

MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE

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

Spring 2022

**Persistent Pain:
5 Pillars
of Wellness**

**Planting Season:
Cannabis Plants
Ready?**

**Ways to Combat
Seasonal Allergies**

**What Price Do We Ask
for Our Property?**

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CONTENTS



Birds in all Their Glory, P 27

SPRING 2022

VOL 7, ISSUE 2

NOT JUST A READ... IT'S A CONNECTION



Spring Cleaning for The Mind, P 15

HIGHLIGHTS

Ways to Combat Seasonal Allergies,
by Peter Meraw

“For some of us that feeling of ecstasy is idiminished somewhat by seasonal allergic rhinitis...”

8

Persistant Pain: 5 Pillars of Wellness,
by Leslie Tempest

“The newest research indicates that pain often results from a loss or lack of homeostasis...”

9

Cannabis: Growing Season is Here,
by Heather Huff-Bogart

“You might be wondering where can one get cannabis plants to grow?...”

12

What Price Do We Ask For Our Property?
by Mike Baum

“There are many variables that influence the value of our property..”

18

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 Your Health
- 10 Nutrition: Healthy Recipe
- 12 Cannabis: FYI
- 14 Support for Stress
- 15 Mind Health
- 16 Faithfully Speaking
- 18 Real Estate
- 19 Social Issues: Your Voice
- 20 Family Matters
- 26 Sports Corner
- 26 Gardening; Did You Know...?
- 27 Volunteers: A Shout Out
- 28 Creative Corner
- 29 Puzzles
- 30 Business Directory



Death... Funny? P 23

ON THE COVER

ALLERGIES.....	8
PERSISTANT PAIN.....	9
CANNABIS.....	12
REAL ESTATE.....	18

FROM THE PUBLISHER



Have we told you lately that we value you? We do! We appreciate the loyalty you've shown us over the years, as readers, contributors, business affiliates... Thank you for being a part of what we like to call 'a connection.'

As a community we need to stick together, especially as we recover from the seemingly never-ending virus (I'm sure we're all sick of even so much as saying the name by now!). Many people have come together in support of maintaining a strong community through it all, especially volunteers. And as much as we would love to devote a whole page listing everyone's name that tirelessly devote themselves to such a great community, we decided upon a new section called *Volunteers: A Shout Out Goes To...* where you can acknowledge and express your appreciation to people you think deserve it.

We also have another new section for you called *Social Issues: Your Voice*, which is exactly as it appears – a venue for you to express your views about topics close to your heart. I'm sure many of you had things to say about the recent trucker rally, like Peter Cassidy did in this edition. This section is for you,

so don't hold back about what's on your mind (within reason of course, and maximum 400 words).

Speaking of mind, we seem to have gone from one stressful social phenomenon to another, with the worry over war now consuming our news channels and thoughts. Chronic stress can take a toll on our health, so we've got you covered here too, with our tips in the *Support for Stress and Mind Health* sections. We can sit on the sidelines and wait for something to go wrong, or actively take measures each day to take care of ourselves and thrive.


You'll have many great reads in this edition in different areas - from allergies to cannabis, or real estate to physical rehabilitation...and of course some fun stuff thrown in for good measure, as always.

So, kick back, relax, and enjoy. And don't forget to share it with your friends, community groups, social media pages and anyone that you think may enjoy it, with the simple copy and paste of the link, so everyone can have a well-needed break and distraction from the turmoils of life!


Once again, we hope you enjoy this edition as much as we enjoy putting it together for you.

Happy spring!

Cheryl Patterson,



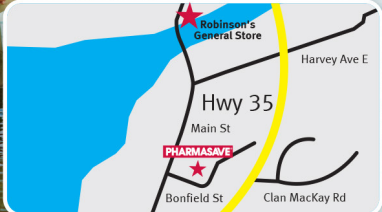
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Are you feeling off but can't quite put your finger on why?

"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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Mission:

Inform, include, support and inspire you!

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MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE is published quarterly.

EDITORIAL NOTE

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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.



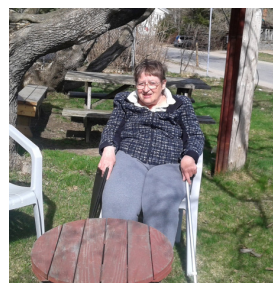
Linda Smith and her husband, Al, enjoy performing their original music to churches and social groups. Linda writes adult biographies and children's books. She describes her senior years as fun!



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 Dorset Village Pharmacy, Pharmasave, 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.

Ways to Combat Seasonal Allergies?

For Muskoka residents spring is a special time of the year, as the leaves begin to blossom and the forest stirs back to life after a long dark winter. It feels great to get outside again without having to first layer up in long underwear or find a matching pair of gloves. We are free again! For some of us unfortunately that feeling of ecstasy is diminished somewhat by seasonal allergic rhinitis, or what my mother used to call ‘hay fever’.

We live in the great outdoors, next to and alongside glorious and lush natural forest. There are coniferous and deciduous species. Lots of them! Jack pines are an especially problematic tree that throws a lot of pollen around in the early spring for allergy sufferers. Maples, birches, cedars and oaks also create a lot of pollen in cottage country as the forest springs to life. For the forest to awaken every spring, it requires a lot of pollen. Clouds of it. This circulates in the air we breathe, and, in the lakes, we swim in.

Ragweed is not so bad up here, but with all the tree types, pollen counts can be bad and we get a lot of customers every spring that have been out hiking and swimming and having a great time, but unfortun-

-ately inhaling a lot of pollen at the same time in the spring and early summer and then the next day they have puffy eyes, the runny noses and so they need treatments for these hay fever symptoms so they can get out there again and enjoy the great outdoors, because it’s a manageable problem with appropriate treatment.

Antihistamines are usually the first thing I recommend. There are several good ones (cetirizine, loratadine, desloratadine). They work well and are quite safe. Unfortunately for some, they don’t always clear up symptoms entirely 100%. You can be somewhat improved but still have symptoms. In these situations, adding a steroid nasal spray alongside can help. These are available without a prescription now, (Fluticasone).

A treatment that has become popular is the neti-pot rinse. This involves squeezing saline rinse through the nostrils, in one nostril and out the other, with a squeezable pot, leaning over a sink etc. It’s not for everyone if you don’t like a mess or are particularly squeamish. It requires technique and instruction, but if done right can help. The technique cleanses the nasal passages of daily inhaled dusts, pollens and allergens and possibly viruses.

It can be helpful for chronic or more severe allergy sufferers.

Itchy, swollen and watery eyes, respond better to antihistamines in an eye drop form, than a tablet form, so if itchy eyes are the predominant symptom, it is better to start with an eyedrop than a pill. Cromoglycate drops also can be helpful. There are other good options on prescription for allergic conjunctivitis.

Some patients still get allergy shots, to desensitize the body’s allergic response by getting regular injections of the allergic pollen. This treatment has been around for over 100 years and is still used and can work well for some people.

Getting outdoors is important at this time of year. It keeps us fit physically, with cardiovascular benefits and keeps our weight down, benefits our mental health, and is also just a lot of fun! We look and feel better this time of year when we go out and get some fresh air. Whether it’s a boat ride, a golf game, or puttering about in a garden, in the sunshine with some music on, when you are outside you just feel good. If allergies are preventing you from doing things, stop in and we will find an allergy treatment that works best for you, and get you back outside again!



Leslie Tempest, a physiotherapist for 30 years, is the owner of ProActive Rehab, a full-service, multi-disciplinary clinic in Huntsville, Ontario, which originally opened in 1999. Leslie's professional practice focuses on biomechanics, manual therapy, exercise as medicine, preventative education and pain science.

Persistent Pain: The 5 Pillars of Wellness

At ProActive Rehab's clinic in Huntsville our clients come to us with a variety of issues: sports injuries, concussions, repetitive strain injuries, recovery from surgeries or accidents—we see it all. One thing that most of our clients have in common is pain, both acute and chronic. In fact, lower back pain is the number one cause of disability, or unwellness, globally!

The past few years, our interdisciplinary team have been learning about breakthroughs in pain science, particularly the science behind persistent pain (greater than three month's). With a more in-depth understanding of how pain works, we can help our clients, and they can help themselves, more effectively.

Pain is a complex issue, but the newest research indicates that pain often results from a loss or lack of homeostasis (balance between interdependent elements) in the body—either temporary due to a sudden injury, or prolonged due to stress, poor sleep patterns, nutritional issues, loneliness, etc. If we look at pain from this perspective, we can see the multifaceted nature of its existence and can extrapolate some important points around staying well - the 5 Pillars of Wellness:

1. Exercise Regularly: It is important to get regular cardiovascular exercise for many reasons, but it specifically benefits your

central nervous system and helps to regulate all systems in your body. Ideally you should exercise for 20-30 mins every day, but aim to be active most days of the week to really see the benefits.

2. Manage Stress: Humans are not designed to endure constant stress. We have a very effective stress response commonly known as “fight or flight” which serves us well in the right situations. Our Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) winds us up, arouses our senses and responses, and gets us ready to deal with a threat of some kind. The trouble is, too much of this starts to have a detrimental effect. Here's where the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) comes in. Activation of the PNS has the exact opposite effect on our systems. When there are no threats around, we can unwind, our senses can stand down and we can regroup and restore in preparation for the next time the stress response is required. Needless to say, it's not hard to see why daily evocation of the relaxation response is healing and restorative to our tired and weary bodies and brains.

3. Eat Well: Although nutrition is not directly within a physiotherapists' scope of practice, we

understand that nourishing yourself with quality, nutritional, well balanced food is a key component of overall wellness. There are many knowledgeable nutritionists in our area that can help you develop a personalized nutrition plan to support your health and healing.

4. Sleep Well: Sleep experts tell us that 7-8 hours of rest per night is ideal. Although this may not be practical for all of us, learning to maximize quality sleep and aiming for at least 6 hours per night (but hopefully more) will really contribute to healing and wellness.

5. Stay Socially Connected: Two of the main components of persistent pain are feelings of helplessness and loneliness. Feeling like you are in this alone, that no one understands and there is no one to relate to are common feelings that get in the way of healing. Creating and maintaining your social support network is crucial to avoiding this pitfall.

Being well is not that complicated! Practicing the 5 Pillars can help you achieve and maintain the homeostasis that is so critical to wellness. The hardest part is taking the steps and making the changes required to make the 5 Pillars a part of your life.

NUTRITION:



Energizing Menu Ideas

by Bessie Grimes

Some of us have just finished battling a terrible virus—Covid-19. The rest of us are tired and discouraged because we've heard more about it than we ever wanted to know. Now it is time to pick ourselves up and help ourselves back to a normal, constructive and energetic life.

What we eat matters. Junk food doesn't do it. It's time to go back to healthy, fresh ingredients and cooking from scratch. Here are some ideas.

Breakfast is basic. Too many people skip this meal with the mistaken impression that it will help them lose weight. By breakfast time, we've all gone several hours without any nutrition at all. Our bodies cannot function at peak efficiency without this meal. A good, solid breakfast will keep us from snacking later and putting empty calories into our systems.

Some sample breakfast ideas

- Bacon, sausage or ham and eggs, fruit juice, whole grain toast, coffee.
- Oatmeal, juice, coffee.
- Kippers, toast, fresh fruit, coffee.

I have included coffee in all these suggestions because it is a hot drink. The kind I prefer, though, is decaffeinated. Herbal teas can work here, too. Regular coffee with sugar can give a person a lift, but it is spurious and temporary. You want more before the morning is out.

Lunch and dinner are versatile meals. They can be switched. You may prefer to have your biggest meal in the middle of the day.

These days a lot of people avoid red meat. These suggestions do include pork, chicken and fish, though. These are white meats.:

Pork and Bean Combos

- Three bean salads served with barbequed pork chops.
- Sausage and chick pea stir-fries with diced onions, zucchini and mushrooms.
- Chicken and turkey soups provide warmth and energy on damp chilly days or when you have come off a long shift. Save meat and vegetable stocks and experiment with your own flavourful combinations.



Fish

- Salmon, sardine and tuna sandwiches.
- freshly-caught local fish such as trout, pickerel or bass. Fishing is a great way to get some exercise and fresh air.

Salads

A good way to add a lot of necessary nutrients to your diet. Here are a few new combos to try:

- Spinach Salad Combos
- Spinach, green onions, blueberries or strawberries, sliced hard-boiled eggs, toasted sesame seeds, chopped nuts.
- Spinach, diced onion, cucumber, celery, tomato, parsley, pepper, paprika, oregano and thyme.
- Spinach, lambsquarters, cherry tomatoes, sunflower seeds.
- Spinach, diced chicken or turkey, onion, celery, chopped nuts.

Bean Salad Combos

- Green and yellow beans, mushrooms, green onions, zucchini, toasted sesame seeds.
- Chick peas, celery, tomato, zucchini, green onions, chopped nuts.
-

Other Salad Combos

- Cauliflower, broccoli, onion, sunflower or pumpkin seeds, chopped bell peppers.
- Carrots, raisins, chopped nuts.

Salad Dressings

Homemade salad dressings based on honey, eggs, maple syrup, vegetable oils and fruit juices such as lemon, orange or mango are healthy replacements for commercial dressings that usually contain a lot of additives. Sunflower, safflower, sesame, avocado and olive are a few of the oil alternatives available. Each of these gives its own distinctive flavour to a dish. You can experiment by adding various herbs and spices to your salads.

Energy Boosting Quick Snacks

Here are a few ideas if you happen to need a mid-afternoon pick-up:

- Deviled eggs.
- Homemade trail mix with raisins, nuts, pumpkin and sunflower seeds, nuts, dried cranberries.
- Fresh seasonal fruit such as apples, oranges, bananas, kiwi, peaches, nectarines, plums, grapes, etc.
- Dried fruit such as figs, raisins, apricots or cranberries.

Sweeteners

Try to avoid cane sugar as much as possible. Healthy alternatives include cinnamon, honey and maple syrup. Honey goes well in tea, maple syrup in coffee and cinnamon with apple.

Homemade Quick Breads and Muffins

These work well as semi-sweet treats for lunch boxes. Varieties you can make include banana, zucchini, carrot, date-nut and pumpkin. If you think you cannot live without adding cocoa, which contains caffeine, substitute carob powder. It's caffeine-free and tastes much the same.

Remember to take the time to prepare energizing meals. Stick to moderately sized portions and you won't want to sleep during the day. Finish your last meal of the day at least three hours before bedtime. This gives your body time to digest what it has taken in and gives you an appetite for the morning meal.

These are only a few suggestions. Experiment and come up with your own healthy meal combos. We would love to see some of your recipes and menu ideas.

Do you have a favourite recipe your friends and family rave about?

Send it in to: editorial@muskaseniormagazine.ca

CANNABIS: FOR YOUR INFORMATION



Heather Huff-Bogart - Heather has more than a decade of experience in the Cannabis industry and holds certificates in cannabis marketing / production and is a certified Cannabis Sommelier. Her passion for cannabis and helping people shines through in every interaction she has with customers at The Green Bouquet Cannabis.

Planting Season: Do You Have Your Cannabis Plants Ready?

Spring is approaching quickly. Are you ready for planting season?

Since legalization in October 2018, people are allowed to grow four cannabis plants per residence.

Now you might be wondering where one can get cannabis plants to grow? Well, cannabis retailers including The Green Bouquet Cannabis Inc, sell seeds. All authorized recreational cannabis retailers are allowed to sell seeds.

Clones (A trimming that has been removed from the mother plant and encouraged to grow roots) are currently only allowed to be purchased through our medical marijuana platform, which is regulated by Health Canada, Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations (ACMPR).

Through this platform, you can order from your registered Licensed Producer (LP). They are the only legal source for clones currently under our regulated system.

Now, there is usually a caveat to every rule, and under our current regulations, people are allowed to give cannabis that they have grown themselves. So your neighbor can give you a cannabis plant or four, however, they are not allowed to sell the plant or products of the

plants. Garden centres are not exempt from this rule. If they are selling cannabis plants, that is unfortunately against the law.

Okay, so you have your cannabis seeds. What to do next? Germinating your seeds. You can germinate a cannabis plant the same as a tomato or any other plant. When planting your cannabis plant, make sure to give it lots of space as it can get pretty big. Most Indica plants can grow up to 6ft tall and about 6ft wide or bigger. Sativa plants need tons of sun and can grow up to 20ft tall and 6ft wide and larger if they have the right growing conditions. Sativa plants also have a longer growing cycle, so it is best to start your germination process early.

May's Full Flower Moon is expected to be in the sky on May 15-16, 2022, according to our Farmers Almanac. This is the best time to plant seedlings after this moon has passed.

Did you know that cannabis plants can share a garden? Dill, lavender, potatoes, carrots, clover are some of the best plants to grow with cannabis. Basil is probably one of the best plants to grow in the same garden bed as your cannabis is a great companion plant, as it can

help the cannabis plant increase oil and resin production come harvest season. Now, cabbage on the other hand is not a great companion for cannabis, so don't plant them together.

The soil used to grow your cannabis is also another factor to consider. It is suggested that you use a mixture of 20% clay, 40% silt, and 40% sand, which you can find in Loamy soil. Fox Farm, Happy Frog are great options for soil. Do not use miracle grow if you can help it, as it is not the most natural soil out there.

Another thing to consider is the PH level of the plant. Usually 5.8 to 6.3PH is acceptable but 6PH is considered best for cannabis plants.

Trimming your plants is not much different than what you would do for other plants. You can trim the bigger fan leaves at the bottom during its growth cycle as this will allow the plant to contribute more energy to the buds, which is the best part of the plant.

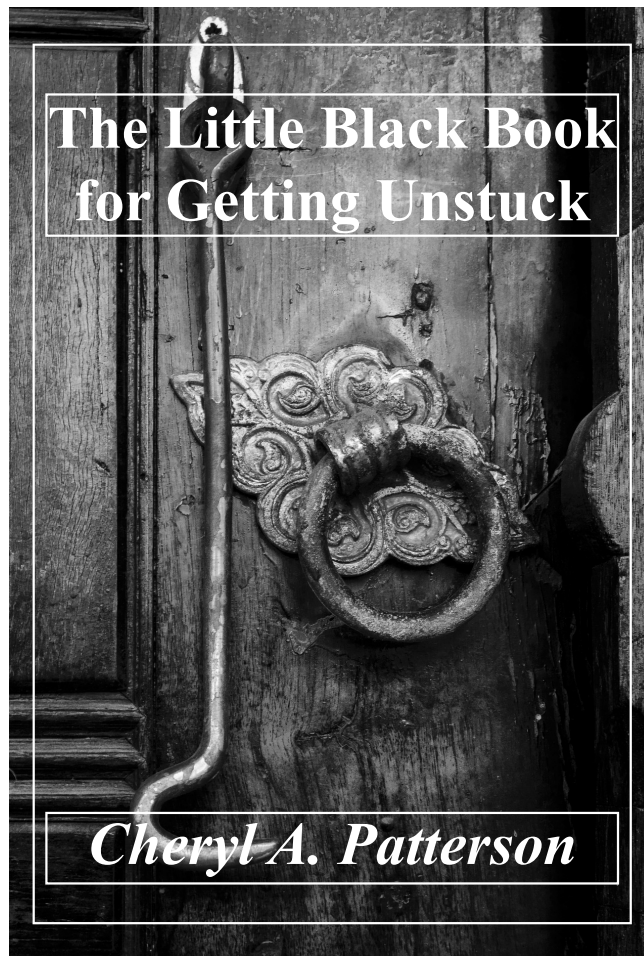
Did you know that you can use the entire cannabis plant down to the roots? You can eat the fan and sugar leaves, make tea from the roots and so much more.

Happy Growing!

Feeling Stuck? One Step Forward, two steps back?

Many of us find ourselves in unwanted circumstances, and if it's happening regularly you may be feeling tired of the struggle. Having the same problems in the same area repeatedly can be frustrating and overwhelming. No matter how hard you try, you can't seem to move forward from it, like a hamster in a wheel, going nowhere fast.

If you'd like to start to easily get unstuck in ways you're destined to, and move forward in leaps, and have a peace of mind knowing that you're living to your potential, don't miss this book!



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*- C.C., Muskoka,
ON, Canada*

"I received your book last week. It was amazing. Since I have been going through a lot of changes so it really did help me out. It was great timing."

*- D. B.,
St. Catharines,
ON, Canada*



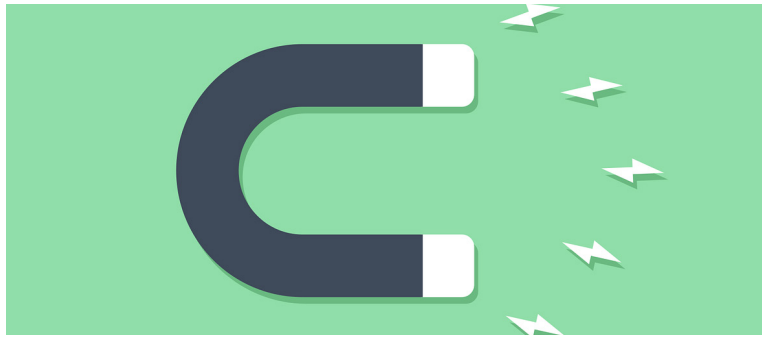
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Covid news, trucker news, war news... Are you feeling stressed just reading this? Likely! It seems we can't escape tragedy, corruption, or destruction these days. And it's not just news anymore; it seems like catastrophes, everywhere we turn.

What's a person to do?

On one hand we want to stay aware of what's happening in our world, yet the stress resulting from constant consumption of horrors can wreak havoc on one's health.

If there's one take away from this, remember the word *balance*. It's simple yet can have profound effects on your stress levels and health, for better or worse. Balance is key with everything we do, especially when it comes to our health.

So, how to balance the chaos that seems to be hitting us from all angles? Here are a few tips:

- **Minimize your media time.** Whether you watch news, are plugged into social media, talk about it with friends and loved ones, cut down the amount of time focusing on negative input. Set aside a specific amount of time each day to catch up on the world, and that's it. Then switch your focus.
- **Balance your negative input with at least double the amount of positive input.** Spend majority of your focus

on things that make you feel good, inspired, motivated, and so on. There are positive stories, learning, groups and experiences out there too. We have a choice about what we want to fill our lives with.

- **Change your habits.** When you do different, you'll feel different and have different outcomes. If you feel stuck in a negative routine that's hard to kick (i.e.

news before bed – very toxic), replace it with a healthier alternative (i.e. read something inspiring). Going to bed with a positive mindset impacts your brain in positive ways, and vice versa.

When it comes to stress, you want to kick the bad stuff like adrenaline to the curb and replace it with healing alternatives like oxytocin – good in results in good out! **MSM**

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Spring Cleaning for the Mind: Ways to Reset

What do you do when your mind is consumed with negative thoughts? Do you let it ruminate over and over, distract yourself, or actively try and change this habit that keeps you down? Are you even aware when it's happening?

You may wonder, "What's the big deal?"

The reality is that for every negative thought there's an equally negative reaction to your body, contributing to greater physical decline.

So, what do we do?

The first step for improving any area of our lives is awareness. Once we're aware of what we're doing, we can then change it, and the impact of it.

The following are some tips to counter those unwanted sneaky, toxic negative thoughts:

- **Pay attention to your thoughts.** An easy way to do this is to notice to how your feeling, as negative thoughts result in feeling bad in some way. Once you're aware of the negative mindset, do something to counter it, such as going for a walk, an act of kindness, doing

a puzzle (i.e. crosswords, word finds or jigsaw puzzles force you to concentrate elsewhere), go for a bike ride, garden, and whatever else you can think of that takes you to a place where you can be in the moment in a state of peace and joy.

- **Start a gratitude journal.** You may have heard about this, as it's a common tool used for the mind because it works. Imagine starting your day of in gratitude? It's ritual you can do each morning that keeps your mind focused on what you have and things that make you happy (rather than the alternative of being consumed with what you don't have and things that make you feel miserable). And as you go through your day, you'll notice things that you can add to your journal next time. This simple task can help keep you connected emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.
- **Write your own go-to list of things that make you feel happy, joyful, peaceful, grateful, and so on.** Keep it in a place for easy access, so when you find yourself consumed with negativity you can counter it with something you feel like doing from your list. A few items you can include are music, gratitude prayer, a funny movie or television show, walking your dog (or someone else's), dancing or any movement, reading poetry or inspirational material. And you can continue adding to your list to keep things interesting.

Our state of mind is connected to our emotional and physical health, and collectively is the hub of what makes anything possible for us to be able to do in this world. **MSM**

Having a hard time with the loss of a loved one?

Sadness, frustration, isolation...

It's still surreal looking back at that period, where I felt like I couldn't breathe, feeling overwhelmed, and without the needed support that most people have.

It had taken it's toll and consumed enough of my life. It was time for me to turn my life around, which I did, and so can you.

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A Story About Overcoming Multiple Loss

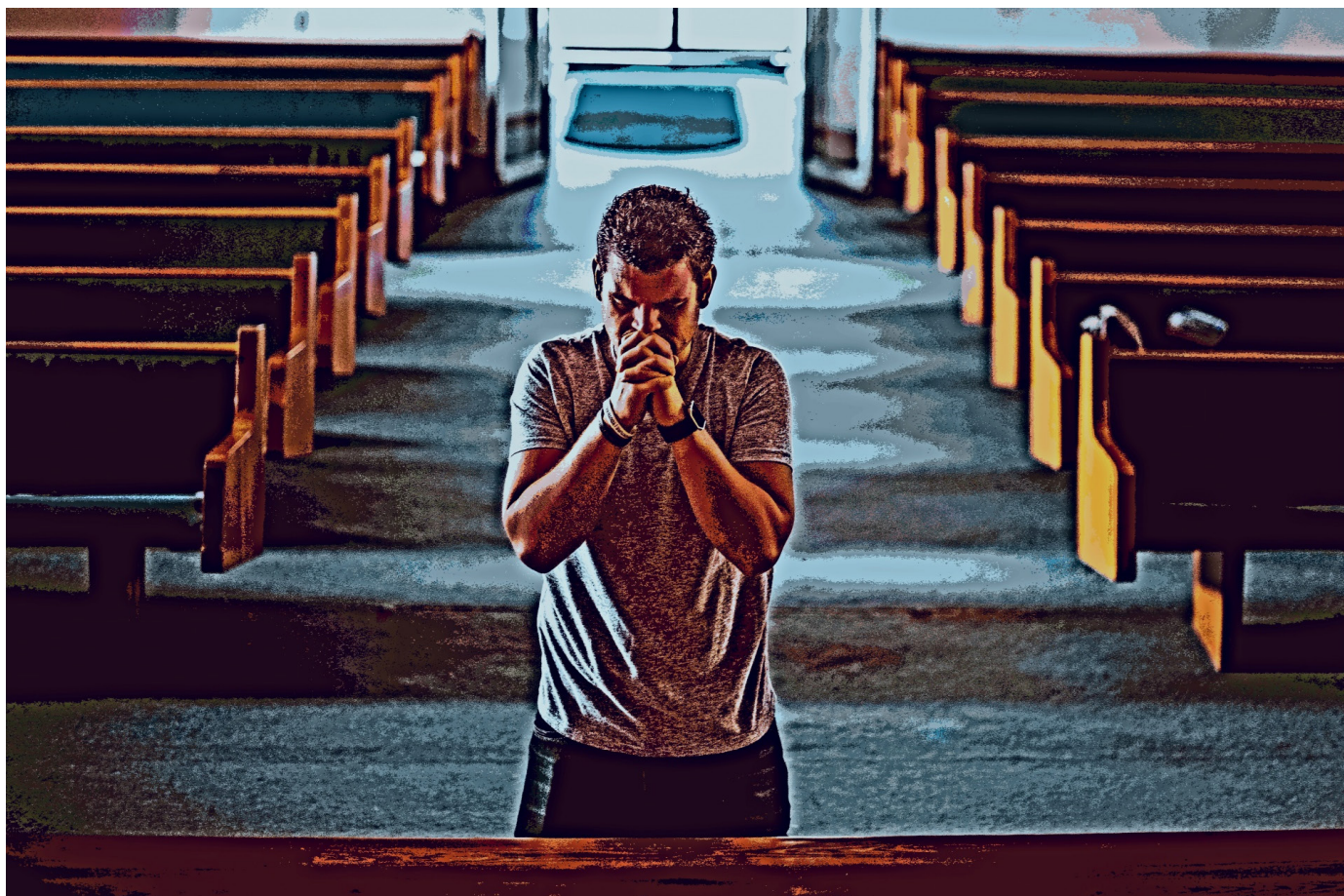


Cheryl A. Patterson

Photo by Matt Paulson

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Prayer Plan to End Covid-19...for Good!

“The head of Ontario’s COVID-19 Science Advisory Table says it is ‘very clear’ that Ontario is now in the middle of a 6th wave of the pandemic driven by a relaxing of restrictions in the province” (Toronto CTV News, Mar. 30, 2022).

By Bessie Grimes

Nobody will argue that the last couple of years haven’t been tough. The Covid-19 pandemic has interfered in some way with all of our lives. One solution is prayer; but it has to be united and focused. But, you may say, “I have been praying. Why isn’t God answering? Is there some reason why He is permitting this to happen?”

Well, yes, there is. We weren’t promised a world without problems while we still reside on this earth. Perhaps He just wanted us to slow

down our pace of living for a while and start looking after our planet. During the first couple of months of pandemic restrictions, the hole in the ozone layer closed. We weren’t travelling around as much. Perhaps at the end of the pandemic we will discover other things that have happened of a similar nature. That’s when someone has a chance to check on these sorts of things.

Enough is enough, however, and I believe a concerted effort must be made in the prayer department. The

newest variant—Omicron— is just a little too contagious for current medical personnel to handle. It’s time to see if God is simply waiting for us to ask Him for the best solution—the elimination of this bug from the face of the earth.

But how should we pray? Here are some ideas.

Pray that the virus disappears clear across the world. Praying that it simply leaves Canada isn’t enough. The latest variant travelled around the world almost faster than

we could even document it. We should pray that symptoms diminish in severity so that hospitals do not become overcrowded and that people who have refused the vaccine so far get vaccinated. God has enabled us to develop some weapons against this disease and the vaccines available today are among them.

Pray that hospital workers can have the strength and endurance to work effectively and that medical retirees who are healthy take up the fight in order to relieve exhausted and infected hospital staff.

Pray that more effective cleaning methods be brought into effect where Covid-19 patients are being treated and that cleaning staff take the time to thoroughly carry them out.

Pray that hospital menus be created that will actively defeat Covid-19.

Pray that, once again, the public is informed regarding the symptoms we should look out for. People tend to forget what we learned at the start of the pandemic.

Pray that people agree on the subject of whether or not to get vaccinated and that harmony and unity reign and people take the presence of Covid-19 seriously.

Pray that those who are currently infected with Covid-19 recover completely.

Pray that schools become safe and kids are able to learn together again without fear of catching the disease.

Pray that no new variants emerge anywhere in the world. Our doctors and nurses have more than enough to cope with already.

What can we do besides pray?

Wearing masks and social distancing. Avoid large crowds, whatever the temptation. Covid-19 needs human contact in order to spread. Remember that it is still not safe to shake hands or give high fives.

If you are healthy and have medical experience, consider volunteering to administer vaccines and treat people with other health problems. This will provide some relief for staff who have some experience with the disease.

Hospital kitchen staff are needed to prepare meals from scratch that include fresh produce. Warm soups and casseroles can be served to overworked staff as well as patients. These meals must be designed to provide the energy and mental alertness medical personnel need after many hours on duty.

Take time to prepare healthy meals for yourself and your family. Fast food with lots of additives won't boost our morale or stimulate us to do very much. All of us need to eat and exercise in a manner that will both nourish and strengthen our minds and our bodies.

Be safe with recreational travel. We must believe that the day will come—soon—when we can go places more readily again.

Intense concentrated prayer coupled with responsible action is needed. Too many people moan about their misfortunes and do nothing to turn tough situations around. Let's pray and work together for an answer to a very tough world problem.

Will we be able to meet together in groups to pray? Frankly, it is not safe as long as there is any evidence of Covid-19 in our communities.

It is best to pray with our family

members and close friends whom we see all the time. Prayer chains may also be established and specific times set for members to engage in prayer.

Social media can help. Virtual prayer sessions can and should take place. In this way, we can all work together to stop the pandemic in its tracks - for good!

How strong is our faith? Do we believe God can do this? Each of us must search our hearts and ask ourselves if we have what it takes to engage in this kind of prayer.

Be sure to thank God for the privilege of praying and for any indication that your prayers are being answered in a positive way. Praise helps to affirm your faith. Be specific and detailed in your requests. If you know people who have the virus, mention them by name as you pray. Pray for specific countries where caseloads and deaths have been mounting.

Some of you will ask the question: What if God doesn't answer? He will answer. He'll say yes or no or, maybe, He'll tell us to wait until His full plan is carried out. Maybe He'll wait until we learn to slow our lives down to a point where we can live satisfactorily and still preserve our planet. But we must ask. What if that is all He is waiting for? If we don't ask, we'll never know and the pandemic will linger. None of us can afford that!

Happy praying, Folks!

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.



Mike Baum is one of Dorset, Ontario's most prominent real estate agents with extensive experience and knowledge of the area of more than 50 years. He excels in waterfront recreation property sales, land development and commercial business ventures, is driven to service his Buyers and Sellers and be as informative as possible, given the unique circumstances involved in "cottage country."

What Price Do We Ask For Our Property?

There are many variables that influence the value of a property.

Often, properties in subdivisions within city or town limits share a fairly standard uniformity between them, so it is an easier task for realtors to assess value, when making recommendations about what price to ask. However, properties that are more rural or have a waterfront component, along with other variables (3 or 4 season road vs. island, exposure, grade or slope, type of shoreline, proximity to hospital and amenities, distance from the Greater Toronto Area, small vs. large lake, access to internet, etc.) all influence value in different ways, unlike very similar properties beside one another in larger towns or cities.

It's not uncommon to ask several realtors for a value estimate and be given several different answers. Hopefully there is a consistent grouping of values, where one

typically discards the values on the extreme ends of the spectrum. In this light, it is recommended to ask different realtors from separate brokerages to come out to assess the value of your property, and hope they are all very similar in their price predictions, based on market sales and conditions. This is a good opportunity to meet realtors face-to-face and determine if there is a feeling of comfort and trust, together with finding out what services and marketing strategies that they will provide.

Then, once a realtor and value estimation is established, there's the whole question of what price to ask.

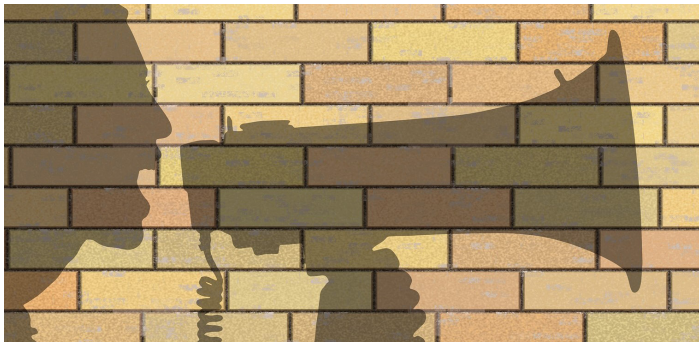
In an unprecedented seller's market, where there is little for sale and many buyers, it is quite typical now to see owners purposely select a price at the lower end of an estimated range of value, and implement a no-offer clause of at least one week or more. By instructing your realtor (via form 244) to not convey any offers during a specific time period, it seems common, as in the last

3 years, to see a large number of buyers come out to view a property and then fight for it with an auction-like mentality, to the point where more often than not offers exceed the asking price. An owner should also discuss and think about the merits of perhaps considering preemptive or bully offers, instead of turning away any and all until an affixed deadline.

A lot will depend on the type of property, its overall condition, the motivation and needs of the owner, etc. It's also important to discuss the Irrevocable deadline to be inserted within offers, so that you can have peace of mind knowing how long you have to consider terms of competing offers rather than feel rushed.

It's a big decision and a new way of marketing that differs from what we were all used to only a few short years ago. Trust a seasoned realtor and take their advice. It's your realtor's obligation to net you as much money as possible from a given marketplace, by utilizing whichever tools and strategies work best to that common goal.

SOCIAL ISSUES: YOUR VOICE



Peaceful Solutions to Confusing and Concerning Issues of the Day

This trucker protest captured the headlines recently. As I watched the coverage on television, I was a bit confused. Are we getting all the information?

This protest has caused a division in our country. My daughter is 35 and most of the protestors I saw were of her age. She drove to Ottawa to exercise her right to peacefully protest. I did not agree with her but accepted that it was her right. I will not take a political preference in this submission. I would however encourage safety and intelligence.

Covid still needs to be a priority, as does personal adherence to self protection (even in consideration of lifted restrictions). I have seen people refusing to wear masks when required, out of defiance.

In my day we were exposed to many childhood illnesses, such as measles, mumps and chicken pox. It was vaccines that eradicated 90% of them.

We as adults parents and grandparents need to not only protect our children but educate them. Vaccines in my opinion are our major defense against this devastating pandemic. I am afraid to say it is here to stay.

I also heard of an incident involving a 70 year old woman fatally injured as a result of an encounter with a horse. My confusion comes from what I heard, not saw. I heard a bike had been thrown in the path of the horse and this startled the animal. Another report said the horse charged the crowd. The bottom line here is it is a tragedy however it happened, and shouldn't have happened.

Regardless of the issue of the day, if we want change, it is up to us to contact our MP and always try to find a peaceful solution. *-Peter Cassidy, Bracebridge, ON*

**Do you have views
concerning a social issue?**

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In Bloom

By Courtney Murrell

Have you ever admired the simple beauty of a garden before? Like a small child, to take the time, to look and see, and wonder and learn ... Gardens truly are so beautiful.

The cycle of growth and blooms is unique for each plant, flower, shrub or bush. Naturally, by spring they are all ready for change, for the new buds, leaves and such.

I have always enjoyed gardening! Learning about planting zones, the soil types, shade, sun, drought tolerant or not ... Flowers make me so happy! I love learning just what each needs specifically, so that I can help it along to grow to its full beautiful potential.

Years ago, I planted my first Hosta. I planted it in memory of my father-in-law. He loved his Hostas and enjoyed gardening as well. This was a topic we could chat about for ages! I planted, I waited, it grew a

little and then died. Turns out the soil was too acidic, and the pests got the best of it. I tried a few more times, a few more over the years. It never worked. The soil, no matter how much I worked with it, was just too acidic. I became frustrated and gave up on the Hosta in that garden.

A few years later, we moved. I was so excited when I learned of the perennial gardens that were all mine, and the pretty Hostas that were popping up! I enjoyed these blooms so much! I loved watching the ants work away at the Peonies. The iris came in as a deep purple and the tiny Forget-me-nots were like a confetti of happiness sprinkled among the big bushes and shrubs. There were Ferns, and Daisies. There were Lilies and Thyme. Chives and Pansies, and Lily of the valley. My garden was so beautiful in its own way. Butterflies, bees and ants kept it going with the help of the sun and a good soil.

I loved that garden and that house ... and then, we moved, again.

This time, my gardening would be more of an indoor activity.

I find great comfort in relating what I learn from life and people such as my father-in-law, to gardening.

Relationships are a lot like a garden. We must tend to them with care if we hope to experience blooms. We must accept that sometimes, no matter how much we care, and tend to the relationship, sometimes the pests such as terminal illness, will find a way into our garden ... and our family.

Gardening can be both an internal and an external experience. We can come to appreciate the buds and the

blooms in our lives from the experience of loss and how the absence of even one plant or flower in our garden will affect the garden, and the gardener, inevitably.

Since moving several times, and the loss of my father-in-law, I have learned that spaces in our gardens and our lives need not remain empty after the physical life cycle of a beloved plant or person has died. Something we can do is place a steppingstone where it once held that space, because even in its physical absence, memories remain.

Many times, when I see a garden, full and in bloom, I pause to admire it. I pause, to remember what I have learned from many precious gardeners in my lifetime. Though they are no longer with me to talk with, the conversations we shared about life, about love and about family, and about mortality, will continue to grow in the garden of my life. This wisdom will reseed itself through my gardening talks with my children!

This past fall, my daughter left for university. She packed up a ton of clothes, a toaster oven and a wooden crate that held a small Spider plant!

When she returned home for Christmas, she brought her plant home with her! She delightfully shared with me that it had begun reseeding itself and pointed out the new shute! She went on to explain that she had found a perfect spot for it in her dorm, and that she thought it was time for some fertilizer.

In listening to her share about her plant, I was gifted a glimpse of what my gardening mentors may have experienced with me. I felt connected to her in a new and >>>

FAMILY MATTERS CONT'D...

quite significant way. She was blooming in her life, rooting herself in wisdom and taking in all of the sunshine she could from her experience as a first-year psychology student.

What was once a conversation between miles and miles of soil, and great lakes was now a conversation that I could hold a little closer.

If you have the opportunity to admire the simple beauty of some ants working away, and bees buzzing in a garden this spring or summer ... I hope that you may find some comfort, and that the seeds of this story might inspire you to take up gardening as a hobby in your home, and in your heart.

I have learned that we are much-like flowers. We need the right amount of sunshine and water, when pests and illness make their way into our roots, we can grow and bloom, and reseed in profound ways, we will thrive in certain soil types and ... most importantly, we all bloom in our own time. Our environments are essential to our optimal growth and optimal health and beauty.

Just as in nature, not all of us can bloom exactly where or how we have been planted. Sometimes we need a little help from our inner gardener. Sometimes, we need to allow ourselves to be transplanted into a different garden, trust our roots and then BLOOM - full growth potential!

Courtney Murrell works as a Hospice Palliative care PSW and writes daily as a self care practice. Her work has been published on the Elephant Journal, Fire Fighter Wife and www.fromtheashesiamreal.com.



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Death: There's Nothing Funny About It... Or is there?

By Linda Smith

There's nothing funny about death. I've done my time in the "valley of the shadow of death." My nineteen-year-old daughter was killed in a car accident years ago. After the blow, something in me dictated that I should never laugh again. It wasn't possible or even appropriate. I decided my laughter was all used up in the life before. It was not allowed anymore. Surely I would never laugh again or even want to.

A month after the tragic death, I laughed about something and felt instantly guilty. The forbidden thing had surfaced. How dare it! In the long haul, it was a good seven years before I began to truly embrace life as a gift, where happiness and laughter could be legal again. I decided it was not disloyalty to the memory of the dearly departed. Instead, it showed a willingness to go on and to whole-heartedly live again. It was a truce to the war within, to search for and to receive new treasures and yes, even laughter. In reflection, it seems that inappropriate humour can find its way up through the concrete of death. I'm not sure how that happens, but it does.

My mother recently died after a long illness. As the only child to my aging father, it fell to me to make arrangements for the engraved stone. The Tombstone Lady as I call her, phoned me to discuss the business of creating a headstone. We requested a dual stone, with my deceased mother's name on one side and my father's name on the other - pending his demise some day in the future. You don't expect The Tombstone Lady to be up for laughs, but human nature is often surprising.

In one of her samples, she suggested my mother's name first on the stone followed by these words: *And Her Beloved Husband.....* I told her that if this tribute was going to be chiselled in stone for all time and eternity, it needed to be a truthful statement. I told her that the 'beloved' didn't so much go that way, but the reverse. We changed the stone to read: *Mother's name - beloved wife of - Father's name*. I gave her an example of why it was wrong the other way around.

I relayed that as my father and I sat at mom's death bed, he launched into one of his many repetitive stories. With her last few drops of energy, mom raised her hand to her forehead and whispered, "Oh my Gaaaaaaaauuuu-ddd!" Dad didn't even hear her and blazed on with his story. It wasn't funny at the time but a few days later, I laughed about it from some other channel in my brain.

This apparently tickled The Tombstone Lady's funny bone. She laughed and said, "Oh Linda, you are so funny." Her business-like façade melted away to the point that she became candid about a similar experience.

"Well," she responded, "you know there's one in every family and in ours, it's my sister Lorraine!"

As my mother was on her last, she started into her typical mischief. We were used to it. She leaned in and whispered some clandestine sentiment into mother's ear so nobody else could hear. We wondered what the heck was she up to now? With my mother's remaining strength we heard her say, "Oh Lorraine, shut Up!"

We laughed together. Who knew The Tombstone Lady would have such a sense of humour, especially in her serious business. She hooted up a storm and said I was 'killing her.' I shot back - "What's that - more mortuary humour?" She chuckled some more. Now that I had her 'on the ropes', I offered another weird death bed vigil story.

Joan's mother had never hugged her - ever, or told her she loved her - not once. The daughter watched her mother fading from life on the hospital bed. Suddenly, she motioned to say something. Was this the moment

CONT'D NEXT PAGE>>>

FEATURE CONT'D...

when her mother would finally express the longed for words of love? Raw after a recent divorce from a cheating husband, this could balance the scales. With failing hands, Joan's mother removed her oxygen mask struggling to get out her final words. Surely they would be the most important things she would ever say to her daughter! Then the words came...

"And don't you put that little (expletive) in the box with us!"

Joan reeled, wondering what on earth her dying mother was talking about, then it hit her. Years ago they had all bought a burial plot together for their final resting place. Her mom wanted to make sure the ex was never buried where she was. Over time, Joan has come to terms with what could have been devastating words. Years later, she often shares this story like a stand-up comedian, while everyone falls into gales of laughter. She laughs too!

There was one final story I shared with The Tombstone Lady. I related how my friend Brenda experienced yet another bizarre end-of life moment as her cousin's body was lowered into the grave. This family had also ordered a dual tombstone with names side by side; one deceased, the other – pending. The wife was laid to rest. As the mourners slowly filed away, a relative whispered in Brenda's ear: "Wrong side!" "What?" "Wrong side!" Nobody else seemed to notice that the wife's coffin had been placed under the husband's name.

The Tombstone Lady and I chuckled again. She shared that she had never laughed like this before in the course of her job. I suggested to her that if she ever had to 'work up' some tears in her employment to be appropriate, that she should hold a hanky over her nose and mouth and think of these stories. I said, "You'll be laughing but it will just look like you're crying."

So what conclusions can be drawn?

I say, accept laughter where you find it and don't feel bad if it seems inappropriate. It can be a soothing momentary gift of relief over your grief. And yes, it is indeed allowed.

Linda Smith and her husband, Al, enjoy performing their original music to churches and social groups. Linda writes adult biographies and children's books. She describes her senior years as fun!



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SPORTS CORNER



*Sports Corner
with Peter Cassidy*

Reflections on Past Spring Seasons

Lately I have been having difficulty getting a good night's sleep. I think my sleeplessness has a bit to do with our world.

We have come through the truckers protests in our province and parts of Canada. Now we are on the brink of a world war.

In my quiet times, which I seem to have a lot of as I get older. I think of how peaceful it was in my younger days.

I reflect on the heroes and individuals who helped make me who I am today.

I think of the make-up football and hockey games we played on a given night or day.

I did not grow up in the computer age. We made our own entertainment with the resources we had at hand.

We were so happy taking a branch from a tree and putting fishing line on it, and that was our fishing pole.

I was always an active participant in most sports.

I think of some of the life-forming people of my years growing up...Rocket Richard, Jean Beliveau, Arnold Palmer...a few of my good teachers. How I wish we could return to those days if only for the sanctity they provided.

Now I am at a loss. Like everyone, I have come through a pandemic, and am almost hesitant about turning on the evening news.

Maybe my lack of sleep is somehow connected to the spring times of my youth. We were only concerned about winning a game or how we can come up with some money for new equipment.

As I think back, in all honesty, we too were in a struggle for power. We always wanted to be at the top of our game. Perhaps in a more sportsman-like manner we mirrored the conflicts in our world today.

***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...?



Container Gardening With Vegetables

By Sandra Harthill

How exciting, we are now into spring and time to start planning what you are going to do in your garden or balcony.

To grow vegetables, you do not require a lot of space. It is so easy to grow them in a pot or hanging basket.

Choose what you want to grow (i.e., cherry tomatoes, small cucumbers, lettuce, onions or herbs). It is amazing how quickly they will grow with the proper care.

Always ensure your container is clean, and fill it with lightweight organic potting soil with fertilizer.

You can also add nutrients to the soil with coffee grounds, banana peel, wood ash, eggshells and epsom salts.

Vegetables require at least 6 hours of full sun daily, so growing them in containers allows you to move them into sunny spots in your garden.

Keeping the soil moist is very important for healthy growth of your vegetable plants. And remember that containers dry out more quickly than ground soil so remember to keep them well watered.

***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.*

VOLUNTEERS

A Shout Out Goes To...

Sue and Jim Punch!

Volunteers Sue and Jim Punch have been with the Muskoka Lawn Bowling Club since it opened in 2017.

Since 2018, they have helped run the indoor lawn bowling program in the Bracebridge Arena.

The game is played on 6'x45' mats which are rolled out several times each week during the winter.

Thanks to their dedication, organization, and consistently positive attitude, they have helped provide a much-needed fun and enjoyable activity to the mostly senior participants, who often have fewer sport options available to them.

Thank you Sue and jim!

Do you know someone who gives back to the community and deserves to be thanked?

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with a shout out!**

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editorial@
muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca

FEATURE



Picture courtesy of Doris Villemaire

Birds... In All Their Glory

By Doris Villemaire

We humans are drawn to majestic pines, rocky outcroppings, water, wildlife, blue skies, sunshine and all of Mother Nature's gifts. Sometimes she surprises us with her oddities. Here are a few I discovered:

1. There are very few blood vessels in a bird's foot.
2. A Sapsucker's tongue is like a paintbrush. He uses it to slurp the sap.
3. Of every 100 birds that hatch, 10 become adults.
4. 4.90% of birds are monogamous...for the season.
5. Scrub Jays and Magpies will harass a bird until they give up their food.
6. Woodpeckers and Swifts sleep clinging to a vertical surface.
7. A cloacae sac is baby bird poop wrapped in a sac. Mother bird carries it away or sometimes eat it.
8. An owl's eyes are tubular (like binoculars). However, they cannot move their eyeballs.
9. Hummingbirds can hover like a helicopter.
10. Did you know our ancestors also loved bird watching? You can see their paintings in caves. However...they used the birds for meat!

Bird songs in the background symphony fill the air with happiness and hope.

"Loss is nothing but change and change is Nature's delight" (Marcus Aurelius).

CREATIVE CORNER



Quiet

By Nancy Goodman

*Not a single word was spoken
The whole entire week
It was a spell of wicked witchcraft
That knocked me off my feet.*

*The airways were full of silence
The likes I've never seen
No bells, no phones, no voices
All was quiet, even the machines.*

*Locked inside my head
The bizarre ideas going around
I was literally immobile
And there was still no place but down.*

*What was this cursed spell I was in?
What was I going to do?
For me there was no clear thinking
I knew He'd help me through,*

*So if up ahead you see that staircase
And upward you must rise
Make sure that wicked witch isn't near
Because she's a devil in disguise.*

Nancy Goodman, is a lively senior, a prolific co-author of the book "My Affair With Cancer", who lives in Penetanguishene, and enjoys walks on the beach, and fireside chats.

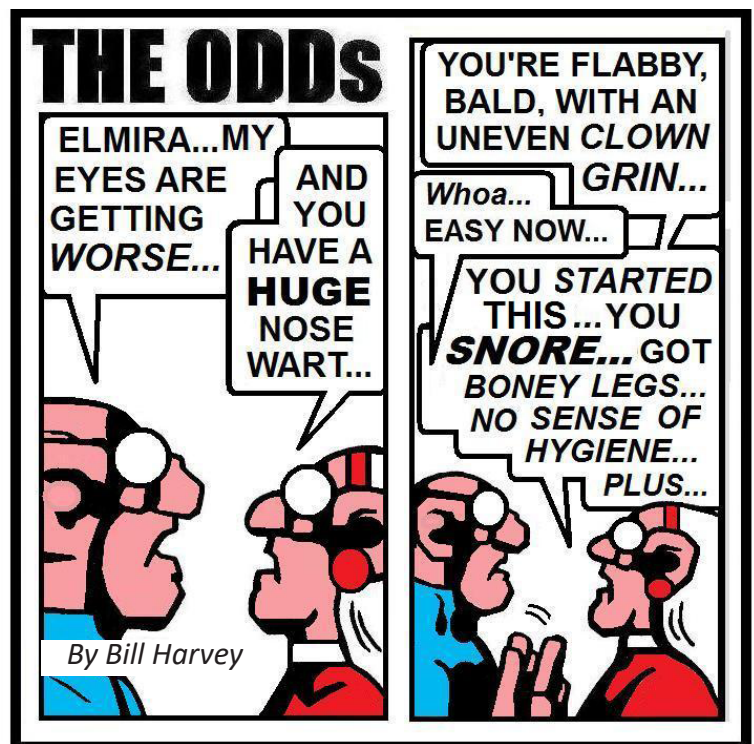


Marion

By Larry Hope

*Marion...
Your smile would light
up a town.
Your laugh is so very infectious.
Your eyes, as always,
are very disarming.
Just the whisper of your name
sends shivers of joy
through my veins.
So just what type of magic do you wield...?
You had me at,
"Hey, how's life?"
At Timmy's for cappuccinos.*

Larry Hope is a Dorset resident, and has lived and cottaged in the area most of his life, and is an avid curler at the Huntsville Curling Club.



Boggle (print this page, or write words that you find 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 this page, or write words on paper), By Bessie Grimes

SPORTS

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

Baseball	Lacrosse	Golf
Badminton	Hockey	Handball
Tennis	Curling	Polo
Cricket		

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

MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE

Business Directory

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Hospice Muskoka - Person-centred palliative care approach to helping residents and families with life limiting illnesses or end-of-life issues. 705 646 1697, www.hospice muskoka.com.

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What legacy do you want to leave behind?

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