renaissance RTO Magazine



going green

Sustainable fashion

Living green made easy

The future of food





Let *Sharing Dance Seniors* move you

Developed by Baycrest and Canada's National Ballet School (NBS), *Sharing Dance Seniors* classes engage older adults in meaningful dance activity that benefits physical, cognitive and overall health.

What is Sharing Dance Seniors?

- 45-60 minute dance classes designed especially for older adults!
- Classes are taught by NBS teachers in Toronto, and delivered through video streaming to seniors in their communities across the country.

Bring Sharing Dance Seniors to Your Community:

This innovative program is suitable for a variety of settings including libraries, community centres, retirement communities – anywhere seniors gather!

/ukets

Connect with us to learn more: Web: www.nbs-enb.ca/sharingdanceseniors Email: sharingdance@nbs-enb.ca Phone: 416-964-3780, ext. 2114

Lozinski Centre for Community Dance at NBS Founding Donors & Honorary Chairs



LEAD SUPPORTERS

Jack Weinbaum



GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

Ontario 🕅







features

- 20 On trend: Sustainable fashion A fashion movement worth trying on
- 26 Going green made easy! It starts by making small, smart decisions every day
- **30** The future of food Embracing plant-based diets is just the beginning

renaissance



On the cover Photo, Fotohunter

forward

- 5 Contributors
- 6 Letters
- 6 Updates
- 7 From the Chair
- 8 From the Editor
- 9 From the CEO

foundation

10 Aging under the microscope

advocacy

12 Clean water is a right

health matters

- 14 Updates to health benefits
- 16 Living well
- 18 Eat well, live well

departments

- 38 Green globe-trotting
- 42 Paying it forward
- 44 Shrink your carbon footprint
- 46 Vegetable gardening in small spaces
- 48 Quilts for comfort
- **50** Living memories
- 52 Bookshelf



REDUCE YOUR JOINT PAIN



JOINT PAIN SHOULD NOT STOP YOU FROM MOVING!

Genacol[®] Pain Relief is a natural and lasting solution to reduce joint pain in less than 5 days.

Why it's so effective?

Genacol®'s exclusive AminoLock® Collagen is scientifically proven by 3 clinical studies to reduce joint pain associated with osteoarthritis.

Natural Soluble Eggshell Membrane includes essential nutrients that guickly reduce pain and inflammation and improve joint mobility and flexibility.

Try Genacol® Pain Relief today and feel the difference!

Available at:





amazon

Genacol A CANADIAN LEADER IN JOINT HEALTH SINCE 20 YEARS!

Genacol makes me feel so good!



TO THE CONSUMER: Limit of one original coupon per product. Please be advised that the retailer is in its right to refuse this coupon. Find out before you go to the checkout. In the case of a retailer's refusal, contact Genacol at 1.888.240.3002 or by email at info@genacol.ca for a refund. Limit one coupon per product. It is forbidden to sell and/or to make several copies of the coupon. Rebate applicable only in-store. No coupons received by mail at Redemco will be reimbursed directly to consumers. VALID UNTIL MAY 31st 2020.

TO THE RETAILER: Corporation Genacol Canada Inc. will reimburse this coupon for the face value plus the establish handling fee. Failure to send in, upon request, evidence that sufficient stock was purchased to cover the coupons presented will void coupons. A reduction in any applicable taxes payable is included in the coupon face value. Valid in Canada only. For redemption, this coupon must be received by mail before AUGUST 31st 2020 to: REDEMCO INC., C.P. 128, Longueuil, Quebec, J4K 4X8.



nacol

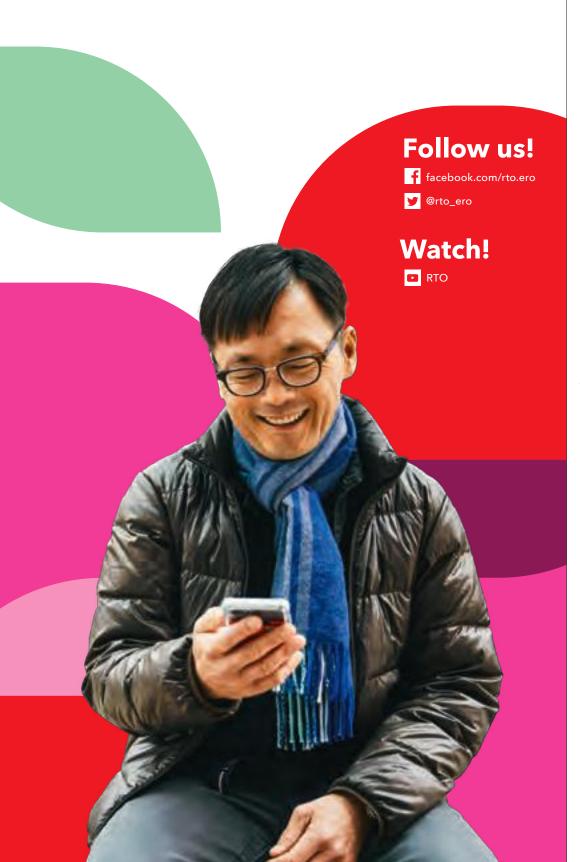


painrelief.genacol.ca

This product may not be right for you. Always read and follow the label.

keep in touch!

The RTO online community is fun, active and engaged. Connect with our growing group for updates on news and events near you, exclusive contests, retirement tips and more.



spring 2020 rto-ero.org

Publisher RTO

Editor-in-Chief Danielle Norris

Executive Editor Charlotte Empey

Associate Editor Stefanie Martin

Production Consultant Sharon Carnegie, Creative Print 3 Inc.

Creative Direction Hambly & Woolley Inc.

Translator Claude Forand

Copy Editor Tina Anson Mine

Contributing Writers Isaac J. Abitbol, Pauline Anderson, Fran Berkoff, Jane Doucet, Frankie Flowers, Stuart Foxman, Brian Jamieson, Alison LaMantia, Lesley-Anne Scorgie, Ylva Van Buuren, Doug Wallace, Martin Zibauer

Board of Directors

Chair Martha Foster, mfoster@rto-ero.org Vice-Chair Rich Prophet Directors Jacqueline Aird, Louise Guérin, Martin Higgs, William Huzar, David Kendall, Claudia Mang, Gayle Manley

Chief Executive Officer Jim Grieve

300-18 Spadina Road, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S7

Telephone **416-962-9463** | Fax **416-962-1061** Toll-free **1-800-361-9888** | Email **info@rto-ero.org** Website **rto-ero.org**

RTO is divided into 51 districts and has over 80,000 members.

Renaissance is published quarterly by the RTO organization in Toronto, Ontario, and provides RTO members with content on topics of interest to the retired education community across Canada.

ISSN 1709-2736 (Print) ISSN 2562-9751 (Online)

Views expressed in *Renaissance* are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the official position of RTO.

Advertising Beth Kukkonen, Dovetail Communications Inc., bkukkonen@dvtail.com

Publication of an advertisement does not constitute an endorsement by RTO of any product or service.

Renaissance est également disponible en français. Si vous désirez recevoir la version française de ce magazine, veuillez communiquer avec le bureau provincial.



MOVING?

Update your mailing and email addresses by contacting the Membership Department. Email **membership@rto-ero.org** or call, toll-free, **1-800-361-9888**.

VIKING

SAIL THROUGH THE HEART OF EUROPE ENJOY SPECIAL CRUISE SAVINGS + INTERNATIONAL AIR DISCOUNTS

8 RHINE GETAWAY 6 GUIDED TOURS THROUGH 4 COUNTRIES

NOV. 20, 2021: FROM **\$2,899**[°] р.р. Basel | Breisach | Strasbourg| Speyer & Rüdesheim | Koblenz | Cologne | Kinderdijk | Amsterdam

merit trave

Note: All prices are in CAD and for CA residents only and are based on double occupancy. Price quoted for this itinerary is for Cat F cabin. Special cruise fares and international air discounts are considered a single offer. International air does not have to be purchased to get cruise offer. Air offers valid on all published Canadian gateways. Prices are based on lowest at time of print and subject to change without notice. Must request offer at time of booking. Pay in full by current cruise and air promotions' expiration date. Valid on new bookings only as 3/1/20, subject to availability and may not be combinable with any other offers except Past Guest Travel Credit and Referral Rewards Credit. Viking reserves the right to correct errors and to change any and all fares, fees and surcharges at any time. Additional terms and conditions may apply; see Passenger Ticket Contract at viking.com. Offer expires 4/30/20. CST#2052644-40 COM - 4499356/4499372 BC-34799

CONTACT YOUR MERIT TRAVEL ADVISOR FOR BEST AVAILABLE PRICING. Call 1-877-872-3826 or visit RTOTravel.ca ♀У@

If getting in and out of a tub is a struggle, we have the perfect solution.

Safe Step walk-in tubs are designed to help those affected by mobility issues enjoy a safe and comfortable bath at home.









We asked Jane Doucet, Frankie Flowers and Lesley-Anne Scorgie how they live the green life.

JANE DOUCET

"I live green by hanging my laundry on the clothesline all year, even when there's snow on the ground. If there's sun and wind, it'll dry! Using the clothesline instead of the dryer saves energy — plus, laundry off the line smells great. Also, I'm 51 and I've never owned a car. I've walked, biked, used public transit, rented cars and been a CarShare member. I recently got married, so now I share my husband's car."

FRANKIE FLOWERS

'I live green by growing! Each and every year I set out to impact my community by inspiring others to grow something they can eat. This benefits the individual and the environment. Growing your own food gives people of all ages an appreciation for our entire food system. We need to decrease food waste and increase food production. Growing helps us all!"

LESLEY-ANNE SCORGIE

"I live green by using second-hand baby clothes, furniture, books and toys. Considering our little baby, Hank, grows so quickly, it doesn't make financial or environmental sense to buy new baby gear. We've also made the decision to ask our friends to invest in Hank's RESP, for his future education, rather than another unnecessary plastic toy."

Living Memories wants your stories!

We know you have compelling stories to share and we – and RTO members – want to hear them. Perhaps it's an inspiring story from your days in education. Or an unexpected experience at your high school or university reunion. Maybe it's about the joy of discovering a hidden talent after retirement. Or the challenge of moving from the home where you raised your family. You don't have to write it; you just have to tell your unique or unusual story to one of our talented writers. So send us an email at renaissance@rto-ero.org. And we'll be in touch.





At IRIS, we provide you with the finest quality lenses from Nikon, our No-Matter-What Guarantee, interest-free financing, and unparalleled experience from leading eyecare professionals.

RTO benefit from IRIS Advantage offers like \$150 towards the purchase of eyewear and prescription sunglasses.

REGISTER AT IRIS.CA/BENEFITS ACCESS CODE: RTOERO



Reader letters

You loved the winter issue of Renaissance!

Just scrolled through the new *Renaissance* (love the cover!). I was pleased to see the article about my trivia night and also the one about the family research that Gay and John have been doing. –*Pamela Baker (District 50 Atlantic)*

WONDERFUL cover picture!

-Bev Panikkar (District 23 North York)

When I saw the cover of *Renaissance* Winter 2020, I had to take a second look.

I couldn't believe it: Modern Family, which included a gay male couple who looked like they just got married.

At last, we are treating everyone with respect and equality. I was thrilled.

I then read the feature with more photos, including two women I believe may be partners.

Congratulations. People who don't accept gay people just don't understand what it means to be gay.

Being gay is not a sin; bashing is!

My son has a partner of 24 years. We just had Christmas dinner with his mother at my place. Someone you know and love is gay.

-Marilyn Byers (District 23 North York)

Enjoying the magazine!

-Ron Leduc (District 37 Oxford)

Love your magazine and how it is continuously evolving. -Gerry Yellowlees (District 47 Vancouver Island)

It was a remarkable issue.

–Mary G. Cecol (District 15 Halton)

The winter issue of *Renaissance* seemed rather serendipitous. Gay Kleiber (District 50 Atlantic) was featured in the article about tracing your family's history.

This past fall at Markham Fair, a young woman who works on another committee asked me where I had taught. I told her and she asked if I knew Gay Kleiber. I replied I knew her name and that she had taught co-op at Markham District High School.

The young woman spoke very emotionally about how Ms. Kleiber had helped her get through high school and cope with life's problems.

-Lynn Hitsman (District 34 York Region)

Be a part of *Renaissance*

Your stories are what make *Renaissance* a must-read magazine. Please share yours for future issues.

Fall 2020: Your Happy Brain (due: April 16)

- Have you ever been on a yoga retreat? Or a silent retreat? We'd like to hear about your experience.
- What does lifelong learning mean to you?
- Do you take your pet to visit people who are housebound? To a hospital or seniors' centre? Tell us about what you do and why it's important to you.

Winter 2021: Life Hacks (due: July 26)

Life hack: a trick, shortcut, skill or novelty method that increases productivity, fun and efficiency in your life. What are yours?

- Storing cleaning supplies in a shoe organizer?
- Using a baking-soda-and-water bath to clean produce?
- Adding an orange slice to the container to keep your brown sugar soft?
- Popping a tea bag into your smelly shoes overnight for a fresh-as-new scent?

Please contact our writing team at **renaissance@rto-ero.org** to share your stories.

LETTERS WANTED

Letters to the editor are always welcome. We like to receive your feedback on the stories and other content featured in *Renaissance*. Tell us how you feel about the magazine and how we can make it better. Send your letters to renaissance@rto-ero.org.

The RTO advantage

We offer insurance and so much more

by Martha Foster



In my last column I spoke about how we are one big, awesome family.

In fact, we have learned from our many surveys that the number 1 way people hear about RTO is word of mouth; current members talking to potential members.

This is an easy conversation to have because we don't just offer insurance to retirees, as other organizations do; we offer insurance and so much more.

Here are the benefits of being an RTO member and how they compare to those of other insurance providers.

Insurance: When we talk about our organization to friends, colleagues and others, the first thing we mention is our health insurance plan, including our travel insurance.

We are proud to say that it's RTO's own unique plan, administered by Johnson Insurance and run for members by members. The RTO Benefits Committee considers the best interests of members in every decision they make. Our travel insurance, including the length of coverage and the short stability clause, contributes to setting us apart.

Perks and products: We offer members a number of special products, including Venngo and Best Doctors. Venngo is a corporate discount program, which allows our members to access discounts through MemberPerks on fitness, travel, restaurants, clothing and more. I never take the train without entering my discount code. Best Doctors offers support when you have questions about a diagnosis, treatment plan or need for surgery. It is also available for your children, parents and parents-in-law.

Member services and activities: RTO members enjoy a variety of programs and services in their districts that allow them to reconnect with former colleagues and make new friends.

Advocacy: Over the last three years, we have dramatically increased our advocacy initiatives at both the Ontario provincial and the federal levels of government, addressing issues of concern to seniors across the country. And we're ready to support districts outside of Ontario on advocacy when we're needed.

Community service: All of our districts take part in a variety of community service activities. Seventy per cent of our membership indicate that they volunteer

in some way, and their RTO district is one opportunity to do just that. We also give annual grants to districts to support local groups or to provide services for seniors in that area.

Research and education: We strongly believe in research and education — that's why we created the RTO Foundation. Thanks to RTO and member support, the foundation has established a Chair of Geriatrics at the University of Toronto that is committed to both research and training. The foundation also provides research grants in other health-related areas of concern to seniors nationwide.

I hope this provides you with the information you need when you chat with colleagues about the benefits of RTO. Remember, you are important in the process; it's because of you that so many new members join our family.

Thank you for all you do. Martha Foster



Joe Murray (District 8 London, Middlesex), a volunteer with the Member Services Committee, spoke to potential members at the National Gathering for Indigenous Education – INDSPIRE conference in November 2019.

Living the green life

Small steps to a greener tomorrow

by Danielle Norris



With the rise of tiny homes,

minimalist lifestyles and improvements to energy-efficient technology, we are all doing what we can to reduce our ecological footprint. There are many issues plaguing the environment, and the overuse of disposable and single-use plastics is a huge concern.

At home, I've taken small steps to cut back. My kids take reusable lunch containers and refillable water bottles to school and we bring our cotton shopping bags to the grocery store or farmers' market.

At RTO, we use ethically sourced paper and plant-based ink to ensure *Renaissance* is produced using materials that are environmentally sound. Though the magazine is mailed out quarterly, over 10,000 members receive *eRenaissance* online, and members can update their subscription preferences any time if they'd prefer the online version only.

Our members are passionate about the environment and their passion is particularly on display when *Renaissance* is mailed out in a clear wrap to hold additional information — the annual report, *Communiqué*, pocket planners, booklets or flyers. I receive emails, phone calls and letters of disappointment regarding the use of the "plastic" wrap.

Members are relieved when I tell them that the clear wrap isn't made of plastic but from a plant-based material that is 100 per cent biodegradable. The wrap can be placed in compost bins in most areas or recycled. We have shared this information in past issues, but I am going to place a reminder in a prominent location in future issues.

RTO has received local and national awards for the quality, design and overall production of *Renaissance* since the redesign in June 2018. With all the improvements to the content, look and feel of the magazine, I am excited to share that the paper we are using is cheaper and better for the environment than issues prior to the redesign. Though there is always room for improvement, looking good for less while helping the environment is a total win-win — and a huge step in the right direction.

Making lifestyle changes can have a lasting impact on the environment and on our health. In this issue, Alison LaMantia highlights the benefits of being financially, environmentally and socially responsible consumers (page 20). Registered dietitian Fran Berkoff shares tips on healthy eating and deconstructs the revamped Canada's Food Guide and new food packaging regulations on page 18. Then Stuart Foxman explores the future of food and the shift towards more plant-based and cutting-edge alternatives on page 30.

You'll also discover 10 easy tips for going green, eco-friendly travel options and food for thought on ethical investing. And, of course, lots of member tips on living sustainably.

As always, I look forward to your feedback, so please keep in touch. 💝

Happy reading! Danielle Norris renaissance@rto-ero.org

environmental sustainability

by Jim Grieve

We're committed to

Going green

The recent federal election featured considerable discussion

across the country on the rapid advance of climate change, the need to find alternative sources of energy, endless talk about the future of electric transportation and the need to remove our dependency on carbon sources of energy.

It's clear that our federal, provincial and municipal leaders are deeply divided on the best approaches for both political and fiscal reasons. How many billions will it take to develop new sources? How can we sustain a Canadian federation so deeply fragmented and regionally committed to forms of energy that seem to be competing and moving in directions that are not sustainable?

The one sure strategy that RTO members have been implementing for a number of years is well outlined in this edition of *Renaissance*. We have long been advocates of environmental sustainability and empowered to go green in our own homes and within the RTO office. In fact, in our fall 2019 all-member survey, 87 per cent of respondents ranked advocacy and action for the environment as extremely important.

At 18 Spadina Road we have spent the last four years upgrading the building by renovating our systems to achieve much greater energy efficiency and higherquality meeting and working spaces. For example, we converted to LED lighting throughout the building three years ago, resulting in a 5.9 per cent energy savings in 2017 and an impressive 26.4 per cent energy savings in 2018. The results for 2019 are on track at that same rate due to the installation of an ultra-high-efficiency heating and cooling system.

We have moved forward rapidly to create meeting agendas that are paperless and easy to navigate. In fact, all members of the Marketing and Communications Committee now operate fully electronically at their meetings. All other agendas for committees and workshops, and even our annual meeting and forum agendas, are provided electronically well in advance, so it is entirely possible for members to operate with any laptop or mobile device.

In early fall 2019 we provided all 51 district treasurers with Google Chromebooks and QuickBooks software to facilitate their budgeting and accounting for district funds. We send electronic versions of *Renaissance*, *Communiqué*, the RTO Insurance Plan Booklet and the Chair's Newsletter to all members with email addresses. We also post all of our documents on our website for easy access by members.

In our home, like many RTO members, we have moved to install devices like a smart thermostat and we now only have rechargeable electric devices, like an Ego lawn mower, leaf blower and snow blower.

Please write and let me know what steps you're taking to sustain and improve the environment. 🖗

Best wishes, Jim Grieve



18 Spadina Green Renovation. Top: Before, June 2019. Bottom: After, December 2019.



foundation

Aging under the microscope

Are older adults properly represented in research?

by Brian Jamieson



Aging happens. But what does it mean to health-care management and public policy when older adults are missing or under-represented in medical research? And, specifically, how are women — the majority of older adults — affected?

Dr. Paula Rochon, the RTO Chair in Geriatric Medicine, and her team are working to find out.

With RTO Foundation funding, Rochon, vice-president of research at Women's College Hospital, geriatrician and a professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Toronto, and her team want to improve the aging process, particularly as it affects women. Specifically, they're examining issues of loneliness, caregiving and the optimal prescribing of drug therapy.

Broadly, the team looks at how to promote health and wellness at a population level. Rochon prioritizes investing time to support trainees who are at the undergraduate, master's, PhD and post-doctoral levels whose own interests, questions and research build greater knowledge and capacity in the field of aging.

Older people haven't been well represented in research, says Rochon, and women, as the majority, have been disproportionately affected. For example, women have generally shouldered the responsibility for caregiving but, because they live longer, may find themselves needing care and not having someone or the resources to provide it.

"How can we provide support that makes caregiving less stressful and help spread those roles in different ways?" asks Rochon.

Public policy is where the conversation leads. "If you're young in the workforce and wanting to start a family, there are supports there. But what about later on in your career when you may need to look after a family member, a parent or a grandparent and you need time off? How does that work?" she wonders. "Or what if you have children and someone older you're looking after? How do you provide support for women in careers who, at times, need additional support? Could we help with that? And how do we give support to men to take on some of these roles?"

Regarding drug use, older people may be among the greatest consumers. But they have not always been adequately included in research, and information about this group is not often reported, she says.

At the moment, Rochon is involved in the early stages of an international study into "prescribing cascades." Cascades occur when another drug is prescribed to treat the conditions caused by or side-effects of an earlier drug.

The cascading concept came from observations in caring for older people over time and recognizing when they were on more drugs than they needed to be. "This concept has been picked up, but there's more we can do to help make it simpler and easier for people to recognize these problems," she says.

Working with investigators from Canada, the United States, Belgium, Italy, Ireland and Israel, Rochon hopes to improve the way drugs are prescribed globally for older adults. "Issues of drug prescribing are international," she says. By sharing and comparing, medical researchers can understand what's similar and different, and what works well in one setting that might work in another. It's an iterative process involving the gathering of quantitative and qualitative data and ongoing discussion.

"We've learned that the situations are different depending on the settings of care," she says. For instance, prescribing is different for people living in community settings versus those living in long-term care homes.

Engaging and educating the public is an important next step. Prescribing cascades are a simple concept that the public, physicians, policy-makers and people in different countries can understand and act on, says Rochon. "What messages do we need to bring out so that providers and patients will be aware and can prevent these cascades from happening in the first place, detect that they have happened or reverse the process?"

Investigators have begun to use newspapers to get the word out, and more information is forthcoming, including questions patients can ask.

Refining those messages will be key — with RTO's continued support, says Rochon. "We are thankful to RTO for having the foresight to invest in geriatric medicine and research. With their support, we are building capacity to improve care for older adults, particularly women, on a national and international level." 🏶

In 2014 the RTO Foundation, with the support of RTO, funded an endowed chair in geriatric medicine at the University of Toronto.

The chair was awarded to Dr. Paula Rochon by the University of Toronto based on research excellence, following an international search. Valued at \$3 million, this endowment supports her research program with external funding from additional sources. The interest from the endowment will continue to support ongoing research.

RTO Foundation **ERO** Fondation

Your friends at the RTO Foundation wish to thank every member who supported the *Engage: End Isolation* campaign this year. The passion and generosity of our donors is what allows us to help build a better future for Canadian seniors.

The RTO Foundation is grateful to Johnson Inc. for their ongoing commitment to enhancing the quality of life for older Canadians. Johnson's support contributes to research that will help RTO members and future generations of seniors live healthier and more connected lives.





To learn more about social isolation please join the Foundation's Facebook group facebook.com/groups/endisolation



Clean water is a right

Here's how you can help make it happen

March 22 is World Water Day -

a great day to take action for water in your community!

According to the David Suzuki Foundation, Canada has one-fifth of the world's freshwater, a quarter of its remaining wetlands and its longest coastline. So no surprise that we take water for granted. Some 500 boil-water advisories are issued by towns and cities every year usually for three or four days because of environmental issues.

Boil-water advisories, both short- and long-term, for Indigenous communities are another story. Global News reported last October that "many Indigenous communities have gone for years and years without clean drinking water — living, as one woman put it, 'in Third-World conditions in a First-World country.'"

RTO advocates for members and seniors through its community-based advocacy campaign Vibrant Voices, which has identified clean, safe water for all Canadians as a priority.



What's the issue?

The United Nations has said clean water is a right. The 1971 Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) aimed to reduce the flow of toxic substances into the environment, with enforcement power given to the provinces. Yet in Canada water regulation has been ineffective.

"Many Indigenous communities have gone for years and years without clean drinking water – living, as one woman put it, 'in Third-World conditions in a First-World country."

Some challenges

- Industrial contaminants: Pharmaceutical, mining and lumber industries draw huge amounts of water and contaminate it.
- **Run-off after rain:** Blue-green algae develops when agricultural fertilizer runs off farms into lakes after it rains, or when human and animal wastes are forced into the lakes during rainstorms. Its presence is a growing problem in Ontario.
- The destruction of our wetlands: The degradation of nature's filtering system allows algae blooms to spread into the upper layer of the water. The green appearance is caused by an explosion of the algae known as cyanobacteria, which release toxins damaging to human health. As the bloom continues to grow, a scum forms and oxygen is stripped from the water, killing off all living organisms and creating a "dead zone." Toxin concentrations

increase as lake levels drop; in Ontario, this is at the greatest level in Lake Erie.

• Well water: One-third of Canadians depend on groundwater (well water). This water can be contaminated by landfill leakage, septic tanks, chemical run-off and industrial waste sites. Some contaminants stay in the system for 10,000 years.

What you can do

This World Water Day, organize a World Water Day activity in your community. Talk to your municipal council about becoming a Blue Community.

Press your MPP and MP to create a water policy that is effective, enforced and properly funded. 🖗

To find out more, visit: The Council of Canadians —canadians.org The David Suzuki Foundation —davidsuzuki.org

WATER CONSERVATION AROUND THE HOUSE

- Always turn taps off tightly so they do not drip.
- Promptly repair any leaks in and around your taps. (One leak can waste several thousand litres of water per year.)
- When hand-washing dishes, never run water continuously. Immerse dishes in a sink partially filled with soapy water, and then rinse them using the spray attachment on your tap.
- While brushing your teeth, turn the water off. Use short bursts for cleaning your brush. (This saves about 80 per cent of the water normally used.)
- When washing or shaving, partially fill the sink rather than running the tap continuously. (This saves about 60 per cent of the water normally used.) Use short bursts to clean razors.
- You can reduce water usage by 40 to 50 per cent by installing low-flush (also known as low-flow) toilets.
- For more information, visit the Water Project at thewaterproject.org.

Updates to health benefits

New ways we're taking care of your health

The following plan changes went into effect on January 1, 2020.

Online claims portal

Say goodbye to the guesswork. Our new online claims portal is launching in early 2020. Get real-time reimbursement amounts and have your claims processed more quickly.

2020 dental fee guide and assignment of benefits

Dental Plan reimbursements will be updated to the 2020 fee guide for general practitioners.

To improve member convenience, our Dental Plan will allow assignment of benefits. You can authorize the payment of eligible benefits directly to your dentist. You will no longer have to pay the dentist up front and wait for reimbursement. You will still be responsible for paying the copayment and any non-eligible services. The option of paying your dentist in full and submitting your claim for reimbursement will remain available.

New benefits card

Effective January 1, 2020, use the new policy number and contact phone numbers if you have a medical emergency or need assistance when travelling. Discard your old benefits card once you have received the new one.

The information for your Extended Health Care, Dental and Hospital claims has not changed. You do not need to update this information with any of your providers.

As of January 1, 2020, Global Excel is our new partner for travel claims and assistance.



AIDS AND APPLIANCES

If you are purchasing an item that is eligible for provincial funding, you must apply for that funding first before you are eligible for reimbursement through your Extended Health Care Plan.

If you do not apply to the provincial plan first, your reimbursement may be reduced by the amount you would have been eligible for through your provincial government health insurance plan (GHIP).

Sometimes there are delays when applying for GHIP funding. However, you must still apply through the province first. Our health plans are designed to supplement, not replace, GHIP coverage.

DIABETIC SUPPLIES

Some diabetic supplies, such as test strips, are eligible for reimbursement through provincial government plans.

ONLINE CLAIMS SUBMISSION

When submitting a claim online, you must include an image of your original receipts. The receipt must include the name of patient, the vendor or provider's information, the date of service or purchase, a description of item(s) and a breakdown of charges. Cash register and credit card receipts are not acceptable.

CLAIMS SUBMISSION BY YOUR PROVIDER

Your practitioner will use the information on your benefits card to submit your claim electronically. Important: The patient name submitted by the provider must match the name on file with Johnson Inc. For example, if you enrolled with the name A. John Smith, this should be the name used by your provider. It is also important to ensure that the date of birth and address are correct.



Medical cannabis has been available to Canadians since 2001. With a doctor's approval, patients may obtain cannabis through Health Canada–approved suppliers. Patients may also produce their own supply.

In response to questions from some members, the Benefits Committee has conducted a thorough review of the evidence related to medical cannabis. We concluded that cannabis coverage will not be included in our health plans.

The Benefits Committee will continue to monitor the evolving medical and legal situation surrounding medical cannabis, as we do with all new treatments and technologies. 3





30 RTO Members for a FREE personalized hearing aid trial

Now enrolling 30 RTO Members at each of our clinics for our free trial session.* We are looking for RTO Members like you, who may struggle to hear and understand conversations. Try the latest hearing technology for yourself and find out if this is the solution to your hearing difficulties.



FREE 30-DAY TRIAL Call us toll-free today. All callers will receive a FREE hearing test**. If testing indicates a hearing aid would be useful, you will get your chance to test the latest digital hearing aid technology.

1-833-738-3527

Mention this code: MAG-WNTD-RTO

Trial spots are limited call to book your free trial or book online: **HearingLife.ca/RTO**

HearingLife has over 200 clinics nation-wide.



*Free trial participants must be private sale, or eligible for ADP. Some public insurers not eligible. See clinic for details. Offer valid until April 30th, 2020 and is subject to change without notice. **A comprehensive hearing assessment is provided to adults ages 19 and older at no cost. The results of this assessment will be communicated verbally to you. If you request a copy of the Audiological Report, a fee will apply. Child hearing tests are conducted at select locations for a fee, please contact us for more information. Some conditions may apply.

Living well

Health news you can use

by Pauline Anderson



Tea and depression

A study published in *BMC Geriatrics* has revealed some beneficial impacts of tea on depression, so you can add a cuppa to the list of possible ways to ward off unhappiness.

The study included 13,026 people age 65 and older from the Chinese Longitudinal Healthy Longevity Survey (CLHLS).

Researchers examined how often they drank tea (almost every day, sometimes or rarely/never) both at the time of the survey and at age 60. They assessed depressive symptoms with a five-item scale that measured positive feelings (looking on the bright side, being happy) and negative emotions (feeling lonely, isolated, useless).

Researchers put in controls for factors that could confuse the relationship between tea drinking and depression, including socio-economic status, lifestyle, health conditions and social engagement.

Interestingly, the beneficial impact of tea on depression may be related to socializing rather than the biochemical components of tea.

After nine years of follow-up, the study found that people who drank tea consistently — almost every day as of age 60 — had significantly fewer depressive symptoms than non-tea drinkers. The benefit was especially evident in men and in those under the age of 80, perhaps because they drink more tea, or tea with a higher concentration of beneficial ingredients.

Caveat: The study didn't consider the type of tea consumed, and the depression symptom scale was limited.

Optimism may protect against heart attack

Look on the bright side. It just might protect your heart.

Research shows that being optimistic believing that good things will happen — reduces the risk for cardiovascular diseases, including heart attack, stroke and angina, and death from any cause.

After searching the literature for relevant research, researchers selected 15 studies with almost 230,000 subjects for their analysis.

The mean age of participants varied from 19 to 93 years. Studies used different scales to measure optimism, and many adjusted for physical activity and psychological stress to rule out depression as a mitigating factor.

After an average follow-up of almost 14 years, the analysis found that optimism reduced the risk of cardiovascular events by about a third. It also linked optimism to less risk of all-cause mortality, but to a lesser extent.

Lifestyle factors, such as eating a healthy diet, might help explain the relationship between optimism and heart health, but optimism could also provide a positive physiological buffer, said the authors.

Antidepressants and side-effects

Conventional wisdom has it that taking selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), the most commonly prescribed antidepressants — think Prozac — may lead to fractures, gastrointestinal problems and other adverse events. But a new review suggests these side-effects may be overblown great news considering that the use of antidepressants has increased sharply worldwide.

The analysis summarized side-effects from 45 groups of studies that looked at antidepressant use. The authors determined that the reason people were taking antidepressants likely explained many of the adverse health outcomes.

They concluded that antidepressant use appears to be safe for treating anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and eating disorders, as well as depression. Although this was a very large review, the included studies were observational, so you can't imply the cause-and-effect equation. The review also didn't include newer antidepressants or side-effects such as obesity and diabetes, or sexual dysfunction, which is the most common adverse side-effect linked to antidepressant use.

Sight is the most valued sense

The results are in: People treasure their sight more than all other senses, including hearing.

In an online survey, 250 U.K. adults age 22 to 80 years — the mean age was 50 — were asked to rank the five traditional senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste) and three other senses (balance, and the abilities to sense temperature change and feel pain) in order of most to least valuable.

About 88 per cent ranked sight as their most valuable sense, with hearing coming in second and balance third. The authors think that the high ranking for balance might be because balance problems can impede mobility and impair quality of life.

Subjects were also asked how long they would be prepared to be without sight or without hearing in exchange for how many years of perfect health. Participants said they'd sacrifice an average of 5.4 years without sight, and 3.2 years without hearing, to remain in perfect health for 10 years.



CUSTOMIZE YOUR HIGH SEAS ADVENTURE

10 MYTHS, MAYANS & MARINAS ABOARD *RIVIERA* HOSTED

JAN. 27, 2021: FROM **\$3,949**[°] p.p. Includes cocktail party + \$400 US shipboard credit

TO:

Miami | Key West | Cozumel | Roatan | Santo Tomas | Harvest Caye | Belize City | Costa Maya **15** nights ABOARD INSIGNIA

JUNE 2, 2021: FROM **\$8,699**[°] p.p.

Free prepaid gratuities

M VISITS TO:

Barcelona | Alicante | Almeria | Gibraltar | Seville | Lisbon | Oporto | Bilbao | Bordeaux and more!

PERSONALIZE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH *OLIFE* **CHOICE.** Enjoy roundtrip airfare and free internet, plus choose one: Up to 6 FREE Shore Excursions | FREE Beverage Package | \$600 USD Shipboard Credit

Offers and fares are subject to change. Contact Your Travel Advisor for current pricing. All fares are per person in Canadian dollars, valid for residents of United States and Canada, based on double occupancy (unless otherwise noted), for new bookings only and may be withdrawn at any time. Oceania Cruises reserves the right to correct errors or omissions and to change any and all fares, fees, promotions and surcharges at any time. Other restrictions may apply. To constant and the second states and the second states and to change any and all fares, fees, promotions and surcharges at any time. Other restrictions may apply.

Call 1-877-872-3826 or visit RTOTravel.ca

Eat well, live well

Food labels help you make your best choices

by Fran Berkoff, registered dietitian

Released more than a year ago, the new Canada's Food Guide (CFG) is a positive document with easy-tounderstand healthy eating guidelines. Unlike past guides (the last revamp was in 2007), this one doesn't dictate portion sizes or number of servings. Instead it focuses on healthier eating: more whole grains, plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole foods rather than ultra-processed foods, drinking water as your best beverage and limiting foods high in sodium, sugars and saturated fat. The guide also encourages eating more non-animal protein sources, such as beans, lentils and chickpeas.

I'm happy with the focus on healthy lifestyle — enjoying food, cooking more often and eating with friends and family. Food brings people together to share the day's doings, celebrate special occasions, mark milestones and more, and this enjoyment fuels our well-being.

To help you make informed food choices, CFG recommends paying attention to labels. New food packaging regulations were announced in 2017 and are coming into effect over the next few years, although many foods already carry the updated label.

Labels list all the ingredients in a food item, which helps you compare similar products and pick the ones that contain a little or a lot of the nutrients that matter to you. The label changes include an updated nutrition facts table, changes in the ingredient list and a new health claim allowed for prepackaged vegetables and fruit. @



Reading the food label

The table provides information on calories plus nutrients, including fat, saturated fat, trans fat, carbohydrates, fibre, sugars, protein, cholesterol, sodium, potassium, calcium and iron. Again, look for nutrients that are most important to you. For example, when you buy cereal, look for ones that are highest in fibre and lowest in sugar. Compare the different canned soups and look for ones with lower sodium.

Bonus: The new labels are in white boxes with black lettering and borders, and the font used for serving size and calories is larger than before.

The ingredient list

This tells you all the ingredients in a packaged food. They must be listed in descending order by weight. So look for the healthiest ingredient or the ingredient you're interested in to be at the head of the list. For example, when you buy whole wheat bread, look for whole wheat as the first ingredient.

Nutrition claims

A nutrient content claim describes the manufacturer's claim for one or more nutrients, such as fat (low in fat) or fibre (high in fibre). All health claims must meet established criteria. For example, there is now a health claim for vegetables and fruit – "A healthy diet rich in a variety of vegetables and fruit may help reduce the risk of heart disease."

Tip: When you see a health claim, check the ingredient list and nutrition facts table and then compare the product to a similar one that doesn't have the claim. They may be the same and you may be paying extra for fancy packaging.



Sugars

In the new ingredient list, sugar-based ingredients are grouped within brackets after the word "sugars" to identify all sources of sugars added to the product. However, the new nutrition facts table shows total sugars and does not differentiate between naturally occurring sugars, such as those found in fresh fruit, and added sugars, such as brown sugar, molasses, corn syrup, honey, maltodextrin or anything ending in "ose." For now, your best solution is to look at the ingredient list. If you can't identify any natural sources of sugar, you'll know that the sugar listed has been added.



feature

Sustainable fashion

A fashion movement worth trying on

by Alison LaMantia



was my year of buying no new clothing.

I knew my shopping habits were impacting the environment and, depending on the factory, abusing human rights. Perhaps most importantly, I realized my young children were watching and learning from me.

The year was fun, freeing and surprisingly easy.

I borrowed clothes from friends when I didn't have what I needed for a specific event and I fell for thrifting, uncovering exceptional second-hand items that seemed almost one-of-a-kind.

Like me, Andrea Kirshenblatt (District 34 York Region) enjoys thrifting. One of her favourite finds is a look-at-me beaded silk dress she picked up for less than \$20.

Kirshenblatt does much of her thrifting at Value Village on senior's day, which offers an additional 30 per cent off already-low prices.



Initially, Kirshenblatt's commitment to buying second-hand was budget driven, but she recognizes the spinoff environmental benefit. "I've seen ads for Value Village where they talk about how much water is used to make a single T-shirt. So it makes me feel good when I donate or buy second-hand," she says.

According to Fashion Takes Action, a Canadian non-profit, the apparel industry, one of the top five most polluting industries in the world, produces more than eight per cent of the total global greenhouse gas emissions.

The fashion industry is also the second largest polluter of our freshwater.

Consider this: It takes about 2,700 litres of water to produce a cotton T-shirt, which is the amount of water a person drinks in two-and-a-half years.

Making a pair of jeans produces as much greenhouse gas as driving a car more than 80 miles.

And thanks to fast fashion inexpensive on-trend clothing designed to be worn only a few times — we're buying and tossing more clothes than ever, contributing to the 12 million tonnes of textiles that end up in North American landfills each year. Discarded clothing made of non-biodegradable fabrics can sit in landfills for up to 200 years.

Donating our unwanted clothing can help divert items from our landfills. But for Mary Cecol (District 15 Halton) it's also a chance for charitable giving. Cecol is careful about how she gets rid of clothing she and her husband no longer need. She donates to an organization called Safetynet (**safetynetservices.ca**) in Oakville, Ont., where she lives. The organization provides clothing, furniture and a range of services at no cost to families facing financial hardship.

"It makes me feel good because I know it's going to a different kind of need," says Cecol. "I like the idea that we can pay it forward." Discarded clothing made of non-biodegradable fabrics can sit in landfills for up to 200 years. "I try to buy good-quality clothes that will last for a long time. Our church has a clothing drive in the spring and fall for the St. Vincent de Paul Society. I collect clothes that are in good condition and donate them to the drives. The Canadian Diabetes Society collects clothes, sorts them and sells items in good condition to Value Village to raise money."

Claudia Mang (District 22 Etobicoke and York)

It takes about

2,700 litres

of water to produce a cotton T-shirt, which is the amount of water a person drinks in two-and-a-half years. simple ways to make sustainable fashion choices: 1-Mend and upcycle 2-Borrow or swap 3-Thrift and donate 4-Buy fewer, higher-quality and timeless pieces 5-Support sustainable fashion brands

12 M tonnes

of textiles end up in North American landfills each year. Kirshenblatt and Cecol's conscientious choices make them part of a growing slow-fashion movement that's focused on sustainability and considering the environmental and human impacts of our choices.

Mel Avery (District 46 Muskoka) embraces slow fashion. The impact of her shopping choices is something she says she can't ignore anymore, so she now buys exclusively from environmentally and socially conscious fashion brands. "The shift has happened in the last four or five years, which coincided with me changing my eating habits. I became vegan. It made me think of where everything is coming from," she explains.

Avery began learning about the damage lower-cost clothing does to the environment in terms of pesticides, water and dyes, and to humanity in terms of labour force exploitation.

"I don't want to know this because it's so easy to go pick up cheap things. But it's one more thing I can't do, now that I know. I'm not even tempted anymore to save money or to be convenient," she says.

Quality, comfortable and stylish clothing is important to Avery, who, while retired, now teaches at a prison. She prefers natural fibres that feel good on her skin and that she can feel good about. "I purged a lot of my clothes; I don't own many items and I feel so free. In fact, I have a walk-in closet, and I'm going to use the space for storing my art supplies. I can't stand having the big closet saying, 'Fill me up.'"

Avery buys her clothing online, which she started to do after she moved from Toronto to Bracebridge, Ont. For people who are new to online shopping, she suggests looking carefully and learning what styles work well for you, not just what looks good online in the picture. "Don't get sucked in and marketed to," she says. @

Material Matters

Cotton

- According to the World Wildlife Foundation, it takes 2,700 litres of water to produce a single T-shirt. That's enough water to sustain a human life for more than two years.
- The fertilizers and pesticides used in conventional cotton farming have an impact on soil, water, biodiversity and human health.

What you can do

- Air-dry your cotton clothing to reduce its environmental impact.
- Buy organic cotton or look for the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) logo on cotton pieces you're buying new.

Denim

• Denim is made from cotton, but its environmental impact doesn't stop there. The conventional finishing processes – from dyeing to distressing – are harmful both environmentally and to workers.

What you can do

- Keep your denim longer.
- Look for companies practising sustainable denim manufacturing. Options include **everlane.com** and **yogajeans.ca**.

Bamboo

- Bamboo is a fast-growing plant that replenishes itself. It can be grown without pesticides or fertilizers and requires less water. It also helps absorb carbon dioxide from the air.
- Bamboo fabric is soft, breathable, UV-protective and naturally antibacterial and antifungal.

What you can do

• Look for clothing made from bamboo. **encircled.ca** has options.

Start your research with these sustainable fashion brands

everlane.com makes basics for men and women and is committed to ethical production and radical transparency. They use factories around the world and publish information about working conditions and more on their website.

encircled.ca makes clothing in Canada from sustainable fabrics. They create modern basics and pieces you can wear a number of different ways, and encourage the concept of a capsule wardrobe, which contains fewer items that can be mixed and matched.

tentree.ca makes clothing from sustainable fabrics. They also commit to planting 10 trees for every item purchased and publish information about their factories on their website.

patagonia.ca is an outdoor clothing company that's committed to social responsibility. You can learn more about the materials they use, their supply chain and their production processes on their website.

yogajeans.ca, a denim company that manufactures in Canada, is committed to using less water and to using laser technology for denim finishes. Many of their products are made from Better Cotton. The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) – a global not-for-profit - is the largest cotton sustainability program in the world. BCI exists to make global cotton production better for the people who produce it, better for the environment it grows in and better for the sector's future. BCI aims to transform cotton production worldwide by developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity.

kotn.com, a Canadian company that makes cotton T-shirts, shirts and trousers for men and women, works directly with cotton-farming families in Egypt, helping to rebuild the industry from the inside. Like farmto-table, but for your clothes.

spring **2020** | 25

Making a pair of jeans produces as much greenhouse gas as driving a car more than

The apparel industry

produces more than

of the total global

greenhouse gas emissions.

per cent

8

80 kilometres.



You don't have to go off-grid to live a greener life

by **Martin Zibauer**

Going green starts by making small, smart decisions every day



around the house

Don't toss it; repair it. Hipster "maker culture" groups will repair small household appliances, clothing and other items, usually for free. If you're handy with a sewing machine or a screwdriver, become a "fixer." In Toronto, check out repaircafetoronto.ca.

Marie-France Leclerc (District 18 Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes) uses castile soap, made from plant oils, to mix her own eco-friendly foaming hand soap: Into an 8-ounce pump bottle, pour 1 cup unscented castile soap, 20 drops essential oil (she likes a mix of orange and lavender) and 1 tsp vitamin E oil. Screw the lid on tightly and shake the bottle to combine.

A home energy audit - performed by a licensed auditor can help you target your renovation budget for a more efficient and comfortable home. An audit is often a prerequisite for the many rebate and grant programs you'll find listed on showmethegreen.ca.

"Renewable energy is the sexy part," says environmental advocate Tim Grant, "but in my neighbourhood, sealing up cracks is more urgent." After his downtown Toronto residents' association negotiated a bulk discount for energy audits, 65 homeowners signed up and discovered that, on average, their homes had leaks equivalent to a two-foot by two-foot hole in the wall.

Cloth napkins are more civilized and greener than paper ones, especially if everyone has an individual napkin ring. Unless your napkin is dirty, put it back in the ring for the next meal.

Keep reusable grocery bags in your car so you don't forget them at home.

Cut single-use plastic waste even more with washable fabric bags for produce, silicone zipper-style bags for the freezer, a travel mug for the barista to fill and a stainless-steel straw for your morning smoothie.



Shop for used goods online on Facebook Marketplace, Kijiji, Craigslist and other websites. Check out the Freecycle Network (freecycle.org) too, where your neighbours are giving items away for free.

Visit the dump, suggests Deborah Reed (District 18 Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes). "The dump is an obscene place," she says, but it will remind you why you must recycle. Many dumps in rural areas separate reusable items like the old metal cradle that now holds logs for her fireplace. "As ugly as the dump is," she says, "it's a source of repurposed joy for our little house."

Canada Post doesn't deliver all of your junk mail, but the Crown corporation says it will respect a note in your mailbox requesting no Canada Post Neighbourhood Mail. That's fewer catalogues, flyers, restaurant menus and other paper waste to haul to the curb for recycling.





in your wardrobe

Get thrifty! Prowling thrift stores is fun, saves money and keeps clothing and other goods out of landfills.

If vintage and thrift stores aren't for you, invest in timeless, well-made clothes you can wear forever. One sign that a manufacturer has confidence its garments are durable: spare buttons.

When you can't hang your clothes outside, wool dryer balls save money and resources by replacing disposable dryer sheets and reducing drying time.

Here's a dandy idea: Replace paper facial tissues with a hankie.

The Lions Club will recycle your old eyeglasses and distribute them in developing countries. Visit **clerc.ca** to find a nearby drop-off location.



For an effective, non-toxic weed killer, dissolve 1 tablespoon salt in 1 cup white vinegar. Pour into a spray bottle and add a squirt of dishwashing detergent. Spray this mixture onto the weed's foliage.

Instead of raking, let leaves lie where they fall; they help fertilize the soil and provide cover for insects and other small creatures.

Give bees a chance by planting pollinator-friendly flowers that bloom in succession, such as foxglove, chives and coneflower. Bees like a messy garden, so leave some twigs and bare, unmulched ground.

Plant milkweed and follow the development of a monarch cocoon, as Deborah Reed did, posting photos on Facebook to get others interested. "I felt really privileged," she says, to share "the wonderment of the process." Smooth operators — drivers who accelerate and brake gently, maintain a steady, reasonable speed and keep tires properly inflated — reduce fuel consumption and vehicle wear and tear. And by travelling light, they save too; a mid-size car uses about 1 per cent more gas for every 25 kilograms it carries.

on the

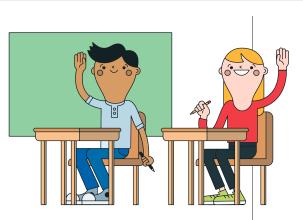
road

For short trips, walk or bike if you can. Turn off the engine; idling isn't good for your wallet or the environment.



in schools and the community

Getting more people, especially kids, involved in green projects and environmental education is one of the best ways retired educators can help, suggests Tim Grant. A former teacher himself, he now publishes Green Teacher magazine, a resource for environmental educators. Teaching strategies and active-learning activities for environmental education often require prep work and setting up, says Grant, and this is something retired teachers can do. Retirees can also help coordinate field trips with local naturalist clubs, birdwatching clubs and similar groups. "These groups love to share their expertise," he says, and since their members are often retirees, a retired teacher is an ideal liaison between them and a class of students. And such trips



always need extra chaperones, drivers and other volunteers.

To get started, Grant suggests calling the local school board and simply asking which nearby schools have active environmental programs. Many school boards participate in the EcoSchools Canada program and have a coordinator who can connect you with a volunteer opportunity or a teacher who's keen to promote environmental responsibility.

Teachers can also apply skills to community education efforts by volunteering with local environmental groups, residents' associations or other non-profit organizations. "Many environmental programs have had their budgets cut," Grant explains. "The help retirees can provide by going in once a week is crucial."





on your devices

Your smartphone, tablet and even your good ol' desktop computer can help you green up:

Use the PaperKarma app to take a photo of addressed junk mail. The app will request that the sender strike your name from its mailing list.

Bikemap plots the best cycling route between any two points, flagging elevation changes and bike lanes.

When you're thirsty, Tap shows you nearby places to refill your water bottle.

Ecosia is a Google-like search engine that uses ad revenue from your web searches to plant trees. ⊕



At RTO, we take our stewardship of the environment very seriously. We know that our members are passionate about environmental sustainability, and so is *Renaissance*. That's why we do everything possible to produce the magazine using innovative materials that are environmentally sound.

PAPER

The magazine is printed on paper that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). That means our paper is sourced in an environmentally and socially responsible way, and produced in an economically viable manner. In 2018 we improved the quality of our paper by switching to a more costeffective option that is better for the environment.

CLEAR WRAP

Renaissance is mailed out in a clear wrap when we are providing members with additional materials, such as the annual report, pocket planners, insurance booklets or flyers. The clear wrap is made from a plant-based material that is 100 per cent biodegradable and can be put into your compost or "green" recycling bin.

INK

The ink is also environmentally friendly, containing 70 to 80 per cent renewable and vegetable-based raw materials that help remove ink safely and quickly in the recycling process.

the future of food



Embracing plant-based diets is just the beginning

by Stuart Foxman

usan McCourt (District 19 Hastings and Prince Edward) thought she was doing her part for the environment. She composted, often walked instead of driving and avoided single-use plastics. "I prided myself on being environmentally aware," she says.

Yet in some ways, those efforts were cancelled by another of McCourt's practices. "With my consumption of meat and dairy, my eco footprint was massive," she says.

McCourt might be part of the future of food. She used to eat meat four or five times a week, but in 2019 she transitioned to a plant-based diet. Her meals now include tacos with plantbased "beef" and chickpea, tomato and peanut soup.

Why the change?

McCourt had ethical reasons (the treatment of animals), and felt a new diet would improve her health. Another motivation was just as important: doing her part to help to save the planet. Consider what it takes to put meat on the table. Producing 1 kilogram of vegetables requires 322 litres of water and producing fruits takes 962 litres per kilogram. In contrast, chicken requires 4,325 litres per kilogram, pork 5,988 litres per kilogram and beef 15,415 litres per kilogram. (waterfootprint.org)

Beyond water use, estimates are that one-third of the world's grain goes to feed animals. It can take about 4.5 kilograms of grain to produce less than half a kilogram of meat. Animal agriculture now also makes up the largest use of land resources. (UN Convention to Combat Desertification)

The run-off from factory farms and livestock grazing is a major cause of pollution for rivers and lakes. Leftover organic matter, like feed and crop residues, causes algae and plants to grow excessively, consuming all the oxygen in a body of water to the detriment of other life forms. (waterfootprint.org)

A 2019 report from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says agriculture and deforestation converting forests to agricultural land — contribute 23 per cent of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions. Add supply chain activities, from processing to transporting food, and that's up to 37 per cent of greenhouse gases.

In November 2019, some 11,000 scientists went so far as to single out meat production as a "profoundly troubling sign" for the world's future.

The scientists, from 153 countries, published a statement about the climate crisis in the journal *BioScience*. They said we face "untold suffering" unless we take urgent action, including eating mostly plants and less meat. "I don't miss meat or dairy," McCourt says, "and it makes me happy to know I'm making a difference."

Choices needn't be all or nothing, though. You can cut back without cutting out. Author Jonathan Safran Foer says the ideal of ethical perfection "often precludes action more than it inspires it."

Safran Foer, a novelist, has also written frequently about our food. His first non-fiction book was called *Eating Animals*, and his latest, *We Are the Weather*, is about what we can do to affect the climate crisis; namely, eating fewer animal products.

"If you were to ask me in 10 years if half of Americans or Canadians would be vegetarian, I would say it's extremely unlikely. But if you were to ask me in two years would half the meals eaten in America and Canada be vegetarian,

39% Have tried plant-based meat alternatives



WE ASKED

Are you eating less meat?

"No, definitely not. Everything in moderation. I love my pasta! A good steak on the BBQ is outstanding." —Andre Litalien (District 3 Algoma)

"I've been a vegetarian for 15 years and plant-based eater for the last five."

-Helena Annala (District 16 City of Toronto)

"Not me! I love my chicken almost daily, along with fish and eggs, and beef maybe once a week." —Jodi Kimm (District 16 City of Toronto)

"We do eat less red meat than a few years ago. The majority of our meals are now plant-based but I still enjoy a delicious barbecued or roasted chicken." —Jennifer Richards (District 41 Elgin)

"For us it's about natural ingredients, unprocessed food and where food is sourced, including farming practices. We tend to eat more Mediterranean-style, Indian and vegetarian dishes. Lots of local veggies and fruits when possible. Lots of sustainably caught fish too. We still eat some red meat but not often. Plant-based burgers are a good idea but it's important to know what the ingredients are, including fillers, salt content, preservatives, etc."

> –Angelika Jackson (District 13 Hamilton-Wentworth, Haldimand)

"It's all about eating fewer processed foods. Eat meat or not, but cut out the processed foods. Get back to making food at home from scratch."

-Monica R. Armour (District 1 Rainy River)

22% want to reduce the amount of meat they consume

I could see that happening," Safran Foer told the *Globe & Mail*. "It's the same outcome with regards to the environment, with regards to animals, but one is based on identity and one is based on actions."

A 2019 study from the Angus Reid Institute found that 39 per cent of Canadians have tried plant-based meat alternatives. Canadians aged 18 to 34 are more likely to have tried these products (58 per cent have), and 70 per cent of this group feel this movement is the way of the future.

Among Canadians who regularly eat meat, 22 per cent (and 39 per cent of the 18 to 34s) say they'd like to reduce that amount, citing environmental sustainability (31 per cent) more than even health concerns (21 per cent).

Sharon West (District 16 City of Toronto) went vegetarian five years ago, but still felt she ate too much processed food. After watching a documentary, she became concerned about the connection between processed food and memory. That was a worry because her father has Alzheimer's disease, and West found herself struggling to recall certain things. She switched to a whole-food, plant-based diet and says her memory improved markedly.



Changing how we shop

Becoming more eco-friendly when it comes to food isn't just about what we eat but also how we shop.

A 2019 report from Toronto agency Second Harvest found that each year in Canada 2.38 million tonnes of food is lost at the consumer level. Another 4.82 million tonnes is lost/wasted during processing and manufacturing. The report says food waste in Canada creates 56.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent emissions.

Much of that happens when you toss surplus food, and when consumers (and retailers) discard food that can still be safely eaten but is bruised or damaged or near/past its best-before date.

Shopping for just what you will eat today or for a couple of days takes planning and practice. Buying less but shopping more frequently also means a shorter grocery list, so you might not need to take the car.

Buying local helps reduce the transportation impact of the food supply chain.

Buying minimally packaged or packaging-free items is another trend. At an Ottawa grocery store called Nu, all products are packaging-free. Nu carries over 700 items, and consumers purchase just the quantity they require in a reusable container – a boon if you're cooking for one or two.

Embracing plant-based diets is just the beginning, according to Simon Somogyi, chair of the business of food at the University of Guelph. Longer-term, he thinks we'll see more precision fermentation, the ability to produce animal proteins for products that mimic dairy or meat.

"There will be a point, two or three generations down the road, where we think of a creature wandering around a paddock, that we used to cut up and eat, as draconian," Somogyi says.

Around the world, researchers are looking at ways to produce lab-grown meat (also known as "cultured" or "clean" meat). One group, based at the University of Toronto, received a grant from the U.S.-based Good Food Institute. Team leader Dr. Peter Stogios, from the Department of Chemical Engineering & Applied Chemistry, says the meat is grown in a bioreactor from initial cells.

This isn't a genetically modified organism. As Stogios explained to *The Varsity*, U of T's student newspaper, the meat grown in the lab consists of the same tissues, vitamins, minerals, hormones, etc. found in the animal. You end up with real meat, without the need to raise and kill animals.

Dr. Amy Rowat, a professor of integrative biology and physiology at UCLA, is also working to develop meat in the lab through a Good Food Institute grant. The Guelph native told the CBC that producing one billion quarter-pound burgers takes 1.2 million cows living for three years on 8,600 square kilometres of land. You can get the same number of "cultured" burgers in a month-anda-half from the stem cells of just a single living cow. Other alternative proteins have already hit the market. In 2018, Loblaws introduced cricket powder to their grocery shelves. Not to everyone's taste, perhaps, but according to the website, "finely ground with a mild taste, it can be added to smoothies, sauces, chili, curries and baking batters."

No question, pressure is mounting. Sin taxes on meat have been proposed in some jurisdictions. In 2019, two German political parties — the Social Democrats and the Greens — called for the tax on meat to increase from seven per cent to 19 per cent. Their goal is to help protect the climate by discouraging consumption.

A few universities, like Goldsmiths (part of the University of London) and the University of Coimbra in Portugal, have banned selling beef on campus to fight the climate crisis.

The IPCC report said climate change has already disrupted agricultural productivity. Continued impacts such as severe heat, drought and major storms could endanger the global food supply. That can mean scarcities, lower quality and price instability. Will we be able to reverse that with our eating choices? It's food for thought. (3)

"There will be a point, two or three generations down the road, where we think of a creature wandering around a paddock, that we used to cut up and eat, as draconian."

Simon Somogyi



merit trave

ENGSTAYS

ORDER YOUR FREE BROCHURE AT MERITTRAVEL.COM/LONGSTAYS

BOOK NOW!

Enjoy up to 33 days at your dream destination and live like a local with the perks of a tourist.

PORTUGAL | SPAIN | ITALY | FRANCE | GREECE | MALTA & MORE...

DISCOVER A PEACEFUL OASIS IN THE HEART OF THE ALGARVE QUINTA PEDRA DOS BICOS APARTMENTS 28 nights ALBUFEIRA, PORTUGAL

Just 300 metres from the famous strip at Areias de São João's shopping and entertainment areas, this centrally-located resort features private beach access, beautiful gardens and spacious, air-conditioned apartments where you can enjoy the view from your private balcony or terrace.

*CDN\$ pp. dbl occ. Taxes included. Professional fee of \$65 plus HST per booking is not included. Single supplement: \$900. Two- bedroom apartment upgrade" \$400 p.p. dbl occ. Other dates available please

SKIP THE CANADIAN WINTER ON THE "COAST OF THE SUN" 28 SUNSET BEACH CLUB nights BENALMÁDENA, MÁLAGA

Spend an unforgettable month at the stunning seafront resort, near the historic "Old Village" and Puerto Marina - one of Costa del Sol's most popular areas. Every apartment offers a breathtaking view of the sea or mountains and there's always something fun to do.

*CDN\$ p.p. dbl. occ. based on a one-bedroom exterior apartment mountain view. Taxes included. Professional fee of \$65 plus HST per booking is not included. Single supplement: \$1,600. Upgrade to a one bedroom exterior sea view \$250. Other dates available.

EXPERIENCE BREATHTAKING FJORDS AND WORLD-CLASS WINE SOUTH AMERICA & ANTARCTICA CRUISE 23 ► HOSTED nights

ONBOARD MS. WESTERDAM

This spectacular Holland America cruise offers a perfect blend of culture, indulgence and natural beauty. You'll begin in beautiful Buenos Aires, then embark on a luxurious 20-day cruise, including four unforgettable days exploring the beauty of Antarctica. Then it's off to Santiago, Chile and the famous vineyards of Valparaíso.

*CDN\$ pp. dbl occ. based on CAT L interior stateroom. Taxes and gratuities included. Professional fee of \$65 plus HST per booking is not included. Single supplement: \$4,100. Upgrade to CAT E ocean view stateroom: \$700. Upgrade to CAT VD veranda stateroom \$2,300. Minimum 20 participants required for a Merit Travel Tour Host.



BEST VALUE! JAN. 12, 2021:



INCLUDES ROUND-TRIP AIRFARE



NOV. 2, 2020: Toronto/Montréal \$3,295*p.p. \$3,595^{*}p.p. Vancouver



INCLUDES ROUND-TRIP AIRFARE



JAN. 28, 2021: Toronto GROUP SIZE:

INCLUDES ROUND-TRIP AIRFARE

Call 1-877-872-3826 or visit RTOTravel.ca troca ON-4499356/4499372 | BC-34799 | QC-7002238

Green globe-trotting

By exploring natural environments, you can help support their conservation

by Doug Wallace



Heritage haven

Fogo Island, Newfoundland

This collection of fishing outposts off the northeast coast of Newfoundland is a huge success story. The charity Shorefast, in which the famed Fogo Island Inn plays a large role, sponsors artistic, cultural and social ventures, creating businesses that reinvest in the community. Everything here is interconnected, the citizens reaping the mutual social and economic benefits, maintaining their heritage and providing them with work so they can continue to live on the island. Tourists go fishing with locals, watch icebergs float by during the spring thaw or go whale-watching. The work of craftspeople – quilts and rugs, arts and crafts, carvings and furniture – line the interiors of both the Fogo Island Inn and visitors' suitcases. Luxury inns not your thing? There are guest houses aplenty. townoffogoisland.ca

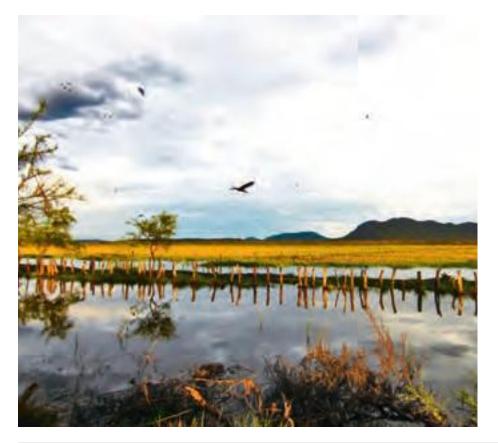


Wildlife wonderland

The Galapagos Islands As the world's first Natural World Heritage Site (1978), this famed Ecuadorian archipelago is at the forefront of ecotourism, respected around the word for its conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage. With such a large number of endangered species, the Galapagos carefully monitors tourist visits and itineraries, limiting the number of people in one place at any given time. Independent touring is not allowed. Nature, culture and adventure tours play to specific interests. Hikers can explore active volcanos and lava tunnels. Wildlife watchers can walk in Charles Darwin's footsteps and see giant turtles, iguanas and birds. Water lovers can snorkel with sea lions or scuba dive, and go kayaking or cliff jumping. Just sitting on the beach? You can do that too. ecuador.travel



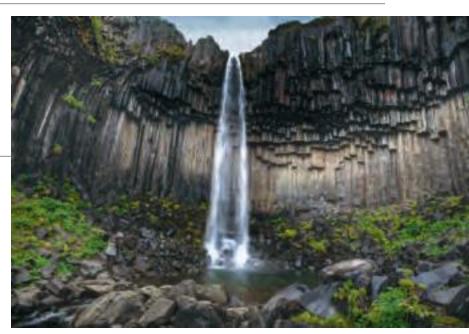




Concentrated conservation

Costa Rica

With protected conservation areas making up one-quarter of the country, Costa Rica is a no-brainer. Ecotourism in this lush country offers ecological, geological and zoological discoveries through 29 national parks, 19 wildlife refuges and eight biosphere reserves. Culturally, eight Indigenous peoples are slowly reclaiming their languages and traditions. The country is a hiker's paradise, filled with untouched nature volcanoes, rainforest, beaches and more – equally appealing to those who like horseback riding, birdwatching and surfing. Hanging out with raccoon-like coatis, white-faced capuchin monkeys, howler monkeys, white-tailed deer and migrating turtles is time well spent. visitcostarica.com



Ethereal environment

Iceland

One of the best ecotourism destinations in the north, Iceland has experienced a large increase in tourism in the past 10 years, almost too quickly: In 2016, the airport saw a visitor increase of 40 per cent. Nature is the star here, with geysers, glaciers, caves, waterfalls, thermal bubbles and hot springs to visit. Day trips from Reykjavik are especially plentiful, offering everything from black-sand beaches to lava-field wonderment - it sometimes looks like you're walking on the moon or through an episode of *Game* of Thrones. Icelanders also enjoy a public bathing culture, thanks to the abundance of geothermal power; the community pools are a social destination before and after work. iceland.is





Iconic water world

The Florida Keys

Time for a road trip? How about a 200-kilometre-long chain of islands connected by a series of 42 bridges? Mindful travel to the Keys lets you discover the ways it's working to maintain the natural balance of life, above and below the water. Popular programs include catch-and-release fishing, wild dolphin-watching and battery-powered boating. Manatee zones have been set up to increase population, with no-motor zones protecting seagrass. Visitors can witness the progress of the preservation of the only living coral reef in the continental United States via snorkeling and diving, or try human-powered water sports, like hydrobiking. And have you ever been on a bridge that's seven miles long? Didn't think so. fla-keys.com

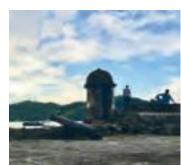
European ingenuity

Slovenia

Slovenia is a big hit with the ecotourists drawn to its multitude of green spaces. It helps that half the country is parkland – and that there are so many different ecosystems to experience. Energy policies see 75 per cent of the country's hydro coming from dams, city buses powered by natural gas and electric-powered trains. Visitors hike in the glacial valleys and forests in Triglav National Park, explore the Secovlje Salt Pans and wander the Postojna caves, an underground adventure of stalactites and stalagmites. You can swim with sea turtles, see how coffee and cocoa feed the local economies and check out the eco-friendly farms, all while learning about Slovenian culture. slovenia.info









Bicoastal paradise

Panama

While the canal has always been Panama's biggest draw, the bays and islets off the country's Pacific and Atlantic coasts make for a rich eco-experience. The best way to take it all in is with a small-ship cruise nimble enough to get in all the nooks and crannies. Panama's diverse ecosystem offers rainforest, cool forest, mountain retreats, beaches and coastal islands throughout almost 50 parks, reserves and sanctuaries, most less than two hours from Panama City. Visitors can spot blue-footed boobies and mating whales, kayak through sub-tidal mangroves, commune with Indigenous jungle villagers and relax on deserted island beaches. Nature truly delivers a great postcard. visitpanama.com 🖗

Paying it forward

Is socially responsible investing right for you?

by Lesley-Anne Scorgie

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s,

companies, pension funds and individuals around the world stopped investing in South Africa. Since 1948, South Africa had been under apartheid, a system of legal racial segregation enforced by the ruling National Party. Apartheid encouraged other human rights violations, including torture, censorship, political repression, exile and detention without trial.

To bring about change, outsiders divested their financial interests in the country. This forced financially struggling South African–based businesses (more than 75 per cent of all that country's businesses) to negotiate for the dismantling of apartheid in 1994.

In this case, socially responsible investing was used as a tool to create significant change in society, business, environment and government. Socially responsible investing, also known as "ethical" or "green" investing, has existed since the 1700s. Today the methods and markets have become more complex, with hundreds of investment products and fund managers directing their interests at a wide spectrum of social issues. The global Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) market has grown so significantly over the past decade that it now represents \$1 out of every \$5 of assets under management in Canada.

SRI is based on choosing your investments with an eye to social good as well as financial gain. Socially responsible investors look for companies that do business responsibly in regards to environmental, social justice and corporate governance (ESG) issues. They do this so they can incorporate their stand on important human and environmental issues into their investment portfolios.

SRI encompasses the protection of people, health, the environment and human rights. There are three approaches to SRI: Get rid of your investments in companies you consider unethical; screen out certain investments and avoid including them in your portfolio altogether; and/or become a shareholder activist and produce change through advocacy and shareholder voting rights.

Most professionally managed SRIs are based on screening out "negative" values associated with "irresponsible" corporations. This typically means avoiding investing in companies involved in environmental degradation, endangering public health and human rights abuses. At the top of the "naughty



list" of businesses that are avoided: tobacco, alcohol, gambling and weapons manufacturing.

If you're a DIY investor, choosing not to work with an investment adviser, you can follow a similar approach by simply reviewing what's in your portfolio. Divest or screen out any investments that are causing harm, and make sure you participate in the annual voting procedures for the stocks you own. Alternatively, there are a number of exchange-traded funds, a low-fee style of investment for DIY investors, that do this screening process automatically.

Rates of return on SRIs are now comparable to those of investments that don't have that same lens, which means you don't have to compromise returns for your beliefs.

The financial case for socially responsible investing is simple. If firms are measured on their contribution to innovation, which ultimately protects the environment and human health, investors will have greater bottom line performance – comparable to mainstream investments. In plainspeak, investments that are focused on the future outperform those that are stuck in the past.

You're a good candidate to buy into the SRI market if you:

 believe that social responsibility should be a primary consideration in making investment decisions; and/or

- want your money to be invested in companies with attractive reputations in environmental protection, social issues and leading governance practices; and/or
- care about balancing returns with doing social good.

If you work with a professional adviser, tell them if you'd like to shift your portfolio to be socially responsible. If you're working with a robo-adviser, click the box that asks you if you want to make your portfolio an SRI portfolio. If you're DIY'ing your investments, roll up your sleeves and start digging into what you'd like to sell or buy in order to transition your portfolio to SRI. 🖗



44

lifestyle

Shrink your carbon footprint

10 practical ways you can make a difference

by Ylva Van Buuren

Reducing your carbon footprint can

be as simple – and sensible – as changing your dentist.

That's exactly what Sandra Rumfeldt (District 39 Peel) did. When her dentist, whose office was 20 minutes away by car, retired several years ago, she found a new one in the neighbourhood.

"I changed my dentist and other professional service providers so that they are closer to where I live. I also make sure that when I do drive somewhere, I have a couple of tasks to do. Or I will walk or carpool, if that's possible."

Your carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, that are generated by your lifestyle choices and actions.

Greenhouse gas emissions are a huge factor in today's climate crisis, says Gideon Forman, climate change and transportation policy analyst at the David Suzuki Foundation. "We're seeing very worrying impacts, like hurricanes, flooding, heat waves, forest fires... and we're likely to see a lot more unless we turn things around."

Greenhouse gases have been building in the atmosphere since the beginning of the industrial age almost 200 years ago, and it will still take some time for them to break down. Now we need to reduce new emissions, says Forman, and there is a deadline. "Scientists have told us that we have about 10 years, between now and about 2030, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly."

The more you buy and travel, the larger your carbon footprint will be, according to Dianne Saxe, president of Saxe Facts and the former environmental commissioner of Ontario. Her department produced an extensive paper, *The Climate Pollution: Reducing My Footprint*, which showed that the average Ontarian causes about 11 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in carbon dioxide equivalents per year.

"What was so groundbreaking about our report," Saxe explains, "is that we did our best to estimate the total carbon footprint of an average Ontarian individually, including stuff they buy and throw away."

To reduce your carbon footprint, says Saxe, identify the largest contributors in your life and make greener choices. Here's how.

Drive less

Can you leave the car at home more often and take public transit, bike or carpool? The alternatives help save time, money and stress too. Plus, walking or cycling is a great way to get some exercise.

Rethink your vehicle

Can you switch to an electric car? Saxe charges her plug-in electric car only at night so there's little carbon footprint.

Eat less meat

Eat less red meat and more plant-based foods. Forman explains that feed cattle give off methane gas, a potent greenhouse gas. Plus, in some parts of the world, mostly South America, precious forests are being cleared to make space for cattle.

Buy local

Locally grown food doesn't come with the carbon miles that food coming from places like Mexico and California do. Check where produce is grown and try to eat in season. Pam Bray (District 40 Brant) supports all her local retailers, not just grocery stores, and rarely buys anything online. "Items purchased online may be shipped from as far away as China. I always look for locally made items."

Go organic

Organic foods don't contain synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, which are often made with fossil fuels, says Forman.

Waste not

Food waste creates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. Try to buy only what you need and eat it all, says Saxe.

Fly less

Flying is carbon intensive. Instead of a short-haul flight, can you take a train?

Offset your flights

Offset carbon emissions connected to flights by making a contribution towards environmental protection. The David Suzuki Foundation, for example, offsets flights by contributing to projects that plant trees and support wind farms.

Reduce your home energy use

A well-insulated home uses less heat (natural gas is a fossil fuel). Keep homes a little cooler in winter, and use energy-efficient appliances. Saxe buys her power from Bullfrog Power, "so I'm heating my house with landfill gas, not fossil gas."

Get involved

Speak up and support groups and organizations that are working to lower greenhouse gases. Urge government to support renewable energy and public transit. Purchase "green." Change investment portfolios so they support smaller-carbon-footprint companies and organizations. @

lifestyle

Driving 10,000 **kilometres** by yourself in a mid-size gasoline car releases

2.2 tonnes

of carbon dioxide into the air annually.

Eating one small hamburger every other day releases

0.5 tonnes

of fossil fuel emissions annually.

Flying economy return from Toronto to Vancouver releases

4 tonnes

of fossil fuel emissions annually.

PHOTO, EVIE S.

Heating a small one-bedroom home with natural gas releases

of fossil fuel emissions

annually.

tonnes

Vegetable gardening in small spaces

Who doesn't love garden-fresh vegetables? Don't have a garden? No worries. Grow your favourite vegetables in pots and planters on your balcony, windowsill or right outside your kitchen door. Bring the taste of fresh right into your kitchen

by Frankie Flowers

This is the fun part – deciding what to grow. I recommend you grow what you eat. The vegetables I would grow in containers include tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes, some lettuces and peppers (hot, of course), along with my favourite herbs: basil, Italian parsley, rosemary and oregano. I also suggest growing vegetables that continue to produce after first harvest, such as tomatoes, peppers and bush beans.

Ensure the area gets at least five hours of direct light each day. The more direct light the plants get, the better their performance.



Container selection depends on the types of vegetables you desire. Vegetables with shallow roots, such as lettuce, radishes and herbs, can grow in as little as 20 centimetres (8 inches) of soil depth. More productive plants, such as tomatoes, bush beans and squash, need deeper and larger pots.

Tip: You need to water plants in pots more often than those planted in the ground. The bigger the pot, the more moisture it can retain.



Food to Grow, Frankie's latest book, helps you evaluate your space and then choose the plants that will give you the best return. He guides you through the entire growing season, from prepping and planning, to planting, weeding and harvesting – the best part!

5 fab container veggies

grown in hanging baskets, that's one of

This compact bush variety of cucumber is ideal for pots, patios and decks, and is ready to harvest 57 days after sowing.

the first varieties to ripen.

SALAD BUSH CUCUMBER

TUMBLER TOMATO A perfect sweet cherry tomato, easily





SALAD BOWL LETTUCE The ultimate leaf lettuce for containers, with tender, frilly leaves; ready to harvest within 45 days. Keep extra seeds to replant in pots for multiple crops.

HANSEL EGGPLANT

This miniature eggplant produces fingersize clusters of fruit up to 10 days before other varieties.

KENTUCKY WONDER BUSH BEAN

An heirloom green bean variety in bush form that matures in 56 days. I recommend planting in a large container or window box.

Outdoor garden soil is just too heavy for pots and will result in root rot and drowning (on the same note, ensure containers have proper drainage). When choosing soil, go for a soilless potting mix made for container gardens to ensure that plants will have healthy, happy roots. My favourite is Nature Mix Container Soil, a certified organic mix.

You must fertilize vegetables in containers, as frequent watering leaches out nutrients. Varieties of fertilizer are endless, from timerelease to a selection of water-soluble ones. A fish- or seaweed-based fertilizer makes a good organic alternative to a chemical one. Don't crowd the plants; the right number of plants in the right-size pot with adequate light is the recipe for success. Overplanting results in a weak harvest and, ultimately, dead plants. Plant tags as well as seed packages will detail the spacing needs. 🖗

Quilts for comfort

Handmade quilts offer a hug in times of need

by Jane Doucet



In December 2016, Donna Arnold (District 8 London, Middlesex) and her neighbour Ellen James were at their Thames Valley Quilters Guild in London, Ont., listening to another member talk about Victoria's Quilts. A non-profit charitable organization, which launched in 1998 in the U.S. and was established in Canada the following year, Victoria's Quilts has 26 independent branches across Canada and provides handmade quilts to Canadians living with cancer.

Since London has a world-class cancer facility, Arnold and James decided to get involved. Just over a year later, they held their first meeting with 11 people in a church basement. Since July 2017, the members of the London branch of Victoria's Quilts — there are now 29, all women in their 60s to 80s — have delivered 272 quilts to local men and women with cancer. (The Thames Valley Quilters Guild has a separate outreach program that makes pillowcases and quilts for children in hospital.) "We're very proud of our accomplishments," says Arnold, "but we're always trying to find ways to raise funds for materials and to get our finished quilts to those in need of some physical comfort."

Arnold learned to quilt in the late 1970s. "I had two children in school and two babies at home, and I needed an out," says Arnold. "I wanted to make a quilt, so I joined an evening quilting class. We made a Christmas runner, which gave me some of the skills I needed, but to me it wasn't a quilt."

The next class was a sampler quilt, which was made of several different quilt-block patterns (quilts consist of several fabric pieces sewn into blocks, then sewn together to make the completed top). "Although it was joined by machine, there was a lot of handiwork and quilting involved by the time it was finished. I was so pleased!" she says.

Last year, when Arnold learned that her daughter's old school friend Lisa was having treatment for pancreatic cancer, she made sure she received a quilt. In her thank-you note, Lisa wrote, "I absolutely love the gorgeous quilt you sent me! It will always be a special comfort to me and I can't thank you enough for your very kind and generous gift. It is so beautiful and perfect because you were the one who taught me how to quilt 30 years ago!"

Arnold had forgotten that she had helped Lisa learn to quilt after she had expressed an interest. She's pleased that she was able to reconnect with her former "student" in such a special way. "A quilt gives the recipient something to wrap up in for comfort during a stressful time," says Arnold. "This warms my heart."

Being involved with Victoria's Quilts has added benefits for the quilters. "We meet once a month, and it's productive but also social," says Arnold. "You bring lunch and share stories. The more you get to know the other volunteers. the more you learn about them beyond your shared interest in quilting."

Arnold has no plans to stop donating her time and talent to Victoria's Quilts, although she'd love to see younger people get involved. "Quilting is an art form and a personal expression. You can have the same pattern, and the looks are different thanks to the selection of fabric by individual sewers," she says. "As for quilting's future, there's a new generation of quilters coming behind us. A quilt is something tangible, a legacy of sorts. It's a lovely thing to leave behind."

To find out more, visit victoriasquilts canada.com.

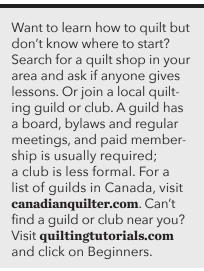
Quilts comfort more than cancer patients. The volunteers with Quilts of Valour - Canada Society donate their beautiful creations to injured Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members. Laverne Phills (District 38 Lambton) started making quilt blocks for the charitable organization in 2010.

"One of my sons is in the military, and when he returned from Afghanistan he had friends who had been injured or committed suicide," says Phills. "He told me about Quilts of Valour, and I wanted to make a donation to the injured vets."

Phills, who didn't take home economics in school, only learned how to sew in her 50s. In the Sarnia Quilters Guild, which she joined in 2013, up to 50 men and women ranging in age from their 30s to 80s contribute blocks for Quilts of Valour. It can take anywhere from two to 18 months to complete a quilt, depending on the pattern and the volunteers' time.

The guild has sent as many as 30 quilts a year to CAF bases in Trenton, Kingston, Meaford and Toronto in Ontario and Gagetown, New Brunswick. "The vets and their families are so grateful because they know the quilts are made with love and gratitude," says Phills. "Many of the older vets have what they refer to as 'leaky eye syndrome' when they receive a quilt. That's the part that chokes us up." 😽

To find out more, visit **quiltsofvalour.ca**.











PHOTOS, COURTESY OF DONNA ARNOLD

From sand to snow

Starting a new life takes courage

by Isaac J. Abitbol (District 51 Echo)



n 1968, I left my house, my neighbourhood, the beaches and the blue sky of Morocco to come to Canada with my wife, Mimi, and three children

(Joseph, who was five years old; Miguel, who was four years old; and Emmanuel, who was six months old).

We arrived in Montreal on October 27 and settled temporarily in a boarding house on Dorchester Street, now called René-Lévesque Boulevard.

When I left our rooms the next the morning, I was hypnotized by the falling snow — the first snow I had ever seen. The flakes were like white stars falling from heaven. After a few falls, I learned how to walk in the snow!

Montreal was a world apart from Tangier, Morocco, and I admit it took courage to start a new life here. But the beauty of Canada and the opportunities offered were remarkable. People showed my family incredible kindness, answering

all our questions, looking after our needs and providing services.

It took some time to get used to the differences between North America and North Africa. The weather, of course. But the biggest challenge? Adjusting to the imperial system — what are inches?!

I taught auto mechanics in Tangier and was permitted to teach the same at Institut Technique Aviron de Montréal, a private school, which I did for two years.

I took a number of courses in Ottawa in order to be licensed to teach in Ontario; in September 1970, I accepted a position teaching auto mechanics and machine shop at École Secondaire Macdonald-Cartier in Sudbury (the first French-language public school in Ontario).





Teaching in Canada was much different than teaching in Tangier. The curriculum was of a higher standard and more structured, and we had a budget to run the shops (which was wonderful).

The students were different too. My Moroccan students were rural people more disciplined and more respectful of their teachers.

My 30 years teaching in Sudbury were the best years of my professional life because I did what I liked and I liked what I did. I am professor emeritus of auto mechanics. I wrote two books, *Principes fondamentaux de la mécanique automobile (Basic Principles of Auto Mechanics)* published by McGraw-Hill and *Guide d'évaluation de la mécanique automobile (Guide to the Evaluation of Auto Mechanics)* published by Éditions Guérin. The last 10 years of my career, I was coordinator of co-operative education and developed a number of Top: Canadian citizenship swearing-in. Left: Last ride before leaving.

initiatives between the community and the school board, including a co-op program with hospitals, and one with the Canadian Armed Forces.

But eventually, it was time to retire and open up a place for the next generation of teachers. Mimi and I moved back to Montreal to help take care of two of our 10 grandchildren — Rosi is now a family physician and Mimi Jr. practises family law — and we continue to support them as they pursue their careers.

Mimi and I go back to Morocco every year to look after my father's farm, which I inherited when he passed away, managing the harvest of juicy and delicious navel, mandarin and Valencia oranges. And like so many retired Canadians, we winter in Florida.

My family and I have been blessed to call Canada home. Thank you for allowing us to fulfill our dreams in peace and harmony. 🖗

"My family and I have been blessed to call Canada nome. Thank you for allowing us to fulfill our dreams in eace and harmony."

Sci-fi must-reads

We asked: What's your favourite science fiction read?

Quantum Night by Canadian sci-fi author Robert J. Sawyer. A great story set in Canada that slowly and terrifyingly builds. I've reread it many times — and it also throws in some free science lessons. **Plot:** Experimental psychologist Jim Marchuk has developed a flawless technique for identifying the previously undetected psychopaths lurking in society. But while being cross-examined about his breakthrough in court, Jim is shocked to discover that he has lost

his memories of six months of his life from 20 years prior – a dark

time during which he himself committed heinous acts.

-Andrie Gedye (District 2 Thunder Bay)

My absolute favourite futuristic novel is *A Scientific Romance* by Ronald Wright. Imagine what would happen in London, England, if all the people were gone! As the author is an anthropologist, he delves into the future from an anthropologist's viewpoint.

Plot: It is 1999 in London and David Lambert, jilted lover and reluctant museum curator, is about to discover the startling news of the return of H.G. Wells' time machine to London. Motivated by a host of unanswered questions and innate curiosity, he propels himself deep into the next millennium.

-Suzanne Dunford (District 21 Renfrew)

Dune was a favourite many years ago, but now I love J. D. Robb's In Death series about Eve Dallas in the 2060s.

Plot: The In Death series, written by Nora Roberts under her pseudonym, J.D. Robb, features New York City Police and Security Department Lieutenant Eve Dallas and her husband, Roarke, and is set in a mid-21st-century New York City. The stories regularly feature other characters, including Captain Ryan Feeney, Detective Delia Peabody, Detective Ian McNab and Dr. Charlotte Mira. Each book in this series is a whole story with a beginning and an ending; however, there may be minor references to events that occurred earlier in the series.

-Carolynne Paton (District 12 Norfolk)

The Marrow Thieves by Cherie Dimaline. Futuristic is not my genre at all, but this book is a must-read.

Plot: Humanity has nearly destroyed its world through global warming, but now an even greater evil lurks. The Indigenous people of North America are being hunted and harvested for their bone marrow, which carries the key to recovering something the rest of the population has lost: the ability to dream.

-Sharon Bray (District 13 Hamilton-Wentworth, Haldimand)

My favourite is *The Chrysalids* by John Wyndham, which I first read in Grade 7. I love it so much that I reread it every couple of years.

Plot: David Strorm's father doesn't approve of Angus Morton's unusually large horses, calling them blasphemies against nature. Little does he realize that his own son, his niece Rosalind and their friends have their own secret aberration that would label them as mutants. *—Jodi Kimm (District 16 City of Toronto)*

the Chrysalids



Afford to Retire in Elliot Lake

With one of the most affordable and attractive retirement lifestyles in Ontario, Elliot Lake offers breathtaking scenery, sunlit beaches, golf, hiking, canoeing and an abundance of arts and cultural pursuits. All of this in a safe, clean, friendly community where you have plenty of choices when it comes to where you want to live.

COMPARE AND SAVE

1 Bedroom Apartments from \$545/month 2 Bedroom Apartments from \$615/month 3 Bedroom Townhomes from \$800/month 2 Bedroom Homes from \$885/month 3 Bedroom Homes from \$985/month

Book Your Discovery Tour One Free Night

at the Hampton Inn Elliot Lake and enjoy a tour of the city and our properties. (Second night \$50.00 + taxes)

1.800.461.4663 retireelliotlake.com

ELLIOT LAKE retirement living

2020 & 2021 Exotic First Class Adventures

Kenya & Tanzania including Zanzibar East Africa Great Migration 20 Day land adventure September 21, 2020

Best of South Africa & Victoria Falls including Chobe Park in Botswana 23 Day land adventure October 12, 2020

The Kingdom of Bhutan Nepal & India's Golden Triangle 20 Day land adventure October 14, 2020

Southern Cross & Namibia Dune Express Travel in Africa by a first class train 18 - 22 Days train & land adventures January 7 & May 6, 2021

WARRAND AND TO PARAMETS

0411

Treasures of Egypt & Jordan including a 4-night Nile River cruise 16 Day land & river cruise/tour November 4, 2020



Australia & New Zealand Explore the Downunder & Beautiful New Zealand 28 Day land & cruise/tour February 1, 2021



EXPO CRUISES & TOURS 416-439-6311 * 1-888-819-7447 413 Dundas Street East, Toronto, ON M5A 2A9 www.Expo-Cruises.com * e-mail: Info@Expo-Cruises.com





We Need You in the Fight for Public Education

Parents, teachers and others have been speaking out in response to sweeping cuts to public education by the Ford Conservative Government. Together, we are fighting to make sure that all Ontario students get the education they deserve. Ontario has one of the best public education systems in the world. We want to make sure it stays that way. Join the growing movement to protect public education by signing up at BuildingBetterSchools.ca/RTO.

Sign up at BuildingBetterSchools.ca/RTO



OVER 80,000 EDUCATORS TRUST JOHNSON.

Enjoy savings on your home and car insurance

Johnson has been serving educators for over 50 years and as a member of RTOERO you get preferred rates plus exclusive offers on home and car insurance.

For details and your quote: Phone 1.855.616.6708 Johnson.ca/educator

Mention Group Code **ST** for your preferred rates.

Johnson Insurance is a tradename of Johnson Inc. ('JI'), a licensed insurance intermediary, and operates as Johnson Insurance Services in British Columbia and Johnson Inc. in Manitoba. Home and car policies underwritten, and claims handled, by Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada ("RSA") in Quebec and primarily underwritten, and claims handled, by Unifund Assurance Company ('UAC') in the rest of Canada. Described coverage and benefits applicable only to policies underwritten by UAC or RSA. Car insurance not available in BC, SK or MB. Home and car insurance not available in NU. Eligibility requirements, limitations, exclusions or additional costs may apply, and/or may vary by province or territory. JI, UAC and RSA share common ownership. tNO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Open January 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020 to legal residents of Canada (excluding NU) who have reached the age of majority in their jurisdiction of residence and are a member of a recognized group of JI with whom JI has an insurance agreement. One (1) available prize of \$25,000 CAD. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received. Math skill test required. Rules: www1.johnson.ca/cash2019.

Get a quote & you'll be entered for a chance to

"Teacher's pet?

RTO | JOHNSO

That's me."

WIN \$25,000⁺

INSURANCE

HOME·CAR