

MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE

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

Fall/Holiday 2024

**Tips for
Top Holiday
Stressors**

**Ways to Nurture
Social Connections**

Cooking for Picky Eaters...

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Cheryl Patterson,
Publisher

MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE

Not just a read... It's a connection!

Many of you might be enjoying the pretty fall leaves by now or are tasked with raking them up (although word has it that it's a little eco system where tiny critters hibernate or lay their larvae in and it's best to let it rest till spring). Others may be planning for the holidays.

Why is it the holidays seem to sneak up so fast? Maybe it's just another example of how quickly time can pass, and a good example of the importance of paying attention to the quality aspect of it, especially during the holidays.

This can be a fun time of year for many families that get the opportunity to see each other after long periods of time, however, daunting for people that have lost loved ones, or are feeling lonely and have nobody to spend it with. So, we've included

some tips in the Mind Health section to help you create great connections and fun times for yourself during the holidays and ongoing.

We've also included some fun stories and poems that are sure to give you a chuckle, warm your heart, provide you with helpful information, and to enjoy overall.

Our trusted Heather Huff-Bogart of *The Green Bouquet* teaches us about how paying attention to where you buy cannabis is just as critical as what you buy, including red flags to pay attention to.

Lin Ring of *Climate Action Muskoka* emphasizes that "climate change is real" and provides us with solutions for climate change in the Environment Matters section.

Our Support for Stress section highlights top holiday stressors and

what you can do about them.

Kenn Page shares a funny story called Moby Duck, and much more.

As always, we hope you enjoy this edition as much as we enjoy creating it for you. So, sit back with a hot chocolate, hot apple cider, or something with a little more kick to it...and enjoy your read.

Merry Christmas to those that celebrate it, happy holidays to those that don't, and wishing everyone the very best and much happiness now and always!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Cheryl Patterson'.

Feeling Stuck?

Many of us find ourselves in unwanted situations, 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 get unstuck and move forward with the 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

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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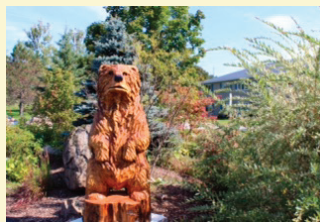


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**Our Mission:
Inform, inspire, support and include you!**

PUBLISHER

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

CONTRIBUTORS

Geraldine O'Meara
Peter Cassidy
Brenda J. Wood
Kenn R. E. Page
Linda Smith
Peter Sanguinetti
Nancy Goodman
Esther Phillips
Len Ring (Climate Action Muskoka)

MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE is published quarterly.

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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The MSM Premium Package is \$39.99 +HST
The MSM Activity Package is \$27.97 +HST (Canada Rates)
HST: 785187089

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

CONTRIBUTORS FALL/HOLIDAY



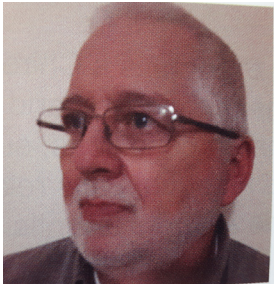
Climate Action Muskoka, inclusive, non-partisan, Muskoka-based group whose mission is to collaborate with individuals, businesses, groups and all governments to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis.



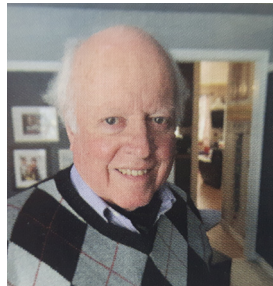
Esther Hobbs Phillips and her husband John have enjoyed swimming, canoeing, sailing, and thrilling outdoor winter ice skating on Muskoka lakes at cottages and camps for 50 years.



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.



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.



Peter Sanguinetti, and his wife, Valerie, are now semi-retired and live in Emsdale. He is a director of the Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners and actively supports the Alliance.



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 <http://hopestreamradio.com>.



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.



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.

NUTRITION



Cooking for Picky Eaters? Get Creative!

Many of us enjoy eating healthy, however, may be cooking for others that don't have interest in the healthier options that we do. So, what is a person to do? As long as it's a food others can eat, get creative!

The holiday season is a great start, given the abundance of all of the rich unhealthy food. It's often the idea of eating something healthy that prevents people from wanting to even try a certain food or new option. However, once they've tried some of the delicious ways to do it, they're sold.

There are many ways you can tweak a meal to make it healthier, and with the same delicious flavours you and your loved ones are used to. Here are a few ideas:

Mashed potatoes. Substitute half or the full amount of potatoes with cauliflower. For those that haven't had this yet, don't knock it until you've tried it! Boil the cauliflower first, then put the pieces in a food processor for a smooth and creamy texture, and then put it back into the pot for business as usual, adding your other favourite ingredients.

You can also cut down on the fat by substituting butter with olive oil, or a healthy oil of your choosing.

If you want to make it dairy-free, soy, almond or rice milk are some great tasting options.

Gravy. Use half sunflower or olive oil instead of all turkey

grease, Add pureed onions, garlic and/or celery, or substitute the gravy with a pureed mushroom sauce.

If you're a garlic or green onion lover, you can sneak a little bit of that in too, and for an extra boost of flavour.

Butter. Substitute half or more of this with one of the many delicious and heart healthy oils, such as olive oil, sesame seed oil, avocado oil, sunflower oil, flax seed or hemp oil, depending on the flavour and texture you want, and cooking methods used.

Sugar. Substitute this with lower glycemic and less processed options where you can. Agave syrup is a great low glycemic option if the texture works with what you're eating or cooking. There are also many other healthy unbleached and non-synthetic options available.

Berries or dried fruit can make a great substitute for cutting back some or all of the sugar in your recipes. They can add a hint of sweetness in a sweet and sour sauce or soup, cookies, and the list goes on.

Burgers. This can include beef, chicken or fish patties. Add some shredded beet root, or ground flax, or quinoa for an added pack of nutrients, fiber, and powerful antioxidants.

Broths/sauces. Add pureed carrots, celery, or other veggies to tomato sauce or broths.

The sky is the limit when it

comes to healthier options you can use to cut back on fats, over processed and synthetic sugars, and other ingredients that compromise your health. Have fun, get creative with it, and enjoy reaping the health benefits and knowing you're having a positive impact on your loved ones. And, like Mikey in the old Life cereal commercial, they just might really like it! **MSM**

Have a
healthy spin
on a recipe
you'd like to share?

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from you!

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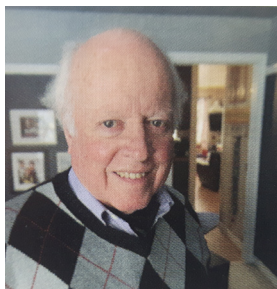


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By
Peter Sanguinetti

Family Traditions

Family traditions evolve over the years and become part of events which may take place annually at a certain time, or less frequently but still can be considered a family tradition. Every family likely has them, though perhaps does not consider them a tradition, but as the years go by that could well change.

Far be it for me to list all events that can be considered a family tradition but certain ones come to mind which you as the reader may well consider apply to your own family.

Consider the grandparents who own the family cottage, a place where they with their children have vacationed for many years. The memories of the enjoyment of time at the family cottage come to mind, special events organised by the lake association in which perhaps the younger members of the family took part are remembered, friends who came to stay all become part of the family history of time at the cottage. Gradually as time goes by and the family grows certain events seem to happen on an annual basis. Maybe there is a particular event that all the family wants to attend and almost by default this becomes a family tradition at the cottage, perhaps spearheaded by the grandparents.

Christmas too is a time for building family traditions. As a small boy I was allowed to bring my stocking into my parents' bedroom and to sit between them as I unpacked the toys which Father Christmas had bought. As this was wartime there weren't too many but each one was treasured for years. The other tradition was the presents around the tree were never opened until after we had all listened on the wireless to the King's

Christmas message. This was always scheduled for 3 PM as this was considered the best time for most countries in the British Empire to hear their Sovereign.

Fast tract to our family Christmases now, as us as the grandparents or go back to when we were parents, there are traditions which have been in place for years.

Our daughters came into our bedroom on Christmas morning to open their stockings, just as their children do now. After breakfast and when everybody is dressed, the turkey is in the oven and all the vegetables prepared for Christmas lunch at one o'clock, everybody goes to the sitting room to where the Christmas Tree is surrounded by presents, and it is Nana who distributes the presents. This in my book falls into a family tradition.

These are just a few of our family's traditions, I am sure you as the reader will have family traditions which perhaps you might be willing to share and which would make very interesting reading. Maybe a follow up article could be written if you sent your tradition in to the editor and I could put them into another article. I suspect the editor would specify a maximum word count.

Peter Sanguinetti, and his wife, Valerie, are now semi-retired and live in Emsdale. He is a director of the Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners and actively supports the Alliance.

**Have a family story
to share?**

- A challenge
- A funny tale
- A heartwarming family experience
- Or a story that others can relate to or enjoy in some way...

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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.

Holiday Tips: Buyer Beware

As our weather changes, that means our holiday season is around the corner. With so many cannabis purchasing options, between legal and illegal cannabis retailers and online, I wanted to share some important tips for purchasing legal cannabis products that have been through the proper regulatory growing standards, certified product testing, approved by Health Canada, as well as some red flags to watch out for when purchasing from an illegal retailer or an online website.

How can you quickly tell that you are shopping on a legal website?

- Health Canada regulates our cannabis packaging, always look for the red THC logo and a tax stamp.
- Only the OCS (Ontario Cannabis Store) is allowed to mail you your order, no other retailers in Ontario are allowed to under our regulations. So, if you are getting your cannabis mailed and you did not order from the OCS that is a RED flag.
- All illegal online sites accept e-transfers and not debit or credit cards, this is a big RED flag.
- All legal cannabis products can be purchased online from your local retailer, and either delivered or the customer picks up

their order. Under our Click and Collect polices under the AGCO (Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario) regulations.

- All legal retailers must age gate everyone before they enter the website, illegal retailers do not always age gate their websites.

Why is getting your cannabis tested by a regulated facility is important?

- Under Health Canada's regulations all legal products sold are checked for contaminants, impurities and are all Lab-Tested before making it to the regulated market. (We hear all the time that the 100mg/g gummy they got offline did not create the desired effect or had something in the edible that should not be there). So be conscious of what you are taking and where you are buying from).
- There are many articles stating that a lot of the illicit cannabis purchased has a lot of contaminants, from mold, fecal matter, pesticides as so on and so forth.
- Many of these products are not made in regulated facilities so buyers beware.

How to tell the difference between an Authorized / Legal retailer and an illicit retailer brick and mortar store?

- All authorized retailers must display their AGCO (Alcohol Gaming Commission of Ontario) seal beside their front entrance.
- We check people's ID to ensure no one under 19 is entering the store.
- Our cannabis products are secured behind counters or glass, and customers are not able to see cannabis unless the retailer has sensory jars for viewing and sniffing.
- Our hours of operation are monitored. We are only allowed to operate between the times of 9am-11pm.
- Illegal retailers do not display any seals or normally do not have any window coverings.
- They allow people of all ages into the store.
- They have their cannabis on display.
- They operate sometimes 24h a day.

If you're wondering where to find legal/ authorized retailers, there are a few ways to search for us. Go directly to [OCS.ca](https://www.ocs.ca) for retailers and their details, or view the AGCO digital map, under [AGCO.maps.arcgis.com](https://www.agco.maps.arcgis.com), There you can see where every retailer in Ontario is located and if their licenses have been approved. Hope that helps. Have a happy and safe holiday!

SUPPORT FOR STRESS



Top Holiday Stressors

The holidays can bring a lot of fun, social camaraderie, family time, however, it can also bring pain and be overwhelming. The following are common stressors and ways to cope with them.

Taking on too much. Set boundaries with yourself and others with what you can comfortably do.

Pushing physical limits. How much is too much with food, travel, sleep, and drinking? You can strike a balance between enjoyment and taking care of yourself.

Last minute gift shopping and groceries. Planning ahead for things you want will give you the breathing space you need, rather than rushing around at the last minute and paying more money as a result.

Topics for conversation. Be mindful of sensitive topics, such as death, religion, politics and money. Also be considerate of topics that may be triggering to people for personal reasons. These may not be ideal for dinner conversation if you want a peaceful meal, but rather likened to adding fuel to already established fires. Keep it light and fun.

Expectations. Be realistic. Life isn't perfect and mistakes happen,

and that's okay. It's how you handle those stressful moments that counts. Plan ahead regarding how you'll handle those stressful moments that don't go as you wanted. What are some phrases you can say to yourself when they happen? What are some things you can do to get your footing back and help you to feel

grounded again? Can you work on having a more relaxed attitude and practice acceptance during those stressful times?

Are you dreading the holidays altogether? You're not alone.

Many people do because they don't measure up to the past, or because of loss and/or loneliness. This can make for a painful time. However, you can get through it. Plan ahead to make it a time to do things you enjoy instead. Plan your own gatherings with activities you like, such as card games, watching favourite movies, going for coffee, phone calls or face time. The point is to stay connected, as this is one of the most significant buffers against loneliness, isolation, and grief. And if you are grieving don't be afraid to ask for help. Your family doctor can be a great start for resources. **MSM**

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Ways to Nurture Social Connections

This might seem like a simple concept, however, it's not always so.

Sometimes we have lifetime connections with people that move, pass away, or are too busy to get together as often as we would like.

Other times, it can be hard to get out to visit loved ones. Regardless of your reason, don't lose hope!

Hang on to the idea of maintaining close connections in your life. It's critically important to your physical and mental health according to research. We need each other to thrive!

So, what are we to do?

Get creative!

Joining existing social gatherings is always a great solution, however, it can be challenging depending on where you live, schedules, and transportation options. This is where you need to assert yourself on your own behalf.

One of the easiest ways to do this is to start your own groups.

Do you love to walk? Start a walking club.

Love to knit? Start a knitting club.

Other groups you can create are sewing or quilting clubs, invite

friends over to play cards, have tea times (as in the tea you drink!), a movie night, meet at coffee shops, create a veggie swap group or share other foods. Speaking of food, why not not have a little monthly pot-

luck lunch at your place (or you can rotate places)?

The list is endless with ways to nurture social connections. Write a list of some ideas that may work for you and get started today! **MSM**

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Speechless

By Esther Hobbs Philips

For 25 years my husband John played pick-up hockey on outdoor rinks in the country and at schools in the Yonge/ Eglinton area of Toronto. There are a lot of Canadian guys and girls who love the sport in the crisp cold fresh air of winter. The ice sometimes sparkles under the moon and stars. Even under the lights of an outdoor arena, there is a magical feeling when someone glides on skate blades over the frozen water. The atmosphere is almost out of this world if large white flakes of snow are falling from the dark sky. As the skaters stretch their legs and carve the edges of their sharp blades into the ice, they create a unique scraping sound. The stronger the skaters, the louder the rhythmic sound of the rich deep percussion of the “ice music” created by skates carving hundreds of unchoreographed paths around the rink. When skaters move both skates paral-

-lel and instantly grind to a stop, the ice moans under the pressure and throws up a wave of “snowy ice spray”.

Eventually, the snow from the sky and or the snow from the skates scraping the ice gets deeper. On frozen lakes, rivers and ponds, skaters use shovels to clear the outdoor rink. In cities and towns, a Zamboni circles the rink until the ice is once again as smooth as glass.

The players are not there to body check or attack each other. The point is to score goals with skilled forward and backward skating and passing. Players show up just to have fun.

John was in his mid-thirties and skating circles around guys in their teens and twenties at the outdoor rink of Hodgeson School near Davisville and Yonge in Toronto. It was pure sportsmanship. Minimal >>>

FAITHFULLY SPEAKING CONT'D...

hockey equipment was worn because games were not about hard body checking.

They were only a few minutes into the neighborhood “everyone’s welcome to play” game, when a teenager with a vicious slap shot, raised the puck. It flew straight at the front of John’s head.

John was not the goalie and had no protective equipment.

The pain of the hockey puck crushing the bones in his neck was excruciating. John was speechless. He was speechless for days because the hard black puck had crushed his voice box.

John could not talk. He had to communicate by writing on a clip board.

I called a friend who is an Ear Nose Throat doctor in Ohio, and he referred John to an ENT surgeon at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto.

About a week after the accident, the doctor took a long scope and looked deep into John’s throat. His face looked grim, and he asked me to look. The doctor explained: “If you imagine the voice box as a violin, the violin is broken to pieces and therefore the strings cannot be played and make music.”

My heart sank. How could John live without a speaking voice? Would I never hear his rich baritone voice sing a full range of music again?

“Help!” Our hearts cried out to God. “What can be done?”

The surgeon gave us some hope by saying, “We should schedule surgery as soon as possible”

“Please God, please let there be an operating room and staff available.”

Thankfully a few days later, the surgeon did a tracheotomy, and inserted a titanium plate to hold the broken bones together. Following the surgery, I sat beside John’s bed in Sunnybrook hospital and prayed. “Dear heavenly Father, our creator and all-powerful healer, we ask for complete recovery of John’s voice”. Did I dare to ask for 100 percent recovery? Yes.

As I sat with John in the hours following the surgery, I noticed minute by minute, hour by hour more blood was oozing out of the site of the sewn-up tracheotomy. Over and over, all day long, I begged the nurses to get a doctor.

“The surgeon is in the Operating Room and cannot be interrupted,” they answered.

The oozing blood became a trickle-down John’s neck

and chest. The trickle grew. A towel became blood soaked. Then we needed a second towel. Long before I had to get a third towel I said, “John, you are losing too much blood, something is wrong. We need a doctor! I have been begging for 5 hours for the nurses to call the doctor.”

Desperate, we prayed for another miracle. “Please God, bring the doctor!”

I went to the nurses’ station and announced, “I am going downstairs to the Operating Room and standing there by the door until the surgeon comes out. I am going to tell him myself that my husband is bleeding to death!!!”

The time for gentle requests was over. The nurses could see the problem and a desperate hysterical wife lobbying very strongly for the survival of her husband.

“Ok we will call a doctor.”

Thankfully the same ENT surgeon arrived in John’s hospital room. Instantly he knew he was looking at a critical problem. “Bring me a surgical kit and suction here at the bedside immediately!”

The surgeon removed a blood clot the size of a baseball from deep inside John’s throat. Then he sewed up the tracheotomy properly, so the bleeding stopped. We both breathed a sigh of relief and a prayer of thanks. A nurse came in and quietly told us, “Many people with that kind of injury die on the spot before they even get to a hospital. Furthermore, you could have died from the blood clot. You are a very lucky man.”

We don’t believe in luck, but we do believe God heard our prayers. We do believe God is able to heal. Miraculously John’s speaking and singing voice was gradually restored to the rich tone and full range he had before the hockey puck smashed his voice box. We dared to ask for 100% recovery and God in His power and providence granted our request.

Psalm 100: “*Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God.*

It is he who made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving! And his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations.”

Esther Hobbs Phillips and her husband John have enjoyed swimming, canoeing, sailing, and thrilling outdoor winter ice skating on Muskoka lakes at cottages and camps for 50 years.



Climate Change is Real

By Len Ring

Scientists understood the physics of climate change in the 1800's. Exxon scientists accurately predicted the pace and scale of climate change in the 1970's. It is not something we need to debate.

It is happening now.

And, it has been happening for a long time. Now we are feeling the effects as they become more extreme. Everyday we hear news of floods, drought, and wildfires; we hear predictions of more severe weather, melting glaciers, and sea level rise. On a personal level we talk about air conditioners, air purifiers, providing safe spaces for the most vulnerable during extreme heat and wildfire smoke episodes.

It is the result of burning fossil fuels.

Ever since the invention of the first coal-fired steam engines of the 1700s, our burning of fossil fuels has steadily increased. Fossil fuels formed over millions of years from the burial of photosynthetic organisms. To grow, these organisms removed carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere and the ocean. The burning of this fossil material

returns CO₂ to the atmosphere at a much faster rate than it can be removed by the natural carbon cycle. It will stay there 100 years or more, wrapping the planet in a warm blanket, and heating it.

We have solutions!

We can reduce energy demand by making smart choices in our everyday lives. Simple actions like turning out the lights and driving slower are important and have a cumulative effect. We can have a bigger personal impact when we make purchases like an energy-efficient cold air source heat pump to replace an existing gas furnace. These choices not only reduce energy demand but also save money.

We need to stop burning fossil fuels, the largest source of CO₂ in the atmosphere. We have renewable energy sources like wind, solar, hydro and geothermal, along with new energy storage systems and grid updates that can do the job, and roll out faster and cheaper than fossil fuel options. We must insist that our governments and financial institutions embrace the international goal of tripling renewable energy by 2030 and that expansion of gas into

new communities be stopped.

Urgent action is required - seniors can play a big role.

There are 10 million people in Canada aged 60+. Seniors have the time, life and work experience, and resources to make a difference. Many of us are living to well over 80. That's a lot of potential time to get the job done, to ensure that our legacy is a livable planet for our children, grandchildren, and the next 7 generations...

It is the task of those alive today to confront the fossil fuel industry and its enablers. We must also lobby for the conservation of wetlands, natural shorelines, wildlife habitat, and farmland. These green spaces are essential to leaving a habitable planet and will help draw down the excess CO₂ in our atmosphere today. Talk about climate with family and friends; get involved in a climate group; contact your elected representatives.

Len Ring, Climate Action Muskoka.
Our Mission is to collaborate with individuals, businesses, groups and governments to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis.



Fall in Muskoka

By Peter Cassidy

Those readers who have read some of my stories know that I am a fan of the Montreal Canadiens. However, the Toronto Maple Leafs were in Bracebridge on October 9th for a practice. This probably was to inaugurate our new Sportsplex and arena.

Not being a Leaf fan, I was not interested in attending, however, my wife thought differently. She threatened me with no supper and relentless persecution.

I like my meals and a happy wife, so I conceded. I thought to myself that there would probably be security, so, I knew I had an old school staff card in my drawer. I took an old white skate lace and put it through the badge and around my neck. My wife decided she would not need one. As we entered the arena there was indeed security.

I proceeded past them like I was special and not one security person stopped me. My wife on the other hand was stopped. They did provide her with a wrist band. It was then that she saw me laughing.

She was angry with the security because in her opinion she made a contribution to the Sportsplex through her taxes. I was not helping with my laughter.

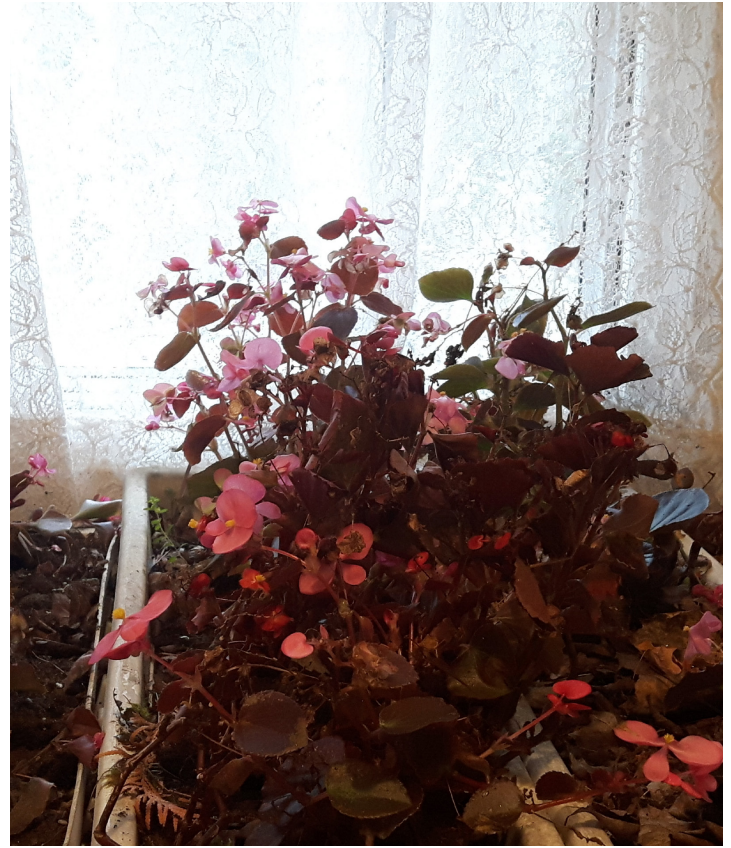
After watching the players play and the happy excited faces of the young fans who had come to see their heroes I began to talk to her. I pointed out the humour in it all.

She called our daughter to relate her ordeal. All I could hear was uncontrollable laughter from her. I could overhear the conversation.

I did have a badge, and she said if the security had looked at it they would have seen it was from 1992.

It made my otherwise usual day.

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.



Bring the Outdoors Inside

You don't have to just enjoy your lovely flowers while they're outside. Bring them in!

How?

You can leave them in existing pots or repot them in smaller or bigger plant pots and place them in a sunny spot indoors for the winter.

Why?

- You get to continue to enjoy their beauty all year.
- By next spring you'll have bigger plants blooming many more flowers.
- You save money by not having to buy them again next year.
- Plants add to healthy oxygen and air quality to your home.

Where?

Find a sunny spot for plants that you want to continue to flower through the winter. If you don't have that you can still keep the plant alive with less sun with regular watering. A lamp or grow light can be helpful too.

What a feeling coming into a room and seeing your summer blooms indoors. Enjoy! **MSM**



Moby Duck

By Kenn R. E. Page

Racking my brain, I can't remember ever having tasted roast duck. I may have back there someplace, but it doesn't stand out like the time long ago at my in-laws for dinner, when we had roast rabbit. I don't think duck would be my first choice anyways. Turkey might be. At home, growing up, chicken and roast beef were the norm, with fish and ham now and then for some special reason.

I remember my dad stopping on the side of Kingston Road to buy a live lobster from a fish monger. At my age then, I thought a fish monger was someone who mongled fish, whatever that meant. I don't remember my dad ever stopping on the side of the road to buy live duck. I knew what live duck looked like. I used to see them swimming in the water out in front of my grandparent's cottage on Muskoka River, three doors in from the north end of Mary Lake. I think it was then that I decided I'd rather see ducks in their natural environment than on my plate.

I often enjoy seeing ducks alive and in colour, swimming around the lily pad beds when I'm out fishing. Their tail up, head down, dunking for whatever it is they're dunking for. I assume it's minnows, same as what I sometimes use to catch bigger fish. Down the

road from me is a pond where I sometimes catch minnows. More often I don't. I sometimes see a pair of Mallards on that pond. Maybe that is why the minnows seem to be far and few between. My kingdom for a bucket of fresh bait minnows.

Unlike the ducks, the fish I catch I usually throw back. I'm more out there for the fresh air and fun of it rather than for the food. According to a photograph of my house and property taken from a helicopter, there is a nice size pond out back of my house. That pond is due I think to a beaver dam two properties over. I've tried to get to my pond in summer and was met with a large surrounding field of tall, very thick, very course grass, that would stop a jeep. I've gone there on snowshoes, but it's the wrong season since like the ducks, I don't ice fish.

Although my memory is not 100% anymore, or maybe never was, I seem to remember something about fishermen in a different country using ducks or some other type of waterfowl to catch their fish for them. The bird it seems has a ring around its long neck so it can't swallow what it catches. I wonder how the bird feels about that? Hungry I suppose. I'm not sure if the fisherman has a line tied to it so he can reel it in or the bird is trained to swim over and beg the fisherman to "get this stupid thing unstuck out of my throat before I croak!" I assume the bird gets the odd fish to consume later as its reward. Hopefully not roast duck.

What I've found is that fishing with Susan brings a whole new meaning to the word 'duck'. There have been times while sitting there in the boat quietly minding my own business with Susan sitting up front, I was surprised by a blur of colour passing through my closeup field of vision and disappearing just as fast. On further investigation it has turned out to be a Zara Spook or some other lure of Susan's travelling close to the speed of light. Needless to say, I'm not crazy about a fishhook or two in any part of my person. My advice to her has always been, "Warn me an hour or two before you do that!"

The latest addition to my tackle bag, I think, is going to be a motorcycle crash helmet for a little protection and a sign for my forehead that reminds me to duck.

***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.*



Events Around the Holidays (FREE unless indicated)

November

- **1st, 10:30am-1pm, Pickleball**, Dwight Community Centre, \$3 Drop in, dwight@lakeofbays.ca
- **2nd, 10am, Holiday Christmas Market**, at Gravenhurst Farmer's Market, Indoor/outdoor vendors
- **4th, 10am-12:30pm, Euchre**, Bracebridge Centre for Active Living, \$2.00, bracebridgeseniorscentre.ca
- **6th, 6:30pm, Retirement Planning on a low Income**, Gravenhurst Public Library, gravenhurstlibrary.ca
- **7th, 10am-12pm, Ruth's Coffee Time**, Bring a treat if you can, Port Cunnington Community Centre
- **14th, 7-8pm, Painted Tea Lights**, Dwight Community Centre, \$3 Drop in, dwight@lakeofbays.ca
- **20th, 1-3pm, Square dance to a live band**, Bracebridge Centre for Active Living, bracebridgeseniorscentre.ca
- **22nd, 6-9pm, Bracebridge Festival of Lights**, fireworks, Christmas carols, live entertainment, hot cocoa trail, bracebridge.ca
- **24th, 6pm, Huntsville Tree Lighting**, Kent Park, huntsville.ca

December

- **5th, 12-1, Roast Turkey Lunch**, Dwight Community Centre (Moon River Lookout), Note: this lunch is through the District of Muskoka's WISE Program, and is available at other townships, including Port Sydney Community Hall, Milford Bay Community Centre, Gravenhurst Ryde Community Co-op, Port Severn, and more locations. Contact the District for more information, at: www.muskoka.on.ca/seniorsprograms.
- **5th, 1-2pm, Holiday Gift, Foot Soak**, run by WISE at the Townships above (i.e. Dwight Community Centre, Port Sydney Hall, etc), www.muskoka.on.ca/seniorsprograms
- **5th, 10-10:30am, Coffee/Tea Social**, run by WISE at the Townships above, (i.e. Dwight Community Centre, Port Sydney Hall, etc), www.muskoka.on.ca/seniorsprograms
- **8th, 6pm, Dorset Christmas Tree Lighting**, Dorset Lions Centennial Park, Main Street, bonfire, carols, refreshments, algonquinhighlands.ca
- **12th, 10am-3pm, Sew and Create**, Huntsville Public Library, creative sewing by machine or hand, cara.mcqueen@huntsvillelibrary.ca
- **16th-23rd, 6-9pm, Huntsville Eclipse Walk With Light Holiday Market**, Muskoka Heritage Place, huntsville.ca
- **19th, 6pm, Adult Board Game Night**, Gravenhurst Public Library, gravenhurstlibrary.ca
- **25th, FREE Christmas Day Dinner, courtesy of Algonquin Cafe**, held at St. Mary's Church Hall, 12 Centre St. North, Huntsville. For more information, call Bill at: 705-784-9700.

Are you a non-profit or charity hosting a community event around Muskoka and would like to share it?

Are you another entity type hosting a FREE event to the public?

We want to hear about it!

**Email it to us at:
editorial@muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca**



Merry Chris-Smith

Submitted by Mary George

A long time ago, dear friends, Mary Christine Mac Donald and David Smith married. Every day since has been special and Christmas time, extra special.

Every Christmas morning, the children and adults wish Christine and Dave a “Mary Chris-Smith” accompanied with smiles, giggles and lots of love!

The Backstory from Christine:

“This is a great story that brings back wonderful memories of the person who originated it – David’s uncle Ernie, who wished us a “Mary Chris-Smith,” just a few days before he passed away.

We had just announced our engagement and were present at the family’s yearly New Year’s dinner (January 1, 1965). We were married that same year on July 24, 1965 and have celebrated a Mary Chris-Smith every year since!”

Have a funny joke to share?

**Email it in for a chance to be published at:
editorial@muskokaseniorsmagazine.ca**



Grandma Burned the Stew

By Brenda J. Wood

Grandma burned the bacon
And lumpied up the stew
Grandma had a problem
And didn’t know what to do.

Her pots and pans were wonky;
The lids were all askew
So, Grandma burned the bacon
And lumpied up the stew.

The pots had cooked potatoes.
They’d fried a million eggs.
They’d stirred up soup and turnip;
Worn out their little legs;

With boiling, steaming, swirling,
All Christmas, Easter too.
They simply were all worn out,
Thus, the problem with the stew.

Grandma worried deeply.
She didn’t know what to do.
For Christmas was a ‘coming
And She’d lumpy up the stew.

But Santa showed up early.
Buying presents great and small!
New pots and pans for Grandma.
No more worries, not at all.

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://heartfelt-devotionals.com> and <http://hopestreamradio.com>.

BAD IDEAS



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!*



’Twas the Night Before Christmas: A Few Favourite Versions

By Benda J. Wood

This poem has more versions than you can shake a stick at.

For example, dieters like this one:
‘T’was the night before Christmas
and all round my hips were Fannie May candies
that sneaked past my lips...

Those in the sunny south use this one:
‘T’was the night before Christmas
and all through the town, no noses were frozen,
no snow fluttered down...

Shoppers know this one:
‘T’was the month before Christmas, and all
through the store, every department was dripping with
Yuletide decor.

Strange that I couldn’t find one that went like this...
T’was the night before Christmas and all through the
high the angels were poised and soon filled the sky.
The Christ Child would be born, to live and to care
To demonstrate love from God who was there.

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://heartfelt-devotionals.com> and hopestreamradio.com.



A Stairway to Heaven

By Geraldine O'Meara

Looking out my window,
a stirring sadness in my heart,
having just said goodbye
to my sister and friend of 86 years.

Gentle flakes of snow are falling;
Swaying, dancing, drifting,
until they land softly on the ground,
to nourish our Mother Earth.

Evergreen trees like sentient beings,
extending their branches,
as if in recognition
of guarding this sacred moment.

A touch of sadness,
yet all seems so right:
the goodbye, the snow, the trees, our Mother Earth;
a reassurance that all is One,
all is holy, all is embraced in
this marvellous universe we call home.

Judy, you were gifted this Stairway to Heaven,
not because of what you did or said,
(Although all was present:

your compassion, your caring, your loving,
your creativity, your birthing, your strength),
but you were gifted, because you became fully
who you were meant to be, a one of a kind;
and, surely, that is all that is expected of us.

So, Judy, my beautiful sister,
Enjoy that place you called heaven,
and so aptly described in your final words;
when you had a look in;
“Gosh, this is lovely...better than I thought!”

You have gifted us with those words,
and especially your presence here on earth;
you touched my life and the lives of so many,
and we thank you for that.
Rest, my dear friend, and be at peace.

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.



Where The Poppies Grow

By Nancy Goodman

*There is a place in a field
Where the poppies grow
You can see them for miles
Row after row*

*Behind those poppies
Are crosses of white
They light up the sky
On a dark, dreary night*

*Beneath those white crosses
Are loved ones and friends
Who fought for our freedom
That had terrible ends*

*And the mothers and sisters
Who looked after those boys
Who also died trying
To give us some joy.*

*They fought in the cold
And the rain and the snow
They didn't give up trying
To give us a land in which we could grow.*

*But they did it for freedom
And what they knew was right
They were brave and courageous
They never gave up the fight.*

*So please remember those poppies
And the great hero's we love
Wear your poppy proudly
And thank God up above.*

Nancy Goodman. *I am an expressionist and a senior who lives in Ottawa with my husband. I spend a lot of time with my books, and looking for new adventures..*

MUSKOKA SENIORS MAGAZINE

Business Directory

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CHARITIES & NON-PROFITS

ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF MUSKOKA - Helping people live well with Alzheimer's and other dementias, and their caregivers. Muskoka/Parry Sound. 705-645-5621 www.alzheimermuskoka.ca

BAYSVILLE CURLING AND BOCCE CLUB — Learn to curl, play boccé, volunteer, meet people, and stay active! New members welcome! baysvillecurling.ca

BRACEBRIDGE CENTRE FOR ACTIVE LIVING - A community hub for Seniors to stay active! 54 Dominion Street, Bracebridge 705-645-9111 www.bracebridgeseniorscentre.ca.

PROBUS OF GRAVENHURST - We, in the Probus Club of Gravenhurst, have celebrated over 20 years in town. We were created to offer our residents an opportunity to meet, share similar interests and enjoy our wonderful Muskoka. Contact Barb McCabe at barbmccabemuskoka@gmail.com

PROBUS SOUTH MUSKOKA - Social Club for retired persons. Monthly meetings with speakers, social activities. Contact: Margaret 705-637-0606 www.smprobus.ca

SOUTH MUSKOKA HOSPITAL FOUNDATION - Needs your help to purchase urgently needed equipment for the hospital. Every dollar counts! Please visit <https://www.healthmuskoka.ca/donate> or call 705-645-4404 x 3193.

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