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Reflections on the joy of ironing my clothes

Christmas is almost upon us and I should write or reflect or do something about it but I find that more and more the catchy strains of “Here Comes Santa Claus,” is making me cranky and wishing I had joined the Communist Party of Canada or the Jehovah’s Witnesses, both of whom do not celebrate Christmas. Or so I am told.

I do not understand why it is necessary for the marketplace to start banging us on the head with Christmas cheer before winter has even decided to make an appearance. That kind of advertising is about as disgusting as the sack of rotten potatoes our parents told us we would get if we did not behave and do as we were told.

These threats usually started with the first snowfall and continued until Midnight Mass, which usually found me on my knees promising the Virgin Mary, 50 Hail Mary’s and half my gifts if she would intervene on my behalf. She always did of course which is one of the reasons why I believe in the power of women.

So instead of writing about Christmas I am going to write about ironing. That’s right, ironing clothes. I have a pile to do as soon as I finish this column. I just read in a magazine in my doctor’s office (I am fine thank you) how some people actually find ironing clothes soothing and it fills them with happy thoughts.

Something I need as “Here Comes Santa Claus,” is sure not doing it for me. And anyways, I am one of those people who loves to iron. I can talk to you for hours about the best irons to use and the best and worst fabric to iron and I can share lots of ironing stories. It is amazing how many there are.

It really is one of the best exercises to do next to walking. It keeps your under arms strong and puts off sagging in that area and it is also good for maintaining a firm bust-line. Well that might be stretching it a bit after 60, Lol, but for sure the feeling one gets from the stacks of neatly folded tea towels, pillow cases, T-shirts, blue jeans with wonderful straight creases down the leg and rows of hanging shirts and blouses is akin to and I won’t say the word, but many women out there will know what I mean.

Ironing is a way to reflect on life’s foibles, to work out anger at the stupid politics of Harper, Doucette, and whoever else happened to make last night’s news. But the best thing of all is to just think about good things, good people and inhale the smell of clean laundry especially if it has been drying outdoors.

When I was a kid we used flat irons that must have weighed at least a pound. (Women were in great shape then) They, the irons, were kept at the back of the cook stove and were always hot. You picked them up with a wooden handle and held a small piece of board underneath in case the handle came undone and the iron fell to the floor or worse yet, landed on a baby crawling around down there.

Later, as we became more modern, my dad, after selling his fur, came home with a gas iron for my mom. News traveled fast in our family community and soon our house was full of

aunties and uncles, cousins and grandmas and grandpas, all there to see the fabulous new “moni yaw ah pah chee chi kun” white man’s tool to make life easier, especially for women.

We all crowded around as my mom read aloud, in a clear precise voice, the instructions from the booklet and we watched breathlessly as dad followed them. First, by filling the small tank on the side with gasoline, then pumping it up and finally lighting it as my aunty raced to the door and threw it wide open and Nokom chased us outside just in case it blew up and dad had to throw it out like he did the hissing, sputtering lamp he’d brought home the month before.

Threw it out several times in fact, until he realized the flaring and hissing of the “mantals” was normal. Well the gas iron didn’t explode but every time my mom lit it up to do the ironing we would all be chased outside until she got used to it.

What a wonderful convenience according to my aunties, who all received gas irons shortly after, traded for mink, otter and weasel skins.

But my Nokom, she never traded no weasel skins for any “moni yaw ah pah chee chi kun” reminding us instead that the flat irons cost us our land. The gas irons would probably want her grandchildren and future generations. But that’s another story.

Miyo Kitchi Mun tou Kisi kaw, ekwa, Miyo Och ay too kisi kaw ni wakom ah kanak. A Good Gods Day and a Good Kissing Day too all of you, my relatives