

The Local Biz Magazine

**15
YEARS**

Durham Region Community Publication
Celebrating 15 Years as one of
Durham's Most-Loved Magazines
• • • • • Winter 2023 • • • • •

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History of
Christmas**

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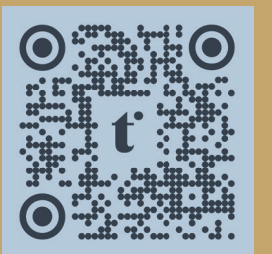
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From the Publisher

Welcome to the Winter 2023 issue everyone! I cannot believe it's almost Christmas, and that the holiday season is already here! Another year has flown by, and it seems like it's gone by in the blink of an eye. For us here at *The Local Biz Magazine*, not only has 1 year flown by, but 15 years have past since we first started the magazine! Where has the time gone? When I started the magazine back in 2008, I had a vision for what I wanted to create and I'm so happy to see that vision come to fruition and still be going strong 15 years later. It has been a most amazing journey, and I would do it all over again in a heartbeat. I truly value what we do here at the magazine.

Since it's our anniversary, this issue's theme is of time past, of history. We reflect on how things were, and how they are now. Wendy, our editor will discuss two features that talk about how the magazine and community have evolved over the past 15 years. Given that it's Christmas, we also have a feature article that looks at Christmas over the centuries. How was it originally celebrated, and how is it celebrated today? What traditions have stayed the same? What traditions have changed? It's a fascinating read. You can check out *The History of Christmas: From Ancient Celebrations to Modern Traditions* on page 8 of the magazine.

I would also like to take this time to say goodbye to our horoscope columnist Julie Antoinette. Julie has been a wonderful contribution to *The Local Biz Magazine* when she started writing for us almost 10 years ago! I know many of you who have looked forward to reading her horoscope column every issue. We are sad to see her go, but wish her all the best in her future endeavours. If there is anyone who likes astrology and is interested in being our new Horoscope columnist, please let us know. We are on the lookout to pass the torch on. Or, if you have another idea for a column, let us know as well. We're always open to suggestions.

Finally, don't forget to check out our website - www.thelocalbizmagazine.ca. As always, I hope you enjoy reading the wonderful content we have for you in this Winter 2023 issue of *The Local Biz Magazine*. Feel free to share your thoughts on it with us. Connect with us through our website and Facebook page.

Antoine Elhashem
Publisher



From the Editor

I cannot believe it's been 15 years since *The Local Biz Magazine* has been in publication! That's a long time for any business, let alone a publication to be around. I joined the magazine about 10 years ago, and it's been a great journey so far with Antoine (the publisher), Kim (the general manager) and Mychol (the designer). The magazine could not be what it is, if it wasn't for the amazing and dedicated group of columnists I work with regularly on each and every issue. I'm also fortunate to have a diverse group of talented writers who continually taken on the challenge of researching and writing our longer features. Without a team effort all around, this magazine would not be what it is today. And of course, a great big thank you goes out to all our readers who have been with us on this journey thus far. Without you, there would be no 15-year celebration! Here's to 15 more!

So, what's in store in our Winter 2023 issue. Well, given that it's our 15-year anniversary, we have a feature article that looks back at *The Local Biz Magazine* since it's inception. From the earliest issue to the current issue; what has stayed the same and what has changed over the course of time. It's a memorable read. You can find the article *The Local Biz Magazine – Reflecting on 15 Years* on page 18 of the magazine.

We also have a feature that looks back on Durham Region over the past 15 years. How has the region changed over the years? What events made headlines? See if you can recall any of the things the article mentions. You can find, *What Happened in Durham Region Over the Past 15 Years?* on page 13 of the magazine.

I hope you enjoy reading the Winter 2023 issue. I'd love to hear your feedback on it. As always, if you would like to pitch us a story or write for us, feel free to email me editor@thelocalbizmagazine.ca.

Wendy Chiavalon
Editor-in-Chief



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The History of Christmas: From Ancient Celebrations to Modern Traditions

by Sukanya Samy

Christmas, as we know it today, is a festive holiday celebrated across the globe with a blend of religious significance and secular traditions. Its rich history stretches back two millennia and is a tapestry woven from diverse cultural influences.

To understand the origins of Christmas, we must journey through time, exploring the ancient customs that have evolved into the modern holiday we cherish today.

Pagan Roots and Winter Solstice Celebrations

The earliest precursors to Christmas can be traced to ancient pagan celebrations.

In Rome, where winters were milder than in the far north, the festival of Saturnalia, dedicated to Saturn, the god of agriculture, took place. Commencing in the week leading up to the winter solstice and spanning a full month, Saturnalia was a hedonistic celebration marked by abundant food and drink and a complete upheaval of the traditional Roman social order.

During this month, enslaved individuals experienced temporary freedom and equal treatment, with businesses and schools shutting down to allow everyone to partake in the festivities. Concurrently, Romans observed Juvenalia, a festivity honoring the city's children, while the upper echelons of society often commemorated the birth of Mithra, the god of the unconquerable

sun, on December 25. According to belief, Mithra, an infant deity, was born from a solid rock, a day regarded by some Romans as the most sacred of the entire year.

Another Roman festival, Sol Invictus, celebrated the "Unconquered Sun" on December 25, marking the winter solstice when the days begin to lengthen again, symbolizing the return of light and life.

In Scandinavia, the Norse celebrated Yule from December 21, the winter solstice, through January. Fathers and sons would bring home large logs in recognition of the sun's return, which they would set on fire. The people would feast until the log burned out, which took many days. The Norse believed that each spark from the fire represented a new pig or calf that would be born during the coming year.

The later part of December was a perfect time for celebration in most areas of Europe. For many, it was the only time of year when they had a supply of fresh meat as most cattle were slaughtered so they would not have to be fed during the winter. In addition, most wine and beer made during the year was finally fermented and ready for drinking.

In Germany, people honored the pagan god Oden during the mid-winter holiday. Germans were terrified of Oden, as they believed he made nocturnal flights through the sky to observe his people, and then decide who would prosper or perish. Because of his presence, many people chose to stay inside.

Christianity and the Birth of Jesus

In the early years of Christianity, Easter held primary importance, while the birth of Jesus went largely uncelebrated. It wasn't until the fourth century that church authorities decided to establish Jesus's birth as a holiday. However, the absence of a specified date for this event in the Bible (a point later emphasized by Puritans seeking to discredit the observance) presented a challenge. Although some indications suggested a spring birth (such as the presence of shepherds in the fields), Pope Julius I settled on December 25. This choice is often attributed to the church's desire to incorporate elements of the pagan Saturnalia festival. Initially known as the Feast of the Nativity, this tradition reached Egypt by 432 and England by the close of the sixth century.

By aligning Christmas with established winter solstice festivities, church leaders increased its likelihood of widespread acceptance but relinquished control over its celebration.

In the Middle Ages, Christianity largely supplanted pagan religions. On Christmas, believers attended church services, followed by boisterous and often drunken revelry reminiscent of today's Mardi Gras. An annual "lord of misrule" was crowned from among beggars or students, and enthusiastic celebrants assumed the roles of his subjects. The less fortunate would visit the homes of the affluent, demanding the finest food and drink. Noncompliance often resulted in playful mischief or, at times, outright disruption. Christmas thus became an occasion for the upper classes to reciprocate their real or perceived societal "debts" by entertaining the less privileged.

Victorian Era Revival

The 19th century saw a revival of Christmas traditions, particularly in England. Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" played a significant role in rekindling interest in the holiday. This period emphasized family gatherings, elaborate decorations, and a focus on charitable giving. Christmas cards became popular during this era, further promoting the season's spirit. The Victorian era's influence on Christmas shapes many of our modern customs.

Recognition in the United States and Canada

Christmas was celebrated in Canada as early as the 1800s, the impetus being the British militia who missed the festivities back home. Christmas trees started appearing after the London Illustrated News published an image of Queen Victoria, her husband Albert and their family, gathered around a tree in Windsor Castle in 1848.

In 1870, Christmas was officially recognized as a federal holiday in the United States, cementing its place as one of the most widely celebrated holidays in the Western world. With this recognition, Christmas became a day off for workers and a time for families to come together.

Modern Christmas Traditions

Today, Christmas is celebrated in diverse ways worldwide, incorporating a mix of religious observance, cultural traditions, and commercial influences. The holiday season typically kicks off with



the decoration of homes and the display of Christmas trees. Many families attend midnight church services or reenactments of the nativity story.

The act of gift-giving remains a central theme, echoing the Magi's offerings to the baby Jesus. Santa Claus, with his origins in St. Nicholas, has become a beloved figure who delivers presents to children around the world.

Festive meals with traditional dishes, such as roast turkey or ham, and special treats like cookies and eggnog, are shared among loved ones. Caroling, a tradition rooted in the singing of hymns and folk songs, continues to fill the air with melodies of joy.

In conclusion, the history of Christmas is a journey through time, weaving together ancient pagan celebrations, Christian religious observance, and the influence of diverse cultures. While its origins may be traced back to the Roman festivals of Saturnalia and Sol Invictus, Christmas has evolved into a beloved holiday that transcends borders and beliefs, bringing people together in the spirit of love, generosity, and togetherness. As we celebrate Christmas today, we honor the traditions of the past while creating new memories for generations to come.

Santa Claus

Santa Claus is a legendary figure who brings gifts to children on Christmas Eve. His popular image is based on the traditions of Saint Nicholas, a fourth-century Christian saint who was famous for his generosity and kindness. He is usually depicted as a jolly old man with a long white beard and a red suit trimmed with white fur.

The current depiction of Santa Claus is based on images drawn by cartoonist Thomas Nast for Harper's Weekly beginning in 1863. Nast's Santa owed much to the description given in the poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" (also known as "'Twas the Night Before Christmas"), first published in 1823. The image was further defined by the popular Santa Claus advertisements created for the Coca-Cola Company from 1931 by illustrator Haddon Sundblum.

Santa Claus lives in the North Pole, where he has a workshop and a team of elves who help him make toys. He also has a sleigh pulled by flying reindeer, led by the red-nosed Rudolph. On Christmas Eve, he travels worldwide and delivers presents to good children. He enters their houses through the chimney and fills their stockings with candy and toys. He also leaves larger gifts under the Christmas tree.

Santa Claus is celebrated in many countries and cultures, sometimes under different names and appearances. For example, he is called Sinterklaas in the Netherlands and arrives by boat in mid-November. In Germany and some parts of America, he is called the Christkindle (Christ Child) and brings gifts on Christmas Eve. In other places, he is known as Father Christmas, Papa Noel, or Ded Moroz (Grandfather Frost). Santa Claus is a symbol of joy, hope, and generosity for millions worldwide.

Sukanya Samy is a professional marketer but a writer at heart. She loves to write movie and book reviews, short stories, and poems about topics close to her heart. She lives in Oshawa with her husband and spirited five-year-old son.



Christmas events in the Durham Region

Pickering

The City of Pickering and the Kinsmen & Kinette Club are celebrating the highly anticipated return of the Santa Claus Parade on November 25. This year, the Parade's theme is Holiday Storytime, where groups are invited to represent pop culture or cultural stories about the holidays in their float design. The City of Pickering also will also be holding their popular Winter Nights, City Lights Festival on the evenings of November 24 and 25 at Esplanade Park.

Ajax

The annual Town of Ajax Santa Claus Parade on November 25 is the perfect way to kick off the holiday season. The parade features 50+ floats including marching bands, local businesses, cultural groups, and Santa Claus!

Whitby

Due to renovations at Downtown Brooklin's Grass Park, the annual Christmas in the Village event will be amalgamated with Whitby Lights the Night event on November 24. The new event, Whitby Lights the Night Christmas Festival will be held at Civic Park which is central to the community, located between Town Hall and the Civic Recreation Centre.

Oshawa

Bright and Merry Market will occur on Thursday, November 16. This free event kicks off the holiday season in Oshawa and takes place at City Hall, surrounding areas, and Memorial Park.

Bowmanville

Old Scugog Road has the most incredible Christmas light displays that go beyond your traditional twinkle lights. Picture over 100 homes decked out in lights, spotlights, moving Ferris wheels, projection screens playing movies, and Santa displays that move and play music; it's truly a sight to see. It's a beloved holiday tradition that's been running for 30 years and attracts visitors from across the province.

Uxbridge

Since 1961, the Uxbridge Santa Claus Parade has been a tradition to celebrate the holiday season. Each year, on the third Saturday in November, Brock Street is closed to allow the parade to wow the thousands of residents and visitors who come out for the fun.

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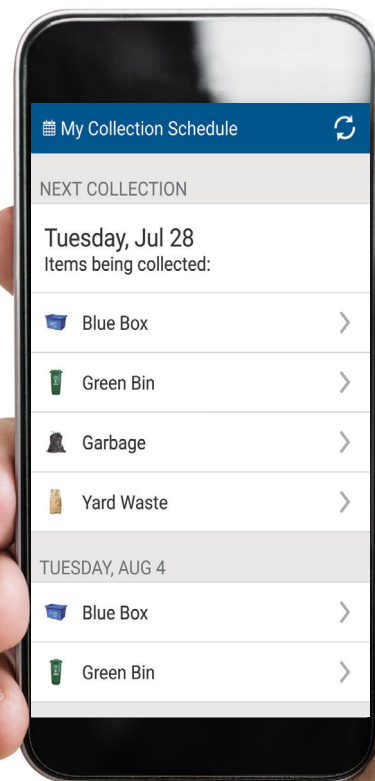


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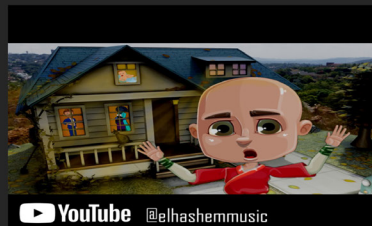
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“The Local Biz Magazine was started by graduates of the Ontario Self Employment Program of Durham Region and is a vehicle that encourages the spirit of entrepreneurship and all the fantastic businesses who provide us with products and services in our area.”

(The Local Biz Magazine – Fall 2008)

Yes, it was 15 years ago that *The Local Biz Magazine* first made its appearance. In the premier edition in 2008, the magazine stated, “Statistics show that 96% of all companies fail within 10 years and even more staggering is that a corporation fails every 3 minutes.” So, a well-deserved congratulations to the magazine for making it this far!

While *The Local Biz Magazine* has been chugging along, many things have also happened in Durham Region over the past 15 years that have affected its businesses and people. Let's take a look at some of them...

Summer 2008 - Flooding over the summer of 2008. Whitby and other areas in Durham Region experienced extreme rainfall. June, July, and August recorded monthly average levels at 185%, 400%, and 150% respectively with some localized intense storms exceeding the 100-year event history. Roads were washed out in certain areas and many small businesses were forced to close because their clientele couldn't reach them.

2009 - In 2009, a report by Durham Police Services Board chairman, Terry Clayton commented, “Coupled with our new strategic direction -- solving problems by addressing the root causes of crime -- the Board and the police service achieved tremendous results. For the first time, the DRPS was ranked #1 among the big police services in Ontario in terms of clearing crimes.” When local police are ranked among the big guys across Ontario, that means the Region would be too, and that had to have been good for local businesses.

June 23, 2010 - The U.S. Geological Survey reported a magnitude 5 earthquake, with its epicentre just north of Ottawa in Quebec. Tremors were felt about 1:41 p.m. According to the U.S.G.S., a magnitude 5 earthquake is considered moderate to strong and can cause slight damage. Although there were no damages in Durham Region following the earthquake, it definitely caused a lot of talk! I still remember that day as I live about a ½ mile from the Darlington Nuclear plant and I was so worried about that magnitude 5 causing a rift in the ground and our gas lines rupturing. We were assured by Ontario Power Generation that nothing like that had happened, and that there had been no impact to the nuclear plants that bookend Durham. But with windows rattling and chandeliers tinkling, we were still worried for a few days...

December 21, 2012 - “From rolling countryside to picturesque historic sites, Durham Region provides the perfect backdrop for major motion pictures and TV shows. Did you know that some box-office hits and current TV favourites are filmed right here in Durham? A television series that has frequent regional backdrops is *Nikita*. Featuring popular actors Maggie Q and Shane West, this action, criminal, drama series was also filmed at the popular



Parkwood Estate, as well as at Glen Major Angling Club in Uxbridge, Greenwood Conservation Area in Ajax and Trafalgar Castle School in Whitby.” (Oshawa This Week). It’s nice to see that film companies finally discovered us! Great for tourism and businesses around the area.

December 19, 2013 - “The December 19, 2013 ice storm was a ‘remember where you were’ event. The storm was the result of a low-pressure system that formed over Texas and made its way to Ontario. The warm front from Texas mixed with the cold air mass in Eastern Canada. The storm officially began on December 19 and dissipated by December 23, but there were prolonged impacts. The affected areas were faced with varying conditions, including extreme snow, an ice storm, and a tornado outbreak.” (Weather Network)

Durham Region was not alone in experiencing the ice storm, but many residents still remember the storm because the roads were littered with tree branches (and in some places whole trees), cars were demolished by falling branches, and roofs were impacted by ice-encased trees succumbing to the weight of the ice on their branches. “The ice was so aggressive that trees were more ice than they were tree,” said the Weather Network article. The ice and snow from the storm also took out power lines, leaving over a million residents without power (some areas had no power for a few days). The storm killed 27 people and cost \$200 million.

2014 - 2014 was the year that Durham Region celebrated its 40th anniversary. Durham Region was created on January 1, 1974, under The Regional Municipality of Durham Act, 1973. The Act had

received royal assent on June 22, 1973. The name Durham was chosen over names such as McLaughlin, Oshawa and Pickering.

From its beginnings in 1974, Durham Region was one of several new regional governments in the Province of Ontario, primarily in fast-growing urban and suburban areas. It encompassed areas that had been part of Ontario County and the United Counties of Northumberland and Durham, and was the culmination of a series of studies into municipal governance in the "Oshawa-Centred Region" that had begun in the late 1960s. The formation of the Region was not without its problems, however. I remember that many rural people were being charged for “city” services they did not receive. Oops!

October 26, 2017 - The Durham Region Area Archives Group is the local association of archives of the Archives Association of Ontario. In the fall of 2017 this group featured a report on the first overseas draft of the 2nd Depot Battalion, 2nd Central Ontario Regiment, WW1. Their report said, “Depot Battalions were created to train later recruits and draftees who would be shipped to Canadian Reserve Battalions in England. Each Depot Battalion provided reinforcements to Battalions currently overseas. The 2nd Depot Battalion, 2nd Central Ontario Regiment was authorized by General Order 2 of 2 January 1917 and by General Order 57 of 15 April 1918. The recruits were sent to reinforce the 54th, 116th, 125th and 164th Battalions through the 2nd Canadian Reserve Battalion. Commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel A.J. McCausland.”

Not earth-moving news, but something many people didn’t know about and may find helpful when doing their ancestral stories (so popular these days!) Visit any of the associated archives to learn more about your community and its history: Ajax Archives, Clarington Museums and Archives, Clarington Public Library, Markham Museum and Archives, Newcastle Village and District Historical Society, Northumberland County Archives, Oshawa Museum, Oshawa Public Libraries, Pickering Public Library, Port Hope Archives, Robert McLaughlin Gallery, UOIT and Durham College Archives, Uxbridge Historical Centre, Whitby Archives. Archives came into their own that year, and continue to serve their communities.

November 26, 2018 - The top story for 2018 was the announcement that GM was leaving Oshawa. “General Motors has announced the Oshawa Assembly Plant will be ‘unallocated in 2019,’ meaning the plant will be closing with no product to make. The automaker says they’re ‘accelerating transformation.’ Along with Oshawa, the Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly in Detroit and Lordstown Assembly in Warren, Ohio, the Baltimore Operations in White Marsh, Maryland and Warren Transmission Operations in Warren, Michigan will be left ‘unallocated.’ According to GM, the Oshawa plant employed 2600 hourly employees and 300 on salary. The GM statement says these actions are being taken to reduce salaried and salaried contract staff by 15 per cent, which includes 25 per cent fewer executives to streamline decision making.” (Durham Radio News)

It was a sad day indeed for hundreds of Durham Residents when this announcement was made. Where would so many people now find employment? How would they survive? People took to the streets; the newspapers were full of articles calling for the reinstatement of their jobs. What would we do? Well, many of us found other work; some of us moved away; some of us went into business for ourselves; and some of us were able to hang on until GM reversed their decision. We all survived in ways we had not envisioned before.



September 25, 2019 - Whitby, Ontario – “As part of Durham Vision Zero’s goal to eliminate fatalities on our roadways, red-light cameras and automated speed enforcement will be coming to Durham Region to help improve traffic safety. Through Durham Vision Zero, the Region has made a commitment to save lives and reduce injuries on our roads. Our collision data show that collisions at intersections and aggressive driving are top areas of concern—and often, these types of crashes involve our most vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists).” (Durham Region)

Prior to this, people were expected to “behave” themselves and follow the rules of the road. The cameras helped, because they showed what actually happened during a collision, thereby eliminating a lot of arguing in court over who was at fault.

2020 and 2021 - “From the time of first detection back in December 2019, COVID-19 has begun spreading rapidly throughout every corner of the world. While the outbreak initially occurred in China, the virus has spread to countries including Canada, the US, Australia and Iran. Here in Durham Region, survey results from the Durham Region Health Unit showed that the pandemic had serious health and social impacts on Durham Region residents in the first year of the pandemic, which affected people’s lives beyond infectious disease transmission.” (Durham Region Health Unit)

Yes, the impact of COVID-19 was felt all across the globe and in Canada. Here in Durham Region, many businesses were forced to shut down and/or limit their customers. Hospitals were at capacity, and burnout among doctors and nurses was rampant. Many

people stopped commuting to work and worked from home. Schools shut down and students were expected to attend via Zoom; most coped, but many just couldn’t adjust (a grandson of mine among these). Masks were mandatory. Getting vaccinated was encouraged, but vaccine passports (which were temporarily enforced) became a contentious issue. Zoom, social distancing, and masking were some of the words that became part of our vocabulary. And oh, yes, this is also when *The Local Biz Magazine* went totally digital (and still is), as are many publications including some local newspapers.

A trying time indeed, but we made it through and are slowly getting back to normal, (even though the virus is refusing to fully disappear).

Now, as the magazine enters its 15th year, what noteworthy things have happened?

October 10, 2023 – The Greenbelt Scandal was by far the most breaking news to date for Durham Region since parts of the Greenbelt fall within the Region’s borders. According to CP24, “The Royal Canadian Mounted Police is investigating the Ontario government’s decision to open up parts of the Greenbelt for development. The RCMP confirmed that an investigation into ‘allegations associated to the decision’ has been launched.”

‘Stop Sprawl Durham’ protesters gathered outside Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy’s office in Pickering, Ont., rallying to save Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve, which makes up nearly 60 per cent of Greenbelt land set to be removed. “This is a non-partisan issue in Pickering,” Abdullah Mir with Stop Sprawl Durham told CTV News Toronto. “We don’t want development on the Greenbelt land largely because we don’t need development on the Greenbelt land.” The protests and outrage by people when this story broke rang loud and clear. The housing minister resigned from his position, and the premier apologized and reversed the decision. Sadly, other lands within Durham Region have also been affected by the Greenbelt Scandal. Unfortunately, some of these lands will never be put back into the Greenbelt as they have already been built on.

Durham Region is not just another part of Ontario. It is a vibrant and important part of the province, and will continue this way for many years to come. Hopefully too, *The Local Biz Magazine* will have many more years of success in this beautiful region we call home!

Sher Leetooze is a Bowmanville based writer specializing in local history. Recently, she has stepped out of her comfort zone to tackle fiction with her first novella, now on her website, and a novel ready-to-go to print. Watch for these on her website at Sher Leetooze.

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The Local Biz Magazine – Reflecting On 15 Years

by Megan Suggitt

Over the last 15 years, The Local Biz Magazine has echoed the diversity of Durham Region. With content ranging from recipes to horoscopes, real-estate to self-help, and everything in-between, the magazine offers a little bit of everything for both young and old.

The magazine strives to offer insightful articles while also highlighting and promoting a variety of small businesses across Durham region. In a society that thrives off quick and short click-bait articles, The Local Biz Magazine propels an edge above the rest as it offers a more traditional magazine with a family-oriented cozy vibe. (The Local Biz Magazine - Fall 2008 issue)

The Evolution of The Local Biz Magazine

As with any publication that has been around a long time, change (or evolution) is inevitable. Looking back at previous issues of the magazine, The Local Biz Magazine is no exception. In the Fall of 2008, The Local Biz Magazine made its debut. The very first edition was called “Durham Region” and featured articles highlighting local entrepreneurs and their businesses. The magazine recognized the role individual entrepreneurs played in the ever-changing business world and the emphasis these entrepreneurs placed on community, personality, and passion. Scott Dagostino, the former editor stated, “Connection is what it’s all about and what this magazine plans to foster.”

Some of the first stories showcased include, Holistic Pet Care by Corry Hamilton, Cleaning Green by Beverly Thompson, A Greener Lawn by Craig McPherson, Recognizing Stress by Pamela Jackson, Going Green with Consignment by Kim Dobie, Publicity 101 by Sue McCallum and Protect your Business by Whitney Collins. There was also a section called The Coach Corner which comprised a life coach and business coach column written by Dennis (Malachi) Brown and Peter Miller.

In the second edition of the magazine in Winter 2008, while the layout of the magazine stayed the same, the landscape started to change. The articles featured had more of a “family feel” to it as it highlighted family holiday traditions, recipes, baby tips and craft ideas, just to name a few.

In the Fall of 2009, when the magazine celebrated their 1-year anniversary, they re-evaluated their goals. A regular teen column, advice column, and pet column debuted. A column for older readers, as well as an events calendar to promote events taking place in Durham Region was slated to start in the following issue. But the re-evaluation process took longer than expected so a Winter 2009 issue never happened.

In the Spring of 2010, The Local Biz Magazine re-launched itself. It was bigger than before and had more photos in it. The aforementioned Boomers column debuted, along with The Coach Corner column and a recipe column called Tasteful Talk. (The events calendar was pushed to the Summer 2010 issue.) The longer feature articles started to cover topics that weren’t necessarily tied to any one business. There were however, many local businesses starting to advertise in the magazine. As editor at the time David Drane explained in his letter, “...while you are reading the articles, columns and stories, take a look at the ads. See who is here to meet your family’s needs. Maybe take an afternoon vacation at one of the many events right in your own neighbourhood and stop along the way to enjoy our home. Relax. Explore. Enjoy Durham Region.”

The magazine was starting to resemble the magazine you see today.

Feature Article Content

Over the years, more columns were added, while some were shelved as columnists came and went. The major feature articles which used to be primarily written by local business owners were now also written by writers. As such, the magazine was able to produce a rich array of content covering important topics that impacted people each and everyday. In the Summer 2018 edition, Tara Richardson wrote about the *Thin = Happiness Myth*. In the 2019 edition, *Human Trafficking - A Modern Day Slavery Tale* current editor Wendy Chiavalon wrote about the signs to look for if you suspect someone is being human trafficked. In the Winter 2019 issue, the magazine had an article tackling anxiety (*Anxiety – A Secret Today, Immobilized Tomorrow*). In Spring 2020, the magazine dedicated an entire issue to the topic of bullying. *In Their Own Words* was an eye-opening, heartbreaking article of personal stories of bullying shared by readers and offered many delicate reminders about the importance of being kind. The wide diversity of articles continues today. In the most recent 2023 Fall edition, the magazine ran an article called *Uncovering the Truth of Canada's Sombre Past* which talks about the atrocities inflicted on Indigenous people.

Longest Running Columns

As with any magazine, content changes in response to changing times. However, there are a few columns that have stood the test of time. The Coach Corner column has been around since the very first issue and is still going strong. The teen column has been around since the magazine turned one, although (obviously!) the teen writers have changed over the years. The magazine still has a recipe column and horoscope column. The Boomers column is also still around, although it is now called The Golden Years. Several new columns have also emerged over the years including a self-help column, fitness column, reiki inspired advice column, and real-estate and financial column.

Long-standing Writers and Columnists

The Local Biz Magazine has always been open to inviting a wide array of writers with diverse backgrounds and stories to tell. The magazine however recognizes that writers come and go, and may move on to pursue other opportunities in life.

There are some writers though that have been with The Local Biz Magazine for a long time. Honorable mention goes to Malachi Brown who still writes the Coach Corner column. Malachi has been with the magazine since its inception and is still writing today. He is chock full of wisdom and his words are still read by loyal readers to this day.

Most of the existing columnists and feature writers have also been with the magazine for the past several years including Tara Richardson (Soulful Searching), Julie Antoinette (Horoscopes), Linda Calder (The Golden Years), Bianca Schaefer (Get Fit: Inside & Out), Nicole Forrester (Finance & Real-Estate Insights), Monica Fox (Family Matters), Kubra Mir (A Forkful of Healthy, Sheila Marina (Ask Sheila), Sukanya Samy, Sam Burton and myself (Megan Suggitt).



Premiere Issue Fall 2008

Reflections from the Publisher

When asked what motivated publisher Antoine Elhashem to start The Local Biz Magazine, he states, “When I launched the magazine, both myself and our general manager Kim Dobie were going through a government program to train on being self-employed. I had 17 years behind me in media and marketing, and the instructors suggested that with my expertise I should launch a magazine to support the other new small business owners with expert exposure to Durham Region. But with our content being positive and upbeat, and being driven by the spirit of the region, we got popular throughout Durham, and businesses from all over the region wanted to get on board, so here we are.”

Antoine’s vision was to be a really happy magazine - a good read and something for everyone. As he further says, “I thought if we have something for the moms, the dads, the teens, and everyone really, then families can share this magazine that they all love reading.”

As Antoine reflects back on the last 15 years, he shares that his vision hasn’t changed at all. He adds, “The community and readers love our content, and we love putting it together for them.” When asked about what he has learned over the discourse of 15 years, Antoine says, “It has been the most amazing journey, and I would do it all over again in a heartbeat. I value what we do.”

Megan Suggitt is the business owner of Beautiful Minds. She is a passionate writer and disability advocate. She’s had a love for writing since she was 6 years old and enjoys writing stories that pertain to social justice that speak from the heart.



Winter Events Calendar

December 7, 2023

Classic Movie Night (Prancer - 1989)

A young farm girl finds a wounded reindeer believing it is one of Santa’s and decides to help it back to health before Christmas. All those around her except her disheartened father, are inspired by her holiday spirit while her father has trouble understanding. Admission \$7.00 Online (in advance) OR \$5.00 Cash Only at Door (one hour before start time). All Children & Students *FREE (No Ticket required). Children must be accompanied by an Adult. High School, College and University students please show student ID. Door Prizes! / Cash Concession Available / Fill out a ballot for future movies Oshawa
www.tickets.regenttheatre.ca/eventperformances.asp?evt=926
905 721-3399 ext.2

December 7 - 10, 2023

Cirque du Soleil CRYSTAL

Cirque du Soleil is thrilled to present its coolest arena show yet CRYSTAL, set to make its Oshawa premiere at the Tribute Communities Centre for six performances only, presented by Sun Life. In addition to seven jaw-dropping traditional circus acts, CRYSTAL also features figure skating and extreme skating two disciplines that have never been seen before in a Cirque du Soleil show.
Oshawa
www.tributecommunitiescentre.com/events/detail/cirque-du-soleil-crystal
905-438-8811

December 8, 2023

“Home for Christmas” with Irwin Smith & Friends

For singer/musician Irwin Smith, Christmas will always be about the joys of home, loved ones and music. Irwin hopes to put a positive spin on things with an intimate holiday performance he calls “Home for Christmas.” Many in the community annually look forward to a holiday concert by Irwin and talented friends he invites to join him on stage here is your opportunity to keep up that tradition
Port Perry
www.townhalltheatre.ca
905-985-8181

December 10, 2023

OPG Sundays: Icy Inspirations

Join in celebrating the long and beautiful winter nights by creating a painting in mixed-media style. Painters will use acrylic paint, and watercolour to design cold wintry landscapes. Free admission, no registration required.
Oshawa
www.rmg.on.ca/events/opg-sundays-icy-inspirations
905-576-3000

December 14, 2023

PROBUS Club of Durham West

PROBUS clubs provide opportunities to meet with others with similar interests. Members are retired business and professional persons residing in Durham Region. Monthly meetings feature informative and entertaining speakers. They usually consist of a business portion of about a half hour, a thirty minute socializing and coffee followed by a stimulating 45 minute presentation by a guest speaker. Meetings end at noon. Along with monthly social events and 21 activity groups who meet regularly, its a great way to meet new people.
Ajax
www.durhamwestprobus.org

December 17, 2023

A Christmas RockStory: A Holiday Circus Spectacular

A Christmas RockStory: A Holiday Circus Spectacular is the only rock opera you’ll find this season with Santa’s motorcycle daredevils, flying elf aerialists, and extreme ice roller skaters! Pickering
www.ticketmaster.ca/the-arena-at-pickering-casino-resort-tickets-pickering/venue/132535

January 12, 2024

Ajax Film Circuit: You Hurt My Feelings

You Hurt My Feelings is a story about moderately happy people who are pretty good at holding everything together until they come face to face with the truth. Holofcener nimbly explores the limits of honesty and whether the piety of positivity is really all it’s cracked up to be. Holofcener’s work in this subtle, thematic film is deceptively masterful, darkly comedic, and oh so familiar. Enjoy TIFF award-winning plays right in the heart of Ajax! Join the St. Francis Centre on Fridays to see these incredible films on the big screen
Ajax
www.ajax.ca/en/play-and-discover/st-francis-centre.aspx

February 24, 2024

Classic Albums Live performs Led Zeppelin II

Classic Albums Live is bringing the iconic Led Zeppelin II to life at Pickering Casino Resort. Don’t miss this unforgettable night of legendary music. Pickering
www.ticketmaster.ca/the-arena-at-pickering-casino-resort-tickets-pickering/venue/132535

For events that may have been added after the publication date and other ideas to plan your perfect day in Durham Region, visit www.durhamtourism.ca.

Winter Horoscope

DECEMBER 2023 to FEBRUARY 2024

Aries (March 21 – April 20)

The universe is done with your avoidance, Aries. You can run, but once the Universal brakes are applied, you're not going anywhere - for a while. This is not a punishment, but a loving re-direction. Now go to your room and have a good long think about a few things.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

You've heeded the call to respond and now you are beginning to understand the unburdened power of taking the proverbial "bull by the horns". How fitting, dear Taurus. Enjoy the resilience of self-mastery, because after this comes the brilliance of artistry.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

You've done well to go with your heart rather than your mind in one particular area of your life, Gemini. Kudos to you because you are very much a cerebrally focused sign. You could not have previously imagined the contingencies that are now clear to you. This was just a lesson. You have other resources outside of your intellect to rely on. Now you must master a balance and hone your newfound tools.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

As predicted, those who sought to entrap you have been foiled by their own designs. You were brave in your vulnerability and were in turn honored by others for your display of self-respect. This is what it means to be in energetic resilience. Untouchable. The opposite is true of your adversaries. For them, they have become acquainted with a universal law: "Embedded within evil is the seed of its own destruction."

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

Your character-building activities have yielded great returns, Leo! You notice others respond to you with a touch of reverence and admiration. Offers are pouring in as everyone now wants you on their team! You've got some careful decisions to make about where to direct your energies next. Congratulations on leveling up as a human being.

Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

Back in the 1980s, the First Lady, Nancy Regan promoted a slogan, "Just Say No" in response to the drug epidemic among youths. The heavens are encouraging you to do the same. Ever-bound by a sense of duty, you've become too much of a "yes" person. Personal boundaries are foundational to well-being. It's okay to say 'no' sometimes.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Having mastered the fine line between your own thoughts and those thoughts that have come into your consciousness by way of "influence", you are now discovering a whole new level of originality. Wellsprings of ideas bubble from within. Connections are made which you never dreamed could be related. You may just be on the verge of a significant invention. Write down your ideas. Years from now, future generations could be studying them like DaVinci's manuscripts.

by Julie Antoinette



Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

If you have in fact mastered the art of "presence" by practicing being in the moment rather than the future, then now is the time for your reward. Blessed peace. The idea of "peace" used to conjure images of uneventful boredom, un-exhilarating contentment. But these were just cerebral definitions. You never dreamed of this feeling of quiet excitement, of burgeoning bliss. How happy you are to have been so wrong.

Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

Have you settled into a comfortable stride outside your comfort zone yet? Clarity about what you do not desire has in fact yielded your prize - the unveiling of your true desires. And what a surprise! Never did you dream your desires could be so elegantly simple. With no thought at all, all is apparent. What you've always desired surrounds you constantly. You were just too distracted to notice.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

Having closely examined your "self-talk", it is now time to take inventory of your discoveries. Your "self-talk" does not come from your self at all. A voice from your childhood plays prominently in your head. The voice and words of a teacher, a parent or another figure pivotal to your developing mind has become your own. You must re-write the script by re-parenting yourself. You are now aware of your own words and will not repeat the generational damage. "Be careful how you speak to your children, because that becomes their inner voice."

Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

Now that you've emptied your mind of the futility of worry, what a wonderful place it is to live! The countless hours of broken record rehearsals and labyrinths of contingencies are replaced by pleasantries and delightful musings. To master one's mind is no small feat. Well done! Celebrate with a slice of cake.

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

Time has soothed your wounds and you are no longer the version of yourself you once were. You are stronger along the fault lines and softer along the protective edges. Having found your inner strength and your stability, you never fear being lost again. Those who cause us pain can in fact be our greatest teachers.

Written by Julie Antoinette. In this horoscope, she relays intuitive messages of guidance from the collective astrological archetypes. As above, so below.

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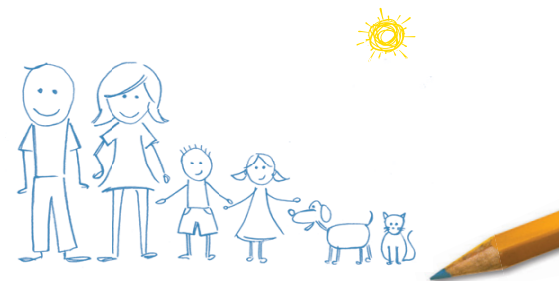
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by Tara Richardson

Soul
Searching



Your Mental Health Check-In

Winter is inherently stressful. The driving in the snow, the cost of the holidays, the drama of family gatherings, just to name a few stressors. It's easy for poor mental health to creep in at this time of year without knowing what's happening. You don't need to have a diagnosable mental illness to have poor mental health. This is why it's important to occasionally check in with your mental well-being. Just like it's recommended to get bloodwork done regularly, you need to know how you're doing mentally in order to properly assess and bolster your mental health. You could be ranging from stressed to burnt out to depressed/anxious. Or, if you catch things early enough, maybe you will end up thriving this year.

This advice is going to sound basic, so I apologize, but the first step is identifying if your basic needs are being met. Food, hydration, and sleep set the foundation for positive mental health. It's really hard to be your best self when you are chronically sleep deprived or undernourished.

Next, think of your mental health facets as though they are buckets. Emotional, spiritual, social, work, financial, intellectual, and environmental. These are the general facets of balanced mental health. Your buckets might look a little different and that's okay. It's what works best for your life. All your buckets don't have to be perfectly balanced. While it'd be nice if they were, realistically, one bucket is probably not as well-honed as others. If that's something you want to change then certainly make that a focus, but if it's just not that valuable to you then let it stay slightly unbalanced.

Now, it's time to get truly, brutally, honest with yourself. When was the last time you felt inspired, content, happy, or hopeful? Where were you and who were you with? When was the last time you felt 'blah' or like you were just coasting in life? What was going on in your life then? Taking stock of what activities or people energize you and what depletes you will help you make decisions about what to include more or less of in the future.

Once you have taken inventory of your mental health, it's time to identify ONE thing to put into your day or week that is solely to improve your mental well-being. If you're so inclined, bring a friend on board to do the monthly check-ins. The whole purpose of checking in regularly is to avoid burnout and mental illness and live your best life. Good luck!

Tara Richardson is a wellness blogger, whose personal experience with mental illness has inspired her to dedicate her life to helping others heal and live a full, flourishing life.

Get Fit: Inside & Out

How to Not Gain Weight this Winter

December through February can be challenging months when it comes to managing your weight. With the colder weather, our body tends to crave warming foods that are often not ideal for the waistline. Add Christmas into the mix and a more sedentary lifestyle and you've got a recipe for more pounds on the scale. If you struggle with carrying extra "holiday weight", here are some strategies to help you avoid weight gain.

Don't write off December

Holiday gatherings often leave us consuming more than we need to. December consists of 31 days so you don't need to write off the whole month just because you have more social outings than usual. Stay on track between gatherings by eating well (consuming plenty of vegetables, fruits, beans and legumes, etc.) having portion control (think palm of your hand for meat protein / complex carbs) and limiting alcoholic beverages and seasonal indulgences to every other gathering. The holidays are short compared to the months it'll take to lose the extra weight. Choose what you want most instead of what you want now.

Try Dry January

Giving up alcohol can have its benefits: better sleep, more energy, and weight loss! Dry January was created as a public health initiative launched by Alcohol Change UK in 2013. The idea was to help people who thought they drank too much, or too often, to abstain from alcohol for one month. Millions have since adopted this challenge. During December, alcohol consumption can easily add up. One drink leads to another and before you know it, the bottle is empty. If you're concerned about managing your drinking habits and weight, trying Dry January is a great way to assess how drinking is affecting your health and life.

Healthy Comfort Food February

Colder temperatures often mean cravings for comfort food. But comfort food often consists of heavy creams, cheese, and butter—not exactly weight loss friendly. Substitute traditional comfort foods with healthier options like soups made with coconut milk or broth instead of cream. When it comes to pasta, potato or bread, reach for squash, quinoa or cauliflower as carbs of choice. Double up on your dark green veggie consumption and include clean sources of protein such as baked fish or organic turkey. Simple daily swaps can make all the difference.

Bianca Schaefer is a Health and Wellness Coach who inspires a global community to take charge of their health through nourishing their body, mind and soul with delicious foods, an active lifestyle and a mindset that believes anything is possible. Check out Bianca on her personal website, Bianca Schaefer or @biancaschaefer1.

by Bianca Schaefer



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Tweens, Teens & In-Between

by Tanvi Lee



Christmas is a joyous season for many during the winter. It is said to represent the birth of Jesus Christ. People across the globe, including many in Durham Region, celebrate Christmas through festive decorations, singing carols, and more. It has grown into a celebration of family and community.

It's important to remember however, that Durham Region like the rest of the world is diverse, with people from many different cultures living here. There are many other winter festivals as well. It's truly special to see how culturally rich our population is, especially with this season's celebrations.

In Asian communities, the Lunar New Year is a major holiday. The history behind this festival is fascinating. It was believed that years ago, an evil monster would attack the village. With loud sounds and vibrant celebration, the villagers scared it off, bringing luck and prosperity in exchange. Fireworks, red clothing and a feast represent this time of honour and joy.

Hanukkah is an annual Jewish holiday, symbolizing victory and hope. After a successful revolt of liberation from a monarchy, a celebratory menorah was lit. Though there was only oil to last one day, it blazed through 8 nights; a Hanukkah miracle. This is celebrated through the lighting of the menorah, playing with dreidels, and a feast with family.

Community and morals create the roots of Kwanzaa, an African-American celebration. Each of the seven days represents a different principle (unity, self determination, responsibility, cooperation, purpose, creativity and faith). Each day, communities come together to light a kinara candle, and discuss the day's principle and its significance. Its end is marked with a feast and community gathering.

Lohri is a popular Indian festival celebrated by those of Hindu and Sikh religion. The festival celebrates a brave warrior who protected the people years ago. This celebration is commemorated often with singing and dancing around a bonfire.

We are all culturally unique and have our own ways of coming together during the holiday season. Yet, the common theme we all share regardless of culture is that of family, community, and celebration.

As we go forward, I hope that we can all learn and do more for different groups in our community. No matter what you're celebrating this winter, I wish you a lovely holiday season.

Tanvi Lee is a Grade 9 student at Pickering High School. She loves to do art, travel, and is passionate about social justice issues.

Family Matters

by Monica Fox



Making memories through family traditions

Let me tell you about the time our cat took down our Christmas tree. You heard that right. Our darling cat spotted a shiny ornament, crouched down and took one big leap into the tree. The tree swayed, the ornaments shook, and the cat was non the less bothered, as he scurried away unsuccessful. You may ask if the ornament was shaped like a mouse. It was not. It was however made of metallic spray-painted plastic straws tied up in the center by a pipe cleaner. The ornament was made in 1990 by me and is still hanging on my Christmas tree today. Handcrafted ornaments adorned our family Christmas tree growing up and today is still a tradition in my family, as I struggle to find space on our tree for all of these masterpieces.

Family traditions, whatever they may be, are often the memories we recall from our childhood. You may have bragged about going bowling every Friday night with your family or the heart shaped cake your mother makes on your birthday. Traditions provide a consistent pillar in our lives, providing stability and continuity. They cultivate a sense of identity and belonging that is carried into the future and continue to support our children as they navigate an ever-changing world. The memories created through family traditions can also help to instill family values and connection to previous generations. Stories, beliefs, songs and cultural activities from the past are present today because someone felt it was important to pass them along. To continue the tradition of telling bedtime stories, giving a kiss on each cheek when you greet someone with a hug, or opening one gift the night before Christmas are just a few of many traditions that have lasted the test of time.

Intentional or not, you probably have some family traditions of your own. They may look like rules or routines of earning dessert after dinner because you finish all your homework, or getting to go to your favorite restaurant on your birthday. They may be heading up north to the family cottage on the long weekends. It can be taking a picture on your front porch on the first day of school. Traditions come in every shape and size, all while bringing meaning and connection to our families.

Do not underestimate the importance of continuity and instilling values in your family through consistent practices. Connection and belonging contributes not only to our social structure but to our overall well-being. Looking back at making ornaments as a child and with my own children today brings back such found memories, not to mention a pretty original looking Christmas tree.

Monica Fox is an HR professional who understands the demands of being a working mom. When not spending time with her family, she loves to pursue her many hobbies which include art, photography, writing and athletics.

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A Forkful of Healthy

by Kubra Mir



Tamarind Roast Beef

I use the slow cooker to come home to a hot meal on cold winter days. This roast beef has a tangy flavour from the tamarind (which is the edible fruit of the tamarind tree) and a sweet-sour taste. The roast beef is perfect with homemade gravy made with the beef drippings.



Ingredients

- 1-inch seedless tamarind
- 1 cup water
- 4lbs beef roast
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 tbsp black pepper
- 1 tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp cinnamon powder
- 1 head of garlic minced
- 1 tsp thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cups beef broth

Gravy

- Beef drippings
- 2 cups beef broth
- 3 tbsp cornstarch
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. In a small pot, add a 1-inch piece of tamarind pulp and cover with water. When the pulp softens, use a strainer to remove the pieces. Keep the liquid aside.
2. Rub the roast beef with salt, pepper, and turmeric.
3. Heat a fry pan and add the vegetable oil. Place the meat and brown on both sides for a few minutes.
4. Place the browned meat in a slow cooker. Add the tamarind, cinnamon, garlic, thyme, bay leaf and beef broth.
5. Cook on high heat for eight hours until the meat is tender. Let the meat rest and then cut into slices.

Gravy:

1. Put the beef drippings and liquid into a small pot and bring to a boil.
2. In a cup, whisk water and cornstarch until blended. Add mixture to the boiling beef broth and reduce heat to medium. Cook until the gravy thickens. If it becomes too thick, add more water.
3. Add salt or pepper as needed.
4. Serve hot with the roast beef and favourite side dishes.

Durham resident, Kubra Mir loves to cook and share her recipes. She enjoys gardening, traveling, and volunteering in the local community.

FINANCE & REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

by Nicole Forrester



Make Your Home Cozy

Winter can be really fun, if you're dressed for it! Why not dress your home for it too? Make your home a cozy holiday retreat that wraps you up after a long cold day with a few of these ideas.

Use Warm Colours – Colour your world in browns, muted greens, and gold. Corn flower yellow and tones of putty all bring out the comforting earthy feels of nature lacking during winter.

Update Your Bedding – Sinking into fuzzy flannel sheets and a luxurious duvet can melt the rosy off your cheeks after a day facing the wind chill.

Softer Lighting – Change out those bright white bulbs for a soft white and see how much warmer it feels. Lighting a beautiful candle with your favourite scent can hit you in all the senses as you set the mood for an intimate dinner, a relaxing bath, or a moment of tranquility.

Throw Blankets and Pillows – Nothing cozies up a home like some strategically placed throw blankets and some trendy pillows. Try oversized and various textures. Don't be afraid to add some faux fur to add for extra warmth.

Warm Underfoot – If you are looking to replace an older floor, consider the luxury of a heated floor, on a thermostat of course, to keep it efficient. If that's not in your budget, area and throw rugs of various textures and sizes can add so much warmth from the ground up!

Decorate with Natural Elements – Bringing nature inside is a wonderful way to stay connected to nature during the colder winter months. Try incorporating chopped wood as décor by the fireplace, well placed greenery on your table, pinecones in a bowl, and of course, flowers and plants.

Stock the Bar – Be sure to stock your bar with Kahlua, Grand Marnier, Triple Sec and Brandy which are all lovely liquors to sip on a crisp night. They also make a warm and cozy delight as a liquor coffee.

Winter can be cold and harsh, but we can strategically beat the winter blues by thinking ahead and treating ourselves to some cozy upgrades. Stay warm!

Nicole Forrester is a local Durham & GTA Real Estate Broker with over 17+ years of experience in the financial industry. Trained on Bay Street as an Investment Executive & Professional Financial Planner for one of Canada's largest financial institutions, she has extensive experience negotiating large financial transactions. Nicole's goal is to be a blessing to every person she meets and recognizes that every trade in Real Estate is not just a house. . . it's a Home. For more information, search Nicole Forrester Real Estate Broker on Social Media.

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Ask Sheila

by Sheila Marina



Dear Sheila,

With the holidays fast approaching, I'm beginning to notice racing thoughts about where the time has gone. Each year around the holidays, I can get pretty stressed out about obligations and about gathering together with my extended family. These stresses and thoughts often keep me up at night unable to sleep. Plus, my energy levels are lower during the winter which adds another layer to my stress. A friend of mine recently shared her positive experience Energy Healing. Can you please explain how Energy Healing can help me this holiday season?

Signed: Seasonally Stressed.

As we approach the holiday season, it's common for many of us find ourselves caught up in a whirlwind of festivities, obligations, and stress. It's a time of joy and celebration, yet it can also be overwhelming. Energy healing practices can help you navigate the holiday season with more balance, calm, and vitality. Here's how:

Stress Reduction: Energy healing techniques such as Reiki, hypnotherapy, or EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) can help reduce stress and promote relaxation. By releasing tension and restoring balance in your energy system, you'll be better equipped to handle the holiday hustle and bustle.

Boosting Your Immune System: Maintaining a strong immune system is crucial. Techniques like Qigong or meditation can help strengthen your vital energy, making you more resilient to illnesses.

Emotional Support: Energy healing can provide emotional support by clearing energy blockages associated with negative emotions. This can help you process your feelings and approach the season with a more positive mindset.

Improved Sleep: With all the holiday activities and late nights, sleep can become a precious commodity. Energy healing can help regulate your sleep patterns by calming the mind and promoting relaxation.

Enhanced Relationships: By working on your own energy, you can become more grounded and emotionally balanced, making it easier to communicate and connect with loved ones.

Remember, energy healing is a complementary approach to overall well-being. It's important to consult with a qualified practitioner and explore techniques that resonate with you and can help you find more balance and peace amid the holiday chaos.

Daily affirmation: *I choose to embrace Peace and Calm*

Sheila Marina resides in Bowmanville and is a compassionate Healer. Her business Planet of Peace Energy Healing Hypnotherapy and Reiki serves people world-wide.

The COACH Corner

by Malachi Brown



Time Flies

Where does the time go? Where did the last 15 years ago?

I remember being asked to contribute an article to the very first publication of this amazing magazine (back in 2008)! I was very excited and thankful for the opportunity. Not in my wildest thoughts did I imagine writing this column fifteen years later. What an amazing ride it's been. The pressure of deadlines, crafting words that I hope are informative, inspirational and motivating. It's been great!

It is always so satisfying to run into someone, or get an email from a reader expressing how my article helped them get unstuck in their lives, or helped them not give up. It's humbling to find out that they have my column pasted on their fridge.

One of my favorite memories was at a service station years ago. A young lady was in the waiting area with me. She picked up a copy of *The Local Biz Magazine* that was amongst the other magazines on the table and started reading it. When she got to the page with my column, she looked up at me and looked back down at the page. She got very excited and shouted, "that's you, isn't it?" I said it was. She continued with excitement that she was just speaking to her younger brother about the topic I had written about. She told me she couldn't wait to show the article to him to validate her point, and that she had actually met me! It was very satisfying to know that I could be making a difference in that young man's life.

Time moves very quickly. If you have children, you know how true it is. One day they are starting school, next, they are pursuing careers and getting married. One day you are starting out in your career, next, retirement is quickly approaching. Are you making the most of your life?

If you are a regular reader of my column, you know I always advise about finding something that gets you excited about getting out of bed each morning. You need to love what you do so that you can't wait to get to it each day. Don't let society determine what is best for you. Find your God given purpose and pursue that. Don't live a life that will be full of regrets...

Antoine - thank you for your vision of bringing a magazine that is needed and relevant; thus, here we are fifteen years later. Thank you for following your dreams. Kim - thank you for making all the parts work. Wendy - thank you for making us writers all sound better than we are. Mychol - thank you for your creative direction. It's been a great fifteen years and I look forward to many more years of engaging you, our awesome readers.

Malachi Brown, life coach, applies his passion in helping others unlock their full potential, enabling them to live the abundant lives they were created to have.

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The Golden Years

by Linda Calder



I think many of us have fond memories of Christmas. For my family, Christmas started in September when my mom made her Christmas cakes. Once they were made, they went into tins and were covered with Brandy every couple of weeks until they were given to friends around Christmas time. Our Christmas dinner was the traditional turkey which was served with every vegetable known to man. It was followed by Christmas pudding, also covered in Brandy and set on fire to be carried into the dining room. Everyone got a silver coin in their piece of pudding.

This is mostly a British tradition. Other countries have traditions of their own. In Norway, people hide their brooms in the closet. This is an old superstition in which people believe that witches and evil spirits awake on Christmas eve and look for brooms to ride across the country.

In Iceland, for thirteen days leading up to Christmas, the Yule Lads visit children. Yule lads are troll like creatures that are mischievous. Children place their best shoes by the window and each night a different Yule Lad visits. Candy is left for the nice girls and boys, and rotten potatoes for the naughty ones.

San Fernando in the Philippines holds a Giant Lantern Festival (Ligligan Parul). Each parol (lantern) symbolizes the Star of Bethlehem which guided the Three Kings to Baby Jesus. It also symbolizes the victory of light over darkness and hope and goodwill during the Christmas season. Thousands of spinning lights illuminate the night sky.

In the southern hemisphere, in Australia and New Zealand, the traditional Christmas meal is a barbeque often on the beach. The dinner can include meat and seafood. In South Africa, braai culture is an important part of Christmas celebrations. Families get together for a braai (bbq). Steak and boerewors (sausage) are served followed by malva pudding with custard.

Orthodox Christians make up almost half of the population of Ukraine. They observe Christmas on January 7. They dress up in traditional garments and walk through town singing Christmas carols. They eat a dish called kutya made with cooked wheat mixed with honey and ground poppy seeds on Christmas Eve.

There are many Christmas traditions from around the world. Choosing which ones to discuss in this column wasn't easy. I enjoyed reading about the many traditions that I hadn't heard about before. I hope you too enjoyed the selections I made.

However you celebrate your Christmas, I hope it is a merry one.

Linda Calder is a retired teacher. She likes to write and enjoys spending time with her family. She also enjoys going on cruises, taking pictures and scrap booking.



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