

The cover of the 'Embracing Change' magazine features a large photograph of a group of approximately 15 seniors, mostly widows and widowers, posing on a paved path near a beach. They are dressed in casual summer attire, including jackets, hats, and sunglasses. The background shows a sandy beach, the ocean with gentle waves, and a line of trees under a cloudy sky. The magazine's title 'EMBRACING CHANGE' is prominently displayed in large, green, serif capital letters at the top. Above the title, the tagline 'LIVING ~ LOVING ~ LEARNING ~ LAUGHING' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. A red diagonal banner in the top left corner reads 'FREE!'. Below the title, the volume and issue information 'VOL. 7 ISSUE 11' is on the left, and the date 'JULY 2025' is on the right. A red rectangular box on the right side of the cover contains the text 'Feature Business of the Month' and 'PHARMASAVE®'. In the bottom left corner, white text reads 'ON THE COVER: MEMBERS OF NEW BEGINNINGS WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS'. In the bottom right corner, white text reads 'OUR TRUSTED BUSINESS DIRECTORY LISTING: PAGE 27'. The entire cover is framed by a dark green border at the bottom containing the text 'COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE' and 'EMPOWERING SENIORS TO EMBRACE THEIR LIMITLESS POTENTIAL'.

FREE!

LIVING ~ LOVING ~ LEARNING ~ LAUGHING

EMBRACING CHANGE

VOL. 7 ISSUE 11

JULY 2025

Feature Business of the Month

PHARMASAVE®

ON THE COVER:
MEMBERS OF NEW BEGINNINGS
WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS

OUR TRUSTED
BUSINESS DIRECTORY
LISTING: PAGE 27

COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE
EMPOWERING SENIORS TO EMBRACE THEIR LIMITLESS POTENTIAL

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Keep being you **Love your ears**

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On The Cover

Looking up to their next adventure, Betty-Anne Field is surrounded by members of New Beginnings--Widows and Widowers. Read the full cover story on page 12.

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New Hamburg, ON N3A 2C6****519-574-6428****embracingchangeinfo@gmail.com****www.embracingchange.ca***Editorial Policy & Disclaimer:*

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Summer has arrived, bringing longer days and warm breezes—perfect for slowing down and enjoying life's simple pleasures. In our small towns, it's a time to reconnect with neighbours, nature, and ourselves. Whether gardening, walking, or chatting with friends, summer invites us to reflect, recharge, and embrace change at our own pace.



I'd like to take a moment to thank you—our valued readers—for your continued support of Embracing Change. Your thoughtful feedback and creative suggestions help shape this magazine in such meaningful ways. I'm especially excited to introduce a brand-new feature this month: a Sudoku puzzle! A big thank-you goes out to the reader who suggested it—we're thrilled to add this fun, brain-boosting challenge to our pages.

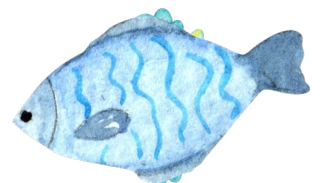
We're always seeking to feature inspiring seniors on our cover. If you, someone you know, or a local group is doing something meaningful, making a positive impact, or living life in an inspiring and unique way, we'd love to hear from you. Sharing these stories is at the heart of what we do, and we're proud to highlight the remarkable individuals within our community.

We also welcome your ideas for topics you'd like to see covered in future issues—your input helps ensure the magazine remains engaging, relevant, and reflective of your interests.

With so many scams and fraudulent services targeting seniors today, it can be difficult to know who to trust. That's why our Embracing Change Business Directory is here to help. Each listing in our directory features local, trustworthy businesses that have earned a reputation for reliability and integrity within Waterloo Region. These are companies you can feel confident turning to for products and services you may need. If you know of a reputable, community-minded business that would be a good fit for our trusted directory, we encourage you to have them reach out—we're always looking to expand this valuable resource with dependable local partners.

Wishing you a joyful summer ahead!

Tara



Have You Got FEET? A Tale of Two Shoemakers in Wellesley Township

Provided by: Sophia Grande-Lawlor, Curator
Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society (WTHHS)

As one shoemaker had hoped, most residents did indeed have feet that required a shoe or boot to carry them through their day. Shoes continued to be an essential purchase as comfort and safety became increasingly important as one conducted the work that was underfoot in the village. This month, we will look at two successful families of shoemakers in Wellesley and Heidelberg.

Christian Hammer of Wellesley ran several advertisements in the Wellesley Maple Leaf promoting his shoe store, Hammer & Co., in the village. The one featured here from the July 13, 1905 issue of the newspaper advertises that those who have feet are welcome to peruse Hammer's store of quality boots and shoes. According to an 1898 article in The Waterloo County Chronicle, Hammer picked up the trade from his Uncle, John Eidt, in the 1870s, proving the trade was a worthwhile endeavour to pass on from one generation to the next. The Chronicle reporter continued to note, "The business is one of the oldest in this section, having been established by Mr. Hill about forty five years ago. Mr. Hammer and his partner, Mr. Forler, are seldom idle, always working at the bench when not engaged at the counter attending to customers in the ready-made department. Their work will always stand inspection." The shoes were appreciated for their craftsmanship, and it is clear they were valued possessions. One unlucky owner placed a lost advertisement in the newspaper hoping someone would find and return their missing shoes to Hammer & Co. if found.

In Heidelberg, another family duo carried out successful business ventures in the shoemaking profession. Carl Smith operated a shoemaking business out of a store attached to his home in Heidelberg. Originally from Germany, Smith became the village shoemaker specializing in custom shoe manufacturing and repair for over 40 years. His son, Oscar, later continued the shoemaking legacy with a successful venture of his own. The younger Smith owned the Oscar J. Smith Shoe Company in St. Jacobs, with a factory located on 8 Spring Street, and a retail store that was located at 1395 King Street North. At one point, the factory manufactured almost 1500 shoes a day, selling to stores across Canada before it shut down in the 1950s.

Two generations of the Hammer and Smith families proved that if the shoe fits, the right career could be passed down successfully to the next cohort.

LOST — Yesterday, Dec. 5th, between Nithburg and Wellesley, two good shoes. The finder will please leave them at Hammer & Co.'s shoe store. Or if he refuses to give them up, he may have the other two, as the lost shoes are not mates.



Have You Got FEET ?

If you have, bring them to me. I'll do the rest!

My Spring Stock of

Boots and Shoes

has been purchased Right! (I am a practical and experienced shoemaker; they suit this section; they are the latest styles; they wear well; they will always be comfortable; they will look neat; They will SUE You!

I have something for the whole family, from the tiniest baby's to up to the oldest grand-parent's

Prices?—Oh, yes, they will suit you, too. Your money earns a whole lot for you in my store.

Repairing Done, and Shoes made to Order.

C. HAMMER,
Wellesley

FEATURE BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: TOWN SQUARE PHARMACY

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Bra Fitting's at Town Square Pharmacy.

Feel Good, Look Great: With Everyday Bras and Mastectomy Bras at Town Square Pharmacy. Did you know that mastectomy bras can do more than just give support? At Town Square Pharmacy, we offer **bras**, which are made to help **all women** feel comfortable, confident, and beautiful-**not just those who have had mastectomies.**

Mastectomy bras has been helping women for many years. They started by making bras and breast forms for women after breast surgery. Mastectomy bras are made especially for woman who have had mastectomy, lumpectomy, or other breast surgeries. These bras have special pockets to hold a breast form (prosthesis) if needed. But today, their products are for **everyday women, too!** Whether you've had surgery or not, these bras are soft, no underwire, stylish, and made to fit just right. So you can feel stylish and confident.

Why Choose Our Bras?

Most bras you find in stores are made in just a few sizes or shapes. That's fine for some people-but not for everyone. Some women need more support. Others want a bra that feels better on their skin. Our bras are made with **comfort in mind.** Our brands use **soft fabrics**, wide straps, and special designs to make sure the bra fits well and doesn't dig into your skin. More than 80% of woman wear the wrong bra. Many woman stay stuck on a size and brand for years. But our bodies and breast shape change every year. Just as you regularly have your eyesight checked, have a bra fitter regularly check that you are wearing the right size and style of bra.

And guess what? They also look **really pretty!** You don't have to give up style to feel good.

Not Just for After Surgery

Many people think mastectomy bras are only for women who've had a mastectomy (surgery to remove a breast). But that's not true! More and more women are choosing our bras for everyday wear. Some want the **extra support**, others love

how soft the bras feel, and some like how they fit better than regular bras. There are even styles made for sports, lounging, or sleep.

Why Fittings Matter

At Town Square Pharmacy, we don't just sell bras-we **help you get the perfect fit.** Our trained fitters are kind, respectful, and understand how important this moment is. We take the time to talk with you, learn about your needs, and make sure you leave with a bra that fits well and feels good.

Getting the right fit helps with

- **Comfort** - No rubbing, pinching, or slipping
- **Support** - Helps your back and shoulders
- **Confidence** - Feel good in your clothes again

What to Expect During a Fitting

You don't have to be nervous! Our fitting rooms are clean and private. A friendly staff member will help measure you and suggest the best bra and size. You can try on a few options and ask questions any time. We're here to help-not rush you.

We also help with **breast forms**, if you need one. These are soft and lightweight, and we'll show you how they fit inside our bras. You'll be amazed at how natural they feel and look.

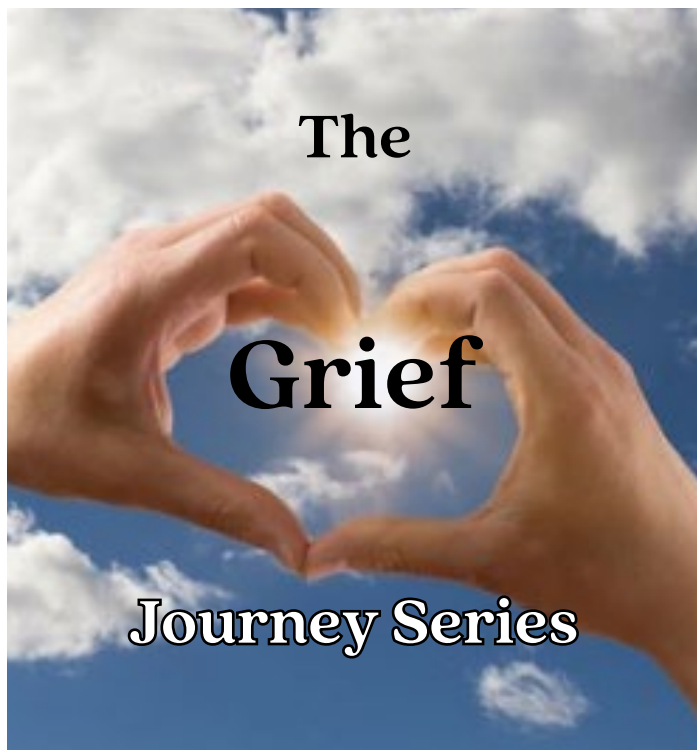
How to Book a Fitting

Call or visit Town Square Pharmacy to **book a fitting appointment.** It's easy, and we'll work around your schedule. If you have insurance, bring your information with you-we'll help with that too.

Stop By and See the Difference

You don't have to wait until something is wrong to treat yourself to a great bra. Our bras are for **any woman** who wants to feel good every day. Whether you're shopping for yourself, your mom, or a friend, we're here to help you find a bra that fits just right.

Come visit us at **Town Square Pharmacy** and ask about our bras. Your body will thank you!



By Will Brubacher, Certified Grief Mentor

Moving Grief from Transition to Transformation

Part One:

Last month we pulled back the curtain on the 'unsung' role of the caregiver, in order to appreciate the profoundly sensitive, exhaustive and complex work that they do to provide the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of the people that they are serving who are going through the end of life.

Grief raises many questions, and one of the most common as it relates to death is "Why?" And for as many times as it is asked, there are as many different answers, because each of us looks for our own answers to the mysteries of life and death.

This month, I'm going to share an almost mystical story of one of my grief support group participants. Her life was transformed by finding the reassuring and reaffirming 'light' of understanding and love, in the midst of grief's disorienting darkness of confusion, and aloneness.

This life-changing transition can occur naturally, at any point in the grief process, and yet, is always an extraordinary experience.

This woman, let's call her Ruth (not her real name), was suffering from surprise, confusion and anger after her beloved husband who was dying, told her that she should find another partner after he was gone, and when she was ready.

They had had such a 'perfect' and mutually loving marriage, and having another partner in her life had never crossed her mind, and especially at such a time.

It hurt her deeply. "How could he say such a thing, and plant such a seed of what she felt would be her betrayal," she thought?

It felt to her as though he was desensitizing their love and minimizing their marriage for all those happy years they were together.

All she could do was to reassure him of her love; however, the weight of that sharp comment haunted her after his death, and for as hard as she tried, she couldn't wrestle it away from her grief.

She went to a grief psychologist, and that didn't help; then her daughter suggested she try a support group.

When she arrived she was feeling very weak and disheartened. She was looking for an answer not only to her husband's death, but to the meaning of his remark that had had such a strong and confusing impact on her life.

It was a mystery that she needed to resolve before she could begin to grieve him. Why was he letting her go, at the same time as he was leaving?

In a support group, everyone brings a uniquely personal frame of reference to the grief process.

Everyone experiences loss differently, yet there is also a common cord of similarity.

Sharing that similar feeling of suffering and curiosity about the mystery of grief are essential elements in meeting the challenges and confronting the complex issues of grief. Think of it as the difference between going through a forest alone – or, in a group, with a guide.

And with the support of the group, Ruth was going to be able to 'see' differently what she hadn't been able to see for several weeks before, and transition would begin to change to transformation, that would start to change her life.

'Releasing' a wife or husband is not an uncommon statement to make in someone's 'last words', which is why it's such an important one to explore.

Next time, we'll see that 'light' of understanding that Ruth was desperately looking for, that can come out of the darkness of grief, coming from a different kind of love, which is not less, but far greater than what she (and we) could ever have imagined.

The 'gift' of grief is that in loss there is always hope and meaning and yes, love is a beautiful mystery still giving us more to love.

Will Brubacher

Family Conflict Coach and
Elder Mediator Certified
by: Ontario Association
of Inter-generational
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(bi-weekly on Tuesdays, 9:00 – 10:00 AM)

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Tech Help

Need 1-on-1 assistance with your devices? Our free Tech Help program provides personalized support to help you navigate your devices, troubleshoot issues, and improve your confidence with your technology. Our 'tech expert' can help you with just about anything! Book a time with Tariq.

Summer Fitness

We are now offering summer fitness classes! Please visit our website at www.wchc.on.ca to see the list of offers for the Summer. Fall (September-December) classes will be open for registration soon as well.

Mindfulness Practice

Tuesdays, July 8 – August 26, 2025 (1:30 – 2:30 PM)

Do you want to practice mindfulness? Let's take some time to slow down and focus on our own well-being during the summer months. Each week we will practice mindfulness and review our experiences. We'll also share some resources and explore ways to keep practicing on our own. People with either no experience or previous experience are all welcome. Join any or all the sessions. Registration is required.

To register for any of these programs, please contact tabdulhadi@wchc.on.ca or call 519-664-3794 ext. 222



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Traveling with a Loved One Living with Dementia:

Tips from the Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington

Traveling with a loved one living with dementia can be a rewarding experience with the right preparation. At the Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington (ASWW), we understand the importance of maintaining routines and minimizing stress during travel. Here are some practical tips to help you plan a safe and enjoyable trip this summer.

Involve Your Loved One: Engage your loved one in the planning process. Let them know the itinerary and discuss any upcoming changes.

Simplify the Itinerary: Choose destinations that are familiar and have easy access to emergency health services. Choose direct flights and avoid tight connections to reduce stress.

Bring a Familiar Companion: Traveling with an additional person can provide extra support and reduce anxiety for both you and your loved one.

Notify Service Providers: Inform airlines and hotel staff about your loved one's needs. Request early boarding, wheelchair assistance, or seating near washrooms to accommodate their comfort.

Carry Essential Documents: Bring copies of medical records, a list of current medications, and emergency contact information. Keep these documents easily accessible during your travels.

Wear Identification: Ensure your loved one wears an identification bracelet or carries a card with their name, your contact information, and a note about any special accommodations.

Have a Backup Plan: Prepare for unexpected changes by having a flexible itinerary and knowing alternative routes or accommodations.

Consider Travel Insurance: Invest in travel insurance that covers medical emergencies and trip cancellations to protect against unforeseen events.

Inform Others: Before visiting family or friends, discuss any changes in your loved one's condition and preferences to ensure a smooth visit.

Use Clear Communication: When speaking with your loved one, use simple language and provide clear instructions to avoid confusion and frustration.

Understand the Environment: Research your destination to anticipate potential challenges, such as crowded areas or unfamiliar customs, and plan accordingly.

Maintain Familiar Routines: Try to keep mealtimes and bedtime consistent with your loved one's usual schedule to provide a sense of stability.

Register with MedicAlert® Safely Home®: This program helps locate individuals who wander and provides emergency responders with important information about your loved one.

Traveling with a loved one living with dementia requires thoughtful planning and flexibility. For more information and resources, visit our website at alzheimerww.ca or contact our office for personalized support at 519-742-1422.

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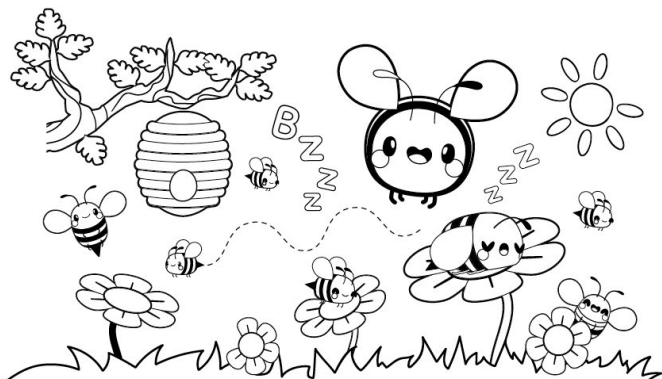
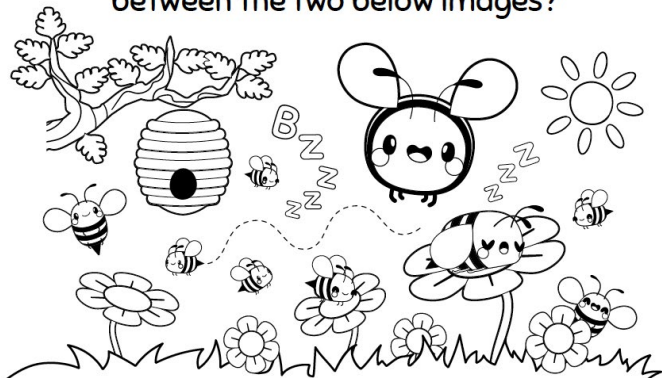
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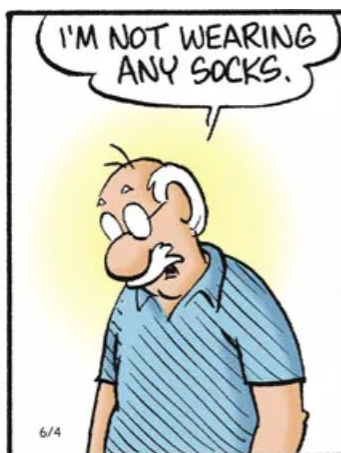
Can you spot all 12 differences between the two below images?



1		7		6	9			3
			3			5		6
			4		5		7	1
		2			1	3		8
5		3				9		7
8		4	9			6		
4	8		5		6			
9		5			8			
3			1	9		8		2

Concentration Puzzle

Use the visual clues in the puzzle to figure out what it says.



Solutions on page 30

COVER STORY



New Beginnings:

How One Group is Helping Widows and Widowers Rebuild Joy, One Monday Coffee at a Time

BY SCOTT DUNSTALL

Betty-Anne Field didn't set out to become a guiding light for widows and widowers. In fact, after her husband passed in 2015 following a long, exhausting battle with chronic illness, she figured she might just spend some quiet time healing.

What she didn't expect was to become the first Event Planner of a social group that's giving hundreds of local seniors a reason to laugh, connect, and live their best "Act II."

From Grief to Growth

"I always say I buried my husband seven times," Betty-Anne says with a half-laugh, half-sigh, recalling the many near-losses during his illness. After years of caregiving, the grief that followed his passing was complex—but so was the relief. "I didn't realize how much weight I was carrying until it was gone." Her late husband, a good man,

encouraged her to live her best life after he passed and eventually, she took him up on that, as a solo traveler through Europe. (She did. More on that in a minute.)

After packing up her life in Colorado and driving solo back to Ontario (because of course she did), Betty-Anne resettled near her daughter and began to rebuild—not just her life, but a community.

That's when she joined the newly formed group on Meetup.com called Widows and Widowers - New Beginnings. The group came together in the Spring of 2017, created by a dynamic Kitchener widow, Lynda McKim, who had suffered her own loss. "She wanted something different. Not a dating scene. Not a grief circle. Just a place for widows and widowers to feel human again."

Not Just Surviving—Thriving

And human they are.

New Beginnings is not a grief group, Betty-Anne stresses. "We've all done that work in some form or another. We're here to support each other in living." And support they do—with a sprawling buffet of activities that includes, but not limited to Monday morning coffee meetups, dinner outings, pool nights, karaoke, book club, walking tours, concerts, high teas, and even the option of an annual winter escape together to the Dominican Republic.

"We're not trying to recreate what was lost. We're trying to live fully with what we have left," she says.

The group is mostly seniors, though it welcomes anyone who's a widow or widower. FREE the first year, there is a \$10 annual membership fee—but if that's a barrier, someone quietly covers it. No one's left behind over ten bucks.

From Facebook to Face Time

New Beginnings thrives both in person and online. The exclusive WWNB Facebook page became a lifeline during the pandemic, when backyard coffees and online euchre replaced restaurants and dances. "We were playing cards on our screens, celebrating birthdays virtually, and posting baby pictures with clues to guess who was who. We had to stay connected. And we did."

During COVID, Betty-Anne herself wasn't even in Canada—she was house-sitting solo across Europe, eventually escaping Rome the day before the Italian airports shut down. "I just had a one-way ticket and a backpack. I figured it out," she laughs.

This isn't bragging. It's encouragement.

One Step at a Time

Many of the group's members come through grief programs like those offered at Henry Walser Funeral Home or the Coping Centre. Others are referred by friends or stumble across the Meetup page when they're ready to step forward. And they're greeted gently—no pressure, no demands. HUGS are our signature greeting ~ saying we care for each other.

Betty-Anne recalls one woman who came to their summer party in Petersburg who even with encouragement, couldn't bring herself to join in. "She sat at the edge, quietly, while we were all laughing. And that's okay. We meet people where they are." That same woman is now one of the group's many vibrant regulars.

The Power of Showing Up

Monday breakfasts regularly attract 30 to 35 members. "We mix it up—Cambridge one week, Kitchener the next. It gives us something to look forward to," Betty-Anne explains. Members share stories about their lives, their kids, their new adventures. Grief might come up, but it doesn't dominate. "It's not who we are. It's part of our story, not the whole plot."

Betty-Anne, as an EP - Event Planner for the group, is a force of nature herself. Between travel, gardening, aqua-fit, and writing her own story of reinvention, she still makes time to organize. Events include scavenger hunts, poetry readings, and even the annual "Palentine's Party" (Valentine's for pals—get it?). Betty-Anne's favourite summer event of choice is the Thursday Night Concert Series at Castle Kilbride. We have sometimes had 30+ members bring their chairs and join in. From Country to Folk; Big Band to Gospel; Jazz to Elvis ... there is something for every musical taste.

Her guiding philosophy: "You only get one go-round in life. So make it count."

More Than a Social Club

New Beginnings is more than an activity roster. It's a web of support. When someone's in the hospital, others check in. If a member's recovering from surgery, meals appear. "There's always someone who'll say, 'I'll pick you up,' or 'I'll drop off some muffins,'" Betty-Anne says. "We've become a family of choice."

Join the Movement

For those who've lost a spouse and are wondering what's next, Betty-Anne offers this: "Don't be afraid. We're not asking for more than you're ready to give. But you deserve connection. You deserve joy."

To join – Widows and Widowers New Beginnings, search for the group on Meetup.com. Membership is limited to those who are widowed, to preserve the group's unique environment of trust and understanding. Once you're a member, you'll gain access to the group's private Facebook page as well. You can also check out the Facebook Page Journey of Discovery:

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

So come for the coffee. Stay for the laughter. And maybe, just maybe, you'll discover what Betty-Anne and hundreds of others already have: that life after loss isn't the end of your story. It's just a new beginning.

Scott Dunstall is a regular contributor to Embracing Change. He writes about seniors, community, and how a good laugh (and a tuna sandwich) can still save the day.

Join us this summer for a retro rewind to the 70s & 80s

AND a very special display for the 50th Anniversary of Blandford-Blenheim Twp.

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www.PlattsvilleDistrictHeritageSociety.com
Text/call 519-535-1417 to book a weekday visit

Taking Advantage of the Summer Weather

The arrival of summer brings longer days, sunshine, and an ideal opportunity to get out of the house! There are many free, or low-cost activities for seniors to enjoy across the Townships – providing opportunities to stay active while connecting with others.

Get out of the house and get moving! Depending on your abilities, go for a walk, run or roll around the block. For those that are more adventurous, there are many great walking trails to enjoy. Not only does this get you out of the house but it keeps your mind and body moving. Need support or want someone to walk with? There are volunteers who can take a walk with you as well as community walking groups to join.

Enjoy the warmth of the sun but please use caution! – Whether it be sitting on a porch or patio, taking a walk, enjoying the beach or participating in activities, summer provides a great opportunity to get out and enjoy the warmth of the sunshine. Vitamin D provided by the sun often makes us feel better. It has also been proven to be good for our bones and muscles to function while reducing the risk of fractures. Please wear sunscreen and a hat and try and adjust your hours in the direct sun to avoid the hottest period of the day, from noon to 3 pm.

Cool down with a swim! Whether it be swimming outdoors or enjoying one of our community pools, swimming relaxes the body and is easier on joints than other forms of exercise. Check out public swim sessions or classes offered through our Townships.

Create or tend a garden. Whether it be planting a few flowers in a pot or tending a flower bed, working with soil and watching plants and gardens grow can be very therapeutic. Need help with gardening? There are people who can help!

Attend a community event, festival or the farmer's market. There are many activities across our Townships that provide an opportunity to get out amongst others.

Participate in free drop-in gentle exercise programs for seniors across our Townships. Building your strength and balance while minimizing the risk of falls, these classes are a great way to stay active while meeting others.

Attend social and recreational programs for seniors across the Townships. There are many free or low-cost activities for seniors to enjoy. Whether it be playing a game of cards or games, enjoying common interests with others, coffee hours, music or guest speakers, these programs offer a great way to get out and meet others. Please reach out for program schedules. Locations include, but are not limited to:

- Breslau Community Centre
- Hawkesville Community Centre
- Linwood Community Centre
- St. Clements Community Centre
- Wellesley Recreation Complex /Bill Gies Recreation Centre (Active Living Centre)
- Wilmot Recreation Complex (Active Living Centre)
- Woolwich Memorial Centre - Woolwich Seniors Association

Summer provides an ideal opportunity to get out of your house and stay active, improving our physical health, keeping us sharp and mentally engaged and connecting with others. For information on these and other activities, contact Community Care Concepts at 519-664-1900, 519-662-9526 or 1-855-664-1900.

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Emily Giau, Audiologist

Emily has extensive experience working with older adults which has led her into the hearing care industry for the last 5 years. As an audiologist, Emily has mainly worked in private practice settings and has traveled to retirement, long-term care and personal residences to provide exceptional hearing health care.

Education:

Bachelor of Science in Honours Health Studies/Aging Studies Option – Psychology Minor (University of Waterloo)

Master of Clinical Science in Audiology (University of Western Ontario)

Selina Mauro, H.I.S

Selina has 10 years of experience in the hearing industry as a Hearing Instrument Specialist and has also been certified in ear wax removal for 10 years as well. Selina also has experience working directly at a hearing aid manufacturer doing audiology support and training for all of Canada. Working as direct sales and training support for clinics traveling all over Ontario.

Education:

Bachelor of Science in Biology/Psychology Trent University

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Wills & Powers of Attorney in Ontario

Advance Care Planning for Seniors

Written by Sue Phillips, Critical Illness/ End of Life Doula

Dear Readers: July 2025

Welcome back to our Life and Death Conversation Series—where we explore practical, heartfelt ways to plan for both life and death.

This Month's Focus: What Happens to Our Bodies After Death?"

Body Disposition in Ontario

What will happen to your body when you die? You now have more choices than ever before. From traditional burials to aquamation, options for body disposition are evolving—shaped by values, beliefs, and emerging technologies.

In my work, I've seen how deeply unmade decisions can ripple through grief. That's why I believe it's time we talk openly about body disposition—and the choices available to us in Ontario.

Understanding Traditional Practices:

Traditional body disposition primarily encompasses two methods: burial and cremation. These practices are regulated under the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002.

Burial: Traditional burial involves interring the body in a cemetery plot, often following a funeral service.

Cremation: Cremation is a popular option in Ontario. It's important to note that while cremation is a method of body preparation, the final disposition—such as burial or scattering of ashes—still requires consideration and planning

Legal Considerations

In Ontario, all funeral service providers must be licensed, and specific documentation is required for both burial and cremation. Additionally, while embalming is not legally required, it may be recommended depending on the circumstances, such as the time between death and the funeral service

Understanding these traditional practices can help individuals make informed decisions that align with their personal, cultural, or religious beliefs. Whether choosing burial or cremation, it's essential to consider the associated legal requirements and the wishes of the deceased and their family.

Understanding Non-Traditional Practices:

In Ontario, individuals seeking alternatives to traditional burial or cremation have several non-traditional body disposition options that emphasize environmental sustainability and personal values.

Green (Natural) Burial: Green burial, also known as natural burial, involves interring the body without embalming, using biodegradable materials like shrouds or simple wooden caskets. The grave is typically shallower, allowing for natural decomposition and integration with the surrounding ecosystem.

Aquamation (Alkaline Hydrolysis): Aquamation is a water-based process that uses a solution of water and alkali to accelerate the natural decomposition of the body. The process results in a sterile liquid and bone ash, which can be returned to the family.

Body Donation: Donating one's body to medical science is another alternative. Institutions like the University of Toronto accept whole-body donations for research and education. After studies are complete, remains are typically cremated, and ashes may be returned to the family or interred in a communal grave.

Human Composting (Natural Organic Reduction): Human composting, or natural organic reduction is not currently permitted in Ontario.

These non-traditional options provide environmentally conscious and personalized alternatives to conventional burial practices in Ontario. Individuals interested in these methods should consult with licensed funeral providers to understand the legal requirements and availability of services.

Resource guide: Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) Consumer Guide <https://thebao.ca/>

If you'd like to connect please feel free to reach out: E: sphillips5519@gmail.com W: www.suephillips.ca.

"The end of life deserves as much beauty, care and respect as the beginning" ... Anonymous

Next month: Reflecting on the Story We Leave Behind

We'll take a deeper look at how to write your own obituary—and why it matters.

Reflections on the Melodies and Rythms of Life



'Music in Me' writer Fred Parry
is a lover of people and a
collector of stories, music,
wisdom, and grandchildren.
Find him at www.fredparry.ca

Good Deeds vs Bad Apples

I was reminded recently about life values and the Boy Scouts' advocacy for being of service—always prepared to do a good deed. As a kid, someone thought I might benefit from this way of living. I mainly learned how to survive the fundraising tradition of Apple Day—standing outside in the crispy cold fall winds, wearing short pants, giving out apples from our baskets in exchange for a donation. The emphasis on doing good deeds, however, left a lasting impression.

This commitment to good deeds resurfaced in my mind while I was checking out at the grocery store. I found myself in a stressful situation: a grumpy cashier hurried me along, and another shopper was tailgating my cart like stop-and-go traffic at rush hour. Feeling overwhelmed, I fumbled and dropped some items on the floor. Before I could react, a small boy with an angelic smile handed me my fallen boxes, saying, "Here are your things that fell, sir." It was a scouting good deed in action.

His actions were very telling. Everything seemed to stop: the cashier smiled, the guy behind me backed off, and I felt relieved. Being on the receiving end of a good deed felt great! Studies prove it's a win-win for everyone (Actionforhappiness.org).

Yet, the Boy Scouts have had dark decades where manipulative adult scout leaders sexually abused children in their care. These maladjusted adults performed a kind of "soul-theft," warping a child's sense of goodness. The organization was criticized for not doing enough to protect children. The Scouts' executive decision to aggressively fight legal investigations led to a 50% drop in membership. Eventually, they emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy with a \$2.4 billion fund to support over 80,000 men suffering from psychological trauma.

"I went to therapy, religiously... I guess I could forgive... but I choose war! I could choose silence but what for?... for all the little girls [boys] who should be warned"

I Choose Violence by Jax

<https://youtu.be/bYszyyHKgug?si=PZOj1cfoUwn6Qz7d>

The organization's new president, Roger Krone, told the Associated Press, "...the more inclusive name [Scouting America] is meant to make it clear that all children and teens are very, very welcome to join...they can bring their authentic selves."

Once, as young parents, we met a newly ordained minister who baptized our kids. He seemed nice, but we moved and lost touch. Decades later, the same priest was found guilty and incarcerated for molesting young native boys. One said of him, "The priest became a beast." We were spared enduring the unendurable.

The Dalai Lama believes we all have an innate compassion, but sometimes it takes time to tune into it. "Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible." Forgiveness may not bring about love today, but breaking the chains of self-guilt is the only way to free us for tomorrow—even from unconscionable grief. May those emotionally damaged boys feel safe again as men!

"Anyone can count the seeds in one apple; only God can count the number of apples in one seed."
– Robert H. Schuller. Yet more importantly, of the apples we can see, will they be a 'good deed' kind of people or just another 'bad apple' making everything worse? The checks and balances are in their hands – for destruction or deliverance.

That's the way I figure it. – by Fred Parry

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Inter-generational Family Conflict

Written by: Will Brubacher

Final: Choosing your Powers of Attorney Should Never be a Popularity Contest

"I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard isn't what I meant." – Unknown

PART TWO

Last month we learned about a situation between two sisters who started out as equal Powers of Attorney, then later the older, was displaced by her younger without being told by their father. You may recall that the father didn't want to get between them, and a mediator was called in to try to resolve the matter. By this time, the sisters were entrenched in opposing views and there was no willing negotiation with the younger sister holding all the power.

Remember, earlier, the older sister who lived out of town discovered some unusual cash movements in her father's accounts, and upon closer investigation found more and more major discrepancies.

By this time, the father's health was deteriorating, and the only legal recourse was to try to prove that the father had signed the Power of Attorney documents under duress of the younger sister; however, both "duress" and mental impairment issues are neither cheap nor easy proofs to make at the best of times, and especially for the purpose of regaining lost legal ground.

As you know, human nature doesn't generally like confrontation, which invariably raises the risk of inaction, at a time when it should be taken in order to potentially be most effective.

Naturally, a bad situation can only get worse, if not properly and professionally challenged in a timely fashion, as happened in this case.

Unfortunately, during this period, the father died leaving an almost untenable situation for the older sister.



The mediator recommended the services of a lawyer due to the malfeasance of the younger sister now in the capacity of the sole estate executor. After all, there was considerable evidence to show the behind-the-scenes 'abuse of power' of the younger sister.

The case was turned over to a Family Law firm, and as expected took years to settle and siphoned considerable thousands of dollars from the father's estate.

This is not so uncommon a case which is the reason I'm sharing it with you. People need to be better prepared to anticipate, and to deal with such 'unintended consequences' which, are far more routine than they should be, and can lead to regret and loss of time and money, turmoil and stress, later, if corrective action is not taken sooner.

And ironically, all of this can start from an initial position of presumed innocence.

I hope you will find the following summary helpful by providing the major 'take away' points for the purpose of this article:

1) Be sure you have a will and that you've had what is called 'the conversation' with your family about your end-of-life wishes. It's vital that everyone knows what you want when, for example, you may no longer be able to voice those wishes yourself.

2) Be sure you've chosen your Power of Attorneys for Property and Health very carefully. It's a matter of life and death, not a popularity contest. And remember you can always change your choices at any time, so long as you are of sound mind. And respectfully monitor family relations with an open and realistic mind, especially when it involves any disagreements that could effect the relationships between family members. Otherwise, it could come back to haunt you.

3) Consider making an appointment with a Family Mediator Mentor/Conflict Coach (far cheaper than a lawyer) simply to review your thoughts and plans in order to hopefully offset the potential for risky pit-falls that you may not expect. "A dollar spent can be worth a hundred saved." "Peace of mind" is preferable to unexpected and, costly outcomes, particularly as we age.

As a certified Family Mediator, Conflict Coach and Grief Specialist I would respectfully suggest that if this article resonated with you, don't hesitate to call the Ontario Association for Family Mediation for free, confidential and professional answers to any of your questions.

Their contact number is: 1-844-989-3026.

Next month we'll look at another common issue that can cause family conflict.

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Will Brubacher, Certified Intergenerational Family Mediator and Conflict Coach by the Ontario Association for Family Mediation and Family Mediation Canada.

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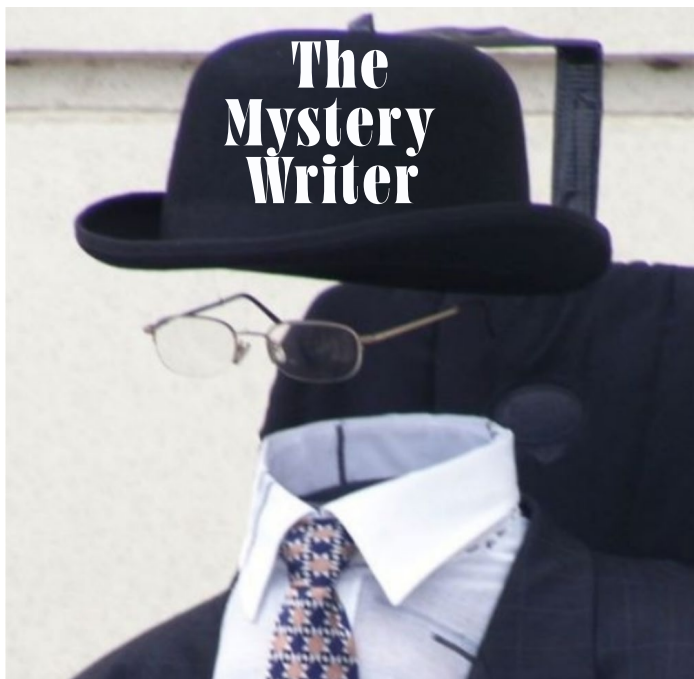
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The Lazy, Hazy Days of Summer

Some things never change.... every year at this time, like magic, we feel like young kids again just freed from school.

The days are longer, hotter; southerly breezes tickle our skin, and bring a smile to our faces; blue fluffy clouds float in fanciful shapes as though lost in the sky; and the sweet songs of birds bring melodies to mind, that puts a spring in our step even if only walking our dog down the street.

The spirit of freedom spreads from person to person and can be seen in the energy of children running like the wind through an open park or playing 'pick-up' soccer in the field. We feel it, too.

Trees are bursting in bloom and flowers of every colour and kind are plentiful to brighten our outer world and inner mood. Water shimmers and sparkles like diamonds in the sunshine and beckons the child in all of us to swim in the eternal universe of timelessness.

Life takes on a different meaning as though the shackles of former limitations have been loosened. We are free to simply experience a new plane of existence beyond our making.

One of the things that makes summer so precious is that it only lasts for the summer – like the elusive enchantment of summer love, or the mystical opening of summer's petals, perfuming the open air.

Summer is like a magical spell that changes the way we see the world and how we relate to our fellow human beings.

Still, we know it will someday come to an end like a candle burning down, and the flickering light will dim and die, and we will have to return to another world – another 'season' of life, older and perhaps wiser.

For as long as it lasts though, we will bask in the lavish abundance of summer's gifts for all to receive, no matter our age.

This is not an ode, but rather, a clarion ringing the song of summer for all to hear and to enjoy. It is a poem of heartfelt delight and worship of nature freely given; a new 'paint-over' of the world in the most vibrant of colours by the hand of the 'master' from his rainbow pallet.

Nothing lasts forever, yet if you listen carefully, you will come to hear its final cadence and marvel at its majestic sunset dance.

This can invite us to relish the unfolding days of tomorrow even better.

Plant the seeds of summer in the spirit of creating the happiest of memories and the best of times spent with friends and family, making dreams come true. Turn your anticipation into the fulfillment of what still remains of the dancing 'camp fire'.

Knowing the end of summer simply adds deeper awareness of the now, and the chance to enjoy it even more. Think not of endings but of beginnings, because as one day ends, another begins. So with time, as one hour closes, another opens. What the next will hold will be different than the last, and will remind us of the time and potential of our life still to be lived to the full, each and every day and every 'storied' hour through each and every season.

Wishing you the happiest and best of times this summer.

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How Diabetes Affects Your Eye Health

Diabetes affects more than just blood sugar levels—it can have a significant impact on eye health, leading to serious complications if not properly managed. Many diabetes-related eye conditions develop without noticeable symptoms in the early stages, making routine eye exams essential.

Your optometrist can provide comprehensive diabetic eye care, helping to detect issues early and protect your vision.

The Most Common Diabetes Related Eye Conditions

Diabetes increases the risk of several serious eye conditions, including:

- **Diabetic Retinopathy** – High blood sugar can damage the blood vessels in the retina, leading to bleeding, swelling, and potential vision loss.
- **Glaucoma** – People with diabetes are twice as likely to develop glaucoma, which causes vision loss due to progressive damage of the optic nerve.
- **Cataracts** – Diabetes can accelerate the clouding of the lens of the eye, leading to blurry vision and difficulty seeing at night.

These conditions often develop gradually without noticeable symptoms in the beginning, which is why regular comprehensive eye exams are vital to maintaining eye health.

Why Regular Eye Exams Are Essential

Diabetes-related eye diseases may not show symptoms until vision loss has already begun. Your optometrist should perform comprehensive diabetic eye exams that include:

- **A dilated retina assessment and macula OCT imaging** – Detects early signs of diabetic retinopathy and macular swelling.
- **Eye pressure testing and optic nerve OCT imaging** – Screens for glaucoma, which often develops without symptoms.
- **Lens evaluations** – Checks for cataract formation, which is more common in individuals with diabetes.

- **Coordination with healthcare providers** – Working with primary care doctors, endocrinologists, and retina ophthalmologists to ensure a comprehensive approach to diabetes management.

With early detection and proper management, many diabetes-related eye conditions can be treated before they cause permanent damage.

The goal of your optometrist is to help patients maintain clear vision and prevent diabetes-related vision loss.

Diabetes can affect your vision, but early detection and professional care can help protect your eyesight. Schedule a comprehensive diabetic eye exam to safeguard your vision.

Howard Dolman BSc OD
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jordan@wplumbing.ca | 519-575-5639
www.wplumbing.ca

Zinger Home and Country Inc.

Jason Zinger, General Maintenance Services
519-577-4258

HOME ORGANIZATION & CLEANING

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www.homeandlifeorganizers.com

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Private Home Care Services for seniors
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Home Health Care & Assistance | 519-699-1118

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515 Riverbend Drive, Suite 200, Kitchener
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Pet Valu New Hamburg

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Futher-Franklin Funeral Home

Christopher Franklin, Owner/Director
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519-656-2880 | www.futher-franklinfuneralhome.com
chris@futher-franklinfuneralhome.com

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519-662-1661 | newhamburgchapel@mjfh.ca
www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca

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info@tcmhomes.com

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519-896-3112 ext 300 | www.trinityvillage.com

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**Waterloo Regional Police
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Crime Stoppers
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Ontario Poison Centre
1-800-268-9017

**Ontario Problem
Gambling Helpline**
1-888-230-3505

TeleHealth
1-866-797-0000
TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Waterloo Wellington LHIN
519-310-2222

Community Care Concepts
519-664-1900

**Retirement Homes
Regulatory Authority**
1-855-275-7472

Elder Abuse Response Team
519-579-4607

Interfaith Community Counselling
519-662-3092

Hospice of Waterloo Region
519-743-4114

**Alzheimer Society of
Waterloo Wellington**
519-742-1422

Senior Safety Line
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Township of Wilmot
519-634-8444

Township of Wellesley
519-699-4611

Township of Woolwich
519-699-1647

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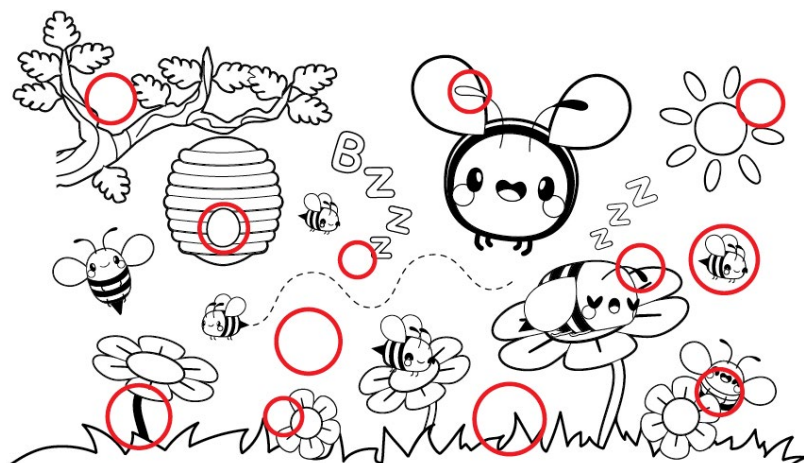
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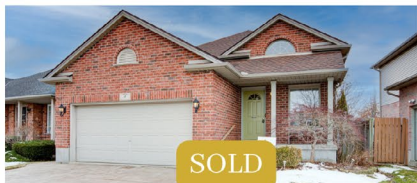
Solutions

Concentration Puzzle: Eat, drink, and be merry



1	5	7	2	6	9	4	8	3
2	4	8	3	1	7	5	9	6
6	3	9	4	8	5	2	7	1
7	9	2	6	5	1	3	4	8
5	6	3	8	4	2	9	1	7
8	1	4	9	7	3	6	2	5
4	8	1	5	2	6	7	3	9
9	2	5	7	3	8	1	6	4
3	7	6	1	9	4	8	5	2

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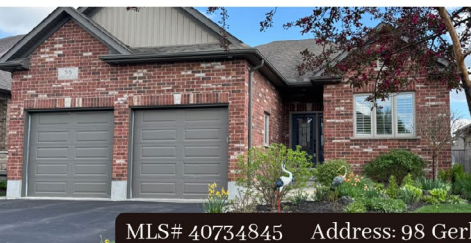
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