

# Opinion

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**The Morning Star**

The North Okanagan's  
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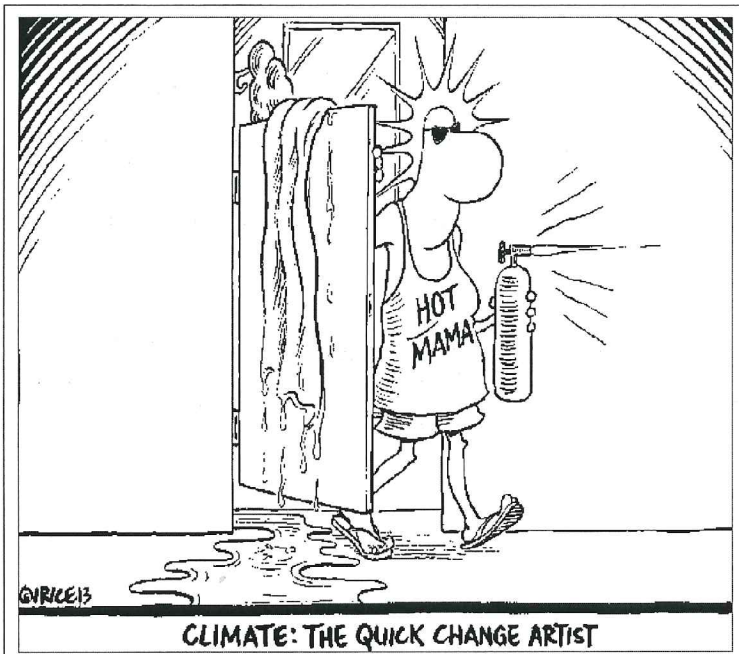
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## Back on my feet

That's the thing about getting sick in the summertime, you're always so grateful for the little things you can do again once you're back on your feet.

Like, literally getting out of bed in the morning. And, even better yet, feeling like you want to get out of bed in the morning.

And eating. And drinking. And breathing. You see nothing makes you feel more like a loser than lying in your bed feeling crappy, on a weekend, no less, while seemingly the rest of the world outside your bedroom window is enjoying the sunshine, the lakes, the 32-degree weather, you know, basically living their lives as residents of the Okanagan are supposed to in July.

But if you ain't got your health, as they say.

And us guys can get pretty melodramatic about it – the “why me and why now?” refrain in your head can dominate your thinking, especially when you suddenly have so much time to think because your life has come down to tossing and turning while you're lying in bed and occasionally paying attention to what's on TV.

And really, the TV doesn't help that much. The commercials, especially around dinner time, tempt you with all kinds of food you can't eat and at this point in time don't even want to look at, not to mention all the ads for lawyers specializing in accident claims, the ads for zit creme and the ads for new and improved ways to make money from the comfort of your own home – that all combine to make you feel even worse about yourself.

But the pity party can't last forever, especially in my house where after a few days my loved ones begin to get tapped out in the sympathy department (although it should be pointed out my parents came by a couple times to check on me but then again they don't have to live with me on a fulltime basis, anymore).

And I can't really blame them. You get pretty

self-centred when you're sick, especially us guys, but it's partly because we're talking about survival here people. It takes so much effort to do anything when you're sick you don't have time to think about how your condition is affecting other people.

But then that, ironically, as you get a little better, leads to a lot of gratitude for those same people when you start to feel a little better.

Like where would I be without them?

In sickness and in health, as they say.

I mean, geez, maybe they're losing some patience with me but they didn't desert me either, and they've got my back and hopefully if the cards are changed they've got mine.

And as you start to feel better and capable of actual human-type activity all the things that depressed you last week that you couldn't enjoy – the weather, the food, the drink, the feeling of summertime in the Okanagan – are now all reasons to feel good about things and act as motivators to get better so that you can really enjoy them.

And so on, and so on.

So as I write this, feeling roughly 85.5 per cent of normal, one looks back on the lessons learned from my few days, well, bed-ridden I guess, but if truth be told the couch and easychair played starring roles as well, there are life lessons to be learned.

Although I don't know exactly what made me sick, I know I can do a lot better in trying to prevent the damn thing from occurring in the first place.

So I'm suddenly motivated to eat better, exercise more (OK, actually start) and just take care of myself a little better. There is some personal responsibility at play here, at least in my case.

But also to be more grateful for the little things in life, like the sun coming up in the morning, the people in your life, eating, drinking, the energy and desire to do what you can with each day as it unfolds before you....

OK, I'm starting to sound like a poster I saw somewhere but do try to have a good weekend. I know I'm going to.

## Mussel threat can't be ignored

We all know the story of the boy who cried wolf, but concerns about zebra and quagga mussels are not being over-exaggerated.

The mussels first arrived in North America from Europe in the 1980s. Since then, they have spread across the continent, devastating ecosystems and public infrastructure along the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River basin and Lake Tahoe. Anyone who believes the Okanagan is immune to this problem is being unrealistic.

Given high levels of calcium (needed for the development of shells) in local lakes, the invasive species could thrive here. They clog water intake pipes and pumps, deplete food sources for indigenous fish and produce toxins that contaminate drinking water.

Imagine walking along beaches covered in razor-sharp shells. Not only would recreational activities suffer, real estate values would be impacted.

Given the potential ramifications, it is critical that all residents support the Regional District of North Okanagan, which is demanding senior levels of government take immediate action to prevent an infestation or at least slow the species' arrival.

All boats coming into B.C. from the U.S. or Alberta must undergo thorough inspection, while decontamination stations must be established at key locations in the Okanagan. As director Juliette Cunningham points out, levying a fine after an infestation occurs isn't sufficient.

“We need to focus on preventative aspects,” she said.

Given the value we all place on our Okanagan lifestyle, write your MP and MLA and insist that they take the issue of zebra and quagga mussels seriously. Time is running out.