

Stories

poetry, prose, and personal reflection

Vol. 9 — June 2022



*I can shake off everything as I write;
my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn.*

~ Anne Frank

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Stories is published monthly, on the first day of each month. Submissions are due no later than 10 days prior to the date of publication.

Please submit by email, as a Word doc attachment. Please do not send PDFs. If you are including photos/illustrations to accompany your submission, please put a placeholder in your word doc, indicating where each graphic is to be placed, and send the graphics themselves as JPEG attachments. Please do not embed graphics in your word doc.

First-time writers for *Stories* are asked to send a brief (two to three sentence) bio with their submission.

Because of difficulties with some articles sent in the body of emails, we cannot accept submissions in this format. Please sent a word doc attachment.

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Publisher's Ponderings



I find it fascinating that, especially in the last month, a large majority of the people I've talked to, and the new clients who've approached me, or whose books I've completed, have spoken about brokenness, trauma, fear, inadequacy. They are all themes with which I am far too familiar. The last two years, dealing with Covid, certainly haven't helped. According to Canada Public Health:

- Mental health helplines in Canada have had a substantial increase in demand during the pandemic, compared to previous years
- Surveys have found that as many as half of Canadians report that their mental health has worsened since the pandemic began
- Approximately one-fifth of Canadians screened positive for anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder during Fall 2020

Add to that the fact that the isolation as a result of Covid protocol resulted in more time alone, and more time for self-reflection (when at times such reflection was detrimental), it's not a wonder that so many of us are feeling fear, anger, and a sense of extreme vulnerability. I for one dealt with a lot of issues I really didn't want to face! Now, in retrospect, I'm glad that I did, because I am stronger and more grounded as a result.

And so, I am even more determined than ever, to help others put their thoughts, their fears—their stories—on paper. In the words of Iyanla Vanzant, "When you stand and share your story in an empowering way, your story will heal you and your story will heal somebody else." I am excited about discussing this topic at an upcoming online event by Embrace Network ... and, of course, continuing to help empower others through telling their story and speaking their truth.

Lisa

The graphic features a dark blue header with the text "EMBRACE SHOWCASE" in large white letters and "Publishing Your Story" in smaller white letters below it. The background is a circular image of a forest. In the center, the text "Sunday June 12th" and "1:00pm EST" is displayed in large white font. Below this, the text "with Lisa Browning of One Thousand Trees" is shown in white. At the bottom center is the logo for "EMBRACE NETWORK", which is a circular emblem featuring a stylized tree with the words "EMBRACE NETWORK" around its base.



Growing Up On Faraday Street, Amsterdam

Margreet Kuypers

MY mother was born in 1934 in Amsterdam and lived on the Faraday Street, only 7km from the house where Anne Frank had moved in from Germany in 1935. Anne was 6 years old.

Audrey Hepburn was born in Belgium only one month before Anne Frank. In 1935, when Audrey Hepburn was also 6 years old, she moved with her mother Ella to her mom's family's estate in Arnhem after her father abandoned them. In 1937 however, Audrey was sent back to boarding school in Kent, England, where she, known as Audrey Ruston or "Little Audrey." She was 8 years old.

After Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939, Hepburn's mother moved her daughter back to Arnhem in the hope that, as during the First World War, the Netherlands would remain neutral and be spared a German attack. Audrey was 10 years old.

When Germany invaded the Netherlands in 1940, my mom remembers the bomb shelters in their neighborhood being built and then hidden under

normal looking sod again. My mom is now 87 and has many memories of the people that lived on the Faraday Street in Amsterdam. It was not a very long street and she can still tell you who lived where. She lived on the first floor of number 1. The Jurriens lived downstairs and the Sondorp family lived next door in number 3. When the bomb warnings sounded they would all go downstairs together and stand in the hallway under the stairs and until the "all clear."

My grandfather was an accountant and was also helping some Jewish businesses to find good people to manage their businesses until after the war. He was also trying to keep the finance books out of the hands of the Germans. He had some close encounters and he found out after the war that his name had been on the deportation list. When the Germans put anti aircraft artillery up behind the Emma church (only 800 meters away from where they lived), my grandfather sent his wife and three little daughters to family in Oosterbeek, just west of Arnhem. My grandfather stayed behind in Amsterdam and would visit them on weekends. My mom was 6 years old.

They stayed there until the spring of 1942 and then moved back to Amsterdam since the situation in Oosterbeek wasn't any safer than their home in Amsterdam anymore. She was 8 years old.

They had left just in time and missed "Operation market garden" that happened 17–25 September 1944. The Germans were stationed in Oosterbeek and when the British paratroopers landed in the countryside just west of them, they rapidly deduced the likely focus of the attack organized the defense of Arnhem. A massive evacuation was mandated and on 23 September about 150 000 people had to leave their homes. My mom's grandmother was really sick, but her uncle managed to carry her out of the basement, load her into a wheelbarrow and push his mom 40 km far all the way to Driebergen.

In the meantime Audrey Hepburn had started to use the name Edda van Heemstra, because an "English-sounding" name was considered dangerous

during the German occupation. Her family was profoundly affected by the occupation. In 1942, her uncle, Otto van Limburg Stirum (husband of her mother's older sister, Miesje), was executed in retaliation for an act of sabotage by the resistance movement; while he had not been involved in the act, he was targeted due to his family's prominence in Dutch society. After her uncle's death, Hepburn, Ella and Miesje left Arnhem to live with her grandfather, Baron Aarnoud van Heemstra, in nearby Velp, only 10km from Oosterbeek. Audrey was now 13 years old.



Anne Frank's family had to go into hiding in 1942. She was also 13 years old. Anne kept a diary she had received as a birthday present and wrote in it regularly until the day in August 1944 when they were discovered and sent to concentration camps.

The winter of 1944 is remembered for the cold and the hunger. People had to be inventive when it came to staying warm and were bartering for food. My

mom remembers my grandfather went with Mr. Fledderus, who lived at number 7, to the Wieringemeer polder to look for food. For the most part they could find a bed to sleep in and a meal, but one night they had to sleep in a very cold barn since the home owner wouldn't let them into the house. They couldn't understand his behavior until after the war when it became clear that there had been some British hiding inside his house. During that time it was impossible to know who to trust; even if you went to the same church you couldn't take that chance. My grandfather managed to exchange some baby clothes for a bag of wheat. My mom and my grandmother had to collect it at the train station, put it onto a little sly and pull it home on the ice. You had to be clever and hide such a treasure otherwise the Germans could just confiscate it...

On 1 November 1944, Anne and her sister, Margot, were transferred from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where they died a few months later, in February 1945.

The Netherlands was liberated on 8 May 1945. My Mom learned the Canadian anthem at school for a special Liberation Day celebration in September 1945 at the Ajax stadium in Amsterdam. She was now 11 years old. Her older sister was 14 and her younger sister was 6 years old.

My mom moved to Ede in February 1948 where she met my dad in school. Both of them were then 13 years old.

* * *

The Power of a Journal

Francine Houston

My journey with words, and with journaling, goes back well over 50 years. WOW, I really am not sure I was ready to admit that. I began reading Well, I don't remember a time when books and reading were not part of my life. I am told, although I don't remember, that I was reading easy books independently at 3, and have been reading well above grade level my whole life. Books, words, are and have been my solace, my refuge, and my safe space. I never went anywhere without a book (or two if I can close to the end of one), and a fiber project. Even when we went for a visit with family, I would sit off to the side, uninterested in anything but the book, and the project I was working on.

Then, something changed: In grade four, we were given a year-long assignment. We were told that we had to begin a weekly writing exercise. We were expected to write 3 steno pages per week about anything we wanted. If we wanted the teacher to read our writing, then we would leave the book open to the current submission. If we didn't want her to, then we just needed to close it and put it in on "our spot" in the cupboard.

I never wanted her to read it, and, if I was to be completely honest, often I didn't write all of the required pages. I never trusted her, or anyone enough to write anything of substance, because I didn't trust anyone enough to share my inner thoughts. I loved and love books, but I had no understanding of why I should write down my thoughts, or why anyone would want to read them. I resisted the whole project for a long time. I suppose it was my first rebellion in school. I didn't want to write, it was hard to write, and I certainly didn't want anyone to read what I was writing.

How times have changed. After that school year, something changed. Not having the risk of anyone reading my thoughts changed how I saw that writing:

Diary I called it way back then. I began to write, only for my own eyes, but I wrote, and wrote and wrote and wrote. Ideas, thoughts, dreams, wishes, desires, all became fodder for those pages, in notebooks hidden from the world. For the next ten years or so, I wrote only for myself. I never shared any of it, but as time went on, ideas about something that I might want to share started to filter through and onto the pages. I shut it down. I kept seeing ideas for stories to share, but was not yet willing to see the possibility of sharing my words with the world. I read, and I wrote, still always for myself.

High school, and then university, not quite as much "diary," it became a journal, and the amount of writing decreased, other than in times of stress. Life, children, marriage, divorce, that writing saved me. It gave me a safe place to process my life, my dreams, my wants, needs and desires. Fast forward 20 years: 150 or so journals later, I am still journaling, still writing, but with a different view... in some ways: The child that was so afraid to be seen, who did not believe that her words had value is now out, seen and creating in the world. I still journal, deep and wide. Those words are still deeply personal. Now, however, that is not the only writing I do. Now, words spill out into the world as well. Now, I write words of hope, and sharing and support and love. I write in public forums, and private ones. Life has changed. Now, that small girl who would not have any of her words seen by anyone, has now understood that her words matter. Not only do I write my own words, I support others to write their own stories, helping them to find their own voices, showing just how powerful our words, our ideas, our stories, our dreams, and our sharing is. Our words matter, that private space where we share all of those ideas and process our thoughts and challenges matters. It gives us a space to cry, be angry, and finally, find joy and wisdom. It allows us to find ourselves, our voices and, ultimately, our freedom.

* * *

The Circle of Life

Sandra Wilson

The horrifying screech in the middle of the night
Woke me up with such a fright
I know the circle of life was taking place
But it did set my heart to race
I expected to find something dead in my yard
It is part of nature but still very hard
To witness whether by eyes or ears
An animal cry out in pain or fear
The beauty of nature is something I like to find
But the horror of that cry is stuck in my mind
But it does make one think of life and death
And makes you remember to value each breath.

Viva Napoli!

Karen Eckert

Want to get over the Covid blues? Go to Naples, Italy where nothing makes sense and nobody seems to care. Neapolitans are known for valuing food, soccer and mama, and everything else takes a backseat. Recently, I spent a few days in Naples on my way to the Amalfi Coast. I can't speak Italian and trying to find my way in the twisting streets turned out to be a walking marathon. The main street changes its name three times. When you take the subway, you first have to discover where they sell the tickets -usually a concession stand nearby, then you need to find your line. The problem is the signs might point towards lines 1 and 2, but when you follow them to their destination, line 1 mysteriously evaporates. You might as well get on the next train; it may not lead you to your destination, but for sure it will lead you somewhere interesting. Maybe you'll stumble across a walk-in street shrine dedicated to the soccer star Maradano, a deity in Neapolitan society. Or maybe you'll wind up in an out of the way deli where the Georgian owner and her son

have just captured a red and yellow parrot that flew in suddenly. He's in a box on the counter. Or maybe you'll find yourself outside a Prada store, with the mannequin dressed in black fishnet stockings, a cowboy hat and clunky shoes. The clerk in the store looks like a young George Clooney.

After trying to follow the crudely drawn map that the hotel gave me, I wound up in the neighborhood I had been warned about – right next to the train station. It was clearly immigration haven with its own specialized market. I caught a delightful snatch of conversation. One man was saying to the other, "Listen maan, if she's the right woman for you, you got to wait for her, maan. If it takes ten years, you just got to wait for her." (Ah, life.....)

You can try going to museums but don't expect to find English translations posted anywhere. The odd time you do, it will read something like: "the ogival arches in the pronaos tuff and the cross vaults of the aisle are probly brightned by the nude tough walls of the single lancet windows." I did try buying an accompanying tape, but I couldn't figure out what rooms the descriptions were referring to until it was too late.

Still though, the pizza and sfogliatelle (a pastry special stuffed with cream) are to die for. And the National Museum boasts an archaeological collection which will knock your socks off. Pay for a private guide; you'll get a passion for antiquity and a wealth of information that will make Pompeii and first century Roman life come alive forever.

Nativity sets (*prescipi*) are big in Naples, and there is a wonderful exhibit of "Crib scenes" at the San Martino museum. You'll find nativity sets carved out of ivory, set in an egg, and scenes that comprise entire villages-butcher, baker and candlestick maker. Everybody it seems wants to be at the birth of Jesus in Naples and "extended nativity sets" where miniature ideal worlds are presented reveal a touching piety in the people. Everywhere amidst the "Say No to Pineapple on Pizza" signs, you'll find shrines set into

walls featuring statues of Mary and sundry saints. And.... if a resident wants to add their own shrine onto their house and it juts out into the street cutting out parking and accessibility, well, so what if it's illegal? It's worth it!

After two years of restrictions and isolation, there is something so healing and life-affirming in coping with the chaos and craziness of Napoli. Neapolitans hate to be indoors; people walk the streets in droves, teenagers munching on their fried pasta sandwiches and families just out tasting the fruits of Spring. Just go with the flow and ride on the salty, sardine-packed sea of life! You'll see the world with fresh eyes.

* * *

I Love You Uncle Stan

Colleen Heighington

My Uncle Stan is the youngest of five children and I remember when I was a child, he would come over to our house with my Aunt Irene and pay us all a visit. As the years went on, we didn't see much of him and life continued.

It wasn't until my mom's passing in 1998 that we started to see him again. He would come over to keep my dad company and if he knew our family would be getting together at my dad's house, he would be there. We had a lot of good laughs and good times.

My dad was in his eighties when he broke his hip and Uncle Stan was a regular visitor at the hospital. I knew just how much that meant to my dad because he told me so. My dad was ten years older than his brother and because of their age gap, they grew up in different times so seeing them back together again was so nice especially since all the other siblings had passed on. My Uncle Stan was always invited to our Father's Day celebration and what a great time we all had together especially my dad and his brother.

It wasn't until my dad's passing in 2012 that I started to call my Uncle Stan on a weekly basis. This continued for a while and then we lost contact until his daughter Laura called me and told me that he moved and gave me his new telephone number. We reconnected right away and I found out so much from him. He told me all about his family and especially of the good old days. He made me laugh and sometimes I was on the phone for an hour or more. Your right ... I love talking especially to my Uncle Stan.

My Uncle Stan turned 91 this past February and his health was beginning to fail yet he never complained and the next thing that I knew, he was in the hospital with stage 4 cancer and given only days to live. Unfortunately, I was unable to pay him a visit but a lovely lady named Grace let me speak to him over the phone. I told Uncle Stan just how special and kind he was to all of us and told him that we loved him so very much. I asked him if I could recite a poem that my dad had written and he said yes ...

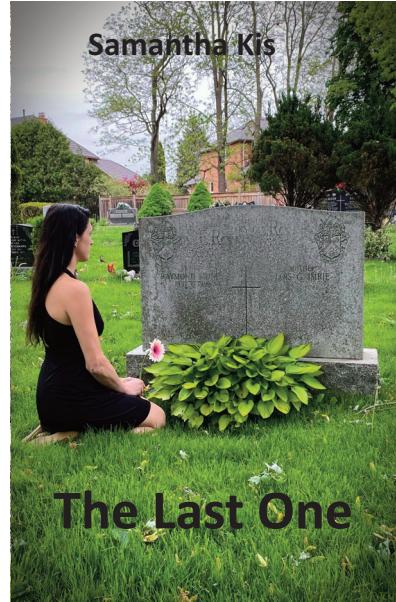
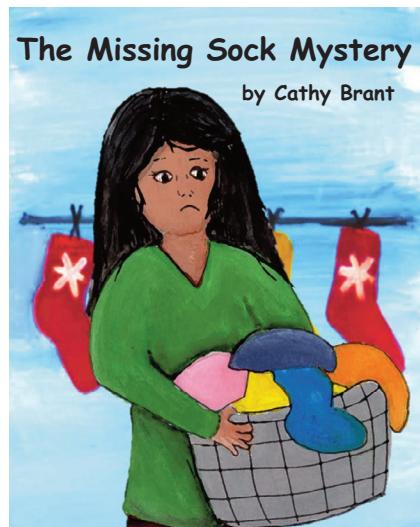
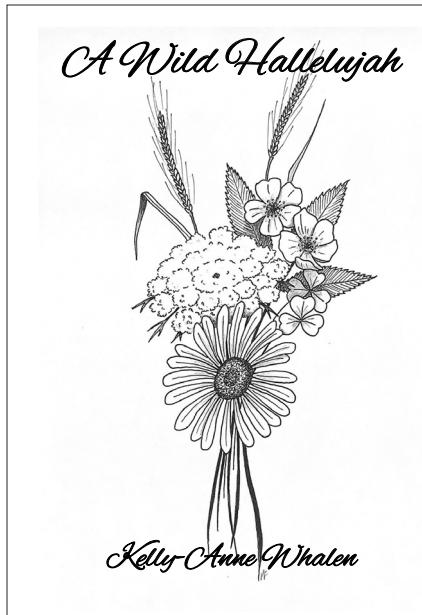
Sail silently oh gentle ship
Sail gently o'er the sea
Sail smoothly and take me home
End the Lord abide with me

For with Him, my journey safe
With Him I've reached the shore
And in his Everlasting Arms
I'm Home Forevermore

He said thank you and I could tell by now that he was getting tired so I ended our conversation like we usually did ... I said I love you Uncle Stan and he said back to me I love you too. These were the last words that we said to one another and they have given me much peace and comfort knowing that my Uncle Stan knew how much he was loved by us all.

* * *

MONTH IN Review



Hot off the press:

Left: *A Wild Hallelujah*, an anthology of poetry by Kelly-Anne Whalen

Middle: *The Missing Sock Mystery*, a children's story by Cathy Brant

Right: *The Last One*, a novel by Samantha Kis

Mark Your Calendars!

One Thousand Trees has booked our table
at The Eden Mills Writers Festival,
Sunday, September 11

We're so excited to be able to be back in person!





Is It Harder to Ask for Help, or To Be Asked?

Bill Brubacher

We've all been in both positions and I don't think many of us feel comfortable with either. Moreover, wanting to ask for help or having to respond to such a question is, I believe, two of the hardest things for most of us to do.

Why is this? What are the unspoken relational dynamics within the question that make it so sensitive? Let's explore the matter together. To start, here are a few of my thoughts to compare with your own.

Why don't we like to ask for help? It could make us feel dependent; obligated; exposing limited skills we don't like to admit. In other words, asking for help can trigger our potential insecurities or lack of self-confidence and self-worth. It can threaten our pride.

Why we don't like being asked? It puts the full or partial responsibility of a task on us. If something goes wrong its our fault which could cause fear of failure or embarrassment.

We can also find it difficult to say "no," especially if we're people-pleasers. We find it hard to refuse someone who needs us because we derive our happiness and self-esteem from serving.

Why we find it hard to say "No"? We don't want to hurt the persons feelings or disappoint them. We may need

their help in future, whether we'd ask or not is another thing. We don't want to run the risk of losing their friendship. We don't want them to hold our negative reply against us or to surmise we aren't willing to help because we can't or don't agree with their position on something.

Yet we've all been admonished for not looking after ourselves. We've been told to only say "Yes" if we can or wish to help. This is the nub, because we often say "Yes" when we mean "No," even if saying "No" is for good reasons. That's a dilemma, isn't it?

We're reluctant to say "No" because we neither want to inflict the sting of being rejected on anyone else or give reason to have it inflicted on us. Weren't we told in the New Testament of the Bible that Jesus said, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*"?

I believe this is a very strong motivation for many: implying its better to serve than to be served. So we're more likely to say "Yes" than "No." Moreover, we can also feel uncomfortable asking, remembering from our experience how the pressure feels and not wanting to be in the 'debt' of someone else.

Yet, who doesn't dream of having the option of saying "No," and of having the fortitude and freedom to be our own 'good' selves without having to always prove it? Wouldn't it be nice to be respected for our honesty and sincerity, and to feel comfortable and authentic in our independence? In other words to give ourselves the freedom of choice.

I think we can agree its far more complicated than a simple answer to either. Right now, it feels to me like a canyon has emerged in the midst of that question of asking or being asked for help.

Perhaps we need to look back and review the answers above and add or subtract some of our own thoughts weighing the results on the basis of our real feelings.

Frankly, I feel it's harder to ask for help than to give help. It's also hard to put myself first. To avoid that choice, I often don't take the time and invest the effort in being totally honest and truly respecting myself. I answer too quickly giving others the answer they want to hear.

There are times when later I wish I had said “No,” in order to do what I would have actually preferred doing. Incidentally, over the course of one’s life and of always giving in, might explain why some seniors can seem to be more outspoken and selfish. Some of us can hardly wait to reach their age and have the same freedom that seems generally accepted.

Finally, let’s briefly revisit something of Jesus’ teaching, to better understand the meaning of “Loving our neighbour as thyself.” There might be more to learn from it regarding how we interact with each other.

The insight, I think, begins with the word “as,” which in this context means ‘equally.’ The lesson may be to first learn to love ourselves which in turn will teach us how to treat others. This means no better, nor worse than we would treat ourselves. Bottom line lesson may be to learn to be honest with ourselves.

Learning to love ourselves could be the key: giving ourselves time and reflection to be honest with ourselves; to accept ourselves unconditionally; and to give ourselves permission to say what we truly wish.

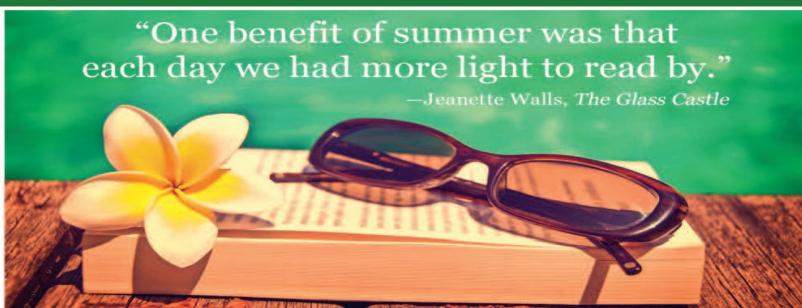
The root of wisdom, is sometimes found in choosing the opposite to our initial response, which leads to another wise tenet found in Shakespeare’s Hamlet, *‘This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.’*

Next time someone asks for your help, what are you going to say? Next time, you wish someone’s help, how will you do it?

Maybe it’s time to rethink the questions.

* * *

You’re Invited to a Book Sale!



“One benefit of summer was that
each day we had more light to read by.”
—Jeanette Walls, *The Glass Castle*

Sunday, June 26, 3-6pm

Harcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Ave, Guelph

**Entrance off the church parking lot (free parking)
... look for the green balloons!**

Your chance to meet and support local authors.



**Please bring cash, as not all vendors
will have electronic payment devices.**

For more information email lisa@onethousandtrees.com

New Child & Family Program in Guelph!

Children's Reading Room

located at the back of All Saints church
210 Silvercreek Pkwy N | 226 706 9845



We provide free quality children's books with every visit! Open for drop-in family programs every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9am to 1pm.

Music and Story Circle

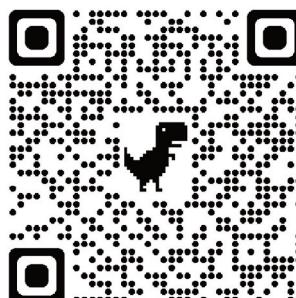
Join one of our fabulous Early Childhood Educators for Circle Time every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 10am! We'll read stories, sing songs, and play games!



Story Time & Crafts

Join us every Thursday at 11am for a literacy-focused craft activity! We will read a story and create a craft based on the elements from the story.

[https://
childrensreadingroom.org/](https://childrensreadingroom.org/)



Serving children birth-12 years

Bruce Trail, End to End (part 9)

Clay Williams

In early June 2021, my good friend Debbie and I decided that we would hike the full length of the Bruce Trail, all 800+ km, by doing day hikes on weekends throughout the coming year. This is the next chapter in our adventures on and off the trail.



I ended the last episode of this adventure by mentioning bacon. I suppose bacon doesn't really fit with the usual idea of a healthy diet for endurance athletes, but somehow it has become a necessity on these hikes. It's acceptable to have bacon on hand and not have time to take a "bacon break" during a hike, but it's not acceptable to take a bacon break and not have bacon on hand. Maybe it's just the folks I hang out with, but I learned from ultra runners years ago that if you go on a group run, someone has to bring bacon to the trail. I also learned that if you say you're going to bring bacon, then make sure you bring bacon. If you fail, there will certainly be comments like: "He had ONE job." I'm not sure how bacon worked its way onto the "essential foods" list but it makes a lot of sense to me. From a nutritional standpoint it has salt, which is an essential electrolyte, protein to help rebuild muscle, and fat to fuel those long endurance events. From a mental health standpoint it has that savory, smokey fatty deliciousness that seems to satisfy some kind of craving. Even though the fat is bad

fat, and there are nitrates in it, my opinion is that the good outweighs the bad.



These few weeks in April have been a transition time as we went from snow drifts and icy trails to warmer temperatures and muddy trails. We learned that some of the sections that are easiest in winter because they are waterlogged and frozen solid can be hardest in the spring because of slippery clay mud and sloping trails. In winter, wearing spikes on our shoes can help with traction on ice, but there's nothing that can improve traction on a wet clay downhill trail. The transition to warmer weather has included more mud and more standing water resulting in wet feet, but it has also included newly sprouting plants and buds pushing their way up through the grey-brown forest floor, and more bird songs. I am hearing-impaired (who knew, right?) and I usually wear hearing aids, but when I'm running or hiking I don't wear them, mostly because they're not waterproof and I don't want to damage them if I work up a sweat. But even without them I can hear more and more birds, chirping, singing, twittering, and the forest seems to be coming back to life after a long winter nap.

A couple of months ago I mentioned a badge. The Bruce Trail is divided into nine sections, or clubs. Each of the clubs has the main Bruce Trail going through it, as well as several Side Trails. People can earn badges in each club by hiking or running on certain sections by themselves, or during organized group events. So far Debbie and I have earned five badges for hiking the

main trail end to end in five club sections. The badges are promoted as a piece of memorabilia to help you look back at your accomplishment and recall the fond memories you made during your event. But I think for many people, like me and maybe Debbie, the meaning of the badges is a little more significant than that, and they are more precious than we first thought they would be. The badges are similar to the belt buckle you get for finishing a 100 mile race. In my case, there's no good place to display them, they usually get tucked away into a drawer or closet or put on a shelf. There's no use displaying them anywhere because there aren't very many people who would recognize their significance if they saw them. And there's no significant financial value or resale value; it's not like showing off by wearing a Tag watch or Armani shoes. They're just a little token, a reminder of an adventure, of a hard earned finish line and of all the colors, smells, stumbles, laughs, struggles and blisters along the way. Even though these little tokens are only fawned over for a short time when I first receive them, they are like tiny spots of light that linger on my mind for months and years afterward. Little spots of light that, when I focus on them for a second, bring back all of those wonderful and painful memories in a little flood of nostalgia.



Day 20, April 2. The temperature was just below freezing when we started, and warmed only slightly by some bright sunshine for the rest of the day. There was only a little mud on the trail so it was mostly good footing and we made good time. This day's hike took

us through Noisy River Provincial Park and the town of Lavender. We hiked 27 km and there was a really steep climb in the last 300 metres. It was as if the Bruce Trail was telling us who is in charge, and it wasn't us. This is the day we completed the Dufferin Hills Section.



Day 21, April 10. The temperature had been above freezing the full week prior, then there was light snow on the roads for our drive out to the start point. It was just below freezing at the start and warmed up only a few degrees during the day, the perfect temperature for a day of strenuous exercise. The first 10 km was deceptively easy with really good footing and not much for hills. Then we started into mud. Just before the half way mark, as we were picking our way down a really slippery downhill section, my feet slipped out from under me and I fell flat on my back in the mud. It was so slippery and steep that I had a hard time getting my feet under me to stand up. Then ten minutes later as we were crossing a wet wooden walkway I fell flat on my back again. Both times my backpack padded my fall, but my backpack, jacket and pants were caked with mud. There was a lot of mud in the second half of the day, and by the end my shoes were soaked and heavy with mud.

Day 22, April 17. This would be the second weekend in a row that I forgot my camera, so I was a little disappointed that I wouldn't be able to take photos other than with my phone. The trail was in mostly good condition with a few very muddy and

slippery places. At about the half way point, we climbed from the lowest part of the valley up to the highest part of the escarpment, the biggest single climb since hiking in the Peninsula section. As we walked along the top of the escarpment there were huge deep crevices and places where we were walking between the big broken rocks. There was a seasonal reroute off of the main trail, and it meant we didn't get to hike across the highest point on the Bruce Trail. We didn't really know until the end of the day, and we were a little sad we missed it.



Day 23, April 23rd. This would be our longest hike since last August, at 28.95 km. We had a small argument at the start. I thought it was going to be 27.3k, Debbie said 28.9k. As it turned out, she was right. I haven't told her yet. The temperature stayed steady all day in the single digits, another day of good hiking weather. Just like the previous week we had really good footing to start, but it got muddy near the end, and there were some pretty big hills near the end. I had been making soup, and bringing warm soup in a thermos for most of our previous hikes, but on this day I forgot to make soup. Instead I brought corn tortillas and pineapple. It just didn't quite hit the spot like hearty soup. Note to self: bring better food for when I'm starving at the end of the hike.

* * *

Freedom Ride

Brenda Cassidy

My memories are recalled
Back to a long time ago;
To that warm summer night
That only I will know.

Riding my bike
With such energy and speed;
The warmth of the night air
Being all that I need.

Carefree and living in the moment,
How wondrous it seemed;
Please God, take me back,
Even if only in my dreams.



This Month's Contributors

Bill Brubacher

Bill is a long-time resident of the Region of Waterloo, a former successful business entrepreneur and an internationally published author of 15 national bestselling books. He is a Certified Bereavement Specialist, and a Certified Conflict Coach/ Elder Mediator, helping seniors and their families through difficult time through Caregivers Oasis, Pathfinder Canada, and Heart and Soul Bereavement for Seniors. Bill has recently authored a new book about his amazing life's journey. His book, *Against the Odds*, is a ten-year testament to his incredible emotional, spiritual and mental tenacity as he fought to reinvent himself after experiencing tremendous loss. His model and message are an inspiration to all who struggle to survive in the face of defeat. His latest book, *The Secret Pond*, is a classic love story fantasy about the shared journey of a young boy and an unusual stranger finding healing from grief and loss at a mystical pond in the midst of an ancient magical forest. For more information about his books go to <https://legacypress.ca/> or contact Bill at billbrubacher@gmail.com.

Brenda Cassidy

Brenda has written two children's books, *Who Needs Little Brothers Anyway?* and *Who Needs Little Sisters Anyway?* In addition to writing for children, she is also interested in writing about her spiritual journey, and hopes to achieve this in the future. In the meantime, Brenda also enjoys writing short poems and her own personal musings.

Karen Eckert

Karen taught English and French for 30 years and is now retired and living in the east end of the beach in Toronto. She has dabbled in various arts over the years and now offers Craft classes to all and sundry. She has written children's stories and is currently working on a bitter-sweet, semi-graphic novel based on journals she kept during her twenties. She has three sons.

Colleen Heighington

Colleen is happily married to a wonderful husband named Ken. They have been blessed with three beautiful children, and four terrific grandsons. She enjoys reading, writing stories and poetry, and she keeps fit by walking 3 to 4 kilometres every day. Her summers are spent at their trailer in Orillia, and she really enjoys the time she spends with family and friends. She has been a volunteer with Hospice Wellington since 2015.

Francine Houston

Francine is a transformational intuitive, animal lover and fibre artist. She spends her time writing, doing fibre arts, and supporting animals and their human companions in transitional times.

Margreet Kuypers

Marge has immigrated twice, and as a result has lived on three continents. As an introvert she prefers to observe, rather than share her views. Until now she used to communicate mainly through music and photography, since then it wasn't necessary to put thoughts into words. Marge did an online Memoir writing course during 2020 which inspired her to share some of her experiences on paper. Visit her at www.walkingthewalk.life.

Clay Williams

Clay is a 61-year-old Manitoba-born father of two living in Elmira Ontario with his wife of 40 years. He manages the Engineering Department of a manufacturing company in Kitchener and has worked in Northern Ontario, Germany and South Carolina. Clay is an avid distance runner, having run dozens of marathons and longer runs, and creator of the Canal Pursuit for Mental Health, a 785 km run along two of Canada's longest canals as well as The Monarch Ultra, a 4300 km run following the migration path of Monarch Butterflies.

Sandra Wilson

Sandra is a children's author, educator and illustrator that lives Ontario, Canada. With her writing she hopes to empower and inspire children and help get the conversation started on topics that can make a difference in the life of a child. She believes compassion and understanding are key concepts to learn to create a better world. And stories are a powerful tool to help teach these concepts to children.



DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

Deadline for submissions for July is Friday, June 24.

Here's a focus quote to inspire you ...

***"One child, one teacher, one book,
one pen can change the world."***
— Malala Yousafzai