

MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE

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Winter 2023

The Snowflake

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FROM THE PUBLISHER



Another New Year is here, and happily unlike the aftermath of the past couple of holidays... Need I say why? Let's just say that in the Faithfully Speaking column, Janie Brooks reminds us how wonderful it is to have holiday gatherings once again – in close proximity.

Connections are everything. We can have all of the money or material things that life affords, however, without having people to love, and who care about, support, and love us...life can be somewhat empty.

Speaking of connections, an important place of camaraderie and necessities in Dorset, Robinson General Store, has closed. This has left many people who rely on it for groceries and other needs in a tough spot, due to an inability to travel to other nearby towns. So, Dorset Village Pharmacy owner, Peter Meraw, has put out a special bulletin in his column, Your Health, on page 8, for those within the township that are struggling, which I will share here as well to help get the word out:

“Recently many in the community were surprised by news of the temporary closure of Robinson’s General Store with more to come about possible ownership change and an estimated re-opening date. The long time general store is a central hub of the community and as such

many residents are concerned about services during the closure. Plans have been discussed to arrange for weekly grocery runs into larger nearby towns and for those who are struggling and know someone who is struggling to meet the demands of fuel and transport costs into nearby towns, reach out to us at the pharmacy or to a member of the Dorset Lions Club and we will arrange for help. For those needing local health services, the winter hours at the Dorset Village Pharmacy (and at the Dorset Health Hub) are unaffected by the Robinsons closure, and other businesses in the town are unaffected and open for business.”

For those of you interested in helping, you can contact Peter at the Pharmacy at (705) 766-1911, or the Dorset Lion’s Club as well, at dorsetlions@gmail.com.

In other news, we added a new Buy and Sell section in the Business Directory on page 29, for those of you looking for good deals, given the cost of pretty much anything these days, or wanting to sell something for a little extra cash as well. Send your 20-word (maximum) listings to editorial@muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca.

Otherwise, as always, we hope you enjoy reading MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE as much as we enjoy putting it together for you, and wish you all the very best in the upcoming year.

Cheryl Patterson,
Publisher



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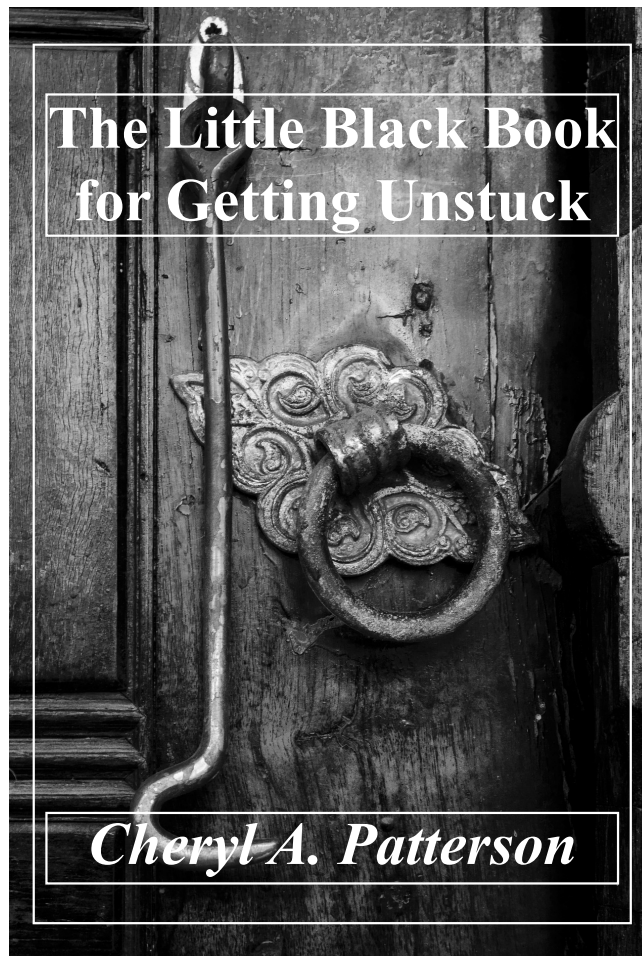
Feeling Stuck?

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!

A great gift for someone going through a tough time over the holidays!



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*"I got mine yesterday...
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**- C.C., Muskoka,
ON, Canada**

Cheryl A. Patterson

"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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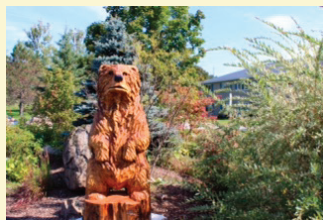
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Mission:

Inform, include, support and inspire you!

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EDITORIAL NOTE

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

Your suggestions and submissions are welcome. However unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned.

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Geraldine O'Meara, spent 21 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.



George Brooks, is a retired elementary school teacher. He and his wife Susan enjoy travel, hiking, and sailing, which round out their lives, and they are very involved in their community.



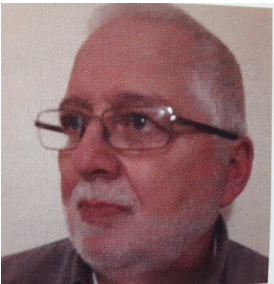
Carol Ford has short stories in Hot Apple Cider books, volunteers with The Word Guild, facilitates a memoir writer's group, writes about her adoption and birth family reunion, and resides in Newmarket.



Linda Smith. I wrote a book of cartoons with commentary called: The Senior Boomer – Whatever happened to the Baby Boomers? The cartoons tell the story of where we landed up!



Brenda J. Wood has been an author and motivational speaker for too many years to count. Enjoy her common sense wisdom and quirky humour at <http://heartfeltdevotionals.com> and hopestreamradio.com.



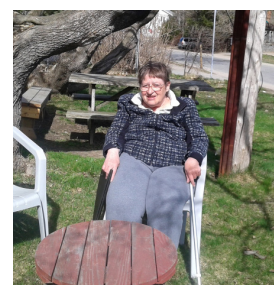
Kenn R. E. Page, is proud to be Canadian! Born in Toronto, raised in Pickering, worked for Bell and IBM. Moved to Muskoka in '75 to design and build homes for 40 years. Hobbies: Fishing, reading, painting, gardening.



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 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.

Safe Inside Your Warm Muskoka Home

As we settle in for the winter months in Muskoka, comfortably tucked inside our cozy homes, behind tightly sealed windows, heated by furnaces that keep those nasty -20C temperatures outside and the cozy +20C inside, it helps to know your home is energy efficient. Modern designed, energy efficient, winter proofed homes can have an important risk, however. That risk comes from radon gas.

Radon is a naturally occurring gas that is odorless and tasteless. It exists across Canada as a by-product of uranium breakup that exists in small amounts in soil and rock across Canada but varies significantly from region to region. On average about 8% of Ontario homes have a level of radon gas that exceeds the standard 200 Bq/Mcu that is considered potentially cancer causing.

Data collected in 2012, showed that Leeds-Lanark-Grenville County in Eastern Ontario and Chatham-Kent region in the Southwest had the worst (highest) average levels at 19.4% and 18.4% respectively. While Simcoe-Muskoka had better numbers at 0.9% of its homes exceeding the recommended level of radon gas.

The date your home was built is a big predictor of risk. Homes that were built more recently, after 2001, have nearly twice the risk of homes built earlier. Newer homes tend to use newer technology such as forced air furnaces. They have lar-

-ger footprints, higher ceilings, furnaces with heat recovery ventilators (HRVs), newer windows and better roof insulation. Newer homes have better energy efficiency, the air is re-circulated and heat is preserved inside. These factors are also unfortunately all associated with higher radon gas circulation.

Radon is a heavier gas. The combination of forced air heating in homes with high ceilings and chimneys, has a funnelling effect and lighter gases rise with heat. Heavier gases stay at ground level. In homes where living quarters are on the ground floor, such as bungalows, residents are at highest risk.

So how high is the risk? According to Health Canada about 16% of Canadian lung cancer deaths each year are currently due to radon gas, that is the highest risk of all non-smoking lung cancer causes.

The good news is that it is relatively inexpensive to diagnose your home and fix if your dwelling has any of the features that suggest higher risk (e.g., newer, large footprint, living quarters on the first floor, higher ceiling, forced air etc.). An assessment can be done for a few hundred dollars. The necessary repairs can be done for a couple of thousand and may involve sealing any cracks in flooring that allow gas to seep in through the foundation and quite likely it will require installation of an Active Soil Depressurisation system. Certified contractors can reduce radon enter-

-ing your house by installing a system of tubing and a fan system that sucks gas from a central pooling point underneath the house and re-channels it outside.

This topic has a personal angle in it for me as my mother passed away just over a year ago from lung cancer. As a non-smoker, she lived in a region and inside a home where its design suggested a high risk of radon. I had to convince my father to do the testing, but when we tested their home afterwards by an accredited professional it was elevated. If your home meets any of the high-risk criteria described above and you would like to have it tested by a certified Canadian National Radon Proficiency Program (C-NRPP) professional, go to takeactiononradon.ca. You will sleep better during those Muskoka winter nights knowing your home is safe from radon.

Other News: *With the recent closure of Robinson's General Store, plans were discussed for weekly grocery runs to larger towns, for those struggling or know someone struggling to meet the demands of fuel and transport costs. Reach out to us at the Dorset Village Pharmacy or Dorset Lions Club and we will arrange for help. Those needing local health services, the hours at the Pharmacy (and Health Hub) are unaffected by the closure, and other businesses in the town are unaffected and open for business.*

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Oatmeal Bread

**Oatmeal isn't just for porridge!
Here's an easy and healthy recipe for a loaf or muffins,
submitted by Brenda Wood.**

BASIC RECIPE

- 3 1/4 cups dry oatmeal flour
- 500 gm 0sp Greek yogurt
- 2 tspn baking soda
- 1 tspn salt
- 2 eggs

OTHER OPTIONS

For sweet taste:

- add berries and sweetner to taste
- or add cinamon and sweetner to taste

For a non-sweet alternate flavour:

- add dehydrated onions to taste

Mix oatmeal flour with baking soda and salt.
Mix eggs and yogurt together.
Combine the yogurt and oatmeal flour mixtures.
Bake in a 8x4 loaf pan, tart pans, or pie pans
for pizza crust.
Spray baking pan well.
Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes, or until
lightly browned on top (it should bounce back to
the touch, rather than sink in).
Let cool before cutting and serving.

AGING WITH A GUSTO: WHAT WORKS FOR YOU



*Lisa Amendola,
North Bay, ON, 55 years old.*

I enjoy walking my dog, Tilly, three times a day, including nature trails when I can. I believe in being outside enjoying the fresh air. Breathing in the fresh air is good for the brain! As someone who suffered two strokes, my doctor told me I'm lucky to be alive because most people don't survive that. I learned that so much good can come out of bad things that happen. I have a second chance at taking care and being good to myself.

I try not to put impurities, like smoking or drinking, in my body anymore. Instead, I'm drinking four glasses of water every day, taking turmeric because it helps with joint pain, and am feeling good. I'm very thankful to be alive. When it comes to your physical health, "use it or lose it." And so, I try and stay active and keep my weight down too.

Prayer is also important to me. I've always lived to pray and before we eat. I ask God to help us through any challenges we go through. It brings the family closer together. I pray for other people too. Spirituality is very important.

Caring about other people and letting them know you care makes you feel good as well.

Mental health can motivate you to feel better. It affects us physically too. Getting focused off negative things helps with life.

With anything I believe that you should finish what you started. It can be small things, like clearing out cupboards or drawers. When you see things through, it makes you feel good.

I also like to cook. It's important to do things that make you feel good.

***What keeps you happy,
healthy, vibrant or fit?***

We'd love to hear about it!

Email it to:

editorial@muskoseniormagazine.ca

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.

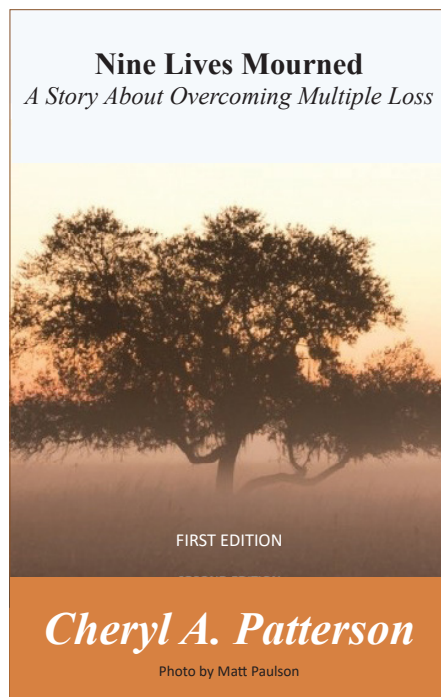
It took its toll and consumed enough of my life. It was time for me to turn things around, which I did, and so can you.

If you're struggling with loss, you're not alone, and it can get better.

In this book I show you ways that I got through. And if I can get through 9 losses in a row, you can get through your grief too.

We have this notion that we should stay suffering to somehow prove our loyalty to the loved one that passed, but is that what they would have wanted?

This book shows you how I got my life back, and how you can make the most of your time again too.



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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 Bouquest Cannabis.

What You Can do for Winter Joint Pain

Now that winter has arrived in full force, one may feel the affects of the cold weather in their muscles and joints. Aches and pains can be made worse by the frosty cold days leading into the evenings. We get asked quite often what can one do to help with this issue. Our first answer is to get yourself a topical. There are many different types of topicals on the market. So which one is the best?

Well, that is up to the consumer to decide, as cannabis is always a personal choice. There are individual cannabinoids options such as CBD, or THC or a blend of both cannabinoids. We are even seeing CBG being used in topicals, as studies have found them to reduce inflammation, similar to CBD. Another choice you will get to make is whether you want a lotion, salve, transdermal, spray, or a roll on.

So, some of the first decisions you must make is what you are comfortable applying to your skin. Keeping in mind that topicals including THC will not impact how you feel or your physical functioning in any way, as they are not breaching the blood stream.

Topicals using transdermal have their own added benefits as they contain carrier agents that allow penetration through the skin getting the cannabinoids deeper into our skin, so they can be more effective.

If you're not a fan of topicals there are many different products to try including transdermal patches that one could apply, and they work as a slow release over a couple of hours.

On another note, given the winter season, we can all get affected by the lack of sunlight and get the winter blues. One of the best ways

to fight this can be with laughter, especially on a dreary day. Laughing 100 times has been found to be like 15 minutes of working out. Laughter can also help release stress, anger etc., because when one is laughing, they are boosting their blood flow to the front temporal lobes, the two main areas associated with laughter. Cannabis has also been shown to stimulate these two areas of our brain, making it easier for one to laugh.

If laughing more is an interest to you, then look for strains containing certain terpenes like linalool and limonene. These terpenes have been found to elevate one's mood, and they can also offer stress release, reduce anxiety etc.

I hope this helps you get through this winter, and if you have any questions, we are here for you. Just ask.

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What Defines Happiness for You?

The concept of happiness can seem abstract and unrealistic to many people, like some unsustainable heightened state of euphoria, and to others it's a distant goal on the 'to do' list to be achieved one day. However, it doesn't have to be either of these extremes.

Simply put, happiness is a general state of well-being, resulting from care in specific areas.

Dr. Martin Seligman, director of positive psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, defines happiness as resulting from three key areas:

- **positive emotion and pleasure**
- **engagement**
- **meaning**

Seligman elaborates on the how as, "experiencing and savouring pleasures, losing the self in engaging activities, and participating in meaningful activities." He adds, "Our recent research suggests that people reliably differ according to the type of life that they pursue

and, further, that the most satisfied people are those who orient their pursuits toward all three, with the greatest weight carried by engagement and meaning."

In her research on sustainable happiness, Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky of the University of California found that "intentional behaviors"—actions people engage in regularly—have a significant influence over happiness levels, as follows:

- **Behavioral** - such as exercising regularly or trying to be kind to others
- **Volitional** - such as striving for important personal goals or devoting effort to meaningful causes
- **Cognitive** - such as reframing situations in a more positive light or pausing to count your blessings

Lyubomirsky's research also shows that benefits of a positive state of mind include greater satisfaction in marriages and friendships, resulting in a stronger support system. And happy people also have greater work outcomes, with a higher level of creativity, productivity and income. They are also more likely to have greater self-control, coping abilities, healthier immune system and longer life.

Being proactive in lifting negative moods and creating meaning in your life is essential.

Lyubomirsky indicates, "Finding happiness may be as simple as finding the right strategy."

What defines happiness for you? Think about things you can incorporate into your life. Write them down and make it a goal to do something new on a regular basis for the sake of feeling good. **MSM**

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How Does Being Active Improve Your Mental Health?

Most of us know that being active is good for us. We've heard about the many benefits, such as, increased energy, stronger immune system, increased muscle tone, weight loss, and better overall health.

We've also heard about the types of health problems that can occur from a lack of being active, including heart disease, diabetes, and obesity – to name just a few ways we compromise our health, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

Mental health is also a critical part of our overall health. It involves our thoughts, feelings, and actions, which in turn affects how we function on a day-to-day basis.

It includes our ability to deal with demands, which involves areas such as decision-making, and how we adapt and cope with difficult situations. Without good mental health we would have difficulty meeting the challenges of our daily lives.

Trouble sleeping or feeling irritable can be a sign of feeling overwhelmed.

Challenges can leave us feeling stressed or overwhelmed when we're faced with too many demands and not enough resources to meet them. Challenges in areas such as

family and financial can be mentally exhausting at times, and can leave you feeling worse-for-wear.

Building and maintaining mental fitness includes taking care of your physical self.

Physical activity not only keeps you fit, but it has many psychological benefits as well, according to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). They add, "Exercise can reduce anxiety – many studies have come to this conclusion. People who exercise report feeling less stressed or nervous."

A basic physical activity routine can improve your ability to manage stress. Exercise burns off the hormones, sugars, and fats that are released into your system when you're stressed. And when you're physically active, there is an increase in the hormones, called endorphins, which are responsible for improving your mood. And when we feel better, we cope better. **MSM**

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Catching The Wonder

By Janie Brooks

“The hands of time were about to turn again and open to a brand New Year.”

In a brief moment, in the twinkling of an eye, like a football player receives a pass and holds

the ball close to his chest, I caught the wonder in the eyes of our four year old grandson as

he entered the festively decorated hallway of our home where we have lived for 40

FAITHFULLY SPEAKING CONT'D

years, where he had not been for almost 3 years.

Throughout Covid he had only peered through the windows as we all braved weather of all sorts just to be together and remain emotionally connected. Hudson's three older siblings were better able to understand what was going on in our world, as best as any of us could, but he had just turned two when a world of masks and social distancing had turned life upside down for everyone.

The rest of the family were still coming in the door, entering the vestibule dog and all, as I entered the hallway from the kitchen where I had been busy preparing Christmas Dinner. It was just Hudson and I. Our eyes met, his wide open and bright said it all! The others had now moved in from the vestibule and here we all are, all nine of us. Is this really happening? It feels like a dream. I had pictured this moment in my mind for weeks... months.

Immediately I was reminded of what it had been like as a new mother when the doctor first put my babies in my arms. Any discomfort of the previous nine months washed away, the joy, the love welling up in my heart full to overflowing, just like now. What had been taken for granted, hugging and kissing our children and grandchildren was now a golden treasure.

The absence of almost three years

had indeed made our hearts grow fonder. As we all embraced each other I prayed this would be one of those days that would never develop wings and fly away.

What a priceless gift to receive on Christmas Day, the day we received the greatest gift of all when God sent Jesus as a baby to Bethlehem so many years ago, to be Emmanuel.....God with us. Surely He was here with us in our home in this moment of time when no one could have orchestrated the way it had played out. It happened as it was meant to unfold - a gift from God.

The hands of time were about to turn again and open to a brand New Year. God is in our tomorrows - He is already there!

The game of life, a full contact sport as experienced by many, will go on.

I want to be ready and on high alert to not miss any pass but have my arms wide open to receive those unexpected blessings, to capture those special moments and not let them slip through my fingers like sand at the seashore. I will purpose to bury them deep down in my heart and nurture them often by remembering, with thankfulness and gratitude to God.

***Janie Brooks.** Her favourite place to write is at her longtime Muskoka cottage. She journals from her life experience with a faith perspective and the joy of family.*

“Old habits die hard,” or so they say...

It may depend on how much these old habits are affecting your health, relationships, goals, or life in general.

Sometimes these pesky habits are happening right under your nose and you don't even realize it. You just know things can be better.

You have two choices:

1. Keep on keeping on, and hope for the best. (Don't hold your breath for positive change to happen this way!)
2. Learn new ways of creating positive, fulfilling and meaningful change in your life.

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The Snowflake

By George Brooks

My granddaughter and I walked into our small town one winter morning. A light snowfall of big fluffy snowflakes started as we walked along towards the main street. My granddaughter stuck out her tongue and a perfect little snowflake landed on her tongue. “Hey, papa, this is neat”. “Try it”. My first thought was that a well-known citizen of the town shouldn’t be sticking out his tongue on the main street. “Come on papa, it’s cool.” I looked around and no one seemed to be taking notice of us, so I stuck out my tongue. It was cool and I felt like a kid again. My granddaughter kept capturing one snowflake after another as we slowly sauntered up the street. “Come on papa try it again.” This time I didn’t hesitate and stuck out my tongue. As I looked ahead there was the dowdy Mrs. Brown walking towards us and I’m sure she had seen my tongue stuck out. My granddaughter saved the day. “Hi!” she said to Mrs. Brown, “We are catching snowflakes on our tongue.” “Try it, it’s fun.” The look on Mrs. Brown’s face said “no” but maybe it was the smiling face and jubilant voice of my granddaughter that softened Mrs. Brown’s scowl into a smile and she opened her mouth and stuck out her tongue. Now there were three of us laughing and catching snowflakes on our tongue. Mr. James, the postman, came out from one of his deliveries and looked at the three of us with our tongues out. He caught on immediately and joined in, tongue and all.

Mr. Jones the tow truck driver was passing by in his truck and recognized us and stopped his truck to stare and then got out of his truck. He said, “I know what you are doing and I haven’t caught snowflakes on my

tongue since I was a kid.” Now there were four of us. A car pulled up behind Mr. James’s tow truck and beeped his horn. Mr. James waved at him to get out of the car and join us. There was another longer beep and we all turned toward his car and stuck out our tongue. The driver got out of his car and walked angrily over to us. Again, my granddaughter saved us. “Hi!” she said. “We are catching snowflakes on our tongue. Try it, it’s fun.” The anger turned to a relaxed smile and out came the tongue.

Constable McLean pulled up behind the stopped car and truck, put on his flashing lights and then got out of his police car. He walked up to us and said, “What is going on here?” This time I spoke. “We are catching snowflakes on our tongue and its fun!” Meanwhile the flashing lights had attracted a crowd and slowly but surely the tongues were out, and the street was filled with giggles and laughter and of course melting snowflakes on tongues. I could see and feel the child like joy that everyone was experiencing and any tension I had in my body disappeared.

Constable McLean finally said, “Ok folks we have to get the traffic moving in case emergency vehicles have to come through.” After hugging my granddaughter, Mr. James reluctantly returned to his truck and the car driver returned to his car. Soon the crowd broke up and tongues returned to their mouths. Mrs. Brown gave us both a hug and thanked us for such a happy day before moving back along the side walk with what looked like a much lighter step than before the snowflake catching episode.

My granddaughter took my hand and we continued on our journey into town. She talked and giggled the whole way about all the adults sticking out their tongue. She could hardly wait to tell her friends. As we walked along, I wondered if Mrs. brown would smile every time it snowed and would Mr. James reminisce about other childhood events. The man in the car, would he beep his horn so impatiently again or would he pause and patiently think of the snowflake on his tongue? I could see the postman ahead of us talking to some folks and pointing in our direction. There was definite laughter. The joy of laughter seemed to affect everyone today.

I marveled at the fact that a little child and a snowflake could stop a town, if only for a few minutes, and possibly change people’s attitudes and maybe their lives, and all by sticking out one’s tongue!

Have a family story to share?

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Home is Where the Heart is Project

By Linda Sullivan

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been profound and far-reaching. The pandemic has also endangered the physical and mental health of Canadians, especially older women 55+ who have experienced worsened inequalities compared to younger women.

According to the 2021 Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women: Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women, the pandemic has disproportionately affected older women's health and wellbeing, economic security, and physical safety and security. Further, many women 55+ shoulder an unequal share of unpaid care responsibilities, which increases risks to both physical and mental health, but also personal safety and economic security, resulting in women in this age group facing a greater risk of poverty.

Home Is Where the Heart Is, a project being led by Naomi's Family Resource Centre and funded by the Women's Foundation of Canada, seeks to understand the extent to which the COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted the lives of women 55+, from their personal life (loss of contact with friends and family, loss of economic independence, and possibly inability to access community services; etc.). We want to hear from all women 55+, espe-

-cially those living in rural Ontario.

Women 55+ are invited to complete an anonymous survey. The survey doesn't require sharing any login or personal information. Survey link: <https://forms.gle/ywUXTmcCjzsbHvv8>. Your voice is important!

Your feedback will greatly help community-based services such as community support services, shel-

ters, health and social services, and others develop resources and supports to best meet yours and other women seeking help.

A final report, including a summary of survey responses and identified programming challenges and service gaps will be submitted to the Women's Foundation of Canada and Naomi's Family Resource Centre in late March 2023.

Loss is challenging enough...without the added costs and complications!

We take pride in making sure you get the services that you need at an affordable price. *Simple and affordable!*

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SPORTS CORNER



*Sports Corner
with Peter Cassidy*

Sports and the Performing Arts

This topic raises several questions. Is there a connection or a fine line between sports and the arts? I will let my readers decide.

I have thought about this subject for many years. This past Christmas my wife and I went to the Nutcracker ballet.

To say I was not only impressed but totally entertained is an understatement. Here was me, a rough and tough sports nut watching men in tights. This may sound humorous to anyone who knows me but that is not my intention. I only wish to draw a comparison between the two.

Rudolf Nureyev was a professional ballet dancer and became quite famous. He was also an accomplished hockey player in Russia. He always said that hockey and ballet were a great balance.

Is figure skating a sport or an art? Ice dancing certainly takes the form of a performing art.

There are many dancers who use soccer and other sports to strengthen their chosen art. Ballet puts a terrible strain on their upper and lower legs. If figure skating can be defined as a form of art, the upper muscles of their arms and shoulders require great coordination.

If we use the word entertainment in reference to both, we might be on a similar track. The skills displayed by some of the top performers are most definitely an art. Whether it is hockey, baseball, soccer, football, or golf. The same can be said for the performing arts.

Canada's Karen Kane used gymnastics to balance her great ballet skills. In this light I see gymnastics as a performing art. If figure skating is indeed a form of art, then I am aware of a few who are black belted martial arts performers. I leave it to the reader. It does give one food for thought.

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...?



Creating an Indoor Cactus/Succulent Garden

By Sandra Harthill

Now that winter is here, if you love plants, you'll want to have some in your house.

Why not create an indoor cactus/succulent dish garden?

This is great to make with your young grandchildren, when they are visiting you.

I always try to involve my little darlings in gardening throughout the year. In summer, making outdoor fairy gardens and in winter, making indoor dish gardens.

After choosing a dish:

- Mix 2 parts sand to 1 part soil.
- Moisten and place into the container.
- Depending on the size of your dish, 3-5 small plants are usually enough. Choose at least one plant that is a little taller than the others. Position them securely in the dish.
- Add either some pea gravel, or some decorative coloured gravel.
- If you have a small mirror, put it into your garden to give the impression of a small pond.
- Add a few small ornaments such as a frog, butterfly or a fairy to complete the picture.

Remember to water a little but never over water, as cactus/succulents have the wonderful capacity to store moisture in their leaves.

Enjoy your creation!

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.



Picture of Lucy submitted by Geraldine O'Meara.

Journeying With Our Beautiful Dog, Lucy

By Geraldine O'Meara

Thirteen Years ago a tiny ball of white fluff, weighing in at 4lbs 2oz, in the form of a cockapoo whom we called Lucy, entered the threshold of our home and stole our hearts away.

My friend, Carolyn, and I bought Lucy from a breeder in Fergus. My daughter who had seen her previously, told us she needed rescuing as she was the smallest of the litter and bullied by her siblings. So after a quick drive down to Fergus, holding this little one in our arms and looking into her eyes, both our hearts melted, and back we came with her to Huntsville.

It was a bumpy start, as Carolyn and I hadn't had experience for years of training a puppy, but after help from a qualified trainer, advice from family and friends, good old common sense, and the intelligence of a poodle, all three of us settled down.

Lucy loved her home and took up space everywhere. We had a couple of designated beds for her, which she occasionally sat in (no doubt to please us), but her favourite resting spots were the back of the sofa in the living room and the chair by the window in the kitchen, both of which gave her a view of the outside. She loved being out on our porch, and would sit for hours in the shade watching people go by, and occasionally barking at a dog that might get too close to what she considered her territory.

Lucy loved having visitors come into our home, and would display her pleasure by wiggling her backside and short tail. She had great affection for her cousin, a black cockapoo called Beamer, and when he came to visit the two of them would roll and play on the floor with great excitement. On occasion, Lucy would go to

LUCY, CONT'D FROM PAGE 22



Picture of Lucy submitted by Geraldine O'Meara.

our friends out in the country for a few days. She loved their two black labs, especially Baker, and many times she would be found sleeping alongside him with her head on his neck. At night time, she would sleep with our friends and position herself right at their heads, and if the other labs tried to get on the bed, she would boss them and dutifully they would go to the floor at the foot of the bed.

I had a practice of meditation at night sitting in my chair in my bedroom, and Lucy would position herself at my feet. The times I missed, I would find her sitting at the foot of my chair, with an alert gaze as if to say, "I'm here, where have you been?" As the years went by, I moved to my bed to meditate, and Lucy followed suit by sitting right beside me, keeping my spiritual journey in check! From the beginning, in true princess style, Lucy slept at night on a lounging chair in Carolyn's bedroom, fully softened with several blankets and a sheep skin draped behind her—she liked her comfort, and as parents we indulged her. My sister said, "If I am to come back again, I'd like to return as a dog into a home like Carolyn and Gerry's!"

Carolyn did most of the walking with Lucy, of which she needed a couple of times a day, and her favourite walk was in the woods in front of our home. As an adult dog, she weighed twelve to thirteen pounds, and maintained her bounciness to the point that people would say, "What a cute little puppy!" Her favourite toy was her ball which she was possessive of and played endlessly with, unless her cousin Beamer came, and then she was smart enough to share it with him as he was bigger and faster, but at times she would pout in the corner until he would relinquish it back to her. She

loved dried sweet potato chips, and turkey treats from the Bulk Barn, and we got into a bad habit of giving one to her when she went out to have a pee which she was happy to do, until we found out that it became a game with her—at times she appeared to be smarter than us!

Unfortunately, at the age of twelve, Lucy became ill with serious health issues. After many panic trips to the vet and endless tests, she was diagnosed with lyme disease. So with several difficult months of medications including steroids, she recovered enough to resume most of her activities. However, as a result of the illness, she had developed high blood pressure and damage to her kidneys, and it was just a matter of time before they would be non-functioning. We did have a better part of the year enjoying Lucy, but in time it became apparent that she was suffering. So, in March, 2022 we had to make the decision to put Lucy to sleep. We hated the idea, but we felt it was the most loving thing for her.

As we got closer to the time, three unusual things got presented to us that helped us believe that Lucy understood what was about to happen to her (words seemed useless). The day before, she had a sudden spurt of energy, so Carolyn took her for a walk in the woods, and then brought her back to sit on the porch, and she stayed there for hours enjoying the sun and the outdoors, with not even a bark from her as dogs walked by. Lucy disliked having her front paws touched but surprisingly, the morning of taking her to the vets, we sat beside her on the sofa playing soft music, and suddenly Lucy extended her front paw to me indicating she wanted it held, which I did for some time. These were special moments of connecting and saying goodbye to our dear companion.

Carolyn and I are now a few months on and we miss Lucy terribly. Her ashes are in a small container on the mantle, ready to be sprinkled in the woods where she loved to walk, when we feel we can part with them. And along side is a plaque that family members gave us with sentiments on it that express it well; "You Left Paw Prints On Our Hearts Forever."

As all animal lovers know, the bond that is formed between a human and their pet is an amazing experience. And we're so grateful to have experienced this with our beautiful dog, Lucy.

Geraldine O'Meara, spent 21 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.



So This is Olden and Golden

By Kenn R. E. Page

Years ago, I heard people go on about the benefits of early retirement. My dad retired early and loved it, but then he golfed a lot. I don't golf. Never have. I loved what I did and I would still do it if I could. Although somebody said: A bad day fishing beats a good day working. So, I fish. Even though I retired late, I wasn't prepared for it. I found I had so much time to rest up. All that resting tired me out. I ended up spending half my time resting up from resting up.

Something else I use to hear some people say was that things came in threes. They didn't say what things and I always wished it was my paycheque. I used to believe it though. It never ever seemed to fail, I always sneezed in three's. Now that I'm older, I only ever sneeze in twos. I can only get up the energy to sneeze in two's, or pairs of two's.

There was a time when I walked 2.5km, three times per week. I still do that with only one minor adjustment. Now I walk 2.5m. I'm doing okay though, I'm not the oldest in my family, not that I want to be. I have an aunt who has me beat by almost twenty years. She's well and I'm pretty sure she holds the family longevity

record. I think I have too many aches and pains to want to go that far. Somebody said, "Going downhill is an uphill battle."

Sometimes I wish I wasn't such an early riser. I can't help it. I do this all the time. Not seeing 6 a.m. go by would be a huge improvement! I get up, watch the morning news and weather so I can properly plan my day. After all that heavy thinking I'm tired and I fall asleep. When I wake up again, I have to scratch off half my to do list because the day is half over.

There was a time I use to collect: "You know you're getting old when..." sayings until I forgot why I was collecting them. But then recently I came up with another one and I couldn't decide whether to start up my collection again or not. The new saying said: "You know you're getting old when someone has to wake you up sitting in your vehicle in front of the local rural group of mailboxes because you're causing a lineup." That prompted another saying: "You know you're getting old when you can still do all those things you use to do like mow the lawn, rake the leaves, weed the gar-

>>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

CONT'D FROM PAGE 24...

-den, but now you've got bottles of 8 hour muscle and-body ache pills stashed all over the house to help you recover."

Then when I was out working in my yard one day it hit me that you know you're getting old when riding around your yard on your lawn tractor mulching leaves is the most fun you've had all week and you can't wait to do it again. It may not be much, but it sure beats sticking a finger in your eye just for something to do.

Not long ago I was sitting thinking I haven't had a darn good medical exam for a long time even though I've brought it up more than once. It makes me wonder if that is a sign of good news or an excuse not to lay the bad news on me. If I only had so long to live I'd want to know about it so I could sit down just before the deadline. I wouldn't want to be standing up at the time. I might fall over and hurt myself.

Well, you know you're getting old when you can actually feel it taking place. That and you have to upsize rather than downsize. The reason being you need to add another table in the kitchen. Not that you're eating more, but because the first table is covered in fishing lures and stuff you've been working on since April and this is now late November.

The most difficult age I ever went through was not the terrible twos. It was the age I was at when I suddenly realized I was too old to chase young women and too young to chase old women. That realization hit me like a ton of bricks! I'm not exactly sure, but it may explain why I took up fishing again after so long away.

Fishing, someone said, is one of those things you can be doing all your life and still be getting better. Sometimes I wish that were true. Some days I feel like I'm losing ground, not gaining. Maybe I'm trying too hard. Maybe if I'd stop losing pricey lures as often as I've been doing lately I wouldn't feel so bad. Or maybe if the stores would give a 50% seniors discount.

Not long-ago Susan and I experienced a fishing season like no other. It was a season we both clobbered personal fishing records. After her initial warm up, Susan caught the biggest, fattest walleye I've ever seen! A few days later she destroyed her previous pike record. I also set a record. One that I never want to see ever again! I set a record for the most number of trips out without a single bite. These were not trips to the grocery store, these were fishing trips. Catching even just a minnow in my minnow trap would have been a breakthrough!

Not long ago I was volunteered to help somebody

move on a holiday Monday. To prepare for the task ahead I rested up all day Sunday. It was good, except that I was so well rested up it took until Wednesday for me to get going again. What was that I was saying? You know you're getting old when...

Lately I've been trying to add up all the advantages of being the age I am. So far, I came up with one... I don't have to eat my peas if I don't want to. As a kid I hated peas. Don't ask me why. Maybe I didn't think the colour was so hot. The rule back then was I had to remain at the table until they were all gone, or I fell asleep, whichever came first. Unfortunately, we didn't have a cat I could slip them to. Do cats like peas? I always ignored my peas until they were ice cold. Now I'm not quite sure what all the fuss was about. I wasted several good years of my life sitting at the table dozing.

Getting old is more fun than I ever thought it would be. Now if I could just figure out why. My sister, a nurse, once told me I should only drink water before bed. Besides peas I also hate water. A sip of water and I start having a panic attack due to an earlier near-drowning experience. I like O.J., but it seems that it irritates the bladder more and is responsible for more trips across a cold floor to the little boys room at night than anyone would want to admit. I forgot my sister's advice recently and drank some leftover fruit smoothie before bed. You can just imagine what that did to me. I barely slept a wink all night.

Some things don't seem to change with age. For example, I once knew a person or two you didn't dare speak to in the morning until they had their first cup of coffee. I'm not like that. I want people to talk to me in the morning. That way I can ask them where they put the coffee.

The whole coffee thing changed for me when I switched to fruit smoothies. It wasn't a big switch but it made a big difference. Not long ago, in desperation, I nearly switched back. I had made my usual smoothie and this time poured it into a sealer jar to take it out to the garden with me while I worked. That way I'd have a pick-me-up in case my get-up-and-go got up and went. It wasn't until I came back into the house a few hours later that I remembered the smoothie. Do you think I could find that thing? No way! It finally showed up on top of the bookcase. Fortunately, it was still drinkable. It must have been. I'm still here.

Kenn R. E. Page, is 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.
MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE, Winter 2023 25



Trapped

By Carol Ford

Frankie just left. He slammed the side door with such a loud bang that the dishes rattled in the cupboard, and his harsh words still ring in my ears.

My hands shake uncontrollably. I tightly grip the sides of my china teacup and lift it to my lips. I stare at my worn Bible on the kitchen table and ask, “Why, Lord?”

Looking down at my thin white hands, I notice an increasing number of brown spots. Slowly I trace the veins on my left hand with my right index finger. The dark, violet-blue lines under the translucent skin run in multiple directions, like small tributaries. These are the hands of an old woman.

How old am I this year? These same hands held Frankie just minutes after he was born in the Wellesley Hospital. The nurse brought my sister’s baby to me in the waiting room. Oh, the sweet smell of that small bundle. My sister, Agnes, gave birth to Frankie at the start of World War II. She was not married. I’m so glad I was there to support her.

Agnes met a handsome pilot while he was training and living at the barracks at the CNE fair ground. She worked in the mess hall at that location. I tried to warn

her about getting involved with those young men, but she fell head over heels in love with that one. His squadron left for Europe a month after they met. They wrote each other regularly, and I can still hear her screams of anguish when she received the letter telling her that he had been killed in action. By then Agnes knew she was pregnant.

Frankie was a beautiful baby, and neither of us could bear to give him up for adoption. We knew it would be hard to raise a child without a father and against family opposition, but together we took on the task.

We bought a house together and neither of us ever married. Frankie was our child. His blond curls made all the women smile when they stopped to look at him in his carriage. Over the years he brought us much joy. I remember the Christmas he just had to have a motorized airplane. We saved our pennies for weeks to buy him that toy. The look on his face Christmas morning was well worth our sacrifice.

Oh Frankie, what happened to you over the years? “Lord, what can I do? Only you have not abandoned me. You told me, you will never leave me nor forsake me.

Several years ago, when Frankie’s marriage ended, he moved back home with Agnes and me. We were glad to have a man around the house; he did all the heavy outside work and made us both feel much safer than living here alone.

Agnes died last year after a lengthy battle with cancer. After her death, Frankie took me to one of those fancy downtown office buildings. We went up to the 22nd floor. I didn’t feel comfortable being up so high. There we met the lawyer, a short, peculiar looking man with a round face. He wheezed and talked in short spurts. Probably a smoker all his life. We were there to deal with Agnes’s will and other paperwork. Frankie and the lawyer recommended that I set up a power of... something.

“Auntie, if you sign this form,” Frankie said, “I will be able to be more of a help to you, and I can do your banking or pick up medicine when you need it.”

It seemed like a good idea at the time and I signed my name on several sheets of paper.

Last month Frankie announced over breakfast, “We need to sell this big house.”

Lately Frankie grumbled about how much yard work is required. It’s a beautiful three-storey Victorian house located near High Park, and sits on a large lot with many shade trees. It’s true I can’t tend the garden like I used to, but I still enjoy my strolls there. I hum that old

CONT'D FROM PAGE 27

hymn, "I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses...."

Last week Frankie arranged for a real estate woman to come and look around our property to get an idea of how much it was worth. I didn't like the look of this lady. I say "lady", but she was no lady. Her hair was dyed a brassy blond colour, her skirt was up above her knees and her sweater scooped way down at the front. I could see everything. She flaunted her jewellery and wore the biggest diamond ring I'd ever seen. This woman looked like she couldn't wait to get her hands on our house and put one of those 'For Sale' signs on the front lawn.

When she left, I asked Frankie, "If we sell the house, where will we live?"

I saw a hint of problems then, because Frankie ignored my question and avoided looking at me. He grabbed his coat off the hook and mumbled, "I have to pick up something at the store before it closes." We didn't discuss it again.

Marie, the nice lady from my bank, called yesterday. She told me that Frankie had withdrawn a thousand dollars three times in the last month. She wanted to know if we were doing renovations or needed the money for other large expenses.

I didn't want to get Frankie in trouble, so I said that he had my approval for these withdrawals. I thought I could handle it myself. I didn't want her to know that this news was upsetting to me.

I'm afraid that Frankie might be using my money at the racetrack. After he retired, he started going there every day with his friends.

Is he in trouble? The love of money is the root of all evil.

That's why he became so angry this morning. I asked him about my bank account and mentioned that Marie had called.

He towering over me at the table, scowled, and spat out the words, "Don't you trust me?"

"I just wanted to know why you withdrew so much money in the last month."

Then he swore at me something terrible, and stormed out of the house. I've never heard Frankie say those kinds of words before, certainly not while his mother was alive.

I thought of the third commandment, "You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

We took Frankie to Sunday school and church every

Sunday until he was almost sixteen, but as a man he didn't continue in the faith.

Lord, I feel trapped, like a rabbit caught in a snare. If I ask Frankie questions, he gets mad; but if I do nothing, what will happen to me?

Where is that phone number I cut out from the paper? Where did I put it?

I look in the velvet jewel case, the one Frankie bought for me with the money he earned from his first part-time job.

Frankie, why are you doing this to someone who loves you so much?

Here it is.

The picture in the article shows a young man pulling on an old woman's arm like he was taking her somewhere she didn't want to go. If Frankie did that to me, I would be black and blue. He wouldn't do that, would he?

Below the picture I see a phone number and the words: Stop Abuse. Restore Respect.

I walk to the kitchen with the paper in my hand. What to do? What if Frankie finds out that I've called these people? My heart is racing and I feel nervous and sweaty.

As the minutes pass, I look at the phone. I slowly dial the number.

It only rings once.

A pleasant voice at the other end answers, "Hello, you've reached the Senior Safety Line, how can I help you?"

Silence...

"Hello, is someone there?"

Silence...

I gently place the receiver back in its cradle and get up from the table. I climb the stairs and put the paper safely back in the jewel case.

Maybe I call them tomorrow.

Carol Ford has short stories in Hot Apple Cider books, volunteers with The Word Guild, facilitates a memoir writer's group, writes about her adoption and birth family reunion, and resides in Newmarket.

Senior Safety Line (24 hours), Elder Abuse Prevention
Ontario: 1-866-299-1011

Government of Canada: "What Every Older Canadian Should Know About Financial Abuse," PDF: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/seniors/forum/financial-abuse.html>
Or for more information, call: 1-800-622-6232

Bad Ideas



Hockey Action

By Bessie Grimes

Come on, everybody, it's time to play.
The visiting team is on its way.
The ice is set and so is the net
They'll rue the day we ever met.
Play, boys, play!

Hockey's a game that takes a lot of skill;
Plain determination; we've our fill.
We'll grab our sweaters and lace our skates.
It can't be said they had to wait.
Play, boys, play!

We're into it now and there's the goal.
The puck's in action; now, aim it low!
Wow! Their goalie missed and we have scored.
The audience cheers. They're not bored.
Play, boys, play!

Life in the locker room! Lot's of fun
Thanking each other for the work we've done.
But we've got to rush. We're on the move.
We'll do it again now we're in the groove.
Play, boys, play!

Gramma! let's go skating!



By Linda Smith

Linda Smith. I wrote a book of cartoons with commentary called: *The Senior Boomer – Whatever happened to the Baby Boomers? The cartoons tell the story of where we landed up!*

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*.

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