

East Gwillimbury's

Bulletin

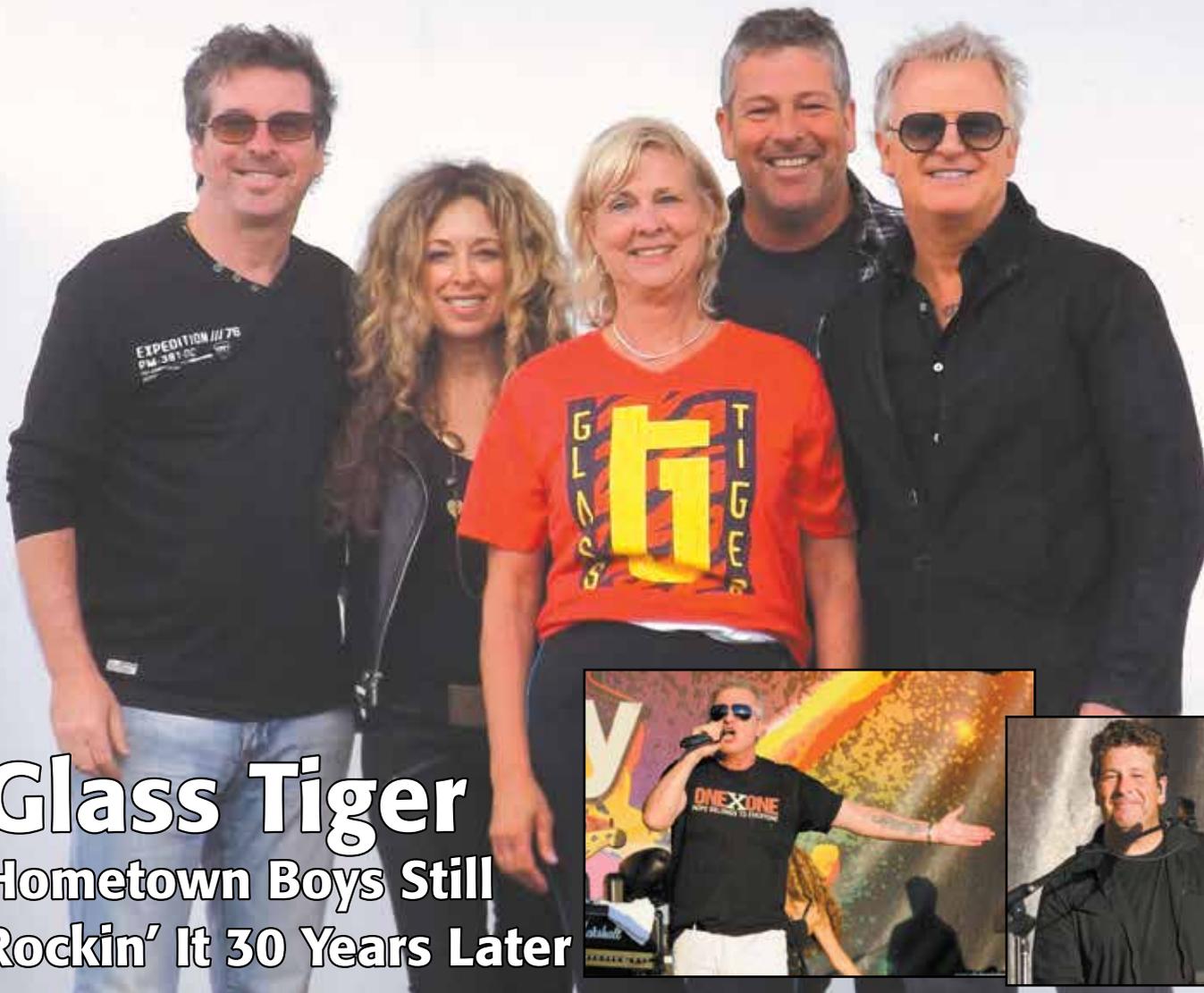
MAGAZINE

December 2014, Vol. 16, No. 10

Since 1998



East Gwillimbury welcomes the jolly old elf at its annual Santa Claus Parade!



Glass Tiger

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Next Course starts Monday, Dec. 29th at the MAVA Business Centre at 72 Main St.

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The Mount Albert Lions

Santa Claus Parade

is coming soon!

Saturday, December 6, 2014 at 11 am SHARP

Come and meet with Santa at the Mount Albert Community Centre following the parade. There will be hot dogs and hot chocolate for all, candy and entertainment for the kids.



Christmas Food Drive

**A non-perishable food item would be greatly appreciated.
Donations will be collected during the parade.**



*Have yourself
a holly jolly
Christmas!*

For parade information call:

Trish - 905-478-8863, or Stan - 905-473-7464

Canadian Music Icons got their start right here in EG

I was 13-years-old the year that Glass Tiger hit it big on the Canadian music scene. Our local radio station was playing *Don't Forget Me (When I'm Gone)* in heavy rotation and my sister went to see them in concert at the Galt Arena Gardens in Cambridge. It wasn't until their second album that I really discovered their music when *Diamond Sun* came out. I bought most of their singles on vinyl 45s, and I had a variety of Glass Tiger cassettes and CDs over the years as the technology changed.

Their music, it seemed, never went out of style. As they matured, so too did their music.

A year ago I was flipping through old newspapers at the library doing research for a Bulletin article when I came across a clipping from the 1980s. It talked about Glass Tiger doing a local concert in conjunction with Joe Persechini's *Persechini Run/Walkathon for Easter Seals*. As you might have guessed, the band members from Glass Tiger are originally from the East Gwillimbury/Newmarket area. They got their start here, and at least one of them still calls East Gwillimbury home. Recently I had a chance to chat with front-man Alan Frew, and keyboard player Sam Reid for a story that appears in this issue. Definitely a personal thrill for me. And my sister, who didn't offer to take me to that Glass Tiger concert nearly 30 years ago, can read it and weep.

I'd like to take this opportunity to say thanks to many of you who have given favourable comments and feedback about the direction the Bulletin is heading. We don't publish an issue in January, but we'll be back in February ready to start fresh with some familiar faces and a few new ones that are coming aboard.

Keep in mind, as you do your shopping, entertaining, and eating this holiday season, to please support local businesses when you can. It really does make a difference to them and to us (especially if they are Bulletin advertisers).

From my family to yours, have a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, New Year.

- Blair Matthews, Bulletin Publisher

Important Bulletin Deadlines:

Submission & Advertising deadline for February issue:
January 26

Bulletin delivered to residents: February 4

Advertising Contact:

Blair Matthews, info@thebulletinmagazine.com
(905)473-3093



You can now reach **The Bulletin Magazine** on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/EGbulletinmagazine>

ON THE COVER...

Left to Right: Al Connelly, original member (guitarist); Carmela Long (back-up singer); East Gwillimbury Mayor, Virginia Hackson; Sam Reid, original member (keyboard player); Alan Frew, original member (lead vocalist).
- photo by Alexandria Lipani

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Bulletin

MAGAZINE

Since 1998

www.TheBulletinMagazine.com

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@ Your East Gwillimbury Library

Food & Toys for Fines

From December 2 to 18, bring in your undamaged and unexpired canned or boxed non-perishable food items and new unwrapped toys to the library. Each item will earn \$1 off your overdue fines. Items will be donated to the Town of East Gwillimbury's Food & Toy Drive 2014.

Family Storytime

Ages 0-5 years. Free. Drop in. Drop in for music, rhymes, stories, and a simple craft.
Holland Landing: Thursdays, December 4, 11, 18 @ 10:30 am
Mount Albert: Thursdays, December 4, 11, 18 @ 10:30 am

At the Movies

All ages. Donations welcome. Please register.
Enjoy *Legends of Oz: Dorothy's Return* (PG; 90 min) with popcorn and juice.
Holland Landing: Fri., Jan. 2 @ 2 pm

New Years' Party

Ages 3 – 6. Free. Please register.

Start the New Year with laughs, games, and button making with Cat in the Hat!

Mount Albert: Friday, January 2 at 10:30 am

Babytime

Ages 0-17 months. Free. Drop in. Share simple stories, songs, and interactive play with your little one while learning about early literacy for babies.

Mount Albert: Tuesdays, January 6 - February 24 @ 10:15 am
Holland Landing: Thursdays, January 8 - February 26 @ 10:30 am

Ones & Twos

Ages 18-30 months. Free. Drop in. Join our interactive program that stimulates the imagination with early literacy activities including books and songs for toddlers.

Mount Albert: Tuesdays, January 6 - February 24 @ 11 am
Holland Landing: Wednesdays, January 7 - February 23 @ 10 am

Preschool Storytime

Ages 2.5-5 years. Free. Drop in.

Enjoy books, music, puppets, and activities that help preschoolers get ready to read.

Mount Albert: Thursdays, January 8 - February 26 @ 10:30 am
Holland Landing: Wednesdays, January 7 - February 23 @ 10:45 am

Teen Advisory Board

Earn community service hours by assisting with Library programs and sharing your ideas. Drop in or contact Heather at halblas@egpl.ca for more information.

Holland Landing: Tuesday, Dec. 9 & Jan. 6 from 7-8 pm
Mount Albert: Wednesday, Dec. 10 & January 7 from 7 – 8 pm

Writing Workshops with Barry Demster

Enjoy three writing weekends featuring a variety of experiences and exercises that will strengthen your voice and expression and give you greater confidence in your abilities. Registration deadline is 2 weeks before each session, including a 3 page sample of your work. Space is

THANK YOU EAST GWILLIMBURY RESIDENTS

I want to thank the residents of East Gwillimbury for their support during the election and over the past 14 years that I have served you on Council. I have enjoyed working for you and with you and along the way, have made many friends here in E.G. I cherish those friendships and I will keep in touch.

I believe our lives are like a large book filled with many chapters and I've just turned a page to start a new chapter in my life. I look forward to new adventures and I will continue to be active in a community that I'm proud to call home – East Gwillimbury.

As Christmas is just around the corner, I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. I'll see you around town.

- Cathy





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limited. Cost: \$250 each, or all three workshops for \$600. Unsuccessful applicants will be refunded in full. Visit www.egpl.ca for more information.

Holland Landing: February 28/March 1, March 28/29 & May 2/3

Disability Tax Credits for Seniors

Free. Please register. Are you or a family member eligible for disability tax credits? Find out from Steve Walsh, chartered accountant and financial advisor. Holland Landing: Wednesday, January 21 from 6:30-8 pm

Small Business Grants for Youth

Free. Please register. Are you interested in entrepreneurship and starting your own business? Learn about two programs provided by the Province of Ontario. Summer Company applicants may receive grants up to \$3000; applicants must be 15-29 years and returning to school. Starter Company applicants may receive grants up to \$5000; applicants must be 18-29 years and not returning to school. Presented by The York Small Business Enterprise Centre. Holland Landing: Wednesday, January 28 from 6-8 pm

A Time to Rejoice & Give Thanks



Rhythm A' Peal

Invite you
To an afternoon of Christmas music
December 21, 2014 at 2:00 pm.
Featuring
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An English Handbell Quartet
Guest Musicians

Freewill offering proceeds to the Food Bank and to support the Handbell Quartet

Come join us at Mount Albert United Church and surround yourself in the warmth of Christmas!

Christmas Eve Services:

6:30 pm Family Service
10:00 pm Communion and Candlelight

Mount Albert United Church

41 Alice Street, Mount Albert
905-473-2562



Mount Albert Lions Santa Claus Parade

December 6, 2014




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Mount Albert Santa Claus Parade:
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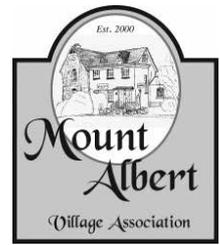


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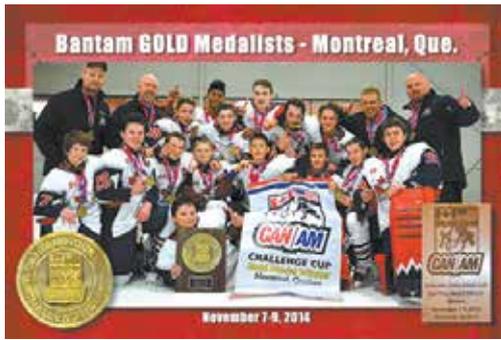
Mount Albert Village Association NEWS



- Join MAVA for the annual Community Tree Lighting & Decorating Event on Sunday December 7th – 3 pm at the Mount Albert Community Centre. Check the website and watch for flyers for full details!
- Thank you to all the residents who took part in the First Annual Homes for the Haunted Event. These were the winners! Watch for categories next year!
 - > First - 181 Mainprize Cres.
 - > Second - 10 Cheltonwood Court
 - > Tied for third - 441 King Street East and 58 Kingsgate
- Many thanks to all the local sponsors; Kaylie`s Kottage, Mount Albert Chiropractic & Wellness Centre, Wow Wing House, Twisted Fork Restaurant, Christina`s Shades of Beauty, Steve Flemming ReMax, Corner Decor and More, The Prince Albert Pub
- Membership levels have been revised. Details are on the website; www.mountalbert.com/membership.php Thank you to all who have submitted their renewals.
- The Mount Albert Village Association E-Newsletter is available to all. Subscribe @ <http://www.mountalbert.com>
- Drop off your single use alkaline batteries at The Corner Décor & More, MSVA, The Family Place, Mount Albert Public Library and the Town of East Gwillimbury offices.
- The Directors of the Mount Albert Village Association wish you all a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year.
- Our next meeting TUESDAY JANUARY 20th @ 7 pm. We meet DOWNSTAIRS at the Mount Albert Community Centre @ 53 Main Street. All are welcome.

Stay Happy, Stay Safe, Shop Local!
www.mountalbert.com

Find MAVA on Facebook and Twitter!



EGMHA Bantam A Tournament Win

The EG Eagles Bantam A team celebrated a GOLD medal win at the CAN/AM Challenge Cup tournament in Montreal on November 9, 2014. The team was awarded The Fair Play Award, a result of their impressive sportsmanship. The Eagles also placed first in the Relay Race competition.

Santa Claus is coming to the Museum!

And you're invited! Jingle all the way to the Elman Campbell Museum. Enjoy an afternoon of hot cocoa and cookies. Have a visit and photo opportunity with Santa and Mrs. Claus. See our gallery of festive trees. Saturday, December 6, 1-3PM. Presented by the Friends of the Museum. Free admission. Don't forget to bring your camera!

For more information please call 905-953-5314 or email elmanmuseum@rogers.com We are located at 134 Main St., South, Newmarket.

Didn't get your Bulletin in the Mail?

As you know, The Bulletin is delivered throughout East Gwillimbury (to every household and business) by Canada Post.

Did the dog eat your Bulletin? Did your spouse pitch it into the recycling bin before you finished reading it? Think you got it, but not sure? Maybe there's something in the current issue that you'd like to share with friends outside the area...

You can pick up copies of the current Bulletin magazine at:

- East Gwillimbury Library (Holland Landing)
- East Gwillimbury Library (Mount Albert)
- Vince's Market (Sharon)
- Town of East Gwillimbury offices (Sharon)
- Food Land (Mount Albert)
- Antiques on 48 (Baldwin)

York Singles Club

YORK SINGLES CLUB is York Region's #1 Social club for singles 50+.

We provide many activities and have a membership of approximately 120 people. Activities include dances, biking, euchre, bridge, bowling, media club, camping, hiking, house and pool parties, holiday events, dinners out, theatre, dinner and a movie and much much more.

Join us for our new member information session held the last Thursday of every month in Richmond Hill. Exceptions are the month of December and May when it is the 3rd Thursday of the month. For more information we can be reached via email - info@york-singles.com or by phone (905)707-7499.

50th Wedding Anniversary

Open House Celebration for Mary & Paul Brand on Saturday, December 27th, 2014. 2-4 pm at Mount Albert Lions Hall (5057 Mount Albert Road). Best wishes only.

We are Winter: Survive, Celebrate, Sing!

Sunday, December 7, 2014

York Region Community Choir's annual winter concert takes its inspiration from the Canadian Winter Olympic Team who declared that "We Are Winter!" Winter is part of our identity. We not only survive its challenges, but also find ways to enjoy ourselves and to thrive. Through our music, we will celebrate the holidays, the beauty of our country in winter, and the indomitable spirit of our people.

Visit: www.yorkregioncommunitychoir.org; phone: 905-235-4574 2 tickets for \$25 or 1 ticket for \$15 if bought in advance and \$15 per ticket at the door. Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street, Aurora.

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Identify where this photo was taken for your chance to win!

In each Bulletin we'll include a photo taken in some area of East Gwillimbury.

If you recognize where the photo is from, email (or Canada Post mail) us the correct answer before the 20th of the month - include your name, phone number, and answer.

Correct answers will be put into a draw and ONE lucky person will win a \$10 SUBWAY gift card.

Note: Please email or snail mail

only - no phone calls with the answer. Our mailing address is on Page 3.

We'll publish the answer in the February 2015 issue along with the name of the winner. Good luck, and keep your eyes open!

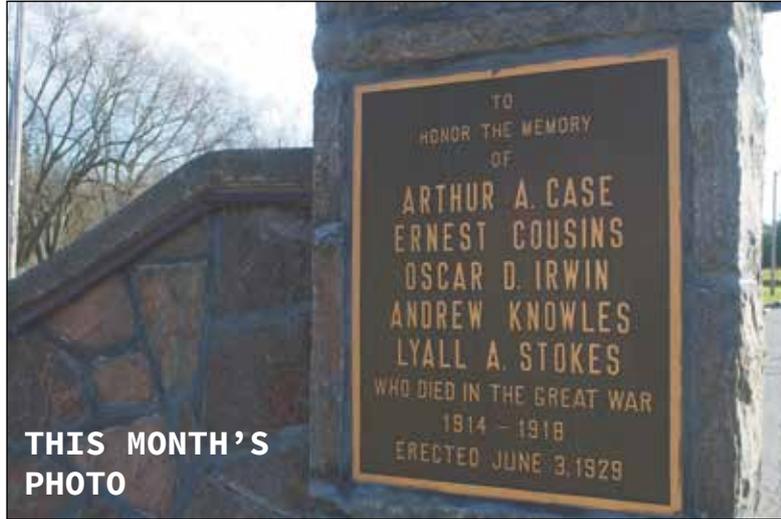
THE RULES: This is NOT a geocache. There is nothing hidden in this spot. You only have to identify where the photo was taken for the answer to be correct. Only **one entry per person** per month. Winners are not eligible to win the contest again in the same calendar year.

Depending on where you live, this month's photo might be easy - or it might be a challenge. Either way, no hints here. But if you visit the Bulletin's Facebook Page, we'll give you a couple of really good clues! You can find our Facebook page at: facebook.com/EGbulletinmagazine.

WINNER of \$10 Subway gift card for identifying our November photo: Kathy Coates of Holland Landing.

Thanks to everyone who sent in the correct answer! We hope you'll

try your luck for the December photo.



THIS MONTH'S PHOTO

LAST MONTH'S

PHOTO →

A lot of answers came in for our November photo. More than a few of you thought it was at the Mount Albert Post Office. It wasn't.

It was, however, in Holland Landing at the corner of Mount Albert Road and Yonge Street.



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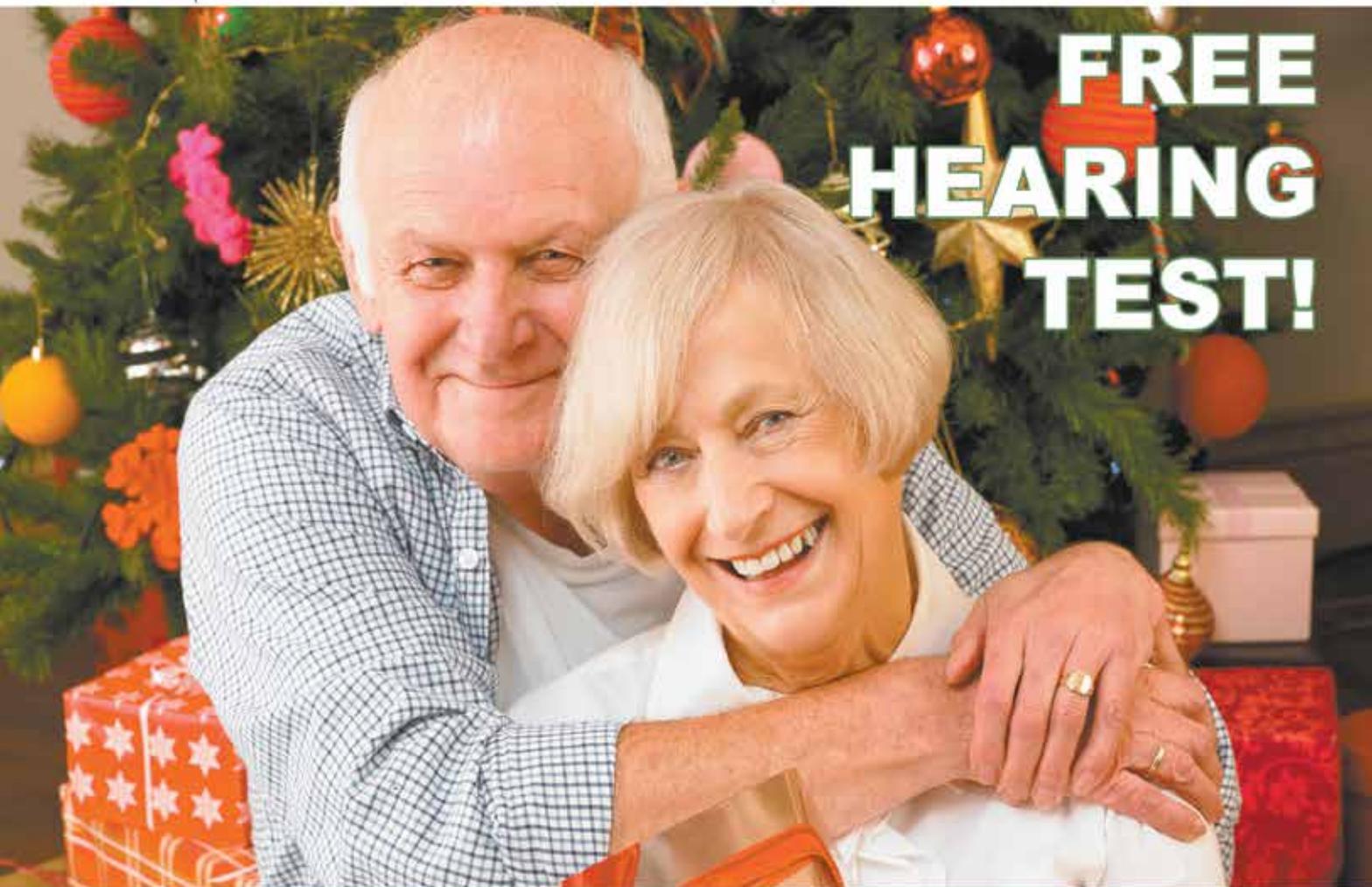
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Community Happenings



ONGOING EVENTS:

Every Monday and Wednesday

Holland Landing Storybook House

A free resource centre for families/caregivers with children from birth to 5 years of age. Join us for socialization, stories, songs, fingerplays, waterplay, playdough, music and movement. 9:30 am - 11:30 am at Holland Landing Public School, 16 Holland River Blvd., Holland Landing. 905-836-8916. Closed school holidays and July/August.

Every Third Thursday of the Month

H.L. Country & Western Jamboree

Holland Landing Community Centre.

7 pm to 11 pm - all are welcome.

Jacque or Walt at 905-473-7072 for info.

Every Thursday Evening

Mount Albert Legion DARTS beginning @ 7 pm

Every Friday Evening

Mount Albert Legion SNOOKER

beginning @ 7 pm - 31 Princess Street, Mount Albert

Every 3rd Tuesday of the Month

Mount Albert Village Association's

Monthly Directors' Meeting - * NEW LOCATION *

7pm - Downstairs at the Mount Albert Community Centre.

Everyone is welcome. www.mountalbert.com

Mount Albert Friendship Club for Seniors

Ross Family Complex/Seniors Meeting Room

First Tuesday of each month Bingo at 1pm

First Wednesday of each month Potluck Luncheon, General Meeting and Euchre from 12-4pm

Each Wednesday is Bid Euchre at 1 pm

Each Thursday is Shuffleboard from 6pm in the Gym

Each Friday night is Bid Euchre starting at 7pm

Please contact 905-473-3305 for further information.

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DECEMBER:

December 6th, 9am-2pm

ELF DAY at Sharon Public School

18532 Leslie St. Sharon. Holiday Bazaar with Vendors, Silent Auction, Poinsettia Sale, Kids Crafts, Free Gift Wrapping and much more. www.spselfday.ca

Tue. Dec. 9th

York-Simcoe Naturalists meeting

Geoff Shore - Fossils of York-Simcoe, a Show-and-Tell. Visitors can attend for free and new members are always welcome. Meetings are held at 20 Oak Ave. River Drive Park Community Centre, Holland Landing, 7:30pm.

Saturday, December 13th

Christmas Concert at Ravenshoe United Church

featuring Bon Accord and Ravenshoe United Church Choir. Performances at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$15. each and can be purchased by calling Marilyn Butcher at 905-476-7367

December 21st, 6-10pm

Winter Solstice Ice Lantern Lighting Event

Come to the Historic Sharon Burying Ground and help us light up the longest night of the year by purchasing a ice lantern to be placed in memory of a historical member of

Yoga and Meditation In Holland Landing



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the community or for a special loved one. Event held at 18391 Leslie Street, Sharon. For more information please e-mail at: sharonburyingground@gmail.com or phone 905-478-1594 (Tara)

December 24th, Christmas Eve Services

Mount Albert United Church

6:30pm - Family Candle Light Service

10pm - Holy Communion and Candle Light Service

FEBRUARY:

Wednesday, February 25, 2015, 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Get Carried Away For Cancer

This exciting fundraiser in support of women's cancers (breast/cervical/ovarian/uterine cancers) celebrates hope and the beauty of being a woman. It's about Health, Balance and Lifestyle. It's about the WOMAN in YOU. An evening spent with friends in an atmosphere that makes every woman feel like a star. Join us for a girls' night out-discover new products, attend an informative session, get beauty and health tips, indulge in some fabulous food and celebrate life!

*Not-for-profit events are free to list in our print edition of The Bulletin. All other events, the cost is \$25 plus HST. Please visit our website thebulletinmagazine.com and fill in the **Submit an Event** information. Event listings are 'first come first served', space permitting.*

Mount Albert Pet Sitter

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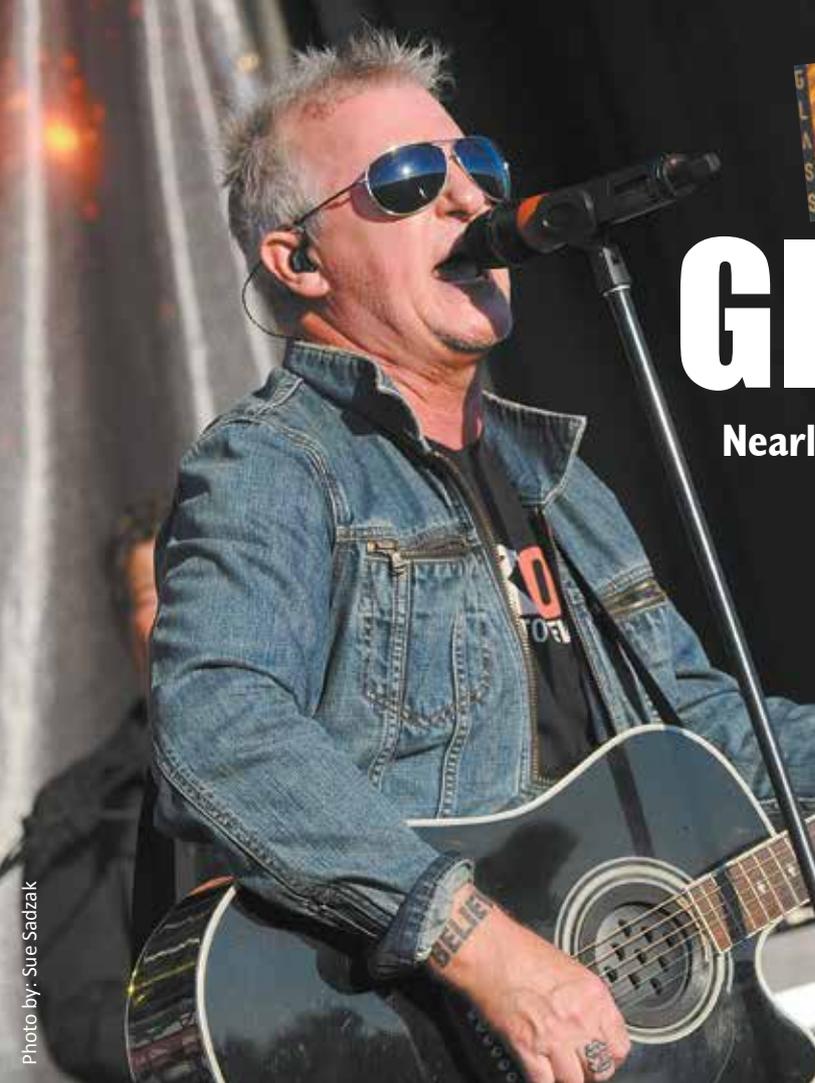


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The Best Care For Your Pet



Glass Tiger

Nearly 30 years later, the homegrown band is still wowing fans everywhere

Story by: Blair Matthews

Photos by: Sue Sadzak

It's November 1984 and Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto is abuzz with nearly 17,000 Boy George fans - mostly teenagers - waiting for their favourite band to take the stage. Behind the curtain, a road manager rattles off instructions to members of the opening act. He tells them that when he yells 'house lights' into his radio, they won't be able to hear him anymore - they'll have to follow his flashlight out to the stage. It's about to get really loud, really quick, he says. He squawks the signal, the house lights come alive, and it's a thunderous response.

This unknown opening act has been paying their dues for years in local night clubs and bars around Newmarket, East Gwillimbury and Aurora.

But this... this is something much different.

Opening for Boy George and the Culture Club in the mid 1980s - without an album or a recording contract - is something that most fledgling bands would risk life and limb for. Their new manager has pulled some strings to get them there, on a stage they aren't sure they belong on. They start their set with a high-energy song called *Ancient Evenings*.

And East Gwillimbury resident Sam Reid, keyboard



player for Canadian megaband Glass Tiger, remembers that chilly Thursday night in Toronto like it was yesterday.

For Reid and the rest of Glass Tiger, that was a time before hit records, awards, media appearances, sold out arenas across North America, and fame that was beyond their wildest expectations.

Considering the success the band has enjoyed for nearly 30 years, it's hard to believe they almost didn't get together. In the early 1980s, they were in two separate bands that toured the area - not rivals, but each group knew of the other. When both groups imploded around the same time, lead singer Alan Frew was ready

Alan Frew sings while Sam Reid plays keyboard in the background.

Photo by: Sue Sadzak



DID YOU KNOW?

- The band members in Glass Tiger attended Huron Heights Secondary School in Newmarket, but all at different times. They weren't friends who met at school.
- Four out of five of the original members of Glass Tiger are still a part of the group: Alan Frew (lead singer); Sam Reid (keyboards); Al Connelly (guitars); Wayne Parker (bass). Original drummer Michael Hanson left the band in 1988 and was replaced by Chris McNeill.
- Front-man Alan Frew had his first 'Beatles' moment in Saskatoon in 1986 when he was chased from an arena after a show to the band's tour bus by a mob of screaming teenage girls. Clutching a suitcase in each hand, he eventually stopped and tried to use "some adult reasoning" with the mob. Just as he was about to speak, a girl ran up to him, grabbed him by the shirt and screamed, "Who's got scissors?"

to give up on music and pursue a career in medicine.

Two members from the other band had lost their lead singer and somehow persuaded Frew to join them to play (just as a hobby, they assured him). But once they started playing together, they realized how good they really were and the bars they played at started to fill up. They called themselves 'Tokyo' at first and eventually when the record companies came calling, they morphed into Glass Tiger.

On the road to a record contract, front-man Alan Frew says he remembers the very first gig they did together as a band - at the Thornhill Community Centre. They made signs and nailed them to telephone poles in the area, handed out flyers, and did everything they could think of to promote their show.

When Glass Tiger was on the brink of getting a record deal, keyboard player Sam Reid had a tough decision to make. He was the youngest in the band, fresh out of high school, and hit a fork in the road. "The biggest problem was that I had a scholarship for the University of Toronto in their (Bachelor of) music program paid for."

After much soul-searching, he turned it down.

Reid says his father was extremely disappointed with his decision to follow his rockstar dreams and bypass a University education. Reid's logic was that if he went off and tried to make a go of it with Glass Tiger and it didn't work out, he could always come home and re-apply to schools - with or without a scholarship. It was a gamble

that would pay off with a lifetime of experiences touring the world and making records as part of one of Canada's most beloved 80's bands.

Fortunately, Reid's father lived long enough to see his son flourish as Glass Tiger's success caught fire. "He got over the disappointment when he understood that (university) wasn't a good fit for me. I flew my mom and dad down to California and that's when it really sunk in for him - he saw 17,000 people in an arena. I was delighted that that's how the story ended and not the other way," he says.

Frew believes that Glass Tiger resonated with fans because they came along at just the right time. "The industry had just come out of the 70's, the big glam arena rock. So it's looking for a shift and the shift starts to happen where songs are a little brighter, a little poppier. There's a movement going on and there's a perfect time when people are looking for it. When Glass Tiger just happened to get together in 1981 and you get five guys that have got a look about them as a real attraction to a female demographic and to a record company, it was all perfect timing. So by 1985 when *Don't Forget Me* was written - and it's this sort of undeniably infectious pop song - the timing was perfect."

'Perfect' is an understatement when you consider the accolades Glass Tiger has racked up over the years. Five Juno Awards, 7 singles in the Top 10, a Number 1 single (*Don't Forget Me [When I'm Gone]*) in Canada

(Number 2 in the United States), and four albums between 1986 and 1993. The band toured with Tina Turner, recorded a song with Rod Stewart, and played the Olympiahalle in Munich, Germany for 7 nights straight.

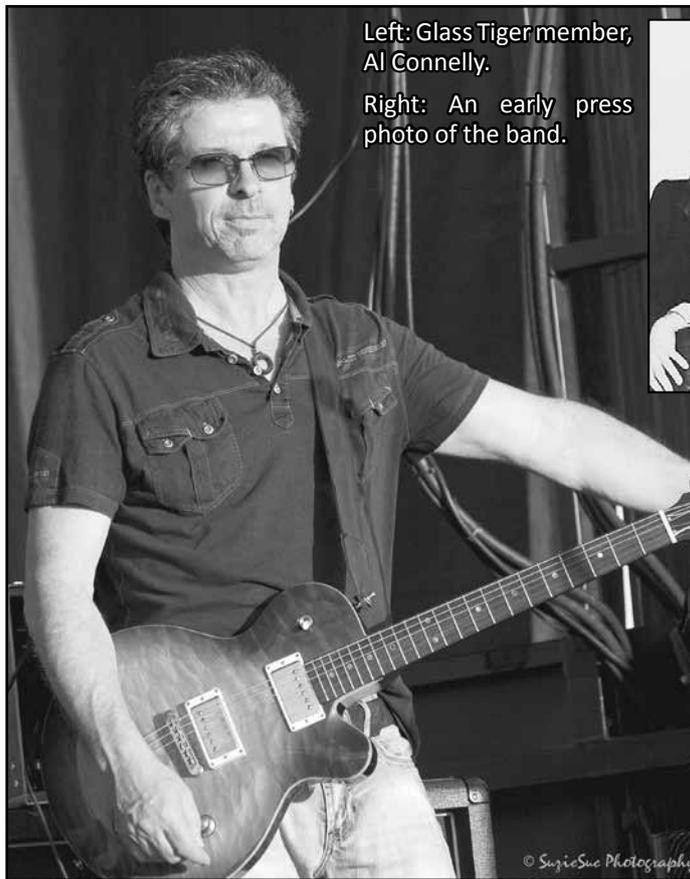
Growing up in Scotland, Frew was influenced heavily by The Beatles. "I always naturally leaned towards British things: Rod Stewart, the Stones, the Beatles, the Police, U2."

And when the band became wildly successful, playing to sold-out stadiums everywhere they went, it was a crash course in dealing with screaming teenage girls, rabid fans, and life on the road.

As much as he loved what he was doing, a part of him was tiring of the fame.

Being the front-man meant he was the most recognizable band member and was in the highest demand for media and press work. "When it was happening, it wore pretty thin because I couldn't go anywhere, I couldn't really do anything. That got to me pretty quickly," he says. "The negative part was that constant reminder that you were 'that guy'. You wish you could turn it on and off but you can't."

Of all the songs the band has written and performed, the one that stands out most to Frew is *My Town* (from their 1993 *Simple Mission* album). "Just a well-craft-



Left: Glass Tiger member, Al Connelly.

Right: An early press photo of the band.



ed story, great melody ... there's a bit of a celtic about it, it's a sing along pop song. I'm pretty proud of songs we've crafted. *Someday* is a great pop song..."

One of Frew's favourite musical achievements is the song he co-wrote for the 2010 Vancouver Olympics called *I Believe*, performed by Nikki Yanofsky. "It was a beautiful song that endeared itself to this nation."

I Believe stretched across Canada during the Olympic broadcast coverage and the single by Yanofsky reached Number 1 on the Canadian Hot 100 that winter. Both the English and French versions were recorded in Montreal, Quebec, along with the help of The Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

It's obvious that Frew's true passion is writing and creating. "It didn't exist yesterday and today it's a killer rock song. I love that just by my nature. But the actual going out and doing it... I get as much pleasure out of watching Nikki Yanofsky perform *I Believe* than whether or not I have to get up and do it."

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Sunday December 14th at 10 am

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4th Sunday of Advent (Joy) - The Celebration Choir presents "All Is Well" a musical presentation of the Nativity

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"Journeying Together in Faith"

Looking back on how the music industry has changed since the early days of Glass Tiger, Frew says that with the advent of YouTube and social media, it's easier to become a musician with an audience, but that doesn't necessarily translate into becoming a bankable musician. "It's really just a mask. Because behind that mask you still have to deal with the issues of: Are you any good? Do you have a great song? How do you get it to go viral? How do you tour a country? How do you do these things? It really is a catch 22," he says.

On the otherhand, being a successful musician these days requires entrepreneurship. You become a musician by being one, Frew says. "Ironically, you're in the music industry, but where is the money going to come from? That's the difference."

And whether you make it big as a musician or not, Reid recommends some long-term financial planning.

"It's certainly one of those businesses where there is no pension, there's no 'I put in my 25 years here's a gold watch'. When it's over, it's over. You either do well and plan accordingly or it just ends one day. You don't think about it when you're 20-years-old and travelling the world; when you hit it big in a band there are moments

you make a lot of money. It's kind of like winning a lottery in a lot of ways. There's not always good stories at the end of those..."

Frew agrees. "When you're doing that, you're only thinking in the moment."

Reid says they got enough of a taste of it to know what it was like, but because of the area they were brought up in, they stayed humble.

"Coming off the tour bus when I got home and having my mom hand me the garbage and say, 'take it out', always kept me grounded," he says.

As the years went by, Glass Tiger went into part time mode. Frew ventured off on his own for two solo albums and has many song-writing credits to his name. He's also an accomplished author and public speaker.

Reid still calls East Gwillimbury home. He is, in his own words, "a lifer" here. He has a recording studio in Newmarket where he writes and produces music, and he's managing the career of Sudbury-native Joey Niceforo (an original member of The Canadian Tenors).

It's also not unheard of for Glass Tiger to perform periodically. Locally, they did a show at the Aurora Ribfest this past fall, and helped celebrate the 404



**The Town of East Gwillimbury's Annual
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December 2 to December 19
**Donations of food, new unwrapped toys and gift
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If you, or someone you know requires assistance this year, please contact
The Salvation Army at 905-895-6276.
All information is kept strictly confidential.

Drop off locations:

- Civic Centre, 19000 Leslie Street, Sharon
- Holland Landing and Mount Albert Library branches
- East Gwillimbury Sports Complex

For hours of operation visit www.eastgwillimbury.ca

 Town of East Gwillimbury 

Extension in East Gwillimbury with an afternoon show in August.

Frew says he'd like to see Glass Tiger gear up for the 30th anniversary of their first hit record when 2016 rolls around.

"I'm singing better right now than I ever did in my life. Glass Tiger is playing extremely well and we're having fun when we do it. From that perspective, it makes perfect sense that we're still doing it."

And even with all the time that has passed since that fateful night at Maple Leaf Gardens decades ago, it's still fresh in Reid's mind.

Fans of the band came to see the show at the Gardens from as far as - you guessed it - East Gwillimbury. A whole bus-load filled the front row to witness history in the making.

The anticipation of performing in front of such a large crowd for the first time was, according to Reid, like getting ready to jump out of an aircraft for a skydiving adventure.

"I remember walking out (on stage) and looking at how far away the 'EXIT' signs were in the aisles at Maple Leaf Gardens. It looked like they were 8 miles away. It just looked like there were people forever. That first night was just completely magical. I felt like, 'oh my god, this is what I want to do'."

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to yours,*

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Councillor's
James R. Young,
Tara Roy-DiClemente,
Marlene Johnston,
Joe Persechini,
and staff*



MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NEW YEAR'S PANCAKE BREAKFAST & FAMILY SKATE

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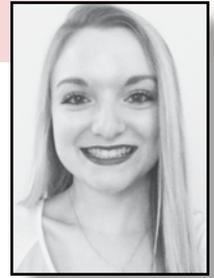
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An (Im)perfect Christmas

Ever since I was a little girl, Christmas has always been my favorite season. Although, like many, I am not a huge fan of our cold Canadian winters. There is just something about Christmas that brightens the mood in my household. You see, during the Christmas season you will spot me dangling from my rooftop because my Dad failed to position a certain strand of Christmas lights just the way I would have liked. You could also probably catch me throwing out the dozen cookies I made for my boyfriend's family and starting from scratch because 'someone' forgot to set the timer. There I am, holding up the fallen Christmas tree to ensure no ornaments have broken until my parents come home...an hour and a half later.

At Christmas time, wrapping presents early is totally a must-do. The elegant, most divine shiny red paper just lifts my spirit... until it is ripped up into a million little pieces from my maniac of a dog. No matter how hard I try, something just seems to go wrong. If it's not getting my car stuck in my ditch on Christmas Eve on the way to buy a last minute gift, then it's rescuing my 84-year-old grandmother from the ice storm – and just so you know, both happened last Christmas. I find that the nonsense just never seems to end! Some may call me a perfectionist when it comes to Christmas, but this is only because no matter how hard I try, it is absolutely impossible for Christmas to be completely perfect. You know all of those Christmas carols that play over and over on the radio? Well, I can't help but notice that the majority of them only talk about how peaceful Christmas is. YA RIGHT! Forget "The twelve days of Christmas", it's more like "The 12 PAINS of Christmas", and number one on that list should be finding a Christmas tree.

We try to do this thing in my house where every year someone new gets to pick out the tree. However, I am the youngest of three and the only one still living at home. So for the past few years you can only imagine how flawless our tree has looked in our living-room window thanks to me. My middle sister seems to always think that our house grows 5 times its size at Christmas when it is her turn to pick out the tree. She picks out the tallest, most fattest tree on the farm, whereas my oldest sister does the complete opposite. The classic Charlie Brown tree seems to be a hit for my oldest sister and is typically one that does not sit well with the rest of us. My Mom always tries her best to ease the tension on the hay wagon as we take the straggly little thing to get strapped onto our car – something that seriously does not fall under the perfect Christmas category.

So what is it about the Christmas season that I actually do enjoy? The answer to that is simple. All of these imperfections have just simply become traditions, and without them, Christmas would not be the same. This year I cannot wait for Christmas to get here. I envision my angel of a Mother decorating that classic Charlie Brown tree while I burn cookies and rewrap half chewed presents. I picture my Dad clinging to the ladder with ears as red as Santa's nose reinforcing the lights that I just HAD to fix. And of course the image of my sisters and I unwrapping our new pajamas on Christmas Eve (that always seem to either be a size too big or too small) just puts the cherry on top of an (im)perfect Christmas spent with my crazy but wonderful family.

Michayla Fraser is a writer from Holland Landing who is planning on pursuing a career within the Journalism field.

WHAT CAN THE NEW YEAR BRING YOU?



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Mount Albert School Days

A history of the early schools - Part 1

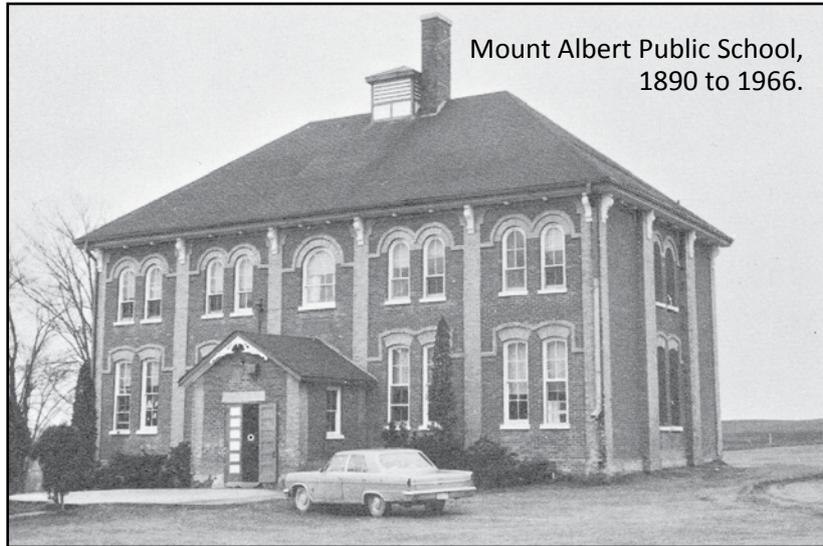
The Robert Munsch Public School has recently opened on King Street East which means Mount Albert now has two schools. However, the area had two schools by the early 1850s: the North School and the South School.

In 1852, the hamlet did not exist. The community then consisted of farm clearings scattered throughout the area. On March 1, 1849, a school, probably of logs, was built on Lot 14, Concession 9. By 1856, a newer school for that section was erected at the northwest corner of Centre and Doane Roads. There is currently a house on that site. This was a union school with pupils also attending from Scott Township to the east. This school was built by William Stokes, and burned by the end of the year. Arson was suspected. A new school on the site was burned in 1876, and it was followed by a two-roomed school that was in use until 1890. This was the North School.

Class size is a big issue these days. In 1879, it was reported that the teachers, Mr. Crosby and Miss Anderson, had 112 pupils between them. That's about 56 pupils each.

The 1852 census of East Gwillimbury listed a school on Lot 9, Concession 8, which was the second farm lot south of Mount Albert Road. By 1856, a new school had been built at the southeast corner of Herald and Centre Roads. This South School was also a union school with Scott Township, was sometimes known as the Mainprize School, and later the Franklin School. William Mainprize lived nearby.

In 1916, William Walker Anderson of Irvington, California, where he ran the Anderson College, mentioned in a letter to the Newmarket Era that the school south of Mount Albert was at the four corners near Mr. Mainprize's. He knew the area. His wife was a local



Shuttleworth girl and probably attended that school.

A new Franklin School was built in 1899 further to the east on the south side of Herald Road where it was in use until the new central school was built in Mount Albert in 1966. Bill and Betty Sanders later built their home on the old Franklin School lot.

As the hamlet of Mount Albert developed, pupils from there had to walk all the way up to the North School at Doane Road. In 1890, a new, two-roomed school was built closer to the village. That is the site where the Ross Family Complex is now located. This school was in use until 1966 when the new school was erected on Mount Albert Road. A continuation class was started there in 1901 with 18 pupils who wanted to study beyond Grade 8. A graduate of the continuation class was Oswald Smith who went on to Bible School and to start the Peoples Church.

A new continuation school was built at the north end of Alice Street in 1930, and was in use until 1947 after which pupils went to High school in Newmarket.

The newspaper reported in February of 1892 that the new school mistress of the juvenile school was using the strap freely much more than the previous one.

In the fall of 1895, Mr. Tinsdale, the teacher, had occasion to correct a girl. The next day, she and her sister waylaid him while he was passing their home and attacked him with a stick and a loaded whipstock. He brought them before Magistrate John Rawdon, Reeve of East Gwillimbury, who fined the girl and her father \$12.80.

Once again in 2014 Mount Albert has a North School and a South School.

Allan McGillivray grew up near Mount Albert and still resides a few miles away.



Ho Ho, Home For Sale

Selling a home during the holidays can be tough. If you are in this situation this year you may not want to deck the halls as much as you would usually do. Instead, try to use your Christmas décor to emphasize your house's best features. Start outside by stringing lights in one colour, preferably white and keep them to a minimum. Pare down and concentrate your Christmas décor to only a few areas throughout the house. One area that this can be done is in the living room or family room where you have a fireplace. Adorn your mantel with a simple fresh cedar garland and a few white shimmering lights, or place white birch logs in a fireplace for colour or hang a fresh wreath above the mantel.



If you have a front table in your hall you can use a collection of your favourite baubles and place them in a bowl or a rectangular tray to add a touch of spirit to the entry way.

Susan Crema-Martin is a Certified Master Canadian Staging Professional who works with clients that are selling their home or are looking for assistance in redesigning their space they live in.

Susan Crema-Martin is a Certified Master Canadian Staging Professional who works with clients that are selling their home or are looking for assistance in redesigning their space they live in.



Your stone kitchen counter top can show off a bowl of decorations in this space too and it will draw the buyer's eye to the counter top as well.

If you require a tree for the holidays, consider putting up a table top tree instead of one that has a 5 foot girth. During the holidays it is important for buyers to be able to see potential space in the house and how their furnishings will fit in the house. Don't try and

disguise your property with lots of Christmas clutter.

In staging, it is a rule of thumb to stay away from decorating with religious items so as not to offend any potential buyer.

The buying activity does slow down during the Christmas season but viewings will still occur. By keeping the decorating scaled down, you not only save yourself some work but you also create less clutter for the buyers to see through and for you to clean around.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a successful house sale.

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Local couple preparing to celebrate 75 years of wedded bliss

By Blair Matthews

For local Mount Albert residents Bill and Violet Kirton, the world looks a whole lot different now than when they started dating more than three-quarters of a century ago.

It was the late 1930s when Bill met his sweetheart Violet - both were 20-years-old (Violet is just 40 days older than Bill).

At the time, Bill was 'going with' Violet's sister. But, as it turned out, Bill and Violet were the ones that were meant to end up together.

They recall driving out to see a show in Uxbridge for their first date.

They were married about a year later. The couple spent their honeymoon in Midland where they recall spending a Saturday night and a Sunday afternoon. When they left for home, they were turned back by a snowstorm that closed the



roads and stayed over another night.

Times were certainly different then, with both the vehicles and the snow clearing equipment. "Those were the days when I had a Model T Ford," Bill remembers.

At 15-years-old, Bill bought his first T. "I didn't even have a licence to drive it, but I'd pick up a bunch of young bucks from around where I worked and we'd go to Uxbridge and drive around. Back then you'd never see a policeman," Bill says.

Mount Albert was a tiny hamlet when the Kirtons were newlyweds; population 725. It was considered to be a thriving village. Seventy years

later, Mount Albert is still expanding.

As seniors living in Mount Albert, they'd like to see an assisted living facility built in East Gwillimbury.

Continued on Page 22.

Season's Greetings

Thank you!

From the bottom of my heart, I thank the voters of East Gwillimbury for placing their confidence in me.

“ I will do everything I can to make our community a better place to live, work and play and raise a family. ”

My sincere thanks also to my campaign team, especially my executive committee, for all your hard work over the past several months. We have knocked on every door in town, through all sorts of weather.

My mentor, Whipper Billy Watson, always told me, "surround yourself with good people and great things will happen." I could never have done this by myself, and I am grateful.

I'd also like to thank the many residents who so graciously accepted lawn signs.

But most of all I thank my wife, Rosalie, for her unfailing support all these years. I love you, Rosalie! And of course my thanks to my beautiful family; you make me so very proud (especially my grandchildren!).

Again, my humble thanks to the voters of East Gwillimbury. Please do not hesitate to contact me anytime as we work together over the next four years.

Joe

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Some residents who have lived in the area their whole lives wouldn't have any choice but to move to a different town if they needed constant care. Currently the closest facility is in Newmarket.

So what's the secret behind 75 years of wedded bliss? Violet says it's sharing, and, as she calls it, "One purse." Both contributed to their relationship and finances equally, but in different ways. They have no debt, and as Bill says, if Violet makes a suggestion about something, he goes along with it.

It's not uncommon to see one or both out and about in Mount Albert - at 95 years of age, both still have driver's licences.

They still do their own shopping and are very active in their church.

Bill worked for the Bell Telephone Company for years and went on to work for York Region Roads. "Between my three boys and myself," Bill says, "we put in over 111 years for York Region Roads."

They had five children (4 boys and a girl), but unfortunately, one boy passed away a number of years ago. Their youngest, a daughter, came along 19 years after her youngest brother.

Bill and Violet now have 10 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren, and 2 great great grandchildren.

And as their 96th birthdays approach, Violet attributes her longevity, at least in part, to her family genes. "My mother was in her 97th year when she passed away; her mother was 97 when she passed away."

On Bill's side, his great great grandmother lived to be 107, his great grandfather was 104, and his grandfather was 96.

Being married for 75 years certainly sounds like it could be a Canadian record... not so. A month ago, a Parry Sound, Ontario couple celebrated their 81st Wedding Anniversary.

But with both Violet and Bill in good health and no signs of slowing down, they could certainly be headed towards that record.

The Kirtons will be celebrating their 75th Wedding Anniversary with an Open House on January 17, 2015 at Royal Oak Apartments, 40 Royal Oak, Mount Albert from 1-4pm in the Solar Room. Best Wishes only.

From the Legion

by **Cathy Morton**

MOUNT ALBERT LEGION BRANCH # 382 STATUS REPORT POPPY TRUST ACCOUNT - OCT 1 2013- SEPT 30 2014

OPENING BALANCE - OCT 1 - 2013 :	\$9,779.47
INCOME FROM CAMPAIGN & OTHER SOURCES	\$11,502.97
SUB TOTAL	\$ 21,282.44
 CAMPAIGN EXPENSES:	
POPPIES & WREATHS	\$ 2,394.10
 DISBURSEMENTS:	
GRANTS TO VETERANS	\$ 1,718.75
BURSURIES	\$ 1,000.00
DONATIONS	\$ 7,063.63
YOUTH EDUCATION	\$ 214.76
SUB TOTAL	\$ 9,997.14
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$12,391.24
 CLOSING BALANCE - SEPT 30TH, 2014	 \$ 8,891.20



Season's Greetings

The winds are getting frigid and crisp, the trees are becoming barren. Our wardrobes must now include gloves and hats and scarves and boots and etcetera and etcetera. Our breaths are visible on the frosty air while our cheeks are permanently tinted pink. Hat hair is certainly the newest fashion on the scene. Jack Frost's artwork is in sight on our windows, his way of wishing us a happy wintry morning. The festive season is upon us – the most wonderful time of the year.



Children are playing in the newly fallen snow, creating snow angels, snow forts and snowmen. Snowball fights, ice skating, and sledding are the ways they spend their weekends. After a long day of cold feet, noses and fingers, a hot chocolate will hit the spot. Warm bellies by the fire with a book in hand are the moments in which we look forward to.

It's that time of year where the Christmas decorations come out and we all get festive and cheery. Lights and ornaments, jingle bells and tinsel – who can make their tree the most extravagant? The mantel is set with garlands and wreaths, stockings and don't forget snow globes! The fireplace is lit, flames of orange and yellow, cackling with seasons greetings. The list of duties to get done in time for December 25th is constantly growing. Gifts and cards, wrapping paper and ribbons, don't forget baking ingredients!

Cakes, pies, loafs and breads, an extra batch of cookies for Santa – chocolates and truffles with a mystery filling and a box of striped candy canes ready for the tree. There's bowls of chestnuts waiting to be roasted, marshmallows for hot cocoa and don't forget whip cream too. Our pants become tighter, our sweaters snuggler from all the delicious treats that need to be tasted. It's the month of giving from presents to love, showing kindness and thanks to our family and friends.

Christmas movies are on television from morning to night, bringing back lovely childhood memories. Story books are read, as we say goodnight (with sugarplums

dancing in our heads). The feeling in the air makes you feel good and happy, not a care in the world to bring down your mood. Malls and stores are all done up, people are rushing everywhere. Only a few weeks until the big day and of course your list is still never ending.

A big feast with a turkey, stuffing and mashed potatoes, gravy to top it all off – you don't think you'll eat again for weeks. Dessert is to follow with fruit and baked goods, you pour your coffee while you change into sweatpants. Christmas carols are sung around the tree, laughter and smiles fill the room. Children ripping open gifts with big grins on their faces while parents and grandparents look on with love in their eyes. The clock strikes midnight and eyes are closing, another year has come and gone.

This time of the year is busy and hectic but no matter how crazy it is, no matter the messes that are made, the arguing that is had (because we all know that it happens) this one day a year brings families and friends closer together in love and gratitude. It brings back memories of laughter and past holidays to remember and cherish for a lifetime.

Merry Christmas to all, and to all a goodnight East Gwillimbury!

Alexandria Lipani is a York University communications student. She is a writer and aspiring journalist from Queensville.

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Santa Comes to East Gwillimbury



By Blair Matthews

The Town of East Gwillimbury welcomed Santa Claus and a host of great floats, bands and organizations at their annual Santa Claus Parade on Sunday, November 16.

For more great Santa Claus Parade fun, make sure to check out the Mount Albert Lions Santa Claus Parade on Saturday, December 6 at 11 am.

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Wishing our clients and the community a Merry Christmas!



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From our family to yours, we wish you Happy Holidays!

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Young actor from Queensville is reaching for the stars

Jadon Clews won a prestigious Joey Award on November 16th, 2014 at an award ceremony in Vancouver in the category of Best Commercial, ages 12 to 19. The Joey Awards recognize young actors and actresses across the nation for their work within the film industry.

Jadon was also nominated for the category Best Short Film, ages 10 to 12.

You would most likely recognize him in the Walmart commercial where he outgrew his spring clothes and his line was "Cool I love it, my voice, my voice," with a voice crack.

Jadon has only been working in film and television for a year and has completed 9 films.

Starting in the business at the late age of 12 is unusual but achievable so believe in yourself and shoot for the stars!



For more information on Jadon's acting career:

http://www.imdb.com/name/nm6190084/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1

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Holiday Nutrition Advice from My Dad

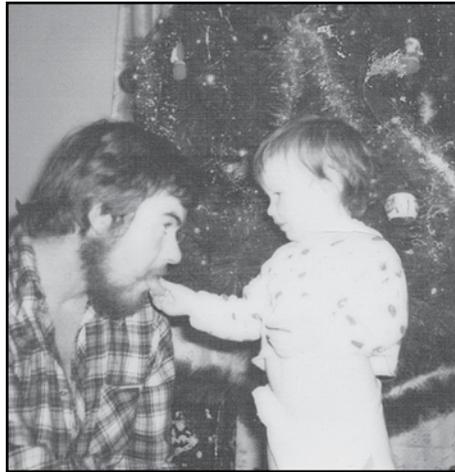
Well, the holidays are officially upon us and at this time of year I am always at a bit of a loss as to what to write. No one really wants to be told what they are doing wrong this time of year; no one is really interested in making a big lifestyle or nutrition change right now. We all have too many things going on now that making another change (or reading another article about what you shouldn't be eating at that holiday party) just isn't a priority. So, what is a nutritionist to write about over the holiday season? Another "holiday survival" tip? Maybe some healthy appetizer ideas for Christmas parties? Nothing seemed right.

I was discussing my dilemma over lunch with my Dad the other day (we aim to have a weekly lunch that is great downtime for both of us) and he said something so perfect that I thought – that's it! That's what my December article should be about! So what perfect nutritional advice did dear old Dad have to share?

"It's not what you eat between Christmas and New Year's that matters; it's what you eat between New Year's and Christmas."

Leave it to Dad. It's not that I haven't heard the expression before, I'm sure I have even said it before, but it came at just the right time. Why stress out over a couple of weeks when we have fifty other ones to make a difference with!

The holidays should be a time to enjoy, not dread! They only come once a year and before you know it they're gone. We get so filled with anxiety at the prospect of the family



gatherings or the company holiday party with all of the temptations lying in wait for us. We worry about our waistlines and lack of gym time, we stress out that we "overdid it" and then worry about working it off for the rest of the week. That's no way to enjoy the holidays! If you're doing your best all year round, enjoy a holiday cookie, enjoy a cocktail or two, just don't indulge like that all year round! It's really pretty simple when you think of it. Two weeks out of the year isn't going to make it or break it. I've always been a big believer that stress is one of the worst things we can do to our body – if you stress about every little thing that you do "wrong" over the holiday season you will miss the enjoyment of the holidays altogether!

er! If you want to indulge a little, go for it, but do it without the guilt!

Now, before you head out to the next party and eat everything in sight, remember, you're relaxing a little, not storing for hibernation! A few parties and treats won't ruin a season but try not to treat the holiday season like a two week "all you can eat" buffet!

I promise Kim and I will be back to motivate you guys to get right back on track in January, but for now, relax just a little, enjoy the good times and good food with your friends and family. Unwind, de-stress and really enjoy everything the holidays have to offer. (Thanks Dad!)

Brandi is a Registered Nutritionist and certified Personal Trainer at Body Design. Body Design offers personal training, nutrition and lifestyle coaching to assist individuals achieve their fitness and weight loss goals. www.bodydesign.ca

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10 Reasons to Never Give Up

There are times when your best efforts seem not to be enough. Don't despair! It is entirely normal and human to feel unmotivated and disheartened from time to time. Many problems are disruptive, consuming and very stubborn opponents.

Setbacks Are Not Exceptional: setbacks, relapses, and symptom reappearance are normal. In fact, if you recover from any psychological disturbance without setback, that would be exceptional. Sure it would be nice if you just got better and better every day until you achieve full recovery, but that's just isn't the way it normally works. You might as well expect the occasional hiccup – forewarned is forearmed! Given that setbacks are normal, it is a good idea to accept the possibility of setbacks rather than living in fear of them.

Recovery Requires Practice, Patience, and Persistence: I have never seen anybody get better overnight. Rome wasn't built in a day and I'd bet that it took a lot longer than a couple of months to construct. So if you follow the 3P's (Practice, Patience and Persistence) you'll get there. After all, Rome did.

Small Achievements Add Up: every little bit of progress, you make counts in large amounts! Take notice of the small positive changes in your life. When you feel disheartened it is all too easy to discredit your achievements. So try making a fair and accurate assessment of your progress to date. Small change can be significant.

You Have Value In The World: however you may be thinking about yourself during your low times, the world needs you! Every time you act in a socially responsible way you are enhancing your environment. Do not underestimate your individual value and contribution to the world. Also remember that when you feel depressed or guilty or otherwise emotionally disturbed, you're probably not the best person to judge. Reserve your judgment for another day when you may have a more balanced and realistic view of yourself.

Nobody Is Perfect: no one is perfectly happy, healthy or perfect. As human beings we are fundamentally designed to be fallible. That means that humans are prone to make mistakes to sometimes behave self-destructively and to occasionally do bad things. Rather than condemning yourself on the basis of your human imperfection, try treating yourself with some compassion and understanding as you would a friend, (Being your own best friend). Perfection is a non-achievable goal. Focus instead on selecting specific and realistic aspects of yourself for improvement. Do this whilst accepting yourself as per-

fectly imperfect. Just like everybody else.

You May Feel Different Tomorrow: bear in mind that the way you feel influences the way you think. If today you're feeling depressed, anxious or angry, for example, it is highly likely that you will be thinking negative or angry provoking thoughts. Your negative thoughts can temporarily taint your view of life. Tomorrow you may feel differently, and may see the world in a much more favourable light. Make informed decisions based on facts rather than on feelings.

You Can Always Try Other Options: it may be that self-help isn't enough for you right now.

Medication: it can help.

Support Groups: there are many types of support groups available in the community.

Individual Therapy: seeing a therapist for regular sessions may give you the extra boost that you need. It may make a big difference.

Talking To Others Often Helps: if you're feeling discouraged with your progress the temptation can often be to keep quiet and tell no one. But talking to others about it can help in the following ways: friends or family may be able to offer much needed encouragement. Others may be able to offer you practical help. Talking to others can give you different perspective on your situation. Friends or family may help you to normalize your feelings and experiences by sharing some of their own. One caution has to be noted is the fact that you have to feel very comfortable with the people you confide in. You have to be sure that they will keep it to themselves.

You Are Not Alone: you're not the only one. No matter how you are feeling. The fact is that there are other people who feel the same way. Everybody struggles from time to time, even doctors, therapists and other professionals. That is because they are people first and professionals second. So rather than putting yourself on an island – come back to the mainland and join the human race.

Change Is An On-going Process: recovery is a process, not a one off event. You are far better off considering your efforts to triumph over your difficulties as a lifestyle shift rather than a finite endeavor. We humans all have to make an ongoing concerted effort to keep emotionally well. It helps to make a distinction between long, medium and short term goals. Enjoy the journey.

Raymond Mark has lived in East Gwillimbury for over 30 years. He is a psychotherapist in private practice. He has enjoyed coaching minor softball and has an interest in photography.



Give the Gift of Story

It is that time of year again. Halloween scarecrows have barely found their way home and Christmas raises its 'joyful,' head. I heard that there is an effort to restrain the gaiety and joy until after Remembrance Day, but the other day I heard seasonal music in stores. Maybe you are like I am. I get pretty twitchy around this time of year. Don't get me wrong, I love winter and jack frost nipping at my nose. I get a kick out of watching kids, their energy and their pure excitement but I have trouble every year with the Christmas list. I have children and their partners, grandchildren, friends and family to find gifts for and my requirements for presents make it hard to find anything.



I need them to be meaningful, different, environmentally sustainable, something that will give the receiver joy but not clutter their house and if possible it needs to create a memory so that years later, it still brings a smile of recollection to the receiver's face. You have to know, that is almost impossible and so as December 25 comes barreling towards me, I tend to get anxious. But this year, I think I have it; the perfect gift. I'm giving the gift of a story. Not a book (although that is not a bad idea) but a told story; a bit of myself.

I got the idea at a gathering not long ago when a woman told us a 20 minute Inuit tale. This was not a group of children but of adults and once it was clear that

she was telling us a story, all eyes were on her. The listeners leaned forward with rapt attention. I couldn't believe it when she was finished. The time had flashed by and the images in my mind were more vivid than they would have been had I been watching a movie. I shivered as she unraveled her tale of snow and ice. Later we talked about our experience. Most of the people there said no one had told them a story in

years. It had been a real gift. Thinking about it later I realized storytelling met all of my criteria for the perfect present. I called storyteller Janice Turner and asked her how I would wrap it up. That is what I am going to share with you here, just in case you have a gift problem too.

Storytelling comes naturally to us, she told me. Human beings have been telling stories since the beginning of time. Today TV and the internet have taken the place of many activities but we still tell stories. Did you hear the one about my trip, without snow tires, through that blizzard the other day? Scratch the surface of anyone you know on any given day and you will find a story. The only thing we don't often do is tell a formal story where a group sits and listens while the teller entertains. We know how to behave in front of the TV but have lost the practice of how to listen to a story. We see it as an activity for little children who are already in their pajamas. Not at all, says Ms. Turner.

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So, what do we need to think about if we are going to give the gift of story? First, find a story to tell. It should be something that you like. It will be easier to remember if you love it. An old family favorite is a good choice. Something heard as a child. It could be a story of some part of family history or it could be a tale Grandma used to tell, a fairy tale or fable. I have found myself telling my granddaughter stories when she creeps into my bed after having a nightmare. It is dark and I have been usually wakened out of a dead sleep. Under those conditions it has to be short and it has to be easy to remember because she certainly will ask me to tell it again during the day and, if I forget part, she remembers it.

Once you have chosen one, practice it. Let your first story be fairly short, maybe 10 or 15 minutes. You will be trying it out and training your audience so you don't want it be too long. Practicing doesn't mean memorizing, it just means knowing it. Stories change and morph from teller to teller. You don't need to get the words exactly right. What you do need to do though, is enjoy the telling and tell it like you mean it, with tone and depth to your words. If you are not an actor, don't worry about it. A well told story doesn't need to be acted out, just enjoyed. If you enjoy it as the teller, the listeners will too.

Stories often start with the proverbial, once upon a time but they don't have to. I have heard, "in a time not so very long ago, maybe last week," or "no one knows what she did to ..." but there is a very definite starting point and end point, even if it is just, "the end."

Once you are ready, decide who you are gifting it to. Because we are so unused to this form of entertainment, you might be a bit nervous so find someone you trust for your first time out. I am picturing telling my family a story on Christmas Day. Janice recommends not telling under the tree just before or after gifts are opened. You want peoples attention. How about pushing back your chair and doing it while people are having their dessert and coffee, before the kids get restless and start fidgeting so just after the plates are passed out. She says, "push away from the table and claim the floor. Tell people you are about to give them their Christmas gift so could they please give you their attention."

Don't allow your fears to make you shy. Oh, you can be shy but be firm. Speak in a voice that can be heard and jump right in. She told me, the first attack of nerves will go as soon as you launch into the story. Then, don't make any judgments about how people like it while you are telling. Some listen to a story with their eyes closed. Some people will be so surprised that their jaws may slacken or they may look startled. Those looks can sometimes be interpreted by someone who is not feeling too secure, as disapproval, boredom or just plain

dislike. Don't let your inner critic tell you what any of those postures mean. Jump in and stay there. If it looks like you are losing the youngsters, you can shorten it and bring the ending closer but do go through and bring it to a close.

If your audience loves it as Janice predicts they will, you can do it again with more confidence. You may find your audience wants to get in on the act and instead of turning on the TV, the kids may want to tell you their stories too. At first, theirs might ramble or be very silly but they are developing a skill that will do very well by them for their whole lives.

Storytelling takes us back to a simpler time. It reminds us of our roots and develops our brains in a way that 'screens' can't. It is a gift that will stay in the memory for a long time, takes up no space and never needs dusting. The cost is minimal but it will stay with those who have heard it for a long time. It is the perfect gift.

If you decide to give the gift of story, have fun and let me know so we can tell each other stories of how it went. Merry Christmas.

Vicki Pinkerton lives on a small farm just outside of Mount Albert. When she is not driving the roads of Canada she is a practicing life coach, a writer and adventurer who wonders about many things. www.questacrosscanada.com or lifelinescoaching.org.

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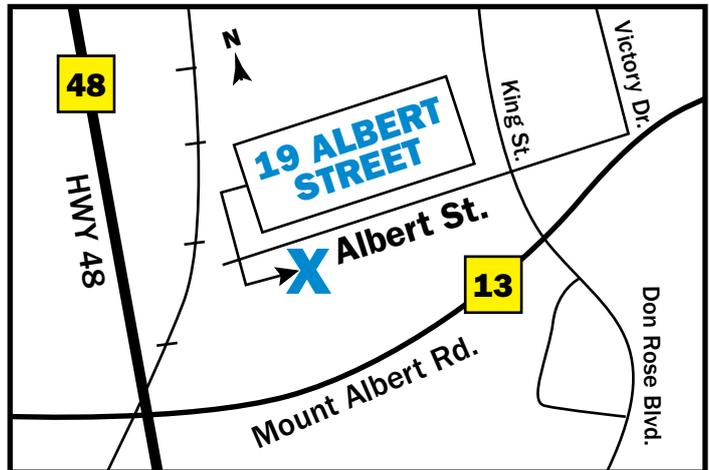
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