

MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE

Not Just A Read... It's A Connection

Spring 2021

**Forgiveness:
A Test of Faith**

**Ways to Combat
Isolation**

**What Businesses Can Do
for the Environment
*Part II - Contest Winner***

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MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE

Not just a read...

It's a connection.

*With a mission to inform,
inspire, support and
include..*

On the cover of this magazine, you may notice a sense of resilience of the tree, determined to grow in unusual conditions...a stump in a lake. It's a great example of how things *can* grow under challenging conditions, including us as a community and society throughout the pandemic.

We've had to find new ways to survive and thrive under conditions that had everyone's heads spinning – from the public, to scientists, and the government... Surreal might seem like an understatement. But we're making it through and are almost at home base with vaccines now being administered, and just in time for spring. We've got this!

Speaking of vaccines and thriving, we have a new column for you, called *Your Health*, by Dorset pharmacist, Peter Meraw, with the first topic covering this very subject. It seemed fitting given the times and that it's a frequent topic to ask about from his customers.

Thriving also requires faith. And there are many ways that we have to thrive, including the act of forgiveness, which you can't do without faith, which we cover in the *Faithfully Speaking* column.

We've also had to overcome loneliness and isolation, which is still a challenge for many people, shut in or otherwise. We provide some suggestions and resources for you to help combat this in the *Mind Health* section.

And while we're on the subject of the mind, which has likely been on overdrive for many of us as we've tried to make sense of what's been happening around us, we forget that we can listen to our body too... Did you know there's a second brain there that can be eq-



Minden Haliburton Hearing Service
41 Bobcaygeon Road, PO Box 579
Minden, ON K0M 2K0
Minden: 705 286-6001 Haliburton: 705 457-9171
mindenhearingserviceinc@gmail.com
mindenhaliburtonhearingservice.com

GORD KIDD, H.I.S./H.I.D.
KATHRYN KIDD, Consultant

-ually informative and helpful during stressful times? See *Support for Stress* for this one.

As usual, we've packed as much helpful and valuable information in this magazine for you as possible, including downsizing support with Jay Richardson, Part II about What Businesses Can Do for the Environment (the business winner of the contest), a new healthy recipe shared by Brenda Wood, a new 5-part series for covering grief and COVID, where Marguerite Thomas shares her experiences of widowhood that include helpful insights as a retired mental health nurse with a background in crisis intervention counseling, plus a new column by *Billingsley Funeral Home* to lend support for grief. And of course, Bill Harvey's comic strip is sure to bring a smile.

We hope you enjoy this edition as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you, and will pass it along to your friends to enjoy as well.

And if you have anything you would like to share – a story, experience, poem, joke, picture, recipe or even a comment, feel free to drop us a line at: editorial@muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca.

Enjoy your spring!

Cheryl Patterson,
Publisher



You are seen. You are heard. You are respected.



With everything happening in the news regarding Long Term Care Homes, people have been more hesitant than ever to transition into senior living facilities.

They are concerned that they may be overlooked, not seen, and not truly cared for. They are tired of “institutions” where residents are treated like a number instead of a fellow human being.

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PUBLISHER

Cheryl Patterson
cpatterson@muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca
705-783-2203

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Larry Hope
lhope@muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca
705-788-4926

CONTRIBUTORS

Bessie Grimes
Peter Cassidy
Sandra Hartill
Kenn R. E. Page
Bill Harvey
David Patterson
Geraldine O'Meara
Marguerite Oberle Thomas

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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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<http://muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca>
info@muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca
705-783-2203
PO Box 283, Dorset, ON, P0A 1E0

CONTRIBUTORS

Spring 2021



Marguerite Oberle Thomas, RN., BScN is a fall prevention consultant, great-grandmother and gardener who also focuses on article writing and encouraging other seniors to write.



David Patterson has been a Bracebridge resident for four years. He is currently writing his first novel, "Square Wheels," and posts poems freshly written every morning on his Facebook page.



Geraldine O'Meara spent twenty-one years in England, working for a spirituality/environmental centre before residency in Huntsville. As a senior, she is enjoying writing, painting, her grandchildren and great-granddaughter.



Bill Harvey Born in Detroit, 1954. Day job career as a computer technician, and analyst. Wanted to draw superhero comic books but switched to a single panel comic strip in the mid-2000's.



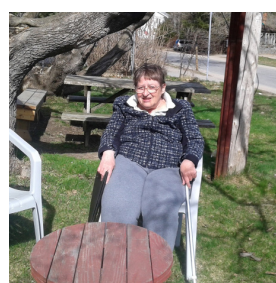
Kenn R. E. Page, proud to be Canadian! Born in Toronto, raised in Pickering, worked for Bell and IBM. Moved to Muskoka in '75 to design and build homes for 40 years. Hobbies: Fishing, reading, painting, gardening.



Sandra Hartill, Master Gardeners of Muskoka and Parry Sound. Our goal is to share, inform and advise avid and amateur gardeners with tips for indoor, outdoor and balcony gardening.



Peter Cassidy, born in Scotland and came to Canada in 1948. I played Canadian sports, and loved hockey and boxing. I love to write stories of those wonderful players and characters who were the stars in my day.



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.



***Peter Meraw** is a pharmacist and owner of the pharmacy in Dorset, Lake of Bays. He visited cottage country often in his youth and was thrilled to move here permanently in 2006 to run his first pharmacy. He lives in Minden with his wife, two daughters and golden retriever Simba.*

The Great Vaccine Rollout

As the days grow warmer and springtime blooms in Muskoka there is more than the usual optimism in the air. The vaccine is here at last and so the most common question I've been getting is, "How do I get my shot?"

Residents who live or work in Muskoka are eligible to get a shot here. Appointments can be made online using the province's Covax-On web portal.

This includes seasonal residents with second homes. Proof of primary or secondary residency (such as driver's license or utility bill) will be required, as well as proof of age with your Ontario Health Card. If you work in Muskoka but don't live here you can use a paystub as proof of eligibility.

The plan is to vaccinate the most vulnerable persons first, starting with the most elderly (80+) and working down to younger age groups each week as more supply becomes available.

A lot of folks want to know if it will be possible to get their shot in the pharmacy. The answer is yes.... By mid-March pharmacy vaccination clinics were just getting started, first in Toronto, Kingston and Windsor with plans to extend pharmacy access

to other counties including Muskoka in the weeks ahead. The timeline for this is not yet known and will depend on availability of doses. Check weekly with your pharmacy.

People want to know which shot they will get, and which one is preferred.

The vaccines haven't been studied head-to-head, so it is impossible to say one is better than another. For this reason, any comparisons of effectiveness can be taken with a grain of salt.

All of the vaccines work well enough to get us to herd immunity. What is more important in a pandemic is the speed at which we vaccinate. This means using whatever supply is available.

There are some valid reasons to use one vaccine over another in specific patient types: The Astra-Zeneca vaccine won't be used for patients over 65. There were not sufficient numbers in their trials to show proof of effectiveness in this age group, so it hasn't been approved in Canada for seniors. Supply of AZ product will instead be used in those under 65, starting with the 60-64 group.

Older Muskoka residents instead were getting the Pfizer vaccine initially, but due to slower

than expected arrival of supplies the 28 day 2nd dose will be stretched out to 4 months. The strategy being that it is better to give the maximum number of people at least one shot, than half as many persons two shots.

One shot will provide a person with some immunity, such that if they are exposed, symptoms should be milder and unlikely to result in hospitalization or death.

The 2nd dose would optimize their immunity at four months.

The J&J vaccine is the first one dose vaccine and will be put in use as soon as supply arrives.

The side effects of all four vaccines are pretty similar. As with the flu vaccine about 1-2% of patients get soreness at the injection site, or some muscle pain or mild aches the next day. A small percentage will be allergic.

The Province's goal is to have everyone vaccinated by the end of June. If that timeline holds, we could reach herd immunity soon after and hopefully begin to relax social distancing rules, open our small businesses and public spaces and once again get together in person with family and friends. An end to this health crisis may finally be within reach.

To good health!



Jay Richardson, Real Estate Broker and Advisor: Jay is a successful real estate professional helping people with their real estate needs in Muskoka. 705-571-2118 www.jayrichardson.ca

Downsizing: Doesn't Have to be Complicated

Recently, I received a call from a friend that wanted to talk about downsizing. She said she was afraid of the process and just didn't know where to start. The more she procrastinated, the more her fears grew. It felt overwhelming.

I totally understand those feelings. I have helped many folks move from their family homes to smaller homes and condos.

I wanted to assure my friend that the most difficult thing is just starting.

We know when our homes are getting to be just too much to handle. Homes that we raised our families in are now just too large – too much to clean and keep in good repair, too many steps between levels, and outside the work of maintaining the gardens and lawns in summer and snow shoveling in winter is just getting to be too much. That perfect home of 25 years ago is not perfect today for our health and lifestyle.

I understand that the actual transition may not be the issue, it is the memories, the parting with personal possessions and an overwhelming fear of change that holds us back.

I met with my friend (at a healthy Covid distance) and showed her the simple downsizing checklist with easy-to-follow steps that helps start

the process of moving with a guide as you move through each step. I recounted the story of Lynne who recently downsized into a condo from a large home on Peninsula Lake.

Lynne and Bill's children were all living away from Huntsville and although they knew it was time to move to a smaller spot, they kept putting it off as they didn't know what to do with all the items accumulated over 50 years of marriage.

Last year Bill needed to have a hip replacement and they knew the time had come for no more stairs. I met with them and discussed the downsizing checklist.

I walked through the home room by room and we started our plan of what would stay and what would go. I explained that I have a network of professionals from organizers to packers to cleaners that Lynne would meet as we worked together through the transition process. I invited Lynne to have her adult children be part of the process and I was happy to meet with the family to review any concerns. Once all were in agreement with the process and questions answered, we began.

We went through the house room by room deciding what would be kept for the new spot, what would

go to family members, what could be donated and what items had seen better days and would go to the landfill. The organizer and I made a checklist for each room. The following week, the packers had divided the items into the corresponding areas – Keep/Donate/Discard. Items being donated were donated to local agencies; items being discarded were removed to the landfill.

Now with the items remaining neatly in the "keep" section, Lynne and Bill could easily see what they would be taking in the move. Once this was accomplished, it was time for the organizer to arrange furnishings and items to look the most appealing when the home was listed, and buyers viewed the home.

Lynne and Bill said that the downsizing process was far less stressful than they had imagined, and they were thrilled with the outcome.

When the time comes to downsize due to health, finances or lifestyle, I suggest you meet with two or three sales professionals. It is important your personalities mesh and you feel comfortable with that person. They will work closely with you to ensure a smooth and stress-free transition.

Remember, you cannot begin until you begin.



Cheryl Kinghan, Funeral Director, Billingsley Funeral Home, We help you share memories. We provide thoughtful services and detailed information at a competitive cost. "Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, Love leaves a memory no one can steal." www.billingsleyfuneralhome.com, 705-789-8982.

Grief: How Would You Want to be Supported?

Friday, April 9, 2021, I learned of the passing of Prince Philip. He was 99 years old and he was married to Queen Elizabeth for 73 years. Most of us will never see 90 years of age. Others may never see 73. I cannot begin to measure her grief, on the loss of her husband and partner.

Can you?

Grief, it is said, is the price we pay for love. I think we could all agree that we love different people in different ways. It would also be logical to suggest that since we love in different ways, and we would grieve in different ways too.

As a funeral professional, one of my most difficult tasks is to understand the measure of support any one person or family needs from myself and our staff. No two people are alike, which makes this so important to address.

As funeral professionals, we need to constantly remind ourselves that we have two ears and one mouth. Putting more emphasis on the listening, is paramount in learning about the needs of a person or family.

During a funeral arrangement interview, we aim to learn about the deceased person, their family, their

hobbies and those things that best reflect the memories created during their life. The efforts to listen and learn, directly impact the actionable support we can offer for the surviving family.

Sometimes it is as simple as a hug; sometimes it is giving a family the opportunity to view their loved one in a private setting; sometimes it is walking a family through some valuable estate processes. There are many ways to support a grieving person. Understanding and offering the best way is part of our profession.

Covid 19 has made the provision of traditional funeral services and celebrations difficult, but not impossible. It has given Billingsley Funeral Home pause, to recognize and address what is most important to the families we are trusted to help through the loss of a loved one.

I have been known to remind all our staff to "dwell not on what you cannot do, but excel on the things you can".

We have improved our Aftercare to help with estate related support. We continue to provide public visitation and funeral services, just in smaller groups. We have adopted a

secure streaming service to broadcast and record funeral services. Travel has been hindered during-Covid 19, so we have adopted an electronic document exchange, that allows you to view and sign any necessary paperwork, never needing to leave the comforts of your home.

Covid 19 has modified the way we do business, but it has not changed the sadness one feels when they lose someone special. It has not diminished grief.

Let me take you back to Queen Elizabeth... Put yourself in her shoes as a wife, mother, grandmother, then ask yourself, "How would I feel? How would I want to be supported? What do I need to help me through this loss? Who do I turn to for help?"

Yes, even the Queen, as strong as she seems, will need help to mourn the loss of her husband.

We hope this article has given you pause to think about how you would support a family member or friend through grief. Or how you would like to be supported, in the event you lost someone close to you.

As funeral professionals, we are here to help. Feel free to call us with questions.

Are you up for a challenge?



MSM digital is working great for those that have online access. Unfortunately, there are seniors that don't, and some simply want print too. If you want access to print, join the *Bring Print Back for Seniors Challenge*:

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A Snapshot of a Hero

By Geraldine O'Meara

Recently, I was sent a photograph of my father, William Pulkingham, known to me as Dad, standing proudly at the age of eleven alongside five other students in front of Victoria Avenue School in Hamilton, Ontario. At the foot of the students rested a large shield that they had won for relay racing in the year of 1909. On the flip side of the photo was a written message from a former teacher, M. E. Graham: "Remember when this snap was taken? The same spirit that helped to win that shield, is now helping to win the war, I am sure; with every good wish from your brother and everyone else at Victoria School."

I was told that seven years after this photo was taken in the year 1916, it was sent to Dad while he was fighting overseas in WW1, and the words on the back were to be a message of hope that the teacher wanted to convey to him. It was a photo that I had not seen before, and there is no way

of telling if it ever got to him. But when I saw the photo, it so impacted me that I wanted to discover what happened to Dad and his life during the years between 1909 and 1917 when he was discharged from the war. So with the help of my sister, Judy, who did an interview with Dad in his older years, I was able to piece together enough information to paint a picture of that period of his life.

In 1910, at the age of twelve, Dad had to leave school to help support his family. His father was a moulder, but because of ill health it inhibited his work. His mother took in music students, but it was not enough of an income to support all of them, which included a younger sister and brother. He found a clerical job with a company in Hamilton, and worked very hard for a couple of years for a Mr. Strauss who he had "great respect" for. Unfortunately, Mr Strauss died in 1912 while sailing on the Titanic, so shortly after that Dad was laid off.

"I came from a very, very poor family," explained Dad. "You had to get a job right away or you starved!" So, almost immediately, he managed to find work in a warehouse with Stoppes, Noise and Randalls, making \$12.00 monthly which was later raised to \$18.00 because of his hard work.

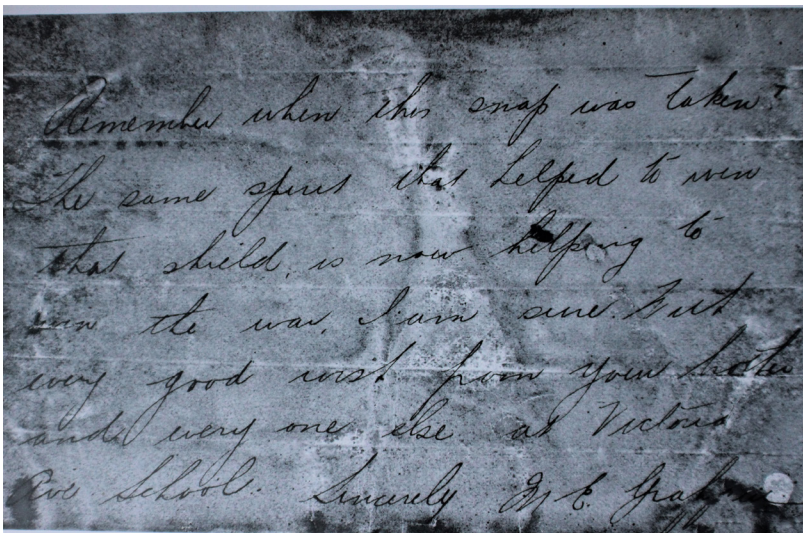
Geraldine's father, William Pulkingham, 11yrs, alongside other students in front of Victoria Avenue School in Hamilton, Ontario, 1909.



It was during that time that he was called into the office and told that his father at 39 had died, and that he was given 3 days off to bury his father. After that, he returned to his job and resigned himself to a life of working "very, very hard". But a year later at the age of 17 he was laid off as the company was struggling to stay afloat.

Months later, in the spring of 1915, Dad joined the army, and after a year with the Corps of Guides he was sent overseas. Dad never spoke much about his years in the war except in the interview with my sister. He told her he was at the Battle of Vimy Ridge: "It was a miserable experience for all of us; just ordinary foot soldiers in the wet and muddy trenches."

Shortly after his experience at Vimy Ridge, his mother got a telegram that her son was missing, and then got another telegram two days later saying that he had been found but injured. A piece of shrapnel ripped through Dad's jaw and took out a wisdom tooth. He was sent to a hospital in France for about 3 months to recover from his injury. After that, in 1917, he was sent back to Canada to his uncle's farm near London, Ontario. He was in poor health with nephritis and had



Back of the photo, with written message from a former teacher, M. E. Graham, 1909.

become what he called, “a skinny wretch”. Strangely enough, when he left the war, they deducted his pay for losing his mess kit and helmet, but he did get a gold stripe for his injury.

The facts I discovered about those years between 1909 and 1917 at first shocked me. It was certainly hard to believe the amount of hardship Dad had to go through at such a young age: leaving school at twelve, losing his father, financially supporting his mother and siblings so they could get an education, and the suffering he must have endured during the war. But then I began to see that his experiences and formative years helped to build his character in order for him to go on and achieve the full life that he lived, not just for himself but for all of us.

With little formal education he became self-educated, studied piano, went on to establish a successful pottery business, Sovereign Potters, in Hamilton, Ontario, married, and together he and my mother raised and supported five children, along with opening their home for his mother until she died.

As I get older, I am beginning to appreciate more of what my dad did for us so that we could have an easier life. He was not only a hero in my eyes, but also a man of stature, worthy of love and respect. So thank you, Dad!

Geraldine O’Meara spent twenty-one years in England, working for a spirituality/environmental centre before residency in Huntsville. As a senior, she is enjoying writing, painting, her grandchildren and great-granddaughter.

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*A Healthy Spin
on an Old Favourite...*

Brenda Wood's Oatmeal Muffins

By Brenda J. Wood

My cholesterol was over 5 and my doctor talked about pills. Oatmeal has long been proven to lower cholesterol but porridge every day did nothing for my appetite!! I found this recipe and tweaked it to suit my taste buds. I tried it plain and it was okay, but the additional ingredients make a nice change. I eat 1-2 servings every day and my doctor was delighted to find that in less than two months, my cholesterol dropped two full points to three!

Ingredients:

3 ¼ cups dry oatmeal
500 gram 0 yogurt
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
2 eggs (1 works too for lower cholesterol)
2 cups of frozen berries
1 cup of sweetener of your choice to taste.

Another option is to add cinnamon with sweetener.
Or you can add dehydrated onion, instead of fruit and sweetener, as an unsweetened version.
You can bake in a loaf, tart or pie pan (as pizza crust, without the sugar)

Directions:

Bake in well greased (or sprayed) pans at 350F until well browned.

Note: Bulk Barn has paper muffin cups made of parchment paper.



Brenda's oatmeal muffins.

We want to hear from you!

We know it's important to eat healthy,
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Let's be healthy together!

SUPPORT FOR STRESS



Stress: It's Not Just in Your Head

Need a guide to help you get clear on your stress levels? Listen to your gut, or as researchers sometimes refer to it as your second brain. Who do you think senses danger first? It's your gut.

Ever have a situation that you feel first, before knowing anything? Biologist Bruce Lipton, Ph.D. uses the word "vibes" when it comes to doing what feels right for you, indicating that "good vibes enhance your energy, saying this is a good place to be." Your body is like a meter moving you either toward or away from life.

Ever feel a shot of adrenalin to your gut when a certain someone contacts you? Or not feel well when you're obligated to do something you don't really want to...? Your body is there to help you, but you have to pay attention.

Researcher Alberto Villoldo, Ph.D. says that 85% of serotonin – which impacts your body, feelings of well being, happiness and more - is produced in your gut. Why is this important? If you hold your stress there (and coincidentally find yourself with digestive issues), you can be blocking the production of serotonin for your brain and body. Not to mention, the flora in your gut also changes with your emotions for better or worse. Healthy production of flora means your brain is creating what Alberto refers to as "bliss molecules."

Ironically, we're tuning out the very thing that can help us when we're stressed. It's no wonder why we end up feeling stuck. It's like trying to drive a car with just the engine, thinking the other parts don't matter. You can't just function from the brain.

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Reconnect to your body and you open yourself up to life. Instead of trying to tune it out with food, alcohol, drugs or whatever way you can, remember that it's there to help you, and acknowledge and listen to it.

Some of the ways you can reconnect are breathe work, meditation, reiki, acupuncture, massage, EFT Tapping (Emotional Freedom Technique), movement (i.e., walks, stretching or yoga, tai chi, and other exercise regimens, put some music on and dance, play an instrument, physical therapies, etc.).

Some of these can be found or learned online if you can't get out right now, and can help you to heal areas that are blocked from stress, and to live more fully. **MSM**

MIND HEALTH



Ways to Combat Isolation

Many of us understand the importance of staying connected to friends and family members as a community and society. And although it has been tough with the pandemic, staying connected and engaged is more important than ever.

“The degree of social cohesion – or civic vitality – in a society is an important determinant of the health of the people who live there,” indicates the Canadian Health Network (CHN). They add, that a supportive society is filled with members who care about their communities, are active in making it a better place to live, and have basic trust in their fellow human beings.

Reach out for support during challenging situations, rather than isolate. If you need help with something, you can still ask, or if you’re worried about bothering someone you know, look into community resources.

Helping others is also a good option to curbing feelings of isolation.

Also, since society tends to disregard lonely people, it’s important to recognize it and offset it before it spreads. “Society may benefit by aggressively targeting the people in the periphery to help repair their so-

-cial networks and to create a protective barrier against loneliness that can keep the whole network from unraveling,” according to a study on loneliness by John T. Cacioppo et al. They recommend helping people connect socially.

If you’re unable to get involved in ways you’re used to, you can still participate in the community in other ways. Call some of your local groups and see where there’s a need that you can fill from home or otherwise.

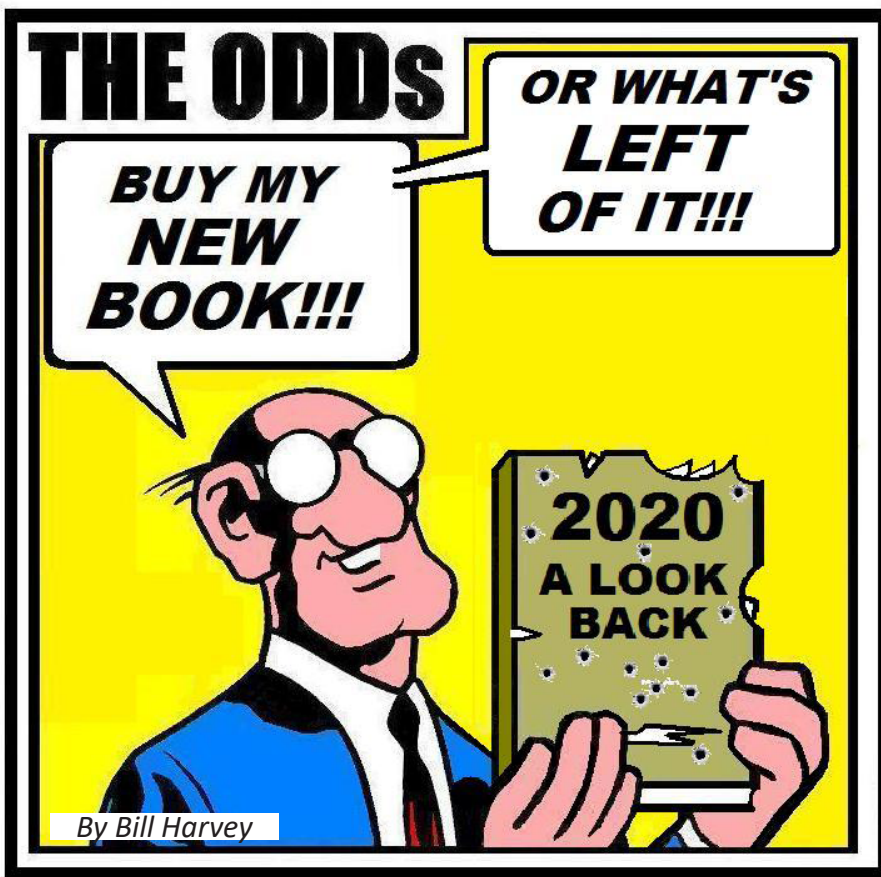
The following are a some links to a few groups for fun:

- **Human Book:** A link in Forbes about the program: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kimelsesser/2020/07/13/the-human-library-is-tackling-diversity-and-inclusion-one-person-at-a-time/?sh=56ac37e34fd0>

- **Art on the Brain:** A fun way to build connections online with activities, like visual arts, music, dance, by learning, playing and mingling. Share opinions with family, friends and/or others in groups there. Registrations are now free for Canadian residents until June 30. Visit artonthebain.org to sign up!

- **Live at the Metropolitan Opera:** Free online streaming of shows on the Met website, with the goal of “brighten the lives of our audience.” For more information: <https://www.metopera.org/user-information/nightly-met-opera-streams/>

Also, remember to keep your faith. Even if it means attending church and/or other faith-based organizations online instead. **MSM**





What Businesses Can Do for the Environment PART II

In the sequel to Bessie Grime's article above (part I), Winter 2020, Muskoka Seniors Magazine had a contest to see what businesses are actually doing, and the winner was Jane Tideman, Royal LePage Muskoka Lakes Realty...



*By Jane Tideman,
Royal LePage Lakes of Muskoka*

Royal LePage Lakes of Muskoka is adopting BIG changes to protect our environment.

Did you know the average Canadian uses 7 trees worth of paper in a year? On top of that, the manufacturing of paper generates the third-highest air, water and land emissions in Canada. It also accounts for over a quarter of solid municipal waste. Needless to say, the manufacturing and use of paper have a significant impact on our environment.

For decades, organized real estate was paper-centric. Between the multi-page contract to buy a home and the regulatory paperwork and archival requirements, you could almost hear a tree fall in the forest each time a real estate transaction began. A 15-page agreement faxed, printed, and so on, could result in the use of 50 plus pages.

In 2015, the Ontario government allowed for the adoption of digital signatures to create and ratify real estate purchase agreements. Up to that point, the sale and purchase of a home required a real pen on a real piece of paper. That meant that for every offer, let alone an accepted contract, dozens of pages of paper had to be printed. Now buyers and sellers were able to sign paperwork from their com-

puter or mobile device without the need to print and sign.

However, despite the adoption of digital signatures, most real estate companies continued to print every piece of paper for every transaction and keep the entire paper file for a minimum of seven years.

In early 2020, Royal LePage and its agents undertook the challenge to reduce its paper requirements by 80%. This meant switching from a paper-based workflow to a completely digital framework using advanced paper management software. All files would be signed, submitted, reviewed, and archived in a digital format only.

No longer would contracts and all related documents be printed and stored physically. Now all files are stored electronically (and

securely). Storage space and the requisite need for cooling and heating of that space have been reduced significantly.

As an agent for Royal LePage and a lifelong resident of Muskoka, the conservation and health of our natural spaces has always been of utmost importance to me and my family. I'm proud of the steps that we have taken to reduce our environmental impact by dramatically scaling down our reliance on paper. Combined with increased digital marketing and streaming technologies, prospective buyers can view properties from the comfort of their own home without the need to start up a car and drive across town, the region or beyond, all the while keeping more trees in the ground - where they belong.

Downsizing doesn't need to be overwhelming.



**Call me today to discuss.
I am happy to help.**



Jay Richardson, Broker
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Forgiveness: A Test of Faith

One of the most important actions you can take for your health is to forgive. You might already know that forgiveness is helpful for you to move on in your life from something, but it's also important to know

that harboring the resentment and pain that goes with holding onto old baggage is hurting your body, and letting it go means releasing it.

Researcher Alberto Villoldo, Ph.D indicates that

FAITHFULLY SPEAKING CONT'D...

forgiveness is the first of the most important things you can do to repair the brain, followed by compassion. And he also adds that forgiveness is “essential for learning lessons of life,” adding that “suffering is optional.”

So, what does this have to do with faith?

Before we can forgive, we have to believe that things can be okay if we do. This is where faith comes in. If you can let go and leave things up to your higher power (whatever that is for you), then you can breathe easy into your life once again.

It doesn't mean that whatever happened is okay, just that you don't want to remain stuck there anymore. For instance, if the situation has to do with a person, it doesn't mean that you're letting them off the hook for their actions. It means you're making a choice to no longer be attached to the situation or the person in that way. You're making a conscious choice to have enough faith to move on from it.

Ironically, not forgiving can keep us in a dance, so-to-speak, to the person or situation - the opposite of trusting and letting it go to your higher power. Basically, not forgiving keeps us connected in the way that keeps us stuck. And you can't fully move on in this way. You want to remain connected to your higher power, not problems.

We really do have a choice when it comes to forgiving. We don't have to stay trapped in hurt and anger and other emotions resulting from holding on to past experiences. It seems that's one of the hardest things for people to understand when it comes to forgiving. People think they have to stay stuck, like they don't have a choice but to drag their past around like a ball and chain when it comes to pains of the past, but we don't.

Making the decision to forgive is ultimately a test of your faith...that you can let go and come out just fine. **MSM**

Are you feeling off but can't quite put your finger on why?

“Old habits die hard,” or so they say. It may depend on how much it's sabotaging your health, relationships, goals or life. Sometimes it's happening right under your nose and you don't even realize it. You just know something is not right.

Wellness Habits

A Compilation of Writings
for Emotional Health

Cheryl Patterson

Maybe you find yourself angry more than usual and for no apparent reason. You're outwardly lashing out in the form of criticism, blame or hurtful comments, or passively engaging in digs or “jokes,” or forgetting things that are important to others. Either way, you're sabotaging your chance at happiness because the focus is on the emotions and reacting to what you don't want through these destructive behaviours that you think nobody notices, instead of focusing on your wants and needs.

How about your self-worth or esteem? What would you rate that on a scale from 1 to 10? Are you noticing that you're doubting yourself or seeming a little worse for wear emotionally when you're around certain people? Could you be feeling better about yourself?

If you were to describe yourself to someone, what would you say? Would there be a criticism of some kind, such as about your weight or lack of abilities in some area? Are you your own worst critic? Would you like to have a better view about yourself?

Our habits can come in many shapes and forms. The trick is to pay attention to what ones are propelling you forward and which ones are holding you back from living your life to the fullest.

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<https://www.amazon.ca/dp/1698857292>



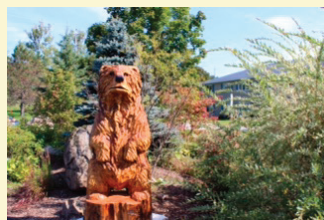
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AGING WITH A GUSTO: WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?



**Bessie Grimes
Tribute**

Huntsville, Ontario.

A Tribute to an Amazingly Positive Fellow

On Monday, February 15, 2021, Huntsville Transit lost a well-loved and appreciated passenger when John Harris passed away.

He had been battling severe kidney disease for at least seven or eight years.

During this time, he frequently rode the bus and brightened the days for the drivers and his fellow passengers with jokes, stories and an abundance of good humour.

Many of his trips were to the hospital for medical appointments. Often he brought along his own homemade baked goods which he shared with everyone. His muffins filled with Devon cream were a special treat that supplemented many a lunch over the years.

During the winter months, John wore a number of novel hats. Passengers particularly remember the elephant head (trunk and ears) and his holiday reindeer hat (with horns).

While John might have shrugged away any questions about his philosophy of life, he definitely had one: live life to the fullest every minute you have. Have fun!

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SPORTS CORNER



*Sports Corner
With Peter Cassidy*

The First Sign of Spring Back In The Day

I have lived through many springs over my life time. The ultimate sight for me is baseball spring training, in Dunedin, Florida (I have yet to make it there, but someday I hope to).

In my day there was no Dunedin, because Canada did not have a professional baseball team. It was still exciting for my friends and I though.

I grew up in the glory days of the New York Yankees. It was a great time for like Mickey Mantle, Yogi Berra, Roger Maris, big “Boog” Powel. Joe Dimaggio, and Whitey Ford too. Other teams had their stars like Hank Aaron, Sandy Koufax, Willie Mays. There isn’t enough room in this story to name them all.

Ad kids, we would begin spring with our sucker run which let us buy new baseball equipment.

Some of my friends and I lived in a new subdivision, and with all of the new construction, we had lots of makeshift baseball diamonds, and we were close enough to the public school which also had one.

Unfortunately, most of the time the school was controlled by the bigger boys. I was not afraid of them. As a matter of fact, if I was on my own, they would let me play. Nonetheless, it was a factor on where we played.

The construction sites also provided us with pails and scrap wood to use for bases. As I reflect on those years, it was us who made us happy to be alive and to enjoy spring. We did not have the manufactured fun of today. We made our own enjoyment. We were healthy, and yes even wise.

Peter Cassidy, Scotland born. Came to Canada in 1948. Played Canadian sports, and loved hockey and boxing. I love to write stories of those wonderful players and characters who were the stars in my day.

GARDENING: DID YOU KNOW...?



MAINTENANCE TECHNIQUES FOR BALCONY PLANTS

By Sandra Harthill

Watering is a very important maintenance practise.

Daily or more frequent watering must be done if the plants are exposed to wind or hot sun. Hanging baskets require to be watered very frequently. Larger containers require less watering.

Remember that flowers planted close to the periphery tend to dry out more quickly than those in the centre.

A layer of mulch, approximately 5 cm, can help to conserve moisture.

Fertilizing must be done regularly throughout the summer, at the recommended rate. Slow release fertilizers can be applied once during the season and are effective. Soilless media requires more fertilizing than soil.

Regular grooming is essential so that the presentation is worth enjoying. Pinch off the dead foliage and faded flowers regularly to encourage new growth and flowers on the plants.

It is also a great time to check for insect or disease infestations.

Before using your planters each year, always scrub them with water, dish soap and vinegar.

Sandra Harthill Master Gardeners of Muskoka and Parry Sound. Our goal is to share, inform and advise avid and amateur gardeners with tips for indoor, outdoor and balcony gardening.



Covid Widowhood and Grief

By Marguerite Oberle Thomas

It's the little things that get to you. I received a belated birthday card last week. Inside it read, "I hope that you and Bob are happy and well." Bob died six months ago. We are neither well nor happy.

As a six-month widow, it was a struggle when first writing about widowhood during Covid. While I have published many articles over the years, most were work related and not personal. This series, however, could have an uncomfortable personal element.

Eventually the nurse-mum in me decided that writing and sharing could and would be helpful to others and may help me to feel more secure. Bob and I were each other's security, so my first helpful

act for my own security was to add cameras to the security alarm system.

To introduce myself, I have been a nurse since 1977 and, although a senior, still work as the Consultant Liaison for the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation. My nuclear extended family lives near GTA, my stepdaughters live at a distance, but I have a strong local support system of friends and "adopted" adult daughters and their families. Full disclaimer: I was married to the 2020 North Huron Citizen of the Year, Bob Kellington, and, while it was two months short of four years, he was the best husband EVER.

I lost him during Covid, which

has overshadowed all of our lives. While not all losses are related directly to Covid, it breathes its foul breathe on everything we do.

Going back to his heart attack and trip to St. Mary's Cardiac Unit in Kitchener on Wednesday, May 20th, I could not be with him. He was admitted to Seaforth and I was allowed to see him off in the ambulance, both of us wearing masks. He thought he had muscle pain, so we were unprepared for how serious it was.

In Kitchener, he needed some ordinary items like a toothbrush and phone charger. My granddaughter, who is a biomedical engineer and services ventilators in St. Mary's and other hospitals,

CONT'D...

knew her way to the front desk to get items to him during the next two days, but she could not see him. He was texting all day Friday when he was due to come home. They tell me that he collapsed in the pharmacy where he was to pick up his prescription. I will never know exactly how that scene went because the next time I saw him was at the Brussels Riverside Funeral Home.

In my earlier career, I worked as a mental health nurse doing crisis intervention counselling. I knew the five stages of loss: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. I was in shock. The doctors had been so optimistic. Bob had been so hopeful and cheerful... How could it go so horribly wrong? How was he well enough to be discharged and dead a half hour later?

Covid was right there, shedding its darkness on everything from losing him to the aftermath. As we planned the funeral, we heard that there would only be ten people allowed at the service. It had to be a drive by instead of the usual visitation. The rules were also changing. Were we to wear masks? We were to stand six feet apart and not hug. As family came around, they wanted to hug and cry together. There was a lot of confusion as to what was allowed and what was needed.

Writing articles about widowhood during Covid is about so much more than my story, as I have been able to connect with others and we are sharing the collective wisdom that we have gained about losses, not just widowhood, especially during this pandemic era. Several others who have been widowed or have had other significant losses have already offered to contribute

to the knowledge and coping skills that will be the focus of these columns. While many people can get to adulthood without a significant loss, most of us do deal with some loss when we are young. Grief can be a too frequent intruder as we grow older.

What is grief? Grief is the natural response to a loss. When your heart is ripped out, it is going to hurt. It is the price that we pay for loving and caring deeply. It can be overwhelming and crippling. It can bring out unexpected and difficult emotions. It can affect us physically, emotionally, and painfully at our core. Eating, sleeping, thinking straight, energy levels all may suffer. Is it also a chance to grow stronger and better? What is normal, rational behaviour in an abnormal, irrational situation?

We move in and out of those stages of grief while trying to heal. People talk about good days and bad days, but the same day can be divided into just minutes spent flip-flopping between feeling okay and feeling not okay.

Covid added that extra layer of sorrow. In the early days downtown, people wanted to hug me and express their condolences. Sorry, Covid forbids hugs. I – we loved dinner parties. Sorry, Covid makes

dinner parties not possible. People in mourning are told to go out to events to try to find what pleasure they can. Sorry, Covid has cancelled events (sigh).

So, along with others who are sharing the grief journey during Covid, these columns will be written to provide information, resources, suggestions from literature, and sharing our collective wisdom.

We already know many snippets of good advice:

- You never get over it, but you learn to live with it.
- You don't have just one way to have the "right" response.
- You feel what you feel. What you do about it though, is a choice.
- You will have periods when you want to talk and share, and times when you want to be alone.
- You are right to take care of your health and to find comfort wherever you can.

Marguerite Oberle Thomas
RN., BScN is a fall prevention consultant, great-grandmother and gardener who also focuses on article writing and encouraging other seniors to write.

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Carrots on My Ceiling

By Kenn R. E. Page

At the time the first carrot exploded, nineteen more carrots sat in a big bowl on the table, all of them peeled, waiting to be processed. I could see the looming potential for a disaster of immense proportions was huge!

Most people no doubt have heard of the health benefits of drinking freshly pressed raw organic juices. The only negative outcome, which I was totally not prepared for, was a kitchen makeover in orange. Orange is not a bad colour really. It looks great on little orange wagons, bird houses, and safety traffic cones, but it was not my first choice for any permanent part of my kitchen.

As a result of a health scare, which proved to be false, I got interested in boosting my immune system real fast by juicing. After heavy research, I ended up buying what may be the most totally efficient juicer on this planet and any other planet. Right off the top I'll tell you, you need to be dead serious about juicing to buy one of these models. The machine in question is no sissy juicer by a long shot!

Built like a tank, not as in water tower tank, but as in armour plated military vehicle. Who ever heard of a sixty-pound kitchen countertop appliance? I'm not kidding!

When I attempted to carry the machine from my vehicle in the garage, through the side door and up seven steps, I just about didn't make it. Not because I had a near heart attack, my heart is fine! Stress test says so. Sixty pounds is getting up there!

To be able to obtain one used in perfect condition

from a couple in Toronto was a stroke of luck! Built in and shipped from the U.S.A. by overland freight, you won't ever see one of these babies showing up in your mailbox.

Don't ask me how long overland freight, customs, and all that takes. All I know is that at sixty pounds plus shipping crate, if you want it sent air freight, it had better be a pretty big airplane or they won't get it off the ground.

The only plastic parts on the whole machine that I can find anywhere are the on/off switch and the heavy-duty food grade plastic pusher for feeding in the veggies and not using your fingers. I guess you can use your fingers if you want, but I guarantee you won't like it!

All these details are coming to you free. I'm doing this preparation for the warning. The machine has proven to be beyond safe to operate. So why the warning? The warning comes to you based on my own personal experience and a little something you need to know.

The road to total juicing success can be a bit lumpy and bumpy, not to mention, as I already have – orange. Don't get me wrong. I love my juicer! If my house was on fire, my juicer would be the first thing I'd grab on the way out. Okay, the second thing right after my frig. cart.

One top advantage is that with a sixty-pound appliance sitting on your counter, there is no danger of it blowing away in a strong wind. The countertop I mean. So, with my first box of organically grown car-

-rots, I faced off with the brooding monster. Oh ya, I forgot to mention, I watched the instruction video first. Very interesting!

To tell you the truth, weight is not an accurate indicator of size. Some amazing things can come in medium sized packages. The video did warn there could be some throwback. I noticed that possibility right at the start. One look down the highly polished stainless steel throat of his beast and you knew it meant business with a capital 'B'.

The machine is not as intimidating as I'm probably making it sound. Still, the spinning veggie cutter gear-like grinder looked like it could make mulch out of old hockey sticks. Which is not why I bought it. With the first carrot in hand, I prepared to feed the hungry monster.

What took place next caught me by total surprise and was not demonstrated in the video. Perhaps that part was not deemed suitable for public viewing consumption. Consumption is a key word here. It consumed the carrot all right! There was no doubt in my mind about that.

To understand this, you need to picture an extremely solid machined stainless steel cutter/grinder spinning at warp speed. One look and you could safely assume it was going to take an oak 2x4 to slow this baby down. In went the carrot and out came the carrot!

The first carrot disappeared out of my hand down the feeder tube and reappeared in tiny bits so fast it took my breath away. "Oooop! Don't think it's supposed to do that." I muttered to myself. I resolved to try harder.

Orange hair doesn't look so bad on a guy my age. If I wasn't awake when the first carrot went in, my full attention was had by the time it came out. Somebody should have included in the video instruction that a Hazmat suit and rubber boots were required before starting. I couldn't help feel that I was doing something wrong!

What really bugged me was that the machine sat there as contented as can be, purring right along, as if nothing in the world had just happened. It would be hard to describe what had recently taken place other than, it was orange! For sure this must be a minor misunderstanding on my part. Was this why the machine had been for sale used?

What remains a little confusing to me is that if the colour of lemons is lemon, and the colour of salad greens is green, why is the colour of carrots not called carrot? It would work for me! CONT'D >>>

The instruction video was suppose to show me all I needed to know. It just didn't include the pressure washer for afterwards. Don't ask me how I got through the remaining nineteen carrots, but I did. It wasn't so much that I did something terribly wrong. It was more like I didn't do something terribly right.

The next day, older and wiser (definitely older), and also worn out from my cleaning chores. I was determined to have another go. This time I would show the beast who was boss! Things went extremely well, that is until I turned the machine on. Big mistake! In went the first peeled carrot. I didn't even bother to look up...I knew exactly where that carrot had gone.

Not one to get excited over a minor mishap that would take hours to scrap off the ceiling, I picked up another carrot. "I'm going to get this right if it kills me!" I said. I fed another morsel to the monster. That innocent morsel shot past my face like a bullet!!

The second carrot to go in, was an exact duplicate copy of the first. Wow! This juicing business was providing more excitement than a trip to Water World in your trunks during a heat wave. Make those orange trunks.

Okay, okay, enough is enough! Time to regroup. What was it I was not cluing into here? Back to the manual. Oh! Lookey here. Do not feed in the first few carrots with the juicer turned on. Ooops! My mistake. Reading between the lines, I also gathered smaller pieces work better. That proved to be true. Hence my earlier warning.

From that point on, with a little practice, the machine and I started to get along like hot pie and cold ice cream. As long as I built and maintained a layer of mashed raw carrot between me and the spinning wheel, we got along hunky dory!

Clearly, as you can see, the mess was all my fault. Now the problem I face is the ongoing supply of carrot bits. I'm going to come across in divers places for the next two years.

I'm always willing to answer any questions and my phone number is listed in the book. But, under the circumstances, please don't call. I think I'm going to be busy!

Kenn R. E. Page, proud to be Canadian! Born in Toronto, raised in Pickering, worked for Bell and IBM. Moved to Muskoka in '75 to design and build homes for 40 years. Hobbies: Fishing, reading, painting, gardening.



Drawing by Linda Smith



Garbage Day

By Bessie Grimes

Above the trees, the seagulls soar
keeping an eagle eye for more
Delights to feed on from the trash
Folks keep adding to the stash.

Of things we humans do not need;
The junk that from our lives we weed.
Seagulls come to investigate
And see what treasures they can take.

Peelings, bagels and clumps of meat,
Pizza and fries add up to treats.
Now squawking sounds invade the air
As each bird grabs all that he dares.

But what is this? They're not alone.
Another bird on each treat hones.
Seagulls fight their aggressive foe;
The noisy, battling hungry crow.

The truck then comes, but just remains
Litter the lawn and liquid drains
From broken bags. The birds are gone;
Cruising the air, singing their song.

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.



Blossom

By David Patterson

I am blossoming like the spring
It is not a strength of my own
It is brought on by miracles
The perfumes of floral fountains

Pink and white and violet
Dancing in the breeze
Bees waving their contented wings
with nectar's syrupy smile

My joy is administered by love
a universal unexplainable song
pronounced in a language so soft
waltzing through sprinkles of rain

I rejoice in plain and simple words
Adamant in my passion for reality

David Patterson, Bracebridge resident for four years. He is currently writing his first novel, "Square Wheels," and posts poems freshly written every morning on his Facebook page.

Boggle (print or write words on paper), 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.

M	O	K	D
A	B	T	N
S	A	E	I
T	E	R	M

Word Find (print or write words on paper), By Bessie Grimes

BUILDINGS

Find the following words below and circle or write them down.

Warehouse	Castle	House
Cottage	Shack	High rise
Mall	Shed	Hut
Gazebo	Barn	

W	Y	E	G	A	R	A	G
A	C	A	S	T	L	E	H
R	S	H	A	C	K	D	U
E	O	B	E	Z	A	G	T
H	I	G	H	R	I	S	E
O	L	X	O	T	N	H	C
U	L	N	U	B	R	E	A
S	A	P	S	N	A	D	L
E	M	L	E	O	B	X	A
C	O	T	T	A	G	E	P

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JAY RICHARDSON, REAL ESTATE BROKER AND ADVISOR - Jay is a successful real estate professional helping people with their real estate needs in Muskoka. 705-571-2118 www.jayrichardson.ca. p. 9

THE HOME IN MUSKOKA - Join our family! Our Home wants to open its’ doors and welcome you in. Book an info session to see if our family-style retirement living is right for you. p. 5
<https://thehomeinmuskoka.com/info-session>

CHARITIES AND NON-PROFITS

Alzheimer Society of Muskoka - Support for people with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias and their caregivers, with a mission to provide meaningful support that helps people live well with dementia. Muskoka/Parry Sound 705-645-5621 www.alzheimermuskoka.ca.

Bracebridge Centre for Active Living - Has now opened a few selected programs that meet the COVID-19 guidelines. Membership is open to anyone over the age of 45. Please join us. Reservation: 705-645-9111.

Huntsville Meals on Wheels - Weekday, lunch-time hot, nutritious meals at a reasonable cost to anyone needing this service, delivered by friendly volunteers. Delivery: 705-789-5681, to volunteer: 705-635-3216.

Muskoka Seniors - Frozen Meals on Wheels, Transportation, and more. Connect with us for more information: www.muskokaseniors.org, 705-789-6676, or info@muskokaseniors.org

Royal Canadian Legion Coldwater Branch 270 - Seniors 55+ Literary Contest that is now open for submissions until May 1. Write a poem, essay, short story, memoir. Contact: branch270seniorsliterary@gmail.com.

Are you having a hard time with the loss of a loved one? *You're not alone...*

Nine Lives Mourned *A Story About Overcoming Multiple Loss*



Cheryl A. Patterson

Photo by Matt Paulson

Sadness, frustration, isolation often permeated my life as I tried to manoeuvre my way through these losses. It's still surreal looking back at that period of my life, where I felt like I couldn't breathe, feeling overwhelmed, and without the needed support that most people have.

I was in awe that so much could happen in such a short period of time, and to one person. I've never met anyone that has gone through this much loss and adversity all at once. Sometimes, I wondered if there was anything I'd done to draw so much negativity to my life. However, loved ones dying from afar isn't typically something within human control. It was a lot to take in.

It was becoming too often and too much. 9 losses in 5 years had taken its toll, and consumed enough of my life. It was time for me to turn my life around. I didn't want to be defined solely by my losses anymore. I didn't want it to define who I am in the world. I was much more than that. And it was the turning point that I needed to propel me to heights that I never imagined (a few that I had!).

If you're struggling with loss, know that you're not alone, and it can get better and a lot faster and easier than you may think. In this book I show you ways that I got through, and feeling better than ever. And if I can get through 9 in a row, you can get through your grief too, and come out ready to take your life to new levels. Why stay stuck and unhappy, when you can feel joy, peace and excitement about life once again? We have this notion that we should stay suffering to prove our loyalty to the loved one that passed, but is that what they would want for you? Get your life back today and make the most of your time again.

Order your paperback copy today at *(copy and paste this link in your browser):*
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