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Taking over coffee can change the world

My father, when he was remembering the great drought of the 1930s, said it was so hot and dry that the grass and the trees crackled in the wind every day and the wind, he said, never seemed to stop blowing.

Well that has certainly been true for the first part of our summer. Not only did the grass and trees crackle but it seemed the wind never stopped and for the first time in my life I saw balls of lightning during one of the spectacular electrical storms we had which produced no rain. As awesome as that all was, it was also frightening.

The North burning up, the evacuation of people from their homes to the cities and the almost minute by minute coverage on radio, television and social media, reminded us every day just how ignorant we are to climate change and, for sure, ill prepared. So ill prepared that it is pretty overwhelming.

I for one know that it's easier to tune out by going out and picking berries than to think of what I can do to change what is happening. But thank goodness for our kids. My youngest daughter called me in the middle of all this and said "Mom, Lorna's having a get together at her house on Saturday and she's inviting all her friends and their moms. Will you come with me?"

"Well sure, but what are we doing?" I asked.

"Who knows, she laughed but it should but be fun.

And it was. We ate good food, had Taro readings, went for a walk, talked about all kinds of things and came away with plans to meet again and organize a water walk and ceremony. I met good women and I got to know another side of my baby girl.

I remember as a young mother in the 1960s getting together with other mothers and having what we called consciousness-raising. Over coffee we educated each other on issues that affected our lives and the lives of our children and found ways to change what was happening.

We were able to get Emergency Crisis Centres, Food Banks, Co-op Housing, make changes to the Indian Act so women and their children would have a better life.

Getting together for coffee, talking, planning and organizing was exciting because we were taking control of our lives. Read *Disinherited Generations: Our Struggle to Reclaim Treaty Rights for First Nations Women and Their Descendants* by Kathleen Steinhauer and Nelly Carlson to find out what getting together for coffee and planning by a small group of mothers was able to do for thousands of people across Canada.

So, yes, we can do something about climate change. We might not be able to do it alone but we sure can do it together so go on call your best friend and her mother that's a good place to start.

So what else am I doing with the rest of my summer besides picking berries, meeting with some radical young moms and their mothers? Well, I am entertaining my cousin Hilary for a few days. She is arriving this week and that will be a fun time.

I'm taking my great grandson out for a birthday dinner and doing a dramatic reading at John Arcand's Fiddle Festival. Co-hosting a Storytelling Gathering and then, flying to a ceremony in Sudbury, Ontario between some First Nations and Michif people from both sides of the border, who are re-enacting a 125-year-old Treaty ceremony. That should be interesting.

But right now the big deal is dinner with my great grandson who was 10 last week. He is very handsome and smart. He loves me and thinks I am the greatest cook and "most awesome lady" he knows. His words on a note he sent me, I have a similar one sent by his father 25 years ago. I am very blessed and not always deserving of it.

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Condolences to the family of "aunty" Bella Arcand who passed away in July she will be missed by the many people who knew and loved her. She was, I believe, about 97 or 98 years old. It seems to me she and my father were born the same year.

I have many memories of her, but the most recent is about 10 years old. It is of her arriving at Back to Batoche Days in her little red car with a couple of old ladies and a trunk load of pies to sell.

They were having so much fun that my friends and I just wanted to hang out with them for the whole weekend.

She was one of those hard working, wise, tough gentle women who always had a smile, a hug and kind words for everyone. I'll miss her. Enjoy the rest of the summer and I'll see you at John Arcand's or somewhere down the road.