

315 words, column #10  
Java Talk  
(for June 28 to July 4, 2007)

## **Every Age Is The Best Age**

### *One Hundred and Forty Years Young*

A few years ago, Moe Sihota, formerly a provincial politician and television host, asked some new Canadians what being a Canadian meant to them. One fellow answered, “It means getting to live a long life.”

His answer delighted Aurora Livingston, 140, who shares the same birthday as Canada. I first met Aurora at a homestead for the extremely aged, years ago; and she is still alive and active—in my stories! The idea of being 140-years-young sounds good, but it is not quite true that Canada was born on July 1, 1867, either. Canada Day celebrates the anniversary when four British colonies united to become “one dominion under the name of Canada.”

Aurora, born and raised in Victoria, (Fort Victoria, actually), became a teacher. “I remember when it seemed my only choice was to be a nurse, or a teacher, or to get married and have children.” Then she laughed and said she did it all—for a start!

Aurora’s timing was fortunate because of the continually progressive direction education was taking during an ongoing period of rapid change and developing ideologies in the nineteenth century. The needs of the students, as well as society’s, were addressed, to adjust to industrialization, capitalism, and urbanization. Elementary education was free, and eventually, so was high school; and these days, there is tuition-free post-secondary education for seniors.

Aurora was able to retire from teaching in 1929, at the right time to get a pension of around \$100 month, too. I said that wasn’t very much, but she said, “Yes, but when you live long enough, it all adds up!”

Best to live each season one day at a time, and let the years take care of themselves, because there’s always going to be a lot to take in! Just ask any two-year-old or fifty-four-year-old, never mind the one hundred-forty-year-olds! Real or not, cheers to every age!

Deidre Hill