vancouver area. The city has built ritzy health spas that everyone can afford to go to.

That's the real difference I've noticed about living in Canada. This place is designed for people. Not rich people. People.

It doesn't cost your entire future to get a college degree up here. The graduate degree my wife received from Simon Fraser University would have cost twice as much if she went to the University of Washington.

I'll stop with the list now. I could go on but typing lists is tiresome. And makes me sound irritatingly smug. When we first got here we were in tourist mode. We hadn't lived here long enough to stop gawking at everything. We were driving around downtown Vancouver and we headed off to nearby Lighthouse Park. In under a half hour we were walking around an old growth forest. It made me wonder ... can you drive from the heart of a major city anywhere in the U.S. and 27 minutes later be in an old growth forest? I can't think of one example. That's one of the "intangible" benefits of living up here. It's not bottom line stuff. But it just makes it better to live here.

Lack of crazy is another one of those intangibles. It's hard to find. You have to look really hard to dig up a small nugget of crazy. But where I come from you'll strike the mother lode by opening up a newspaper or clicking on a website. Crazy falls out of the trees down there, brushes itself off, and jumps in front of a microphone or television camera. A two year respite from that has done wonders for my stomach lining.

Before anyone accuses me of drinking the Maple Syrup flavored Kool-Aid and wearing Canadian Rose Colored glasses ... I'll beat them to the punch by saying:

Alberta Tar Sands.

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Any country addicted to fossil fuels is ecologically insane. And, as my wife pointed out to me, there are plenty of money-grubbing oil and blood-drenched psychopaths messing up our paradise, starting at the top. But tonight we're celebrating our two years in Canada and those are topics for another day.

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