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Nov/Dec 2017

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FROM THE PUBLISHER



Muskoka Seniors Magazine *Your Resource for Living Well*

*Catering to Muskoka and surrounding areas,
with a mission to inform, inspire, support and include.*

The holidays are upon us once again. For some people this means Christmas shopping, others delightful feasts or a festival of lights. Regardless of what this time means to you, one thing we all seem to have in common is the importance of family and friends.

Some of you may be blessed enough to have loved ones to spend time with over the holidays. However, that's not the case for everyone. It can be a challenging time of year for people that are alone or feel the loss of their loved ones magnified. The hope here is twofold: One is that those that are alone realize you don't have to be and take advantage of the friends, community events and other social activities that can do a world of good. And two is that we embrace those that may be sad or alone into our circle of celebrations.

A small gesture of kindness can go a long way, not only during the holidays but at any time, as shown by George Brooks in his story about the man he took the time to reach out to on a bench in a mall. And in addition to giving kindness, when we realize that little blessings are all around us, regardless of our circumstances, as Catherine MacDonald shows us in her ordeal of being stranded on Christmas Eve, we allow ourselves to feel happy. Or as Reverend S. Derek Shelly puts it in Faithfully Speaking, "Despite times of hardship and difficulty, I can also be thankful...for the love and joy I experience...for the things I can still do...for loving people..."

Speaking of loving people, we have a new column called Family Matters for your family members, to be able to share experiences that you may have gone through together. Are there situations you've gone through as a family that you feel might be helpful to other families (i.e. medical, travel, caregiving etc.)? If so, we want to hear from your loved ones.

We also have a new Business Directory to make it clear and easy for you to find the products and services you may want and need, in addition to the columns, short stories, poems and other tidbits of material we enjoy putting together for you.

So whether you're travelling this season, trying out some new recipes for your gatherings (Muskoka Family Focus has some great recipes in their new book *150 Soup Recipes* – see their listing on page 31!), have other plans – or none – we hope that you enjoy your holidays. Season's Greetings!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, stylized lines that form a cursive name.

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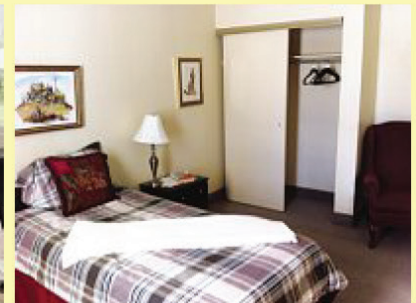
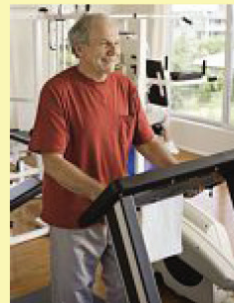
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The information presented in this magazine is
not intended to substitute medical advice from
a licensed practitioner.

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NOV/DEC 2017 CONTRIBUTORS



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Mike Napolitano retired from NYC in 1980 to marry a Muskoka girl. Since then, he has harmonized his American background with Muskokan sensibilities, keeping those within earshot entertained and informed.



Ray Napolitano, Forged in NYC, tempered in California, spiritually connected to Muskoka. Dedicated to truth, fairness, and justice. Defender of underdogs, natural predator of bullies. Writer, food and wine guy, dreamer, career underachiever.

PHYSICAL HEALTH COLUMN: ASK DR. NICK



Dr Nick Bianchi is a Chiropractor in Bracebridge. Chiropractors deal with conditions of the spine and all muscles, joints and nerves of the body. He deals with common conditions, such as sciatica, neck ache and shoulder pain. You can send him questions related to physical health and well-being, exercise and conditions such as arthritis.

Q: “Do you recommend assistive devices for the winter?”

As a chiropractor, not a week goes by without at least one patient of mine telling me that they have slipped and fallen. There are a number of reasons why this happens, with mud, loose gravel, wind, dew and yes, the dreaded snow and ice as the common culprits.

There are two main situations that involves falls. One is the person who purposefully walks outdoors for fitness, exercise or simply pure enjoyment, and the other is the accidental faller, who is going about their everyday life and slips and falls (usually getting to and from their car).

How can we prepare ourselves for the slippery conditions in the months ahead?

Canes, walkers and walking sticks

Pros: Simple to use; alerts others to your “unbalanced” situation; versatile; can also be a fashion accessory!

Cons: Can be slippery depending on the tip; we can become overly-dependent on them and

either lean on them too much (and fall) and/or not train our own sense of balance; they can get dirty and slippery.

Overall: I like the use of canes better than a walking stick. Walkers are more stable, however they are more cumbersome and can easily get stuck in snow and slush.

The verdict: Use a cane with a rubber end and/or an ice pick for really bad days.

Wheelchair “winter tires”

What a great idea! Yes, they do sell winter and all-terrain tires for wheelchairs. They even sell all-terrain wheelchairs for the real enthusiast.

Ice-grips for shoes

These slip-on devices provide traction for snow and ice. They can be found in many stores around town. The most famous brand is called Yaktrax but there are other brands as well.

FALL PREVENTION TIPS

Yes, accidents do happen, however, we can still do some important things here:

- **Use salt, sand or other gripping substances** around your home and car.
- **Clear your way properly.** Most of the falls happen at home. Yes, we can be rushed and in a hurry, however sometimes saving 5 minutes can result in 2 weeks of lost work or even worse, like a broken bone or concussion.
- **Exercise.** I know that you have heard this message many times, however, here is a new twist on this advice. People who exercise are stronger and more flexible. They may be able to avoid the fall altogether, stop or slow down their slip and at the very least, recover more quickly. People are often surprised when I praise them for healing so quickly. The way and speed at which we heal is dependent upon our overall health. Some people will fall, twist something, and be sidelined for months. Others will have a similar fall and will be sore for only a few days. The healthier you are, the more resilient you



Stay safe this winter but don't be a shut-in. Winter can be quite beautiful and fresh air is always beneficial. If you enjoy the outdoors, a few assistive devices can help you out. If you would rather avoid it all together, remember about your footing when you leave the house.

Have a safe season,
Dr. Nick

If you have a physical health question for Dr. Nick, addressing your muscles, bones or nerves, including exercise, conditions such as arthritis, or general well being, email:

editorial@muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca.

Dr. Nick would love to hear from you!

and the healthier all your systems are, including your muscles, bones, joints and immune system.

- **Don't let the pain linger too long.** Have you ever had sore muscles? The pain from over-exertion of muscles lasts for a couple of days. Any injury that persists for more than a few days, or involves a joint, needs to be assessed. Don't get into the habit of thinking that it will go away and all is well. I can tell you that any injury that results in pain lasting longer than 3-4 days will have ramifications down the road. Most importantly, check for balance problems after an injury.

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NUTRITION: SPECIAL FEATURE

Treating Illness and Disease: There is Hope

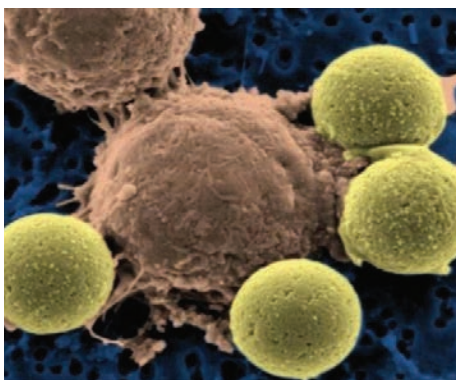
By Mike Napolitano

A few days ago as I lay in bed tossing ideas around in my head, it suddenly dawned on me that some things we have come to believe in without question, do not in some cases make any sense at all.

My opinions that follow are based on plain common sense and also an avid curiosity. I personally have no qualifications to address the medical problems the current establishment is now dealing with. My college major having been that of 'Export Trade'. Nevertheless, I did learn to think and to question, and it's these two tools I will use to seek answers to questions possibly puzzling many of you.

Also unqualified as I was in any form of health therapy except for some body building expertise done in my younger years, I would have never gotten involved in such a controversial and confusing subject as cancer until my wife at age fifty-two was diagnosed with lung, bronchial and trachea cancer - inoperable, nonresponsive to radiation or chemo and with no option but a prayer and the hope she would live the thirty days projected by the surgeon. (She was a smoker having started at age eighteen as part of the women's liberation movement.)

My main interests at the time were sports, politics and economics. My first published writing was for a sports magazine



followed by a good number of 'letters to editor' to about five newspapers on social issues of the day. Told there was nothing they could do for my wife, I turned to my research skills, which by some miraculous chance led me to the discovery of a doctor known to treat and control cancer by fortifying the patient's 'immune system' so that the body's own defense forces could be utilized to fight the intruder cancer cells. (All Greek to me at that time.)

If the 'immune system' is a new term to you, I would find out all you can about it because it could spare you from not only cancer but many other ailments. I did just that and went on to find with guidance by two chiropractors and a medical doctor the cause of cancer was due to poor diets, drinks and air pollution with a few exceptions in rare cases. My wife was eating well. We ate mostly Italian cuisine that we were both raised on by our parents. However, she was a smoker also and its destructive effect on her system overrode any benefit the good food might have provided otherwise.

When we got to meet the new

medical doctor, he did certain tests on my wife, to determine what medication her system could tolerate and benefit from. He then gave us a book to read written by a close friend of his, a chiropractor. Then he told us he was also a Registered Doctor of Chiropractic Therapy. He also told us that our medical profession were now using a new therapy to treat symptoms that brought quick relief to the patients who wanted immediate relief. They no longer studied nutrition as much. They were using pills, drugs and various chemicals, again more to bring temporary relief than to cure. The book was a '101' on vitamins and minerals, their function and needs by the body and very little on chiropractic. The writer was also a body builder. Then it hit me! We had an old Italian doctor who made house calls when I was living with my parents. Before he left he would make up drinks that we should eat or avoid.

Question? As times changed and our pace of living with it, have we pushed our medical profession to the point where in order to provide the demands of our time (quick fixes) they have had to push aside all the old means they once used, which had certain advantages over longer treatment times but abandoned those to give patients what they were seeking in preference - a pill for a quick fix so they could get on with their lives. Should we go back to experimenting with some of those >>>

old ideas? In my wife's case, it was those that gave her three years of additional normal life. True "one robin does not a spring make" but more doctors and scientists are taking a second look at those old ideas that may actually contain the answers to the very cure we have been so avidly seeking elsewhere.

Mike Napolitano retired from NYC in 1980 to marry a Muskoka girl. Since then, he has harmonized his American background with Muskokan sensibilities, keeping those within earshot entertained and informed.



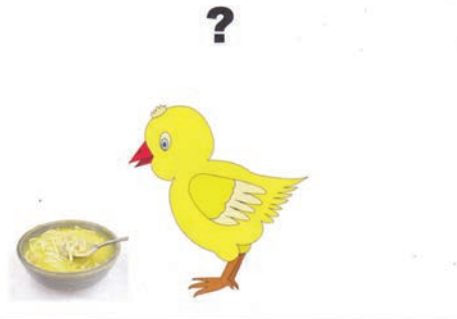
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Crazy Chicken Orzo Soup

By Bessie Grimes

What do you do when you have a craving for homemade Chicken Noodle Soup and you have no pasta in the house except orzo and no chicken pieces, only chicken nuggets? Here's a solution that tastes pretty good.

INGREDIENTS

6 frozen chicken nuggets
4 cups lamb or pork stock
1 large onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, diced

1 cup orzo
pepper and salt to taste
1 tbs. dried parsley flakes

Bring meat stock to a boil. Microwave chicken nuggets for one minute and chop them into bite-sized pieces. Add them to the stock along with salt and pepper, onion and garlic. Boil 15 minutes to cook the chicken and vegetables, then add orzo. Boil another 10 minutes, stirring constantly to prevent the orzo from sticking to the pot.

Makes 4 servings. Garnish each bowl with parsley flakes and enjoy.

***Bessie Grimes** is the author of **Bible Stories From a Different Point of View, Little Pigs and Big Carrots and Other Amazing Tales**, and the editor of **Pioneer Homemaking in Muskoka**.*

FAMILY MATTERS: NEWS & VIEWS OF FAMILY MEMBERS



By Ray Napolitano

Tossed Out of the Friendliest Country in the World

Readers of this publication were made familiar with the story of 95-yr old, wheelchair-bound, Mike Napolitano, of Gravenhurst, when this past July saw him lose the full time help of his son Raymond. That's me. Turns out on one slow morning at the Thousand Islands border a young, upwardly mobile (I presume) border agent started questioning the amount of time I had been spending in Canada and pointed me to the immigration office there, where over the next few hours I was deemed unworthy of remaining due to that plus a DUI I had gotten in California back in the days when I was a wholesale fine wine distributor. Immigration told me they could either not let me in at all, place me in jail awaiting a hearing, or option three: they awarded me a two-week visa, whereby I was to be officially vanquished on, of all days, July 4th (American Independence Day).

Fortunately, the first order of business, ensuring that Dad was

looked after, fell into place, with friends filling the void. The second order of business proved much more interesting. My instructions were to visit any immigration office at any port on my way out of the country to hand in my temporary visa. I consulted Google Maps and saw there was an office near the Buffalo crossing. It was a sunny, warm Muskoka morning as I hugged the Old Man goodbye and made my way south, down the familiar Route 11. I presumed crossing would entail a simple hand off of my visa, then perhaps some parting gifts from the friendliest country in the world, wishing me well upon my journey. Ha.

I arrived at the immigration office, a block-long, unimposing, architecturally dreary glass and steel utilitarian outpost within an average looking suburban neighborhood, found my way from the wrong end down endless hallways to what seemed like an official immigration counter. Four or five blue-uniformed border agents appeared busy, a skill all institutional bureaucrats everywhere seem to have mastered. Finally someone walked over to ask me what I was doing there. I dutifully handed them my passport and visa explaining my mission.

After a couple of them gathered around a computer, looking puzzled, a most commanding woman told me I was in the wrong building and gave me general instructions about where I should go. She would be holding my passport and visa while

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I went to the correct place. It led me on a harrowing chase across toll booth lanes and wrong ways down one way streets until I came upon the immigration office on the Canadian side of the border crossing (don't ask). I walked into a cramped, grey room filled with frustrated immigrants awaiting some fate or another and approached the window.

Another commanding woman impatiently listened to my explanation that my visa and passport were with the woman in the attached (so I thought) building. She said she knew of no such woman and heartily reprimanded me for going to the wrong building in the first place. I (perhaps a

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bit sarcastically) pointed out that I wasn't used to being thrown out of countries and apologized for botching my assignment. After some gnashing of teeth and a few phone calls I was escorted to another building, whereupon my passport was returned and I was shown the entrance ramp out of Canada.

In retrospect, it makes for a fun story. Naturally, I hold no animosity toward the friendliest country in the world and look forward to someday returning as a normalized tourist. Oh Canada!

Fortunately, Dad found a dear friend who happened to also need someplace to live, so they are enjoying their time together. In many ways, he's happier now because, let's face it, having a friend around is much more fun than a pain in the neck son who

occasionally bangs heads with you.

The takeaway is probably to really look into the rules for immigration regarding whatever country you're going to. I never thought I'd be up there for so long--frankly Dad was supposedly in declining health when I arrived, but he's impossibly resilient. Also, it was 100% correct

for my life to have been there when I was, and I believe it was also 100% correct to have been moved along by the universe when it happened. Nonsensical national bureaucracies aside, there is some sort of greater order to

everything and I just try to flow along with it.

Ray Napolitano, Forged in NYC, tempered in California, spiritually connected to Muskoka. Dedicated to truth, fairness, and justice. Defender of underdogs, natural predator of bullies. Writer, food and wine guy, dreamer, career underachiever.



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SUPPORT FOR STRESS: SPECIAL FEATURE



Man on the Bench: A Little Help Can Go a Long Way

By George Brooks

On one of our shopping trips to the mall, my wife gave me specific instructions not to follow along behind her but to meet at the front entrance at noon.

I wandered around the mall looking for nothing in particular and soon exhausted the few stores that interested me. I arrived back at the main entrance well before noon, looked around and spotted a bench.

A young man, maybe in his 30's, was sitting alone at one end of the bench. He was slumped over with his head in his hands. I sat at the other end of the bench and casually watched the people as they went by, some in a hurry, a mother pushing a stroller, several folks with a cell phone pushed to an ear or an Ipod in their hands. None were giving the bench a second look.

After a few minutes, the young man started to quietly talk to himself. I knew he wasn't talking to anyone else and definitely not me because he still had his face in his hands.

Not wanting to intrude, I glanced over and back again and I suppose if I were honest, I didn't want to get involved.

The young man's voice became more distinct and I thought I heard him say, "It's no use. I can't go on."

I looked over at him and I could see tears running between his clenched fingers. He sobbed and I couldn't ignore it any longer. I quietly spoke in his direction. "Is there something I can help you with young man?"

There was no response and no indication that he

had heard me.

I continued to look his way but he didn't say anything more. Minutes passed and I turned back to again gaze out over the mall entrance area. I wondered what was distressing this young man so badly but I couldn't bring myself to speak to him again. Several more minutes passed and then I heard him speak, almost inaudible but distinct enough for me to hear him.

"She died and it was my fault!"

I turned towards him. He was still bent over with his head in his hands but I felt that the words he had just spoken were for me. Hesitantly I said, "Do you want to talk about it?" He didn't look up but he made a deep sigh that would break any father's heart.

I waited and everything around the bench seemed to disappear as I focused my whole being on this young man.

He slowly started to speak and I had to strain to hear his words through his clenched fingers that covered his face. "I shouldn't have been driving. We both had had too much to drink at the party, and we were laughing and singing like we did before we were married. I drove too fast, missed a turn and ran into a tree. I can't remember anymore, except sirens and flashing lights." A long pause and then he began again. "The next morning, I woke up dazed and in the hospital. A doctor told me that my wife was dead from severe head injuries." A pause and a sob came from this broken man. He continued, "Those words have haunted me day and night for months and I can't go on." >>>

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES FOR STRESS OR MELANCHOLY:

- **Simcoe/Muskoka District Health Unit,**
1-877-721-7520
www.simcoemuskohealth.org
- **Canadian Mental Health Association**
705-645-2262
www.cmha.ca
- **Your family doctor can also help you get the support you need during challenging times.**

He started to sob again and I was at a loss as to what to say, and yet I knew that I had to say something and somehow turn this desperate and broken man away from what he might do to himself.

I began slowly, “You had a terrible and devastating loss.” A weak start I thought. A slight nod of the young man’s head encouraged me to continue. “I’m sure you are carrying a lot of guilt feelings and hurt. Anyone could understand that.”

“I hate myself,” he stammered.

I searched my brain for a response. “You may carry those feelings for a long time son, and even if I didn’t know your wife, I’m sure she wouldn’t want you to harm yourself. She might even want you to make something out of this tragedy.

For the first time he raised his head slightly and turned his grief stricken face towards me. “What do you mean?” he asked.

I thought, “What do I mean?” I had connected with this distraught man who was obviously looking for help and hope and I was lost for words.

He turned away and put his face back into his hands.

I knew that I was going to lose him. I had to say something, something meaningful. “I think that your wife may want you to do something for both of you. She may be thinking that you have two lives to live now, and maybe with each little success you have, you can picture her smiling and nodding her head. She still wants you to make her proud. Your actions from now on reflect on both of you.”

He looked up at me. A few moments of eye contact went by and then he turned his head away from me and stared out across the mall.

I continued to quietly watch his sad face but his eyes seemed to be looking beyond the mall to some other place. Slowly he stood up, turned and nodded at me and walked away and out the entrance doors.

Several months have passed but each time I revisit the mall, I go to that same bench and sit a spell. I look at the people as they go by to see if I might spot the young man again. As I wait, I wonder what the young man is doing and what decisions he made since that day we met on the bench in the mall.

George Brooks is a retired teacher. He and his wife moved from the Niagara area to Ahmic Lake. He has been published by Reader’s Digest magazine, “More of Canada.”

MIND HEALTH



Tips for Staying Resilient During the Holidays

The holidays can be a special time for many of us. But for some people it represents painful reminders of past loved ones.

If you find yourself having a hard time enjoying yourself over the holidays, create alternative ways of coping, so you can embrace the joys and create more meaning. The following are some tips to help you enjoy your season:

Plan ahead. Think about what you can do for yourself to make this occasion easier or more enjoyable (i.e. social time, staying connected to loved ones, etc.)

Create new traditions. Your loss may have impacted your traditions. Create new rituals to make this time meaningful again (i.e. volunteering).

Take care of yourself. Do things that will uplift you emotionally (i.e. walks/exercise, fun hobbies, etc.)

Get support. Talk to a caring friend, clergy and other community supports, which can also inform you about resources available in your area.

It’s also important to be sensitive to those we know that may be experiencing difficulty. How to lend your support:

- Be there to listen if someone needs to talk.
- Express empathy and understanding.
- Help in general areas where needed.
- Include them in social activities.
- Provide supportive resources. **MSM**



**Debbie Dale,
Chapter President
President's message:**

We are pleased to join with Muskoka Seniors Magazine to make sure CARP Chapter #58 reaches our existing and future members. We know you will enjoy this resource for seniors, Zoomers and families.

CARP is on the move across Muskoka and Parry Sound with a rapid expansion alongside our CARP National lead team who are sprinting into a spectacular 2018 under the "2018 Top 6 Advocacy Priorities." A banner year, indeed, and we CARP Muskoka Parry Sound enthusiasts are ecstatic to be a part of it all with local membership rising over 1,200. Check out our new Board of energized 'locals' ready to pitch in. Now here's a question: What can you buy for \$1.65 per month? Read on!

CARP's 2018 Top 6 Advocacy Priorities nationally have initiated forward movement that's destined for success.

- **The #1 priority** is restoring sanity to electricity rates - only in Ontario. We Ontarians pay more for hydro than any of our Canadian neighbours; and, relief is surely due in part to the national presence, perseverance, and persistence of CARP.
- **Priority # 2** is a reduction of wait times for medical procedures. By the time many Canadians get that much-needed surgery, muscles have declined and the 'magic pain pills' have played a negative role. The list of side effects for various medications are, well, shocking. The practise of deferring medical procedures until patient pain is severe seems rather barbaric to most. Yet, here we are and here we sit. Oh Canada! CARP is a surging national wave of united voices – moving in unity and en masse.

So, what's CARP all about? CARP (formerly known as the Canadian Association of Retired Persons) is a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization that advocates for financial security and improved health care for Canadians as we age. With over 300,000 members and nearly 50 chapters across Canada, CARP plays an active and increasingly visible role in the creation of policy and legislation that impacts older Canadians. Check us out online or give us a 'like' on Facebook, please. It matters not if you are a senior yet as, God willing, you will get to that stage in life and be thankful that many have gone ahead before you – and made change. Wonderful, fabulous, needed CHANGE.

Debbie Dale

What is CARP? CARP, the Canadian Association for Retired Persons, is Canada's largest Advocacy Association for Canadians as we age. CARP advocates for better healthcare, financial security and freedom from ageism. CARP members engage in polls and petitions, email their elected representatives, connect with local chapters and share stories and opinions on urgent issues. CARP members also get more than 100 benefits and discounts in healthcare, lifestyle, traveling and many more.

Through our affiliation with Zoomer Media, CARP has access to multiple media platforms. CARP works closely with all levels of government and collaborates with other organizations to advocate on health and financial issues. CARP uses the media and enlists members' voices to increase its clout as an effective advocate.

Our local Chapter # 58 engages in these objectives and zeros in on local issues and situations. Housing, delivery of hospital services, transportation, accessibility and money matters are among these but we are always ready to help our members with their concerns as soon as they communicate with us.



We support local businesses and appreciate their financial support. Among those are the following:

- Huntsville Place Mall,
- William Green Insurance & Financial Solutions
- Muskoka Medical Centre Pharmacy (Huntsville)
- Billingsley Funeral Home
- Joan Ricard, Broker - Royal LePage
- Cottage Country Cremation Inc.
- Hear in Muskoka
- Darrach Denture Clinic
- Seniors for Seniors
- Home Comfort Care Services
- Back of Beyond Equine Centre
- Sanderson Monument Gallery
- Mary Kuipers Gallery

Please check our website for more details on these and other local supporters.

Top 6 National Priorities

1. Restore sanity to electricity rates in Ontario.
2. Reduce wait times for hospital procedures.
3. Improve access to home care for the aged and for hospice care.
4. Caregiver support to reduce the potential for the emotional and financial devastation that can occur.
5. CARP is working to eliminate embedded fees and eliminate mandatory RRIF withdrawals.
6. CARP is developing recommendations to stop elder abuses to improve the financial, physical and emotional security of us as we age.

Our local chapter is involved with these 6 priorities with our location in mind since Muskoka/Parry Sound has its unique perspectives.

Join now! Call us for a mail in form or go to:
<http://muskokacarp.ca/join-chapter-58/>

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Holiday Gift Guide...



Give your family peace of mind this holiday season by completing the **Departing Details Workbook**. This step-by-step guide highlights aspects of your life often overlooked in your will. Save 10% on online orders with coupon code: **GIFT10**.
www.EstateWorkbook.com

Acme Pets

See us for all your pet care needs this holiday season - food, treats, toys, shampoo, grooming and more! \$10 off large bag of dog food November and December! Customer appreciation Christmas sale December 22 and 23, 2017! Sundridge, acmepetfoods.ca, 705-384-5555.

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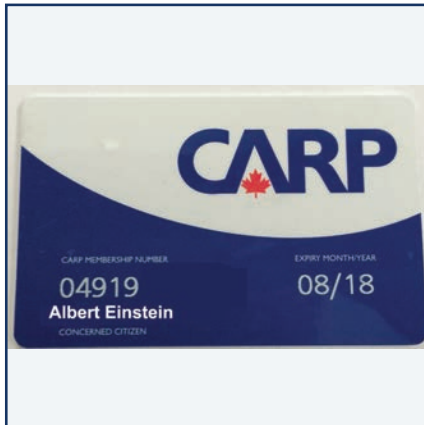
Wishing you a safe and happy holiday!

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www.huntsvilleshometownida.ca

Shop locally this holiday season, and support your nearby businesses and community!

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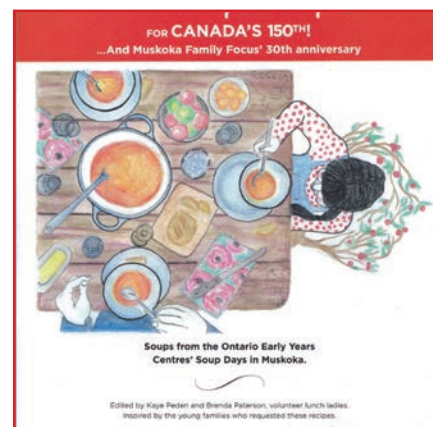


CARP

For anyone who wants to age with vim and vigour, the gift of a CARP membership would be a welcomed bonus. Lots of news, views, tips, special discounts and lots of fun could be right for the 45+ on your list.

150 Soup Recipes

All proceeds go to support *Muskoka Family Focus*, so not only will you have a great reference for your kitchen but great Christmas gifts for only \$20.00. Please contact Brenda Paterson at: groveparkmuskoka@gmail.com or 705-645-3027 to order your copy.





We Are Blessed

Some time ago, I had blogged about the use of the term “bless you”, in response to when someone sneezes. My grandson and I had a wonderful discussion about its meaning. Into the conversation came the expression “I am blessed” as a response to someone being asked how they were feeling at that particular time. Often when asked: “How are you feeling?” the common response these days is “fine” whether or not we are feeling fine. Yet some folks use the term “I am blessed”.

As it turns out, I began seeking to understand for myself what these terms could mean for us today. The idea of saying “bless you” after a sneeze originated at a time when sneezing was considered an expulsion of evil spirits from the body (believing evil spirits caused illness). Tradition still has us expressing the idea of a blessing when someone sneezes. Yet, I have been known to say “excuse me” after a sneeze or cough, which I suppose is done of politeness having interrupted whatever was happening around me, even when I am

totally alone. (Just manners, I guess.)

Then there is the issue of the individual telling others they are feeling “blessed” when asked. At first I wasn’t sure what to make of such a statement. In an older sense, one might interpret the expression as one of arrogance, accepting the belief that the opposite means one is cursed if not blessed. Blessing accompanied good actions, whereas not being blessed was God’s way of punishing us for bad actions or thoughts.

Rather than get into a long discussion about the one that many of us would call “God” and even a longer discussion about how this God does or doesn’t reward and punish us, I simply want to focus on the expression “I am blessed” or “I am feeling blessed”.

In speaking with a young woman earlier this week and about this very discussion, she posed the question wondering if such an expression simply had to do with a feeling of gratitude. “I am blessed” for her meant that there is a feeling of gratitude

rather than one of privilege or reward. To acknowledge a sense of blessing is to acknowledge a sense of gratitude. The individual was expressing thankfulness for that which was part of her life. (Oh, the wisdom of youth that is so often neglected.)

As I approach the holidays, I look at all that is in my life for which I can be thankful. Despite times of hardship and difficulty, I can also be thankful. Even as I grieve the many losses that I may be experiencing at this time, I can still feel blessed and I can still be thankful. I can be thankful for the love and joy I experienced. I can be thankful for the loving people (and pets) that offer me love on a daily bases. I can give thanks for the things I can still do, as well as grieving the loss of those I can’t.

In essence, we are all blessed; yet so often we feel that we cannot or should not express seemingly contrasting feelings. In reality, we are feeling them all. We experience joy and sadness; we are happy and sad. Too often we forget that these contrasting feelings are not polar opposite but one in the same. I like to use the example of “laughing until we cry or crying until we laugh” as an expression of what I mean. Even in our darkest moments there is still a reason for us to give thanks. May we all know that we are blessed.

Rev. S. Derek Shelly is a minister with the United Church of Canada, serving Trinity United in Huntsville, and is the author of the book, Dying to Live.



Blessed on Christmas Eve

By Catherine MacDonald

I had an unforgettable experience, which I like to refer to as my True Christmas Story that occurred on Christmas Eve in 1978.

I was driving from Toronto with my two young daughters and two fidgety Poodles enroute to my mother's home in Bracebridge some 100 miles north. It was 30 below freezing and dropping. Our Volkswagen Bug was packed to the hilt with children, dogs and gifts for everyone. We had a late start from the city and as we passed Barrie in the heart of the snow belt, it was already dark and a snow storm was setting in. Fortunately, the Bug was an excellent performer in snow and that wasn't a particular concern, however, when the engine began slowing down, and cutting in and out, my concern level began to rise.

As all the gas stations were already closed, I began to pray. There were very few motorists on the road. Prayer got us to an O.P.P station in Orillia, which meant we weren't going to freeze to death, but there was little hope of getting our vehicle

looked at or getting home for Christmas. As we stood looking at each other not knowing what to do next, a police officer who had been going off shift as we entered, returned for something he forgot and over hearing part of our conversation approached me. "Your gas line is probably frozen," he said. "I have a bottle of gas-line antifreeze in my car, I'll put it in for you".

I tried to pay him, but he wouldn't hear of it. I thanked him profusely, wished him a very Merry Christmas and loading kids, dogs and a renewed Christmas spirit back into the Bug we continued on our way.

We were only a few miles on the highway when we came upon a vehicle on the side of the road. My rule was never stop for strangers and keeping to the rule, I sailed by.

The children however had other ideas. "We have got to stop, we have got to stop. It's Christmas Eve..."

They were right. As much as my logical self said, "don't," my inner self knew we had to stop.

Reluctantly, I slowly backed

the Bug up. A great burly hulk of a man began to approach us.

My heart was in my mouth. We were so vulnerable and the two little girls and woolly lap pooches weren't going to be of any help either. I rolled the window down about 3 inches and prayed. "God help us..."

The hulk was now bending over looking at me saying, "Haven't I seen you somewhere before tonight?" Impossible! Here was the officer that gave us his last bottle of antifreeze stranded on the highway with a frozen gas-line. Somehow we squeezed him into the Bug, into some mysterious space between singing children, kissing dogs and tinsel wrappings and delivered him to his home safe and sound and thence on to my mother's house.

Many years have passed, but this experience stays with us all. We were truly blessed on the most blessed eve of the year.

Catherine MacDonald, Bracebridge, worked 25 yrs for Prov. Gov't, author of historical novel, Heaven Knows and book of awarded winning poems, Soul Sounds. Vol: Brac. Seniors Centre.



Huntsville Place Mall's Sensitive Santa...

For many children with autism and sensory processing disorders, visiting Santa is a nightmare and the Huntsville Place Mall understands that sometimes it's hard for some infants, children and young adults because of long lines, boredom and an overwhelming sense of hustle and bustle.

Some families know this type of situation means trouble and don't even bother with shopping centers or stores during the holiday season, therefore some children have never had the opportunity to meet the special man in the red suit. That's why the Huntsville Place Mall continues to host their Sensitive Santa making it the fifth consecutive year this December.

It's an offering of a sensory-friendly Santa experience, so all families have the opportunity to take that beloved photo with less crowding, and with a very special new Santa and his Mrs. Claus.

Activities in line for this two day event on Friday December 1st and 2nd from 9:30-12:30 for those of all ages in the Huntsville and surrounding communities with Autism and any special need will include activity stations as well as snacks and much more! Each family will receive one complimentary picture as their holiday reminder that the season is for everyone.

For more information about this event, contact Mall Manager Lindsay Edwards at 705-789-3889 or email at huntsvilleplacemall@hotmail.com.



*By Mike Napolitano
(92 years old, Gravenhurst, ON)*

I was born at a different time. Our food was sold on farms.

Our mothers raised the kids at home, made all their bread, macaroni and used eggs from free range chickens to make their egg noodles.

Cows ate only grass and gave good raw milk that we drank unpasteurized or homogenized.

We had gardens, not lawns cut with noisy gas emitting machines. We watered them with non fluoridated water, a poison put in your drinking water in some towns in Muskoka.

Lemonade, a gingerale and maybe a coke were treats.

We had no fast food stores to buy new soda pops, by the dozen, containing ten to fifteen teaspoons of sugar each, the real cause of cavities.

We had no cars, buses or big factories all spewing fumes into the air. Airplanes came later few and far apart.

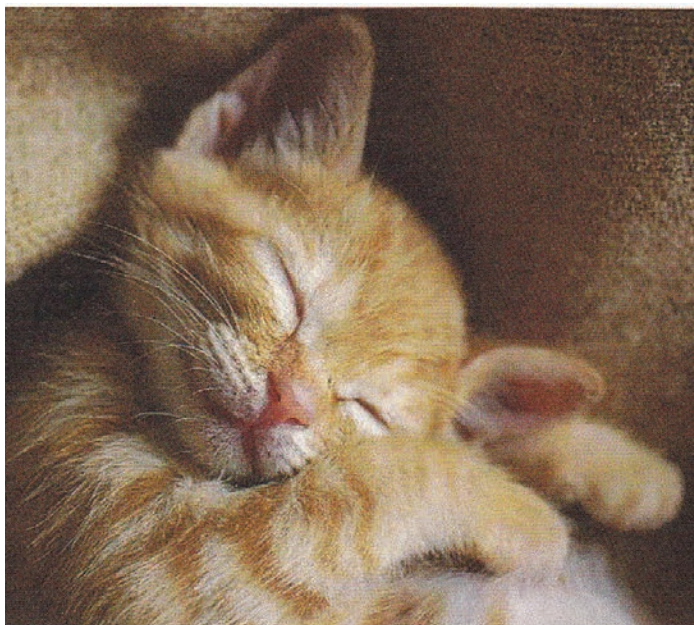
You can take it on from here!

Do you have 'go to' things in your life that help you to age well (i.e. foods you eat, exercise practices, staying busy, social or spiritual beliefs, etc.)? If so, we want to hear from you!

Contact us at:

editorial@muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca

CREATIVE CORNER



A Lazy Day

By Bessie Grimes

I feel like being lazy.
It's a very lazy day.
The weather it is dreary
And I know I'd like to stay

Close by a fire where it's warm
And a blanket covers me.
TV sounds quite good right now.
That is where I want to be.

I feel like being lazy.
And I do not want to stir
Far from the cozy comfort
Where a cat would like to purr.

Bessie Grimes is the author of *Bible Stories From a Different Point of View*, *Little Pigs and Big Carrots* and *Other Amazing Tales*, and the editor of *Pioneer Home-making in Muskoka*.



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The Rhyme

By Joanne Lips

Once a little rhyme
lived in a house as small as a dime.
It wandered about but found no way out.
Then looking up high spied a hole to the sky.
It sat down to ponder,
Did it dare go up yonder?
With a breath very deep,
It made the great leap.
Rhyme learned to fly,
high up in the sky.
A voice in the dome said,
'This is your home.
You now are a poem.'

Joanne Lips and her husband have been residents in the Huntsville area for 14 years. She enjoys family genealogy research, travelling and, more recently, writing stories and various forms of poetry.



It was Time to Test Their Wings

By Shirley Cambray

As they returned from the travel agency, Holly and Carol were walking on air. They'd decided on the agent's recommendation of a cruise to Mexico for the Christmas break. Such excitement they'd never felt before, and nervousness too – they'd never ventured far from their Canadian home and certainly never travelled on a plane.

It would be a tribute to the memory of a wonderful mother, Margaret, who'd been overjoyed at the birth of twin girls on Christmas Day, those many years ago. She'd almost given up hope of having children and was sad that her husband, Wilfred, did not feel the same way. He'd made it clear, shortly after their marriage, he really wasn't interested in having children. He was dogmatic and steadfast in his old-world belief that only boys were of value and he didn't even soften his view as the babies grew to be the fine young women he should have been proud to love.

They were not beautiful in the classic sense, and rather too tall to be considered "cute", but they certainly had wonderful dispositions, and smiles some said could light up a room.

Although Wilfred took little interest in their upbringing, telling Margaret higher education was wasted on girls, they were determined to become teachers and their mother was just as determined they would get the education needed.

Because Margaret was an excellent seamstress, she was able to build up a bank account for the girls to at-

-tend the local university. Of course they pitched in too with after-school jobs and full-time work during summer months. Sadly, in the last year of university life Margaret's health became fragile, and she lived only a short time after the girl's graduation. Unbelievably, she'd asked them to promise they'd take care of their father, so the following years were spent looking after a cantankerous man who became even more demanding after having a stroke. Because he'd never shown the girls any affection, it was an onerous task rather than a labour of love.

Then, after five years of teaching experience, Holly was offered a position of vice-principal in another municipality. That meant moving a distance away, which would put a heavier burden on Carol, but she encouraged Holly to take the promotion. As it happened, it was to be Wilfred's last year as he suffered a final stroke. Surprisingly, Carol discovered she didn't mind being on her own, and she took on the added pleasure of doing some tutoring.

It was while Holly was home again for the weekend, they'd decided on a trip to celebrate their birthday.

"Are we too old to hope for a shipboard romance?" mused Carol.

Holly smiled, "Probably, but we're not too old to hope. And isn't it time for us to test our wings?"

And so the adventure began. After lift-off, the plane was not as scary as they thought it would be and they began to enjoy every minute of the ride. Upon landing



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in Florida a shuttle bus took them to Tampa to board the awaiting cruise ship, the "Vera Cruz. They were directed to their room, which at first sight looked to be more the size of a closet, but they must make the best of it and after unpacking they found it was quite functional. Later they spent time on deck watching the activities of the crew and noticed some of the passengers were already acquainted, having met each other on previous trips. The twins felt sort of out of the loop, never having been outside of Ontario. At dinner they joined the people who shared their table. There was Peter, the quiet young man with a talkative mother, an unhappy-looking older married couple, and Fred the lone male... Was he actually leering at them?

Bedded down in their cabin for the night, they talked about those they'd met. Peter seemed to be on the trip only at the insistence of his mother, who perhaps had her own agenda. The older couple did not speak to each other, although they made conversation with the rest of the people at the table - something wrong here. Then there was Fred, the lone male, possibly fifty years old, who kept looking at them in a sly sort of

way - a good thing they couldn't read his thoughts.

After breakfast the next morning, while walking the deck, they met Peter with his mother. She tried desperately to get him to show some interest in them and he was polite, but distant, obviously embarrassed by his mother's attempt at some kind of connection.

The ship's first port of call would not be until the next day, so they would use this time to lazily enjoy the beautiful sunny weather and calm waters. On the upper deck they spotted the older married man sitting alone. At first their conversation was about the cruise so far, and then Holly enquired if the man's wife perhaps was not feeling well. "No," replied the man, "My wife and I are headed for divorce. Our sons have given us this trip in the hope of reconciliation, but it's not working. Anyway, I shouldn't burden you with my troubles." The twins assured him they were only sorry they could not help. As the man left them, saying he was going to the bar for another good stiff drink, they wondered if that was part of the problem.

Next day, the island tour by tender to Playa del Carmen. From there, by bus, they... Cont'd page 26 >>>

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

made a stop at the Maya Ruins to learn its history before going on to a beautiful Lagoon. Here the girls ate their boxed lunch while watching multi-coloured fish swim around exotic plants growing in crystal clear water.

Earlier in the day, Fred had made a move on Holly but had been rebuffed, so he set his sights on the more vulnerable Carol. Holly told her sister to ignore him, he probably had a wife somewhere, but Carol was enjoying his smooth line and attention, so she brushed off the warning. Of course Holly could not let that go and she came up with a plan to enlist Peter. At first he laughed at the idea but then agreed to do what he could to pry her sister away from the “wolf”. It worked. Carol became more overjoyed with Peter’s attention, so it was goodbye old Fred and hello gorgeous Peter. Holly and Peter’s mother found they had common interests, especially for the upcoming shopping day in Cozomel. A great arrangement for everyone, except Fred, it seemed.

All too soon the voyage came to an end and it was time to say their farewells. The older couple were not completely reconciled but they were going to work at improving their relationship. After all, a thirty year marriage should not be lightly discarded.

Fred ignored the twins. He had been rejected by both of them and was annoyed he’d spent any time at all on them. Didn’t the silly spinsters understand he was doing them a favour?

Peter gave Carol a big bear hug, much to the delight of his mother. When saying goodbye to Holly, he confessed he’d told Carol about the plan because he didn’t want her to be fooled. Also, when at home, he would break the news that he’d been in a relationship with a partner for years. Holly had a feeling his mother already knew.

Vacation ended, bags unpacked, and settling down with a nice cup of tea, they stretched out their legs and with a mutual sigh of contentment, recalled the adventure of their first flight from the nest. Then with an impish grin Holly said, “Get out the travel books Carol, it’s time to plan our summer vacation – how about a whole month at a resort in Ontario?”

Shirley Cambray spent many summers on Oxbow Lake before taking up full-time residency in Huntsville. Now in her senior years, she is enjoying the writing of poems and short stories.



It's Snow Time

By Bob Birrell

The snow is snowing,
The wind is blowing,
But Muskoka can weather the storm.

It is only frozen vapour falling to the earth
in light white flakes,
We know mother nature has what it takes.

Yes, the snow is white,
And the sun is bright,
They combine to make things just right,
For skiing, snowshoeing and winter sports that don't
fright.

Our local hero Dara Howell went looking for snow in
Russia and came back with a skiing glow.

Christmas isn't the same without snow;
Santa can't use his sleigh without snow

Some trees are bare in winter,
But evergreens are no fool and carry snow on them
like cotton wool.

Some of us love our winters,
And the snow creates lovely scenes for kids with
their sleds, and snowmobiles for big kids.
So, “let it snow, let it snow, let it snow”.

Bob Birrell 82, was born in Scotland and emigrated to Canada at 23 as a fresh architect. He lives in Huntsville and paints and writes in his retirement.

ADVERTORIAL

An Act of Love and Kindness for Your Family: 5 Reason's You Need to Plan for Your Inevitable Death Now

By Rosemary Pahl RN MBA

#1 IT IS AN ACT OF LOVE AND KINDNESS FOR YOUR FAMILY

One of the greatest legacies you can leave your loved ones is to ensure they have the information they need when you die. This allows your heirs to focus on grieving and healing rather than being consumed by stressful searches for information or even worse family conflicts around decisions. As an added bonus, preplanning results in conversations that can create a more meaningful process for the whole family.

#2 JUST HAVING A WILL IS NOT ENOUGH

Having an up-to-date will is essential. A good rule of thumb is that a revision is required after any major life event or

at least every 5 years. If you become incompetent a power of attorney is required in order to have your affairs managed appropriately.

#3 HEALTH CARE ISSUES MAY EMERGE PRIOR TO DEATH

Living wills and advance directives are written, legal documents regarding your preferences for medical care if you are unable to make decisions for yourself. At the point of death, your family may be asked about donating your organs. Having these discussions now, means that there will not be uncertainty and stress about what to do at the time.

#4 THERE IS A LONG LIST OF BASIC INFORMATION YOUR HEIRS/EXECUTORS WILL REQUIRE

Imagine that I asked you to produce your birth certificate, your marriage certificate, a list of all your investments, a list of any loans owing or owed to you, a key to your safe deposit box, and a list of your passwords. These are just a representative sample of the many things your executor will require. Now imagine having to find all that information if you had no idea where to look.

#5 HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED?

Arguably one of the more difficult areas to deal with is how you want to be remembered. If selecting a gravesite, burial vs. cremation or writing your own obituary is too difficult to contemplate, you can assist

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DEPARTING DETAILS *Workbook*

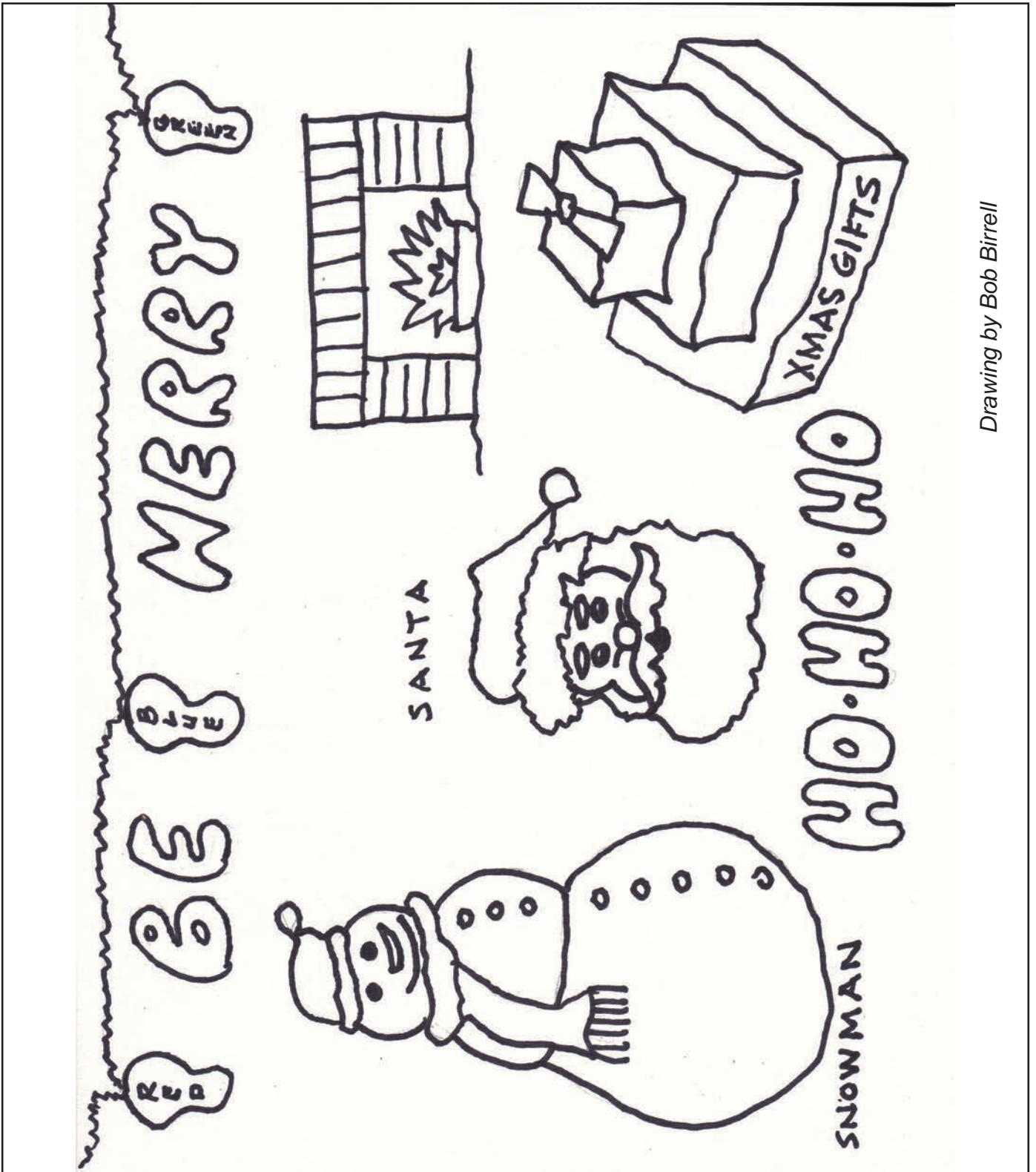
your family by leaving relevant information including preferences, family history, resumes, awards, details about causes near to your heart and other documents that they can use to make funeral decisions or write an obituary.

Through a personal experience with a close friend, I witnessed the painful results of what can happen when we don't prepare. It inspired me to create an *estate planning guide* for my immediate family. Once you make all these documents available it can bring peace of mind to the whole family as children will not be consumed by stressful searches for information or, even worse, family conflicts around unmade decisions. If I was to die suddenly, I have peace of mind that my affairs are in order. Do you? As Benjamin Franklin said "Failing to plan, is planning to fail."

Whether you use *Departing Details* or other resources, the important thing is to ensure that your loved ones have the necessary information they need when you die or are incapacitated. It is an act of love and one of the kindest things you can do for your family.

Rosemary Pahl was a healthcare CEO and an COO/CFO in the tourism and legal sectors after starting her career as a nurse in Peterborough, Ontario. She is the author of Departing Details Workbook.

COLOUR ME: For fun, stress or perhaps another thing you can do with your grandkids...



Drawing by Bob Birrell

If you have a picture for colouring that you created, an experience, short or funny story, or poem that you would like to share, email it to: editorial@muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca

MARKETPLACE

**MUSKOKA SENIORS
MAGAZINE
CLASSIFIEDS**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Muskoka Advent Choir: 7:00pm

- Nov. 24 - Church of the Holy Spirit, Burk's Falls;
- Nov 26 - First Baptist, Orillia;
- Dec 1 - St. Paul's, Gravenhurst;
- Dec. 3 - St. Andrew's, Huntsville;
- Dec 8 - Pinegrove, 118 W Port Carling;
- Dec 10 - Pingrove, Bracebridge



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Boggle, By Bessie Grimes

List the words you find in the puzzle below on a separate page. Each word must contain at least three letters, and each letter must connect either vertically, horizontally or diagonally. Letters may only be used once in any one word.

SCORING:

3 letters = 1 point; 4 letters = 2 points; 5 letters = 3 points; 6 letters = 4 points; 7 letters = 6 points; 8 letters = 10 points; 9+ letters = 15 points.

S	O	T	T
T	I	L	A
R	S	E	R
A	N	G	E

Word Find - HOLIDAYS

Find the following words below - any which way - and circle them.

Christmas
Family
Travel
Decorations
Giving

Food
Hanukuh
Tree
Music
Greetings

Gatherings
Origami
Baking
Events
Cards

S	O	N	C	Y	L	I	M	A	F	S
U	T	R	E	M	E	B	C	S	A	N
G	R	N	T	I	E	G	A	G	N	O
N	A	S	E	L	R	M	R	N	I	I
I	X	M	S	V	T	E	D	I	C	T
K	N	I	D	S	E	H	S	R	A	A
A	E	O	I	T	R	A	V	E	L	R
B	O	R	I	G	A	M	I	H	U	O
F	H	N	C	I	S	U	M	T	K	C
C	G	A	H	U	K	U	N	A	H	E
S	V	X	G	N	I	V	I	G	A	D

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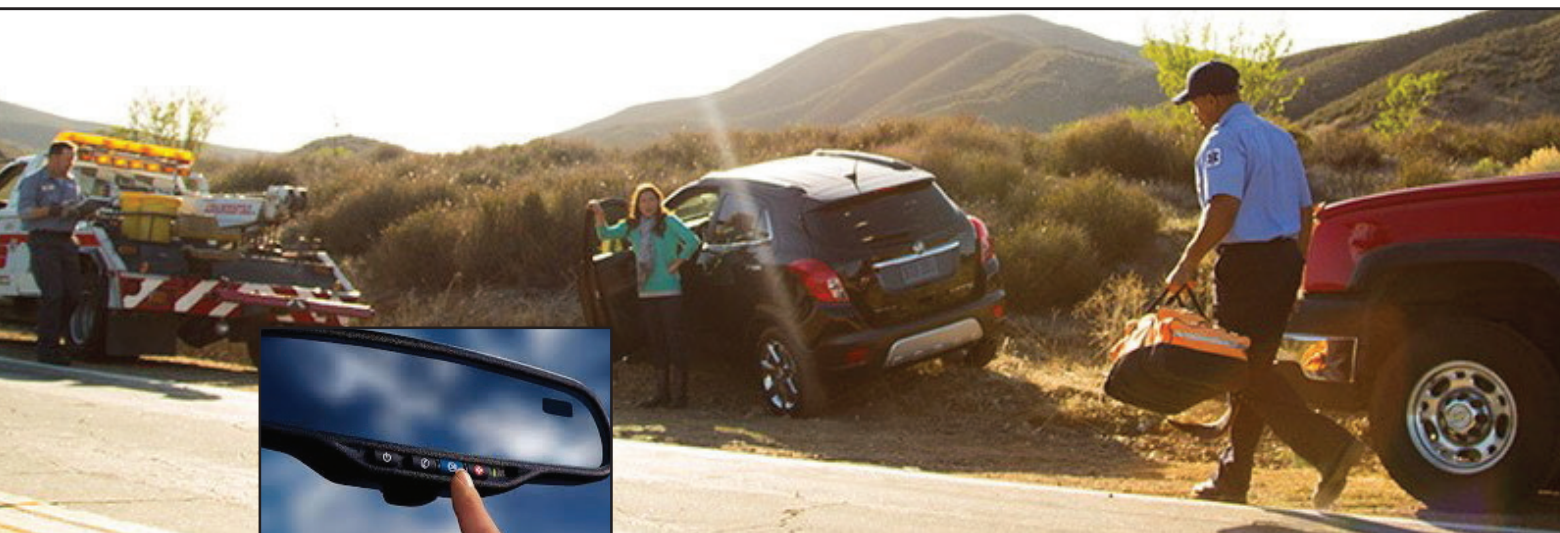
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