

# HOME *ON THE* *Green*

COMMUNITY LIFE IN THE  
BALLANTRAE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB



## In This Issue:

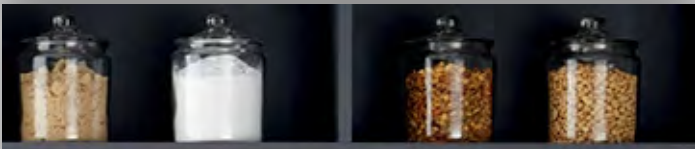
Recipes for  
Holiday Entertaining

Carron Canning,  
the Stork of Ballantrae

Made in Canada:  
Hudson's Bay Point Blanket

Post-COVID Travel Bucket List

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# HOME ON THE Green

P.O. Box 849 Stouffville, ON L4A 7Z9

**A magazine for and about the residents of  
The Ballantrae Golf & Country Club Community.  
A positive community voice to inform and entertain.**

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<b>Publisher</b>	Elaine Saksons
<b>Editor</b>	Anita Draycott
<b>Assistant Editor</b>	Karen Clark
<b>Social Liaison</b>	Kathy Billington
<b>Administrative Support</b>	Ninette Correa
<b>Contributing Writers</b>	Lynne Balfour Johanna Burkhard Donna Clark Linda LeGallais Greg McCain Al Moldon Jan Richards Luba Quadrini Evelyn St. Clair Alison Scowcroft Maurice Smith Philippe Martin Teillet Blair Tullis
<b>Proofreaders</b>	Mary Hallam, <i>Coordinator</i> Helen Mitchell Diane Ross
<b>Contributing Photographers</b>	Robert Pitour, <i>Coordinator</i> Lynne Balfour Carron Canning Greg McCain Glenn McGeorge Al Moldon Luba Quadrini Philippe Martin Teillet Blair Tullis
<b>Production Coordinator</b>	Terry Coulson 416-606-5876
<b>Advertising Sales</b>	Bill Hewitt, <i>Coordinator</i> <a href="mailto:bhewitt@rogers.com">bhewitt@rogers.com</a> John Pittaway, <i>Administrator</i> Bruce Forty Lynn Gale Maggie Pittaway Imants Saksons Linda Tanaka Carol Taplin
<b>Distribution</b>	Norm Bresser Al Moldon
<b>Comptroller</b>	Marie Hewitt
<b>Board of Directors</b>	Donna Clark, <i>Chair</i> Anne Brewing Paul Mak Terry Maloney Elaine Saksons Ginny Tullis
<b>Founding Editor</b>	Ruth Flanagan
<b>Graphic Design</b>	UNITE Creative Inc.
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*Home on the Green* welcomes submissions from residents of our community for possible inclusion in the magazine. Send articles and news items in WORD format to [magazine@hotg.ca](mailto:magazine@hotg.ca). *Home on the Green* reserves the right to accept, edit or reject any submitted article. All such contributors are deemed to have consented to the publication – either in print or online – of any information submitted by them.



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# MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

BY ANITA DRAYCOTT



Season's greetings everyone!

I do believe that there is light at the end of the long pandemic tunnel. Borders are opening. Armed with our vaccination passports, we are now able to go places and do things not available to us last year.

With that in mind, I thought that instead of telling you about all the interesting reads in this issue, I would share some extremely useful instructions about putting your vaccination passport on your iPhone. These are provided by Al Moldon, our resident "PC Doctor." Consider it a Christmas present from "Santa Al."

Wouldn't it be nice if you could open your iPhone and, with just two taps, display your vaccination QR code on a colour screen? No more searching for the photo you took of the code or fumbling for a piece of paper with your vaccination receipt on it when you go into your favourite restaurant or submit your travel documents at the airport.

Good news! Apple has incorporated the QR code display into its



latest version of the IOS operating system of the phone. Here is how to set it up.

1. **Ensure your iPhone operating system is at level 15.1. This procedure won't work if it's not updated to 15.1. Note: you can only put the update on phones 6+ or newer and this only works on iPhones.**
2. Obtain your QR code from your Provincial web site. For Ontario residents: <http://covid19.ontariohealth.ca>. Follow the prompts. You will need the numbers on both the front and back of your Health Card. Print out your QR code on a piece of paper.
3. Open the camera app and hold it over the QR code.
4. Tap on the health app.
5. Tap to add to health and wallet.
6. Open wallet app.
7. Tap on vaccination card.

That's it. Now the QR code is in your wallet app.

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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR COUNCILLOR MORE FROM MAURICE



## Community Vision Report

In my March 2021 article I addressed the residential and commercial growth that is predicted for Stouffville in the coming years. I indicated that considerable planning must be undertaken well in advance of a shovel being put in the ground. To this end, be advised that in April, council set aside funds for a number of plans to begin. Master plans for fire, transportation, leisure services, water and library services were being worked on starting this past summer. Final reports on needs and a strategy to meet future requirements will come to council in early 2022.

The latest Official Plan will establish a unified community vision and a policy direction for managing growth and development for the future. It will be a plan to address active lifestyle, growth management, walkability and safety. It will also set directives for managing land use changes that will adhere to preserving our natural environment and agricultural lands. The combination of these standards will include our best efforts to take into account climate sensitivities.

I support this exercise and made the motion at council that we endorse in principal the Draft Community Vision Report and that we direct staff to proceed with the next phase.

## COVID-19 Update

Like many corporate offices and commercial businesses, our town had to make many adjustments to handle the pandemic. The town offices were closed for more than 18 months so most employees worked from home. However, Customer Service was always open and staff rotated through other departments.

Many precautions were taken for those in departments such as Roads and Public Works where employees were mandated to continue to maintain town facilities. However even these employees were required to adhere to strict rules--only one employee per vehicle, etc. Also, the Works Department staff were split up so that only a selected number of employees would be in the Works Yard at a time. Also, many citizens in Ward 2 would have noticed a number of the departmental vehicles parked at the Ballantrae Community Centre. The department had been split up to allow some employees to use this location as their central gathering point and for their meetings with managers.

With respect to our council I am happy to mention that we did not miss holding any of our scheduled meetings.

They were all done via ZOOM and this proved to be a most effective way to stay in touch with participants, staff, agencies and delegations.

Hopefully by the time you are reading this we will all be back to a somewhat more normal schedule and regular office participation.

## Traffic issues

As this great community of Ballantrae continues to grow from a residential small village into a more all-round section of Stouffville, the number one issue is the traffic that comes with it.

Many of our main roads are governed either by the province and/or the Region of York. However, that is no reason for me to give up on advocating for calming and traffic enforcement. To this end you will notice minor changes in the speed limits on Aurora Road. For me these are only minor changes and I will continue to advocate on behalf of all Ward residents for a major rethinking of this issue by all parties.

## Stouffville Construction

When you exit from Highway 404 onto Aurora Road you will have noticed a significant movement of earth and realigning on the south-east corner.

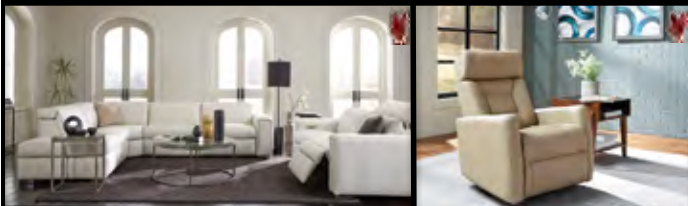
The ground work being undertaken is for the layout, among other improvements, for a building to house an automotive assembly plant owned by Mr. Frank Stronach. This facility will be his latest venture into the electric automobile industry. The assembly plant will bring in excess of 150 new jobs to this area of Stouffville.

The electric vehicle assembly plant is only one change coming to this 20-hectare piece of property. The land closest to Highway 404 is controlled by the Oak Ridges Moraine legislation. This area will be converted into a park containing a sports field and walking trails. Stay tuned for an exciting change to this whole area.

## Seasons Greetings

For many of us, 2021 has been a very trying year. There has been less travelling and more staying at home. However, our family (and I trust yours), count our blessings that we live in such a location as BGCC. Not a bad place to have to stay! Jane and I wish you all the best of the season and a happy, prosperous New Year. If you plan on being away this winter travel safely.

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# Canadian Superstars

BY LINDA LEGALLAIS



For a relative “lightweight” on the world stage Canada has produced its share of sports heroes. I’d like to feature three of them here. Oh, and they all have hooves!



*Northern Dancer*

Even people who have no interest in the equine world will surely have heard of Northern Dancer, Canada’s most successful racehorse. This thoroughbred was born on May 27, 1961 at E.P. Taylor’s Windfields Farm in Oshawa, Ontario. When he was offered for sale as a yearling for the bargain price of \$25,000 there were no takers so the Taylors kept him. At only 15 hands he was considered small for the track. But he went on to prove his doubters wrong. Although his career was short (lasting less than two years), his accomplishments were outstanding. In his 19 races he came third twice, second twice and first 15 times. He was the first Canadian horse to win the Kentucky Derby in 1964. He went on to win the Preakness but unfortunately he placed third in the Belmont to deny him the Triple Crown. He returned to Canada to win the Queen’s Plate that year which would be his final race.

As a stud he had no match. He sired many winners including the great Nijinsky. In fact, all 20 horses in the 2014 Kentucky Derby could trace their lineage back to the “Dancer.” He died on November 16, 1990 of colic at the age of 29. He was buried

looking over Windfields Farms and was the first non-human to be inducted into Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame.



*Big Ben & Ian Millar*

While Dancer was thought to be too small, another Canadian favourite, at 17.3 hands high, was considered to be too big. Big Ben was born on April 20, 1976 in Belgium. When Ian Millar, “Captain Canada,” first met the gentle giant, something magical happened and he knew he had to have him. He purchased the Belgian Warmblood for \$45,000. This team went on to equestrian glory by winning 40 Grand Prix titles worldwide, including six Derbys at Spruce Meadows in Calgary, two world cup show jumping titles in 1988/89, and a fourth place finish at the Seoul Olympics. Ben had his share of tragedies too. He survived two serious bouts of colic and was in a terrible head-on collision that caused the trailer he was in to roll over. Two horses died that day and another’s career was ended. Fortunately, Ben survived and he went on to win a Grand Prix event a few months later. In December 1999 he was diagnosed with colic again and was

**Continued on page 9**



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# Canadian Superstars

CONTINUED...

humanely euthanized. He is buried at Ian Millar's Millar Brooke Farm and has since joined Northern Dancer in Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.

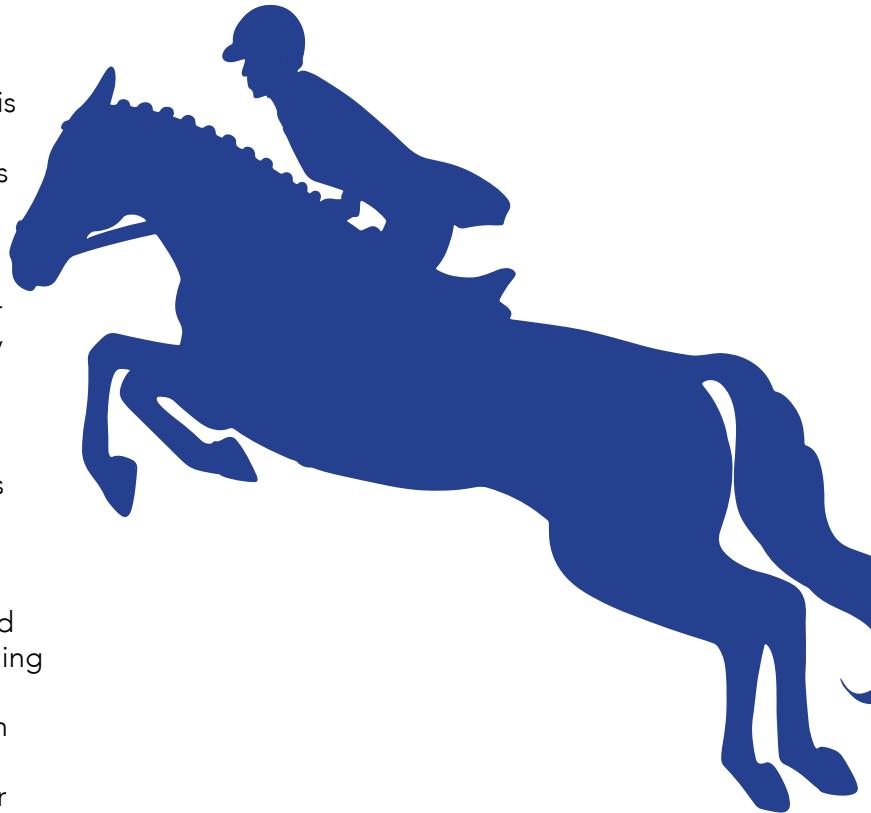


*Hickstead & Eric Lamaze*

Last, but not least, is my sentimental favourite, Hickstead. Lesser known than the other two he is nonetheless just as incredible. A 16-hand Dutch Warmblood, born in Belgium in 1996, he too was considered small for the Grand Prix circuit. His "hot and rebellious" personality caused many buyers to overlook him. I think it was fate that he ended up being teamed with Canadian rider Eric Lamaze who has a rather controversial story himself. He is well worth reading about! These two bad boys went on to achieve equestrian greatness, with a few bumps along the way. I haven't room to list all of their accomplishments from their 2006 Nations Cup win in Florida to winning the CN International Cup at Spruce Meadows in 2007. At the 2008 Pan Am Games they took Team Silver and Individual Bronze, and Team Silver and Individual Gold at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Hickstead also won the title of "Best Horse in the World" at the FEI World Equestrian Games. He went on to win more international competitions and was at the height of his career when tragedy struck. On November 6, 2011 during

an International competition in Italy with Eric in the saddle, Hickstead collapsed and died of an aortic rupture. He was only 15 years old. The fans in the stands were horrified. The equestrian world was left shocked and grieving. At the time Hickstead was ranked the number one show horse in the world. Eric Lamaze has continued his successful career but ranks Hickstead as that, "once in a lifetime horse." One of his grooms said that although Hickstead had a mind of his own he was also friendly and loved to cuddle. On a more uplifting note, Hickstead joined his fellow horses by being inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame this past September.

I hope you have enjoyed reading about some of Canada's premier horses. Each one, along with their riders, has given us all reasons to be proud.



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# Hudson's Bay Point Blanket

BY JAN RICHARDS



Hudson's Bay Point Blanket

A Hudson's Bay point blanket is a type of wool blanket that was traded for beaver pelts in the early days of the fur trade in North America. Wool blankets accounted for sixty per cent of the commodities that were desired. In 1779, an independent French fur trader, Germain Maugenest, met with the Hudson's Bay

Company and suggested ways to improve inland trade. One of his suggestions was that the company should stock and trade "pointed" blankets.

The first point blanket was created by French weavers and the number of points determined the finished size of a blanket. The term point is derived from the French word "empointer" which means "to make threaded stitches on cloth."

Points are short black lines woven into the selvage or outside edge of the blanket. The size of the point stitch indicates the overall size of the blanket which is easily determined when the blanket is folded. Traders used the points to determine how many beaver pelts could be traded – one point equalled one beaver pelt.

Originally point blankets had a single stripe across each end – usually red or blue. By the 1800s, these blankets began to be produced with green, red, yellow and indigo stripes on a white background – the four stripes were popular and easily produced using colourfast dyes. These four colours are often referred to as Queen



Coueurs des bois



Traditional "capotes"

Anne's colours because they became popular during her reign in the 1700s.

The weavers in Witney, Oxfordshire, a town famous for its woollen blankets since the Middle Ages, were the principal suppliers of Hudson's Bay point blankets. A blend of wool from Britain and New Zealand was selected for their special qualities that made the blankets water resistant, soft and strong.



The wool is dyed before it is spun, then air dried to brighten the colours. The blankets are woven fifty per cent larger than their final milled size.

From the early days of the fur trade, wool blankets were made into hooded coats called "capotes" by the Indigenous people and the French Canadian voyageurs—well suited for Canadian winters.

Today, Hudson's Bay blankets are commonly found in sizes to accommodate all beds (3.5 point for twin, 4 point for double, 6 point for queen and 8 point for king size beds.)

On May 2, 2020, HBC celebrated its 350th anniversary, at which time it re-released a series of special, limited edition blankets in a variety of historic colourways and patterns.



350th anniversary Sterling Wool Point blanket.

For over two centuries, the Hudson's Bay point blanket has been an iconic Canadian product which has been sold around the world. Point blankets are enjoyed today as much as they were when first introduced to the fur trade in 1780 and these blankets still represent the pure warmth of Canadiana!

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# Help is Just a Wrist Away

BY AL MOLDON



It is well known that one of the side effects of aging is the reduced ability to maintain balance which can result in unexpected falls. This can be especially problematic if you live alone and may have difficulty seeking assistance if a fall occurs. One solution is to wear a signalling device such as a pendant containing a push button to request help when needed. This device is usually restricted to use around the home as it relies on your home phone line or internet connection to place the emergency call. The monthly cost of the equipment and emergency operator service can also be significant.

However, in the last couple of years, an excellent alternative has been chosen by some BGCC residents -the Apple Watch. This device, now in its seventh version, has built-in automatic fall detection and the ability to call 911 even if the injured wearer is unconscious. The location of the fall is not restricted to the home and does not rely on your cell phone being nearby to call for help, so even a parking lot tumble can result in assistance to your actual location. Your emergency contacts will also be contacted to make them aware of your situation. Of course, if your detected fall is minor and you are OK, you have the option of cancelling unneeded help. The current monthly cost after purchasing the watch is only \$10.00 and no contract is required.

In addition to the fall detection feature, the Apple Watch offers many other convenient functions. Imagine that you are out on your daily walk on Masters South and your cell phone is at home. You are listening to your new Audible book using your Apple Watch as the source when your daughter calls your cell phone number with some news. The book story pauses, your watch "rings" with the same cell phone call which you answer by tapping the screen on the watch and then you simply start chatting. The Apple Watch acts like an extension phone to your cell phone with the same phone number!

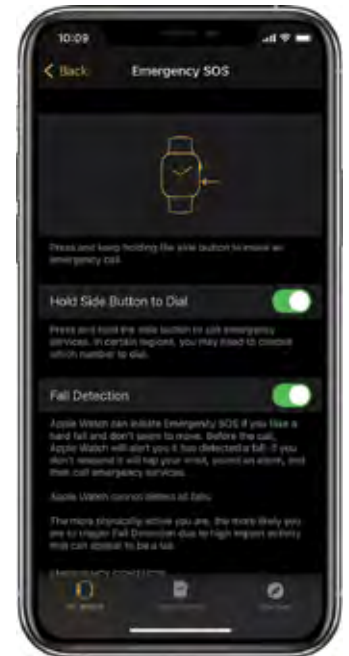
You can also check your Blood Oxygen level anytime with a 15 second test on the watch. Placing your index finger on the crown of the watch will allow it to take a 30 second snapshot of your heart and check for any signs of atrial fibrillation with your personal electrocardiogram (ECG). Results can be saved and sent to your doctor if necessary. Siri, the built-in assistant, will also answer your questions. For example, you can ask her about the weather for the weekend in

Huntsville. You can even wear the watch in the shower! It monitors your sleep patterns, acts as a timer as well as an alarm clock and can adjust the thermostat in your home to save energy. The built-in activity monitor tracks your steps, stairs climbed and exercise level to encourage a healthy lifestyle. You can answer texts and emails using your voice!

There is no question that the Apple Watch is my favourite device and I am sure you will be amazed at the extensive list of things it can do to help you as well. Check it out on the web at [www.apple.ca](http://www.apple.ca) for a complete description and pricing.



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# Trading Post Quality Foods

BY ALISON SCOWCROFT



Lori Cannon

When I interviewed Lori and James Cannon, the creators and owners of The Trading Post, I was very interested in hearing about how it all came to be. Before opening this lovely and unique store in 2002, James had been in retail working as a manager at both Zellers and Walmart and Lori was a CPA. James grew up in Greenbank and went to high school in Port Perry, and Lori is from Maxwell, Ontario. They met in their first year of university. Throughout our conversation, the thing that resonated the most with me was their passion for their customers and their employees. Customer service is truly an essential ingredient to their success.



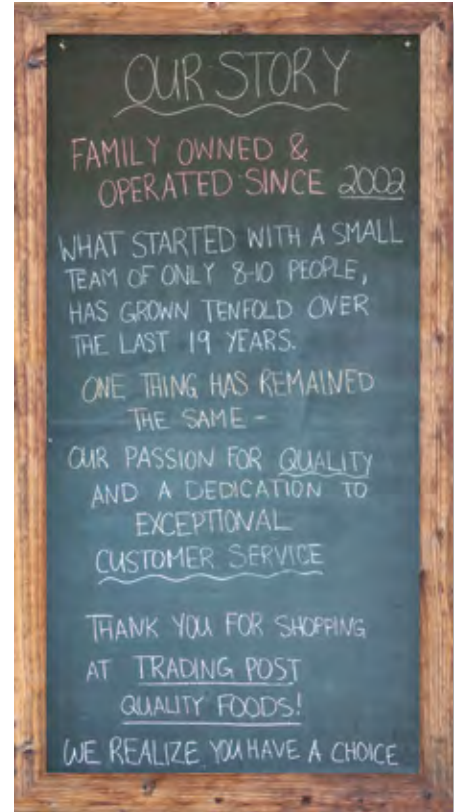
The building itself is very "rural Ontario" and it's worth the drive to Port Perry just to admire the structure. The foods they offer are, for the most part, locally sourced within a 100-mile radius, and they take particular pride in their meat counter and the "Butcher Girls" who work there. You can purchase stuffed chicken, salmon, pork, London Broil, steaks, prime rib and lamb. You name it, they carry it! Plus they will customize any cut you want.

They also offer a drive-through service where you drive up, someone comes to greet you, takes your order, fills your order and brings it back to your car. So convenient!

There is an extensive frozen food section with entrées available in different portion sizes, some of which are sourced through partnerships with stores such as the Village Grocer in Unionville and Leadbetters in Orillia. They also carry a large selection of sauces and a line of spices that are made to their specifications. Two popular products are the jalapeno poppers and the carrot muffins with cream cheese icing.

This past summer they opened a produce market and in 2022 they will be opening their new retail space which James said will be a "showstopper" with Douglas fir timbers and a massive cathedral ceiling.

Trust me when I tell you that The Trading Post is a must-visit foodie destination. Their incredible staff and mouth-watering products make it well worth the drive to Port Perry. You will not be disappointed.



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# The Magic in the Music

BY BLAIR TULLIS



Sam Guadagnolo is a little like the Wizard of Oz. A good part of that sound and fury out there in a Pacemakers' performance is the result of Sam madly pulling levers and pushing buttons behind the curtain. For the Dorothy in all of you, it's time to pull back that curtain and take a look at the workings of the magician.

Sam is a musician who has played the guitar since he was seven. By the time he was 15, he was in a rock 'n roll band. He still plays in two bands and is proficient on the keys, guitar, bass, mandolin, ukulele and harmonica. The joy he gets from playing and creating music is what makes the magic that he brings to Ballantrae's own Pacemakers.

What so many see as a spontaneous-looking performance is only accomplished through much hard work and practice on the part of the members of the band – Bob Ross, Tom Clarke, Ray Stadnick, Al Gillan, the aforementioned Sam and, recently, your humble scribe.



The Pacemakers (left to right): Sam Guadagnolo, Bob Ross, Al Gillan, Ray Stadnick, Tom Clarke.

In the absence of some of the instruments, notably the drums, that fill out the sound and lay down the backbeat for the singers to follow, Sam's de facto Master's degree in arranging is a definite advantage. Our Sam has the chops to make thin gruel into a rich porridge.

It all starts with a suggestion – why don't we play *Hotel California* in our next show? Good idea! We can sing it and

the people out there will love it when we do. All we need now is the sound that the Eagles put down with banks of speakers and amps, a raft of professional musicians and some great musicianship. Work your magic, Sam!

The wall of levers and buttons, in our case, is a Yamaha Genos performance keyboard. It's more than an electric piano. It's a sophisticated piece of computer technology, augmented by arranging software called Q-Base Pro and a little pixie dust (to help the music soar).

First, Sam lays out a template, a master plan of sorts, of how the song should be arranged – key, tempo, style, how many verses, choruses and solos are needed. It's the skeleton of the song. Next, he lays down the rhythm tracks, choosing from about 2,000 different drum tracks that are then infinitely changeable on a note-by-note basis.



In all, he has 16 tracks on which he can layer instruments. That long solo at the end of *Hotel California*, which took Sam weeks to learn, was laid down on one of the tracks by playing the guitar through an interface and into the keyboard's memory. He can add horns, organ or whatever the song needs; each component being laid into a track that will later all come together when Sam signals the downbeat and the band starts to play the song.

With the base laid down, Bob plays rhythm, Tom's on bass, Ray on harmonica or banjo and Sam plays the electric piano. Lead vocals are mostly shared by Al and Blair, with harmonies by the rest of the band.

It sounds like an afternoon jam, but so much has gone into the preparation. Sam's fascination with all types of music and his dedication to his band mates has brought the Pacemakers, always a local favourite, to another level. His wizardry makes playing and listening to music more rewarding and certainly very enjoyable. Thanks, Sammy, for all those hours you put in to make us look natural. Now let's talk about getting some bagpipes into that rendition of *Amazing Grace*.

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**BY GREG MCCAIN**



Statistics Canada tells us that 20% of people in Canada are over 65. This number is greater than the number of people under 14. In the age group over 65, 80% take two pills a day and 45% take five or more medications.

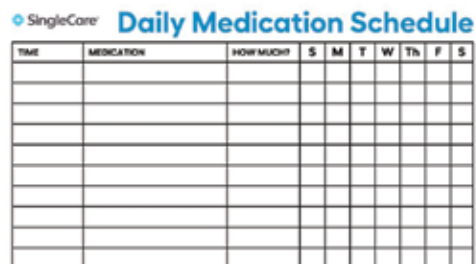
## 1) GATHER ALL MEDICATIONS IN ONE PLACE

Thanks to the courtesy of our local Ballantrae Pharmacy, the first 200 people who show them their copy of *Home on the Green* will receive a free pill organizer (\$18.00 value).

Although it is traditional to store your medications in the medicine cabinet in your bathroom, I would strongly suggest a kitchen cupboard instead. The bathroom has lots of heat and humidity that are not good for pills. I recently changed the knobs on my bathroom cupboards and found that they were partially corroded.

your meds in the original packaging. Take care to avoid taking the wrong medications. My wife, once in a hurry, thought she might have taken the dog's heart worm pill and he received her vitamin. Her doctor assured that she was not going to get heart worm and the dog probably wasn't going to get a cold. He seemed more worried about the dog.

Always keep a copy of your medications in your wallet and give a copy to your loved one (spouse, family member or even a friend). There are many free apps to help you with this such as [MyTherapy.com](https://www.mytherapy.com)



One common mistake that seniors make is called polypharmacy (taking too many pills). It is important to establish good communication with your pharmacist who is readily available to take your call. He is well trained with a wealth of knowledge. A patient was instructed to wear a patch for his heart condition. Two weeks later he returned and told the pharmacist he had run out of places to put the patch. The pharmacist amended the instructions to include "take off the old patch before applying new one."

## HOME ON THE GREEN

# A Cellar for my Homemade Wine

BY LUBA QUADRINI



I have always loved cooking and entertaining. While living in Arizona in the 90s I began introducing wines into my cooking and bought them quite affordably at the grocery store. Upon my return to Canada in 2001, I was stunned by how much an average bottle cost at the LCBO. So I looked into the possibility of making my own. With the help of the knowledgeable folks at Yonge Street Winery in Aurora I made my first batch to use only in my cooking.

The first batch was okay but we continued to drink LCBO wine. With time I got better at choosing the wines I made and they did get good enough to drink. One year I made too much wine and discovered that the wine that had aged for more than a year had improved considerably in flavour. We began serving it to guests at our get-togethers. When several of our friends told us that they preferred our wine over some store bought equivalents, I increased my production from 30 to 90 bottles a year.

By the time we moved to Ballantrae in 2012, my inventory, in different stages of aging, had grown to occupy a 10 foot stretch of wall in the basement crawl space. My bottled wine sat on five plastic shelving units that I purchased at Costco and this arrangement served its purpose for several years. My wine was living in a cool, dark space at a relatively consistent temperature. It was happy and continued to age well.

After we had lived here for three years, my husband began suggesting that we have the basement finished.

Let me just say that I have never been a basement person. As far as I'm concerned there is plenty of living space above ground for me and I have always regarded a basement as a very large storage closet. My husband has also never been a cellar dweller but does love things to be clean, tidy and dust-free. Since concrete floors are endlessly dusty and the plastic-wrapped insulation on the walls, a dust magnet, he continued his campaign to finish the basement.

I did not want to make the expensive investment so our negotiations continued over the next two years. We eventually reached a compromise and the planning began. Danny would get a gym space, a bathroom with shower, a sauna, a recreation room with a large screen TV (necessary for sports viewing), as well as a large storage room to house all of our luggage and his golf paraphernalia.

You may well ask, so what was in it for me? Ahhhhhhh, I would get a climate controlled wine cellar. Here was the deal, we would hire a contractor to finish the entire basement except for one area that would be left for me to design and build. I love DIY projects and am the proud owner of all the power tools in this house. While the contractor was working on the rest of the basement, I spent weeks researching wine cellar specifications and finally came up with a six by ten foot design that I thought would suit our needs.

I planned the racking to cover three walls and had the room framed to accommodate these dimensions in the hopes of giving the project the look of a true custom





build. I ordered the cedar racking components from Michelle at Yonge Street Winery. The assembly of the racking took the better part of a week and over 1000 brad nails. Once done, I set them aside and moved on to completing the interior of the wine cellar. The wiring for the cooling unit and lighting went in first, then the ceiling and walls were covered with a vapour barrier. R 32 insulation was installed and covered with moisture resistant (blue) drywall, then taped and sanded. All corners and floor edges had to be caulked to air seal the room, everything was primed and then painted with latex paint. The concrete floor was left un-insulated to take advantage of its cool surface. It was covered with waterproof wood-grained solid vinyl flooring.

I then positioned and anchored all of the assembled racks to the walls. I added a small bar counter and tiled it. The LED lights went up next and a temperature/moisture control unit was installed on the upper portion of one wall. Since cold air sinks, the bottom of the room is several degrees cooler than the upper portion which was exactly what I wanted. Lastly, two insulated exterior French doors with rubber floor sweeps were added to keep the cold air in.

As well as his continued encouragement, Danny's contribution to the wine cellar was a beautiful enlargement of a photo he took when we last visited Sicily. It went up over the bar.

Today, because I have control over the cellar's environment I make more wine (120-150 bottles annually) and am confident that it will age well and remain very drinkable. Our cellar can hold 640 bottles but it has never been filled to capacity. As we continue to enjoy and share our wine, I regularly move the older bottles up in the racks to make room for the newly bottled wine to be added below for aging. I store my reds on the upper racks at 15 degrees C and the whites and sparkling wines on the bottom at 10 degrees C, ready to be enjoyed at the proper temperature and at a moment's notice when friends or family drop by.

I am no wine expert, nor am I all that knowledgeable on the subject of wine, but I do know what I like to drink and I love the process of making and aging wine. To keep track of my inventory I date all the batches that I bottle. I also like to tag any bottles that we have been given so that when we have enjoyed the contents, I can thank the giver.

These days, I am very fond of robust reds and our favourite house wines are a bold but smooth Amarone to enjoy with dinner and a softer Barbera for sipping on the patio. We try not to serve any wine that we haven't aged for at least 18 months, which we believe improves the quality considerably.

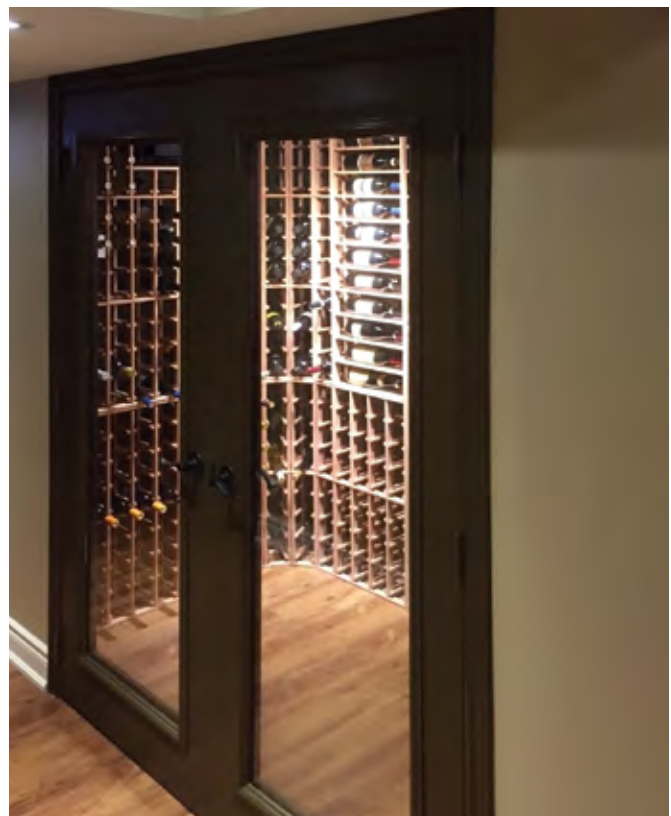
If a wine cellar is not in your future and you enjoy drinking wine, I would encourage you to give wine

making a try. It doesn't require much space or attention. Just keep a few things in mind to insure success. Once bottled, the best location for storage is in a cool dark spot, away from windows and UV light. Even under a bed works well if you are short on space. Bottled wine should always be stored on its side. This keeps the cork wet, prevents shrinkage and helps keep the oxygen out. Oxidation can cause a good wine to become bitter or sour. All wines can be safely stored at a constant temperature between 4 degrees C and 18 degrees C. Storing at above 21 degrees C (typical room temperature) for long periods of time may cause undesirable changes.

What have I learned over the years to bring out the best in any wine? Before drinking, always let the wine (especially reds) breathe for several minutes or use an aerating tool which immediately allows the wine's aroma to open and to soften which improves the flavour. After opening, an unfinished bottle can be re-corked and stored in the fridge for two to three days or used up in a recipe. After that, the quality will begin to decline.

So you may be wondering if I think having the basement done was worth it. I have to admit that I am glad we did it. My wines are aging happily in their custom built space and the basement is now a clean and dust-free zone that I do occasionally stop to admire while on my way to the wine cellar to select a bottle to serve with dinner.

CHEERS!



# Holiday Entertaining

BY JOHANNA BURKHARD

This year's festive season will be a welcome change from last year's scaled back version where we kept it small and safe with virtual gatherings. This year we can look forward to celebrating with our families with in-person dinners and get-togethers but we still must keep safety in mind. Here are some terrific appetizers, cookie recipes and a spectacular Linzertorte to add to your favourite holiday recipes!



## TOMATO FETA BITES

**MAKES 24 APPETIZERS**

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C)

- 4 to 5** small thin Roma tomatoes
- 24** frozen unbaked puff pastry squares
- 1 tsp (5 mL)** dried oregano leaves
- 4 oz (125 g)** crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 cup (60 mL)** pitted Kalamata olives, cut into thin strips

Freshly ground black pepper

Extra virgin olive oil

1. Arrange pastry squares on parchment lined baking sheet.
2. Cut the tops and ends from Roma tomatoes and discard. Using a small spoon, remove seeds from tomatoes; cut each into 5 to 6 slices. Place 1 tomato slice on each pastry square. Sprinkle with oregano, feta and olives; season with pepper. Drizzle each with a bit of olive oil.
3. Bake in preheated oven for 15 to 17 minutes or until pastry is puffed and golden. Serve warm. (Prepare and bake just before serving or appetizers may become soggy.)

**3** yellow cooking onions, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced (about 4 cups/1 L)

**1 tbsp (15 mL)** white balsamic vinegar

Salt and freshly ground pepper

**36** frozen unbaked puff pastry squares

**1 cup (250 mL)** finely shredded Gruyere cheese or other firm cheese, such as medium Gouda

1. Place bacon in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Cook, turning strips often, until crisp, about 8 to 10 minutes. Remove bacon to a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Finely chop. You should have 1/3 cup (75 mL).
2. Drain bacon fat from skillet. Add olive oil and onions. Cook at medium-high heat for 3 minutes, stirring, until the onions start to soften. Reduce heat to medium-low. Continue cooking uncovered, stirring occasionally, until onions become soft and light golden brown, about 20 minutes. Stir in balsamic vinegar and cook over medium-high heat for 2 minutes or until liquid evaporates. Season with salt and pepper. Be careful not to let onions burn. Let cool and refrigerate in a covered container for up to three days or freeze for up to two weeks.
3. Arrange pastry squares on parchment lined baking sheets. Microwave onions on medium, stirring once, until warm. Stir in bacon bits.
4. Place a heaping teaspoonful of onion mixture on each pastry square and bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and top with a teaspoonful of grated cheese. Return to oven and bake 5 to 7 minutes more or until pastry is golden and cheese is melted. Serve warm.

## PUFF PASTRY BITES WITH TOPPINGS

Start with frozen puff pastry squares and top with one of the following toppings for easy make-ahead appetizers. Or get inventive and create other crostini-type toppings.

**1 pkg (450 g)** President's Choice frozen butter puff pastry (2 rolls), defrosted in refrigerator

1. Unroll each pastry sheet on parchment paper-lined baking sheets and press down any areas of pastry that have torn. Pierce dough all over with a fork. Place in freezer until pastry is firm. (Do in two batches, if necessary)
2. Cut each pastry sheet into 25- 2 by 2 inch (5 by 5 cm) squares. Return pastry to freezer until firm. Place frozen pastry squares in a storage container separating layers with parchment paper. Prepare several packages of puff pastry bites and freeze for up to 4 weeks or until ready to use.



## CARAMELIZED ONION WITH BACON BITS AND GRUYERE

**MAKES 36 APPETIZERS**

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C)

- 8 to 10** slices bacon
- 2 tbsp (30 mL)** extra-virgin olive oil





## WARM SPINACH AND CHEDDAR DIP

This inviting dip makes a generous amount so make it ahead and have it ready in the fridge to reheat when entertaining over the holidays. I like to accompany it with white or blue corn tortilla chips, or if desired serve it in a carved out bread bowl.

**MAKES 3 CUPS (750 ML)**

**1 package (10 oz/300 g)** frozen spinach

**8 oz (250 g)** cream cheese, softened

**1 cup (250 mL)** mild or medium salsa

**2** green onions, finely chopped

**1** clove garlic, minced

**1/2 tsp (2 mL)** dried oregano leaves

**1/2 tsp (2 mL)** ground cumin

**1 cup (250 mL)** shredded aged Cheddar cheese

**1/3 cup (75 mL)** milk (approx.)

Salt

Hot pepper sauce (\*see tip)

1. Remove frozen spinach from packaging and place in a 4 cup (1 L) casserole dish. Cover and microwave on high, stirring once, for 6 to 8 minutes or until defrosted and hot. Place in a sieve and squeeze out moisture by hand; wrap in a clean, dry towel and squeeze out excess moisture. Finely chop.
2. In a medium saucepan, combine spinach, cream cheese, salsa, green onions, garlic, oregano and cumin. Cook over medium heat, stirring, for 3 minutes or until smooth and piping hot.
3. Stir in cheese and enough milk to thin the dip; cook for 2 minutes or until cheese melts. Season with salt and hot pepper sauce to taste. Spoon into serving dish.

To make a bread bowl for serving: Using a serrated knife, slice 2 inches (5 cm) off top of small (1 lb/500 g) unsliced round whole wheat or sourdough bread. Hollow out loaf, reserving contents, leaving a shell about 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick. Spoon

hot dip into bread bowl. Cut reserved bread into strips or cubes and serve along with vegetable dippers.

*\*Tip: To add a spicy kick, add 1 to 2 minced fresh or pickled jalapeno peppers. Or for a milder version, add 1 can (4 oz/113 g) green chilies, drained and chopped.*



## RICE KRISPIE SQUARES WITH PRETZELS AND CHOCOLATE

This oh-so-easy recipe takes Rice Krispie squares to a whole new level. A perfect holiday treat for grandkids and adults alike. Have all of the ingredients ready before you start. Measure the pretzels first then break into pieces.

9 inch (2.5 L) square baking pan or glass dish

**MAKES 24 SQUARES**

**6 tbsp (90 mL)** butter

**6 cups (1.5 L)** mini marshmallows

**4 cups (1 L)** Rice Krispies

**2 cups (500 mL)** mini pretzel sticks, broken into 3 pieces each

**1/2 cup (125 mL)** dark chocolate chips (\*see tip)

Flaky sea salt for sprinkling (optional)

1. Line bottom and sides of baking pan with parchment paper, leaving a 1 inch (2.5 cm) overhang on all sides. Brush lightly with oil or non-stick cooking spray.
2. In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium-low heat. Continue to heat butter until it turns clear golden and finally starts to turn brown and smell nutty. Watch closely and stir often. Add marshmallows; stir with a wooden spoon or silicone spatula for 3 minutes or until smooth and light brown in colour.
3. Remove from heat. Add cereal and pretzels; stir until evenly coated. Sprinkle with chocolate chips and stir until evenly distributed.

4. Immediately scrape into prepared pan and press down using buttered hands, if necessary, until top of mixture is flat. Very lightly sprinkle with flaky sea salt, if using. Let cool. Lift out of pan using sides of parchment and cut into squares. Transfer to an airtight container.

*\*Tip: Freeze chocolate chips for 20 minutes so they don't melt when added to the warm marshmallow mixture.*



## PECAN PIE COOKIES

Intend to serve pecan pie for the holidays? Make these delicious thumb print cookies filled with a luscious pecan pie filling instead. The recipe comes from Lorraine Madigan Farro of Condo 2 and she notes that the cookies freeze well when made ahead. They are sure to disappear quickly!

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C)

**MAKES 3 DOZEN COOKIES**

Dough

**1 cup (250 mL)** firmly packed brown sugar

**3/4 cup (175 mL)** butter, softened

**1** large egg

**1 tsp (5 mL)** vanilla

**2 cups (500 mL)** all-purpose flour

**1 tsp (5 mL)** baking powder

Filling

**1 cup (250 mL)** lightly toasted pecans, chopped

**1/2 cup (125 mL)** firmly packed brown sugar

**1/4 cup (60 mL)** (35%) whipping cream

**1 tsp (5 mL)** vanilla

Pinch salt

1. Dough: In a mixing bowl, combine brown sugar, butter, egg and vanilla. Using an electric mixer, beat at medium speed until creamy. Add flour and baking powder; beat at low speed until well mixed. Refrigerate dough for 1 hour or until firm.

Continued on page 25



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# Holiday Entertaining

CONTINUED...

2. Shape dough into 1 1/4-inch (3 cm) balls. Place 2 inches (5 cm) apart on parchment-lined cookie sheets. Make indentation in each cookie with thumb; rotate thumb to hollow out slightly.
3. Filling: In a bowl, combine pecans, brown sugar, cream and vanilla. Fill each cookie with 1 rounded tsp (7 mL) filling.
4. Bake in preheated oven for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool 1 minute on cookie sheets; transfer to a rack to cool. Cookies freeze well.



## LINZERTORTE

Gisela Weger of Condo 2 is an avid holiday baker and has kept the tradition of baking her family's favourite German Christmas cookies each year.

There is one festive recipe that is essential, she notes. "Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without Linzertorte."

This Austrian specialty takes its name from the city of Linz but it has become a famous sweet tart throughout Europe.



*Gisela, who remembers her mother making it each Christmas and has perfected her recipe over the years, makes up to 10 or more Linzertortes each December to give as gifts to friends and family. "It's something special and everyone looks so forward to getting their Linzertorte," she adds.*

10 inch (25 cm) springform pan, well buttered and dusted with fine dry bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C)

**1 cup plus 2 tbsp (250 g)** unsalted butter, softened

**1 cup plus 2 tbsp (250 mL)** granulated sugar

**1** large egg

**2 tbsp (30 mL)** Kirsch or Slivovitz (\*see tip)

**1-3/4 cups (250 g)** all-purpose flour

**1 heaping tbsp (4 tsp)** each ground cinnamon and cocoa powder

**1/2 tsp (2 mL)** allspice

**2-1/2 cups (250 g)** finely ground almonds (blanched or unblanched, your choice)

**3/4 cup (175 mL)** good-quality raspberry jam

**1** egg beaten with 1 tsp (5 mL) cream

Confectioner's sugar

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and Kirsch.
2. In another bowl, combine flour, cinnamon, cocoa and allspice. Add to creamed mixture until combined. Stir in ground almonds to make a soft dough.
3. Break off 1/3 of dough and shape into a ball; flatten and wrap in plastic wrap. Gather remaining dough into a ball, flatten and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate both balls of dough for at least 1 hour or until firm enough to roll out.
4. Dust larger dough piece generously with flour and roll between sheets of parchment paper into a 10 inch (25 cm) circle. Remove top sheet of parchment

paper and flip dough into bottom of springform pan. Press into pan with 1/2 inch (1 cm) extending up the sides. Spread bottom with raspberry jam.

5. Dust smaller dough piece with flour and roll between sheets of parchment paper into a 10 inch (25 cm) circle, 1/4 inch (3 mm) thick. Cut into 10 strips, each 1 inch (2.5 cm) wide.
6. Arrange five strips in the same direction on top of jam layer, spacing 1 inch (2.5 cm) apart. (If strips break, simply press them back together.) Layer remaining five strips over top of first strips, crisscrossing in the opposite direction. Trim pastry ends (reserve scraps of dough) pressing strip ends into sides of torte.
7. Gather remaining dough into a ball and dust with flour. Roll out between sheets of parchment paper into a 6 inch (12 cm) circle. Cut into 3/4 inch (2 cm) wide thin strips and arrange along the inside edge of torte to form a border. Brush pastry edge and strips with egg mixture.
8. Bake tart in a preheated oven for 55 to 60 minutes or until golden and jam bubbles. Place a baking sheet lined with parchment paper on bottom shelf to catch any drippings. Run a knife around edge while still warm and carefully remove sides of pan. Let cool completely on rack. Lightly dust with confectioner's sugar before serving. Cut into small wedges and serve. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

*\*Tip: Both Kirsch and Slivovitz are clear, dry brandies fermented from fruit. Austrian Schloss Kirsch is made from cherries and sold in the LCBO. It is not to be confused with cherry liqueur that is sweet and not a good substitute in this recipe. Kirsch is preferred but Slivovitz, which is made from plums, is a good substitute.*



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## PROFILE:

# Grey Brett's Ultimate Gift of Life

BY KAREN CLARK



Michael Brett &amp; his daughter

*Home on the Green* is always interested in hearing about our residents' remarkable involvements and endeavours. Meet Michael 'Grey' Brett, a liver transplant recipient and his efforts to bring awareness to the cause. His is a story about courage, generosity and thankfulness.

**Q:** From what I understand, your boyhood was fairly typical for an active child.

**A:** I grew up in Stouffville where I went to elementary school and then attended high school in Markham. I had always been a keen swimmer. By age seven I was on a competitive swim team training six times a week, sometimes twice a day. In 1990 at age 12 I made it to the Junior Nationals. Life was good.

**Q:** Life made a big left turn for you. What happened?

**A:** In 2005, I was diagnosed with a rare auto-immune disease called primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC). It is an incurable, progressive disease that results in liver failure. At the time my doctors told me that I had roughly seven years before my liver would fail. Just out of university and working as an executive recruiter, I decided that I had to live my life to the fullest and reach for my dreams. I got heavily involved in competition

level Muay Thai (kickboxing). I moved to Bermuda for a year and a half, then to Grand Cayman for a further three years where I ran a very successful Muay Thai program. I got married and had a daughter. I believe that my healthy eating and high physical fitness level allowed me to continue living with very few bad days. However, in 2013 a serious liver infection necessitated my moving back to Toronto where I could access world class health care.

**Q:** That must have been a very trying time.

**A:** I was working one week and in the hospital the next. I was in Toronto General Hospital and didn't know how I got there. A condition called ascites caused toxins in my liver to build up so badly that I had blown up to 206 pounds and my body and mind were shutting down. I would wake up every few days and have to be told where I was and what was happening.

At first, the transplant team decided that surgery wasn't an option due to a blood infection. However, my doctors got the infection under control and the transplant was a "go." I was put on the list and 18 hours later a donor had been found and I was in surgery. Most folks are on a list for seven months.

**Continued on page 28**

## PROFILE:

*Grey Brett's* Ultimate Gift of Life

CONTINUED...

**Q: Who makes those crucial transplant decisions?**

**A:** In Ontario, the Trillium Gift of Life Network manages organ transplants. There is a different criterion for each organ. They rank people on the list by their health condition. There must be a match of blood type and of course a donor.

**Q: How are donors found?**

**A:** For liver and kidney there are two options. Option one is from a person who has passed away and meets the "match criterion." The second option is a live donor. With a blood match, a live donor can give one kidney or because a liver is the only organ that can regenerate itself, donors can give three quarters of their livers. Both donor and recipient will regrow their livers within three to four months.

**Q: Amazing! How does one become a donor?**

**A:** When you renew your driver's license you can register to become a donor. Or you can register by going on [www.beadonor.ca](http://www.beadonor.ca). To volunteer as a live donor, contact the Transplant Centre, Toronto General Hospital. [www.uhn.ca/transplant](http://www.uhn.ca/transplant)

**Q: Back to your transplant. I can't imagine the recovery for such a drastic operation.**

**A:** The nine-hour surgery at TGH went well however recovery was not without its challenges. On a ventilator for a number of days and tube fed, I was in hospital for three and a half weeks and dropped to 132 pounds. As all my muscles had atrophied, I left in a wheelchair and lived on a couch for weeks.

**Q: What was your biggest inspiration to keep going?**

**A:** Wanting to be an example for my two year-old daughter and wanting to get back to my athletic endeavors, I took the slow but determined road to recovery. However the biggest motivator was the poster I saw one day when at the hospital for a follow-up visit. The Canadian Transplant Games were being held in Toronto in the summer of 2016. Held every two years all over the world, it was kismet that it was being held in my home town. When I discovered there were swimming events, I was inspired to make it a goal to compete. Within one and half months of surgery, I was in the pool training.

**Q: Did you realize your dream to compete in the games?**

**A:** It wasn't without setbacks. I was in and out of hospital with a number of issues, one of which was





an organ rejection, for at least six months following surgery. A transplant is not a cure and I still had the disease so there were complications. However I did compete and I am proud to say that I won five gold medals. I also met some amazing fellow competitors who introduced me to the World Transplant Games which led to my next challenge. I got involved with a high performance training team with my eye on the 2017 World games in Malaga, Spain.

**Q:** That was a bold venture to travel so far in your condition to participate in the World Games.

**A:** Feeling empowered and excited, I committed to putting forth an effort that would make my donor and family proud. I swam away with three world records and

five medals: three gold, one silver and one bronze! But most rewarding were the friendships I made. I became fast friends with Canadian swimmer Jillian Best, also a liver transplant recipient. Training hard, we were both successful at the 2019 World Games in England, again setting records and winning gold medals for Canada.



**Q:** How did COVID-19 put the brakes on your competitive goals?

**A:** The 2021 Games were cancelled so Jillian and I looked for new ways to inspire ourselves and others. We decided to swim the 52 kilometres across Lake Ontario in tandem representing the marriage between donor and recipient. Unfortunately I was unwell and couldn't dedicate the time and energy for this monumental swim, so I acted as her pacer and was beside her in the boat, plus in the water for five to six hours of her eighteen hour crossing.

**Q:** Was this also a fundraiser?

**A:** Jillian and I along with two other swimming competitors set up the Move For Life Foundation with the intention of raising donor awareness, inspiring recipients and creating a vehicle for fund raising. Jillian's Lake Ontario swim in the summer of 2021 raised \$130,000 and was donated to the London Health Sciences Centre in London, Ontario where she had her transplant. Our plan is to do one big fundraising event every year.

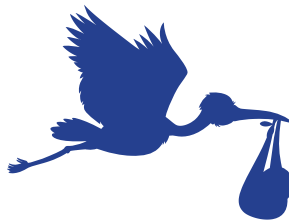
**Q:** What is planned for next year?

**A:** You will have to "stay tuned" to find out about our extravaganza for 2022! Keep in touch on the foundation site [www.moveforlifefoundation.com](http://www.moveforlifefoundation.com) or follow my Instagram page: @chasing\_greytness

*We had to end our conversation as Grey was heading out to give an inspirational talk to high school students. He also mentioned that he is on a list for a second liver transplant...a never ending battle met with determination, inspiration and grace. Good luck Grey.*

# Carron Canning, the Stork of Ballantrae

BY LYNNE BALFOUR



We all know how babies are made. The stork can be seen flying over the rooftops with a little cloth bundle before landing on the doorstep of the happy couple. Many of us have met our very own Ballantrae stork, Carron Canning, on the tennis courts or in the Recreation Centre pool doing laps. She is a friendly, outgoing person who has lived in Ballantrae for the last eleven years.

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, the eldest of six girls, Carron trained as a nurse and midwife. The love of catching babies has kept her involved with childbirth ever since. As a young person she was involved in public speaking, rising high in the ranks of Toastmasters, acting in plays and playing sports. Her love of sports was encouraged by her family and they were fortunate to have a swimming pool and tennis court in their backyard. A congenital dislocated hip, not recognized at birth nor corrected by many surgeries, does not hold her back.

In 1988 Carron and her husband Desmond immigrated to Canada. Midwifery was not yet





regulated in Ontario, so she worked as a labour and delivery nurse at North York General Hospital for 10 years. Midwifery became regulated in 1994 and soon after a program was developed to get foreign-trained midwives qualified. A year later Carron was a registered midwife with the College of Ontario with privileges at North York General Hospital.

Midwifery has been around for women and babies for many centuries all around the world. It is becoming more and more popular for women in Canada. Ontario currently has 1,000 midwives. Midwives care for women throughout their pregnancy, the birth and for six weeks postpartum. They get three visits at home in the first month after birth. The three tenets of midwifery that they hold dear are: choice of birth place, continuity of care and informed choice.

Carron is a partner with Midwifery Care, North Don River Valley, a practice of 12 midwives. They work in teams with two midwives attending the birth – one for mom and one for the baby. Carron attends 80 births a year and about 15% of these happen at home. Being a midwife involves an unpredictable lifestyle. They are on call day and night. Babies don't always arrive on their due dates! Midwives are always available for advice, help, support and care. Carron answers calls everywhere, even on the tennis court. Everyone understands if she has to leave in a hurry for a birth and helps her out by playing for her when she is bringing a baby into the world.

Sadly, Desmond died of cancer nine months after they moved to Ballantrae. Carron's participation and love of sports led her to meet her current partner Bob at pickleball.

Carron's passion for midwifery has enabled her to keep in touch with many of her babies. She still hears from the first baby she caught in South Africa who is now grown and has two children of her own. She has had the honour of being part of the birth experiences for whole families. Her clients include some families with 11 children and still counting. She is even featured in a YouTube video on swaddling a baby. In her spare time she can be found reading and knitting.

So, the next time you see the stork flying overhead, think of Carron bringing another little baby into the world. She is still waiting for her first Ballantrae delivery!



# Meet the HOTG.CA TEAM the *brains* behind the website!

BY DONNA CLARK. PHOTOS BY GLENN MCGEORGE.

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# Disruptive Technologies 4: Virtual Reality (VR)

BY PHILIPPE MARTIN TEILLET



Rob Whitehead & Herman Narula

Herman Narula is the co-founder and CEO of Improbable Worlds Limited, a British multinational company. Narula and Rob Whitehead co-founded Improbable in 2012 after graduating from Cambridge University. They created SpatialOS, a platform that can be used to build advanced virtual worlds for anything from games to simulations of city infrastructure to simulations of human body cells. In 2017, following a \$502 million of investment from SoftBank, the company was estimated to be worth \$1 billion. What's going on here?

In 1938, Antonin Artaud described the illusory nature of characters and objects in the theatre as "la réalité virtuelle" in a collection of essays, *Le Théâtre et son Double*. The English translation, published in 1958 as *The Theatre and its Double*, is the earliest published use of the term "virtual reality." "Virtual" has been used in the computer sense of not physically existing, but made to appear by software since 1959. "Virtual reality" was first used in science fiction in *The Judas Mandala*, a 1982 novel by Damien Broderick.

Virtual reality encompasses computer-generated immersive experiences created using purely real-world content, purely synthetic content, or a hybrid of both, thus creating an experience not possible in our physical reality. Typically, one wears computer-linked special-purpose hardware to see, hear, feel, and interact with

a "virtual world" created by software. A virtual reality headset, like a colour monitor, is a way of looking at content. A virtual world, like a web page, is a container of content.

A virtual world is a computer-based simulated environment you visit online. It is usually populated by many users who create personal avatars, and simultaneously and independently explore the virtual world, participate in its activities, and communicate with others. "Avatar" is used in Hinduism for a material manifestation of a deity but, in the computing context, an "avatar" is the graphical representation of the user or the user's alter ego or character. The use of avatar to mean online virtual bodies was popularized by Neal Stephenson in his 1992 cyberpunk novel *Snow Crash*. In *Snow Crash*, avatar is used to describe a simulated human form in the Metaverse, a fictional virtual reality application on the Internet.

A similar technology is "augmented reality" (AR), which provides a direct or indirect live view of a physical, real-world environment whose elements are "augmented" by computer-generated perceptual information, usually including sight and sound, but in some cases also smell and touch. The overlaid sensory information is spatially registered with the physical world such that it is perceived as an immersive aspect of the real environment. AR alters one's perception of a real environment, whereas VR replaces the real-world environment with a simulated one. There are many applications of AR, heads-up displays used by pilots and in some automobiles being good examples. My grandchildren use augmented reality when they use Snapchat to superimpose computer-generated objects on real images and videos!

Virtual reality has to date disappointed. Sales of virtual-reality headsets have been sluggish. Mark Zuckerberg, the chief executive of Facebook, who bought Oculus VR for more than \$2 billion several years ago, has admitted that turning the technology into a

**Continued on page 36**



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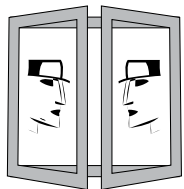
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# Disruptive Technologies 4: Virtual Reality (VR)

CONTINUED...



new computing platform is tougher than expected. However, in the gaming setting, virtual reality is flourishing. Worldwide revenue for the augmented-reality and virtual-reality market is expected to soon be more than \$200 billion.

While older movies such as *Total Recall* and *The Matrix* feature VR, a more vivid portrayal of where virtual reality might be heading is in the 2018 movie *Ready Player One*, produced and directed by Steven Spielberg. It is based on Ernest Cline's 2011 novel of the same name. The action takes place in 2045, when much of humanity spends a lot of time in the virtual world OASIS to escape the desolation of the real world.

VR and AR have contributed positively to numerous fields. They have been used to treat war veterans overcoming PTSD as well as by doctors training to perform intricate surgeries and by paraplegics wanting to feel the sense of flight. They have also been used as

a mechanism to prototype almost every motor vehicle fabricated in the last two decades. VR and AR tools facilitate the rehearsal and training of thousands of people in real-world situations, from heavy industry to defence to the testing of new medicines.

There are many disruptive technologies. Introductory overviews of satellite imaging, artificial intelligence, robotics, and virtual reality seemed to me to be topics worth considering initially, providing food for thought for readers of all ages. Radical change that comes with disruptive technologies has always been a concern and a challenge. As University of Toronto philosophy professor Mark Kingwell notes, we are generally unequal to the task of mastering such disruptions. He concludes, "Wisdom lies in accepting this fact and seeing the possibilities it opens up." One hopes that these possibilities also help to decrease inequality in the world.



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BY KAREN CLARK

Left to right: Mrs. Strype, Mrs. Bond, Mrs. Dow, Mrs. Bennett.



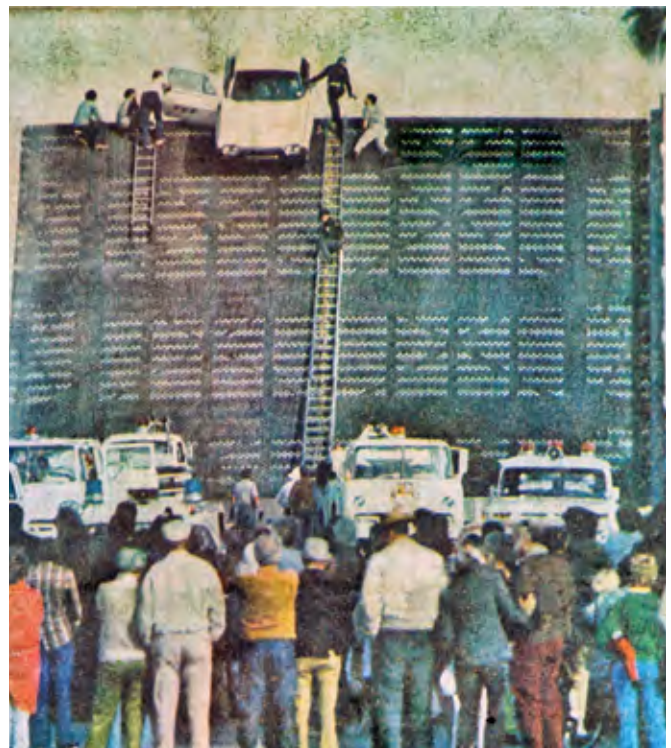
Joyce Dow, daughter-in-law of Claim to Famer Madeleine Dow

#### Four Canadians Who Hung In There!

Hanging in there is something we have all been doing these last two years due to COVID-19, but these four ladies took it to new heights! While Joyce Dow was going through her late husband Carl's many files, she came across this amazing story involving Carl's mother, Madeleine (Madge) Dow and her three friends (Olive Bond, Margaret Strype and Norah Bennett).

As many Canadians do each winter, the four friends from the Toronto area had decided to take a six-week vacation to sunny Florida. The year was 1973 and the four widows, all in their 70s, were staying in Norah Bennett's son's condo in St. Petersburg. On January 30, Madeleine was driving the girls in the son's 1962 Thunderbird over the Treasure Island Causeway

drawbridge when the warning gates came down behind them as well as in front of them! She attempted to back up but the rear wheels had just crossed the halfway mark when the bridge parted and their horrific ordeal began!



Women's fate hung in the balance

**Continued on page 40**



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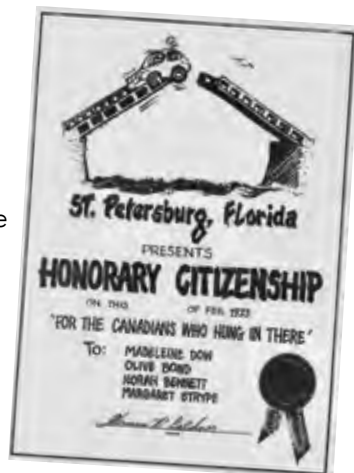
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# Claim To Fame

CONTINUED...

As the bridge began to rise, the front end of their car teetered face down while the rear end dangled over the 35-foot drop to the Bay. The span operator said he had not seen their car as it was in a blind spot from his position in the old masonry bridgehouse. It was only the honking, waving and yelling from the boats below that got his attention. Afraid to bring the bridge down in case it caused the car to flip backwards, the ladies were left hanging in peril. While the ladies hung "on the lip of death," as one newspaper reported, a crowd of observers gathered with cameras and binoculars and a small fleet of boats gathered underneath. Fifteen emergency vehicles and 25 fire and police staff collected on the bridge to figure out what to do. Firemen climbed up long ladders to reach the car and to try to calm and comfort the women. Others secured the vehicle with bolts and chains so at least it wouldn't fall off. Finally, a fire department Snorkel truck (the Snorkel is an aerial firefighting device developed by the Snorkel Fire Equipment Company) sent up its 55-foot boom with a cherry picker type basket. Although it could reach the car, the women still had to open the doors and teeter along the bridge lip to get into the basket. Escorted one by one to safety, they made it to waiting ambulances and were taken to a nearby hospital. All but one received a tranquilizer, for which they were charged \$17.25. Mrs. Dow said they were more in need of a stiff drink! Fire and police officers had nothing but praise for the bravery and calm the women showed during their two-hour ordeal.

Checked over and released from the hospital, they hoped to carry on with their holiday, but they became local celebrities and were deluged with fan mail, invitations to parties and civic receptions. News reports were broadcast all over the USA and became headlines on TV and in newspapers back home in Toronto! Dubbed "The Fearless Foursome," they were made honorary citizens of St. Petersburg. They later sued the city of Treasure Island, charging the bridge tender with negligence. However three suits were dropped and the fourth, for medical bills...all \$17.25 each, was settled amicably out of court. "We're famous now," Olive said. "But it wasn't worth it." Norah's granddaughter spoke to her on the phone and quipped, "I thought you were going to Florida to see the sights, not to become one." Carl, being his positive self remarked to his mother, "I know you four like to play bridge every day, but this is taking it a bit far." Safe and sound, they will be remembered as "the Canadians who hung in there!"



Securing the car



Rescuing the women to safety



Bridge spans were lowered after women were safely removed



Car hangs precariously from bridge span



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# Frank Frano, the Travelling Barber of Ballantrae

BY KAREN CLARK



Frank Frano-(Jim Thomas-Sun Tribune-Feb.2012)

For more than 25 years, Frank's & Son Barber Shop has been a staple of the Stouffville community.

From haircuts to shaves, Frank Frano and his son Rosario do it with a smile.

"I love the town; I love the people and I love the job," says Frank. "Work isn't work when you enjoy it so much."

When Frank isn't giving haircuts, which can be as many as 30 a day, he can be found entertaining his customers with his accordion.

Aside from his busy schedule at the shop, Frank has been coming to our Ballantrae community to cut men's hair for a couple of fellows who have difficulty or can't come to his Main Street location. When asked if he would be willing to come to BGCC on Mondays, his day off, and cut hair for more people that need him, his answer was "Yes!"

You can visit the shop at 6421 Main Street, Tuesday to Friday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. or phone **905-642-4710** to arrange a "house call".





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# Calling all Line Dancers

BY EVELYN ST. CLAIR



## Meet the Mis-steps!

All the fun started during our last Summer Games in 2019 when a group of us started line dancing to the beat of songs played by one of the hired bands. Especially popular was the Electric Slide

After a long respite from using our community recreational facility, reopening was met with anxiety and doubt. Was it really safe to be indoors with others again (albeit at a distance wearing masks) and how could we go about resuming our laughter, stepping and toe tapping?

At the time of writing, the maximum allowed in the two rooms is 10, therefore we have had to set up two classes of 10 each, one led by Jenny Gould and the other by myself. A big hurdle was how to keep six feet apart while moving around! With measuring tape in hand I go over early to lay out a grid and I use helium balloon weights to designate the ten dance spots. We had been faithfully following a YouTube line dancing for seniors' web site; however, Apple TV no longer supports YouTube. After a laborious few weeks of bringing a lap top from home to stream the program onto the big screen and then resorting to a CD player, the Recreation Centre staff got us a Firestick and we are now back in business with YouTube!

We are all young at heart and even one of the eldest

in our community came out to our class to give it a try. Hats off to Peggy Topping, 95 years young!



If this piques your interest and you want to learn some dance routines, get some exercise and have a lot of fun, call the Recreation Centre front desk to get our contact information.

In short, we have overcome the shackles of COVID and after a challenging encounter with technology, we are looking forward to dancing at all our future Summer Games and Ballantrae party events.

Watch out - here we come, pink hats and all!







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For the past 25 years I have averaged about 200 travel days per year in my career as a freelance travel writer. Having been “grounded” due to COVID-19 for almost two years, my pent-up urge to globe trot has left me contemplating and fantasizing where to go when it’s safe to hop on a plane again. Here’s my bucket list for some memorable experiences.

in the ‘Kingdom of Golf’ holds a candle to the Old Course at St. Andrews because no other starts and finishes at the front terrace of the Royal & Ancient, where, no doubt, members ensconced in leather armchairs are sipping their single malts and surveying the constant parade of golfers on the first tee who are praying for decent drives.

Even though the Old Course sees close to 50,000 rounds per year and getting a tee time is tough, the course remains accessible to golf pilgrims who have come to pay homage. The St. Andrews Links, the largest municipal public golf facility in the world, includes the Old, New, Jubilee, Eden and Strathtyrum eighteen-hole courses, plus the Balgove nine-hole for beginners and kids and The Castle, the newest of the crown jewels. It’s a chance to tread upon the first fairway of the Old Course in the footsteps of Bobby Jones, Ben Hogan, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and so many more legends, to contemplate the Road Hole bunker and to pose for posterity on the historic Swilcan Bridge.

Golf is said to have been played on the St. Andrews Links since the fifteenth century. In 1457 James II of Scotland banned the game because it distracted his subjects from archery practice. The first greenskeepers were rabbits and sheep. James lifted his ban in 1502 after succumbing to the game himself.

Do not plan on playing the Old Course on Sunday. On the Sabbath, it’s a public park. Up until 1974, residents had the right to wash their clothes in the Swilcan Burn (stream) and dry them on the first fairway, according to local bylaws. They didn’t of course, but it begs the question—do you get a free drop if your ball lands in a pair of boxer shorts?

To reserve a tee time on the Old Course and other St. Andrews Links: [www.standrews.org.uk](http://www.standrews.org.uk)



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## Thailand



### Give an Elephant a Bath in Chiang Mai

I am knee-deep in the river giving Memei, a 20-year-old elephant, her daily bath. I am brushing her adorable freckled ears and she seems to be loving the attention. Nu, her *mahout* (trainer) informs me that each of the pachyderms here at Patara Elephant Farm has his/her own quirks. Memei is afraid of mice!

Elephants, revered in the Buddhist religion as a symbol of protection, have also played an important role in Thailand's history and economy. Centuries ago, royals and warriors rode them in combats against the Burmese. More recently, elephants hauled lumber from Thai jungles. But when the teak exportation business dwindled, many pachyderms and their mahouts became unemployed. Fortunately, they are now finding new careers in "elephant-centric" responsible tourism.

Pat Theerapat, founder of the Patara Elephant Farm, near Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, is passionate about the health and happiness of his elephant family and is eager to teach us "day owners" as much as possible about their care.

Previously I had only viewed elephants from afar or from behind bars. At Patara I found myself literally face-to-trunk with a family of them. Before the bath, Nu had introduced me to Memei and her daughter Naya. He handed me a basket of sugar cane sticks and bananas and showed me how to feed them. Elephants eat ten percent of their weight per day, so feeding is an integral part of the bonding experience. My first reaction to being so close to these mammoth creatures was unnerving, especially when Naya playfully wound her trunk around my shoulders in order to grab a banana. Soon I relaxed. Elephants may be huge, but they have a great deal of dignity and grace.

After the feeding, we ambled down and into a river for bath time. By the time I'd finished scrubbing every inch of Memei she thanked me by filling her trunk with water and showering me.

I hope the old adage that "an elephant never forgets" is true. I certainly won't forget this amazing experience.

[www.pataraelephantfarm.com](http://www.pataraelephantfarm.com)



**Continued on page 48**

# My *Bucket List* for Post-COVID Travel Experiences

CONTINUED...

## Italy



### Cooking with Mamma Agata on the Amalfi Coast

The 50 kilometre corniche road from Sorrento to Ravello is one of the most giddy, toe-clenching drives in the world. A series of vertical cliffs rising as high as 300 metres plunge into an impossibly blue Tyrrhenian Sea as the coastline of white-washed seaside towns cling to the hills amongst a landscape of terraced olive and lemon groves and umbrella pines.

There's hardly an inch of the Amalfi Coast that I wouldn't rave about. However, Ravello is probably where I'd like to have my ashes sprinkled when judgment day does come.

Perched almost 350 metres above Amalfi, Ravello has been described as closer to heaven than the sea. The town has long been a magnet for literati, composers and celebrities. Author and one-time resident, Gore Vidal, opined that the panorama from Villa Cimbrone is the "most beautiful view in the world." Actress Greta Garbo chose this secluded garden of Eden for her tryst with composer Leopold Stokowski in 1937.

The town also has its very own culinary celebrity. At age 13 Agata Lima (who is affectionately known as Mamma Agata) started cooking for a rich American woman who entertained the likes of Jackie Kennedy, Fred Astaire and Humphrey Bogart in her posh villa. Born in 1942, Agata was one of seven children and times were tough in the aftermath of WWII. Her early start as a cook was a way to help support the family.

I had heard about Mamma Agata's cooking class and put it on my bucket list when on a 40th anniversary romp to Amalfi and Ravello last October. Mamma Agata's Cooking classes, operating since 1994, offer the chance to don an apron and to learn some culinary tricks from one of the best. Mamma has passed her wooden spoon to her daughter Chiara who now leads the classes with great panache. She too has twirled pasta with her fair share of celebrities, including Pierce Brosnan and Woody Harrelson.

We begin the day on the patio overlooking the family gardens—vegetables, herbs and lemon trees terraced down to the cobalt sea—with cappuccino and Mamma's famous lemon cake, reported to be Humphrey Bogart's favourite. The Amalfi Coast is famous for its huge lemons. Then we

follow Chiara into the kitchen where she slices and dices her way through Italian classics: three tomato sauces, Bolognese ragu, eggplant Parmesan and meatballs. For her farmer's cherry tomato sauce she deftly drops thin slices of garlic into a pan of oil creating what she calls "Prosecco bubbles" and the heady fragrance of "Italian Chanel" wafts through the kitchen. We taste, smell and savour while learning tons of things such as: only use garlic for fast cooking and use onions for longer simmers; how to make meatballs as light as clouds; how to slice, salt and squeeze eggplant; why Amalfitanos use arugula instead of black pepper; what oil and flour are best for certain recipes.

By 2:00 p.m. lunch is served back on the sunny terrace with Andrea Bocelli as background music. Chiara wasn't kidding when she said, "Come hungry." Finally, out comes the house made chilled lemoncello and just one more sliver of that famed lemon cake!

Aah *la dolce vita*.

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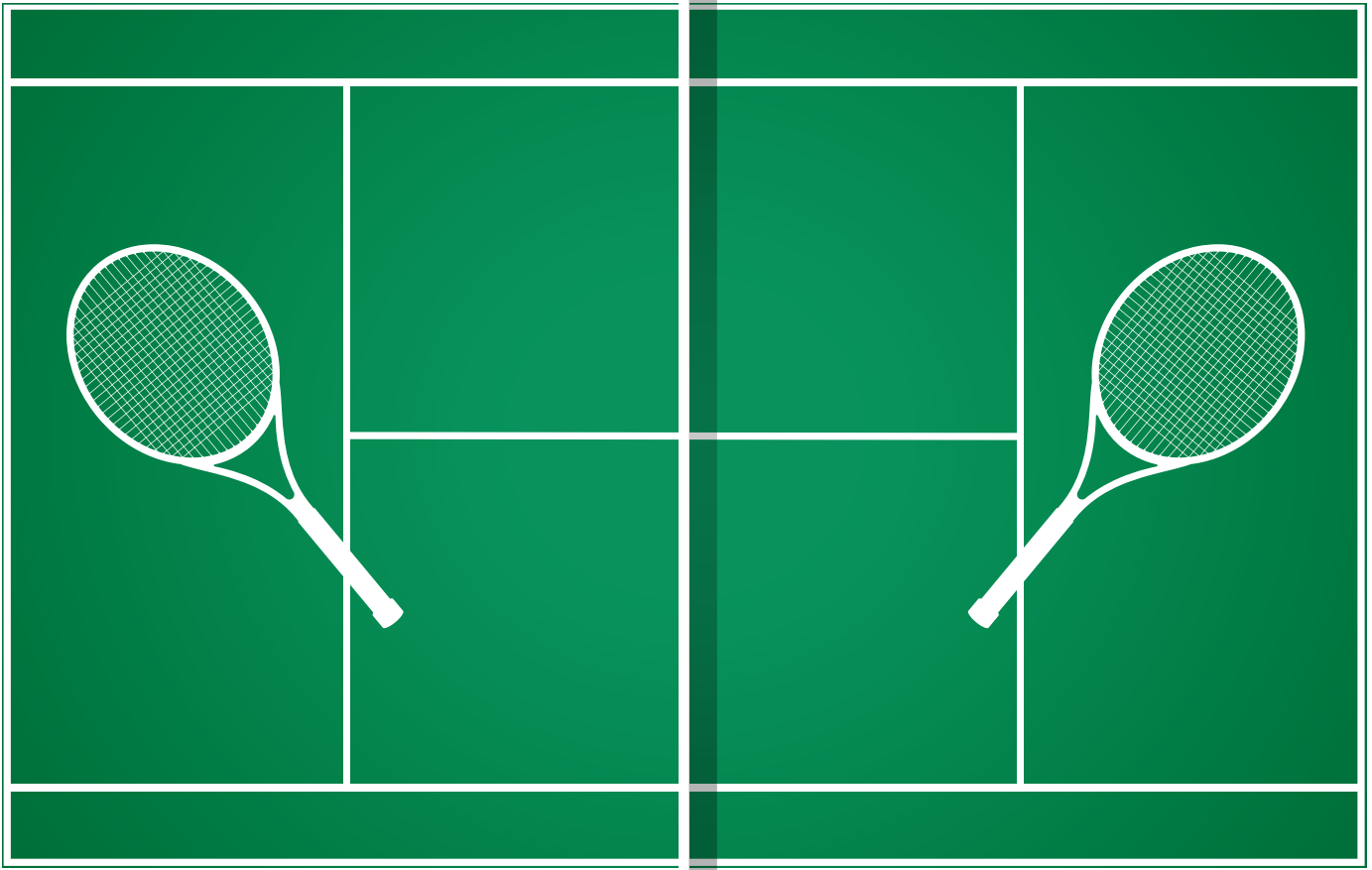
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# BALLANTRAE TENNIS ROUND ROBIN AND SOCIAL



On September 12, members of the BGCC Tennis Club organized a Round Robin and Social. About 30 members and guests enjoyed tennis in the morning followed by lunch. President John Perz welcomed the group. Chef Tommy Mansi barbecued hamburgers and sausages to perfection. Geri Flotron and her helpers set out a spread of salads, chips, cookies and soft drinks. Rennie Wittenbois presented draw prizes to new members Debra Taylor and Tommy Mansi.

In keeping with COVID-19 protocols, the food handlers wore masks and disposable gloves.

This was the first tennis social event since the onset of COVID-19 and a good time was had by all the fully vaccinated participants.

**Watch for Notices in *Home On The Green* and [www.hotg.ca](http://www.hotg.ca) for the spring sign up date for the BGCC Tennis Club.**





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## Photo Contest Update

Watch for the photo contest results in the spring issue of *Home on the Green*!

Thirty entries from nine submissions were received by the September 30th deadline. The entries reflect our community and will be evaluated by our panel of five judges including Mr. Dennis Hristovski, a professional photographer. To determine the winners, entries will be judged based on six criteria: originality/impact, storytelling, creativity, composition, points of interest and technical excellence.

We want to thank all of the contributors for entering our 2021 *HOTG* photo contest.



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