

# FIFTY-FIVE PLUS

## Lifestyle Magazine

September 2025  
Ottawa Edition

**OLIVIA CHOW**

MAYOR OF CANADA'S LARGEST CITY

**THE NEW RETIREMENT DREAM**

FIFTY-FIVE PLUS  
**LIFESTYLE**

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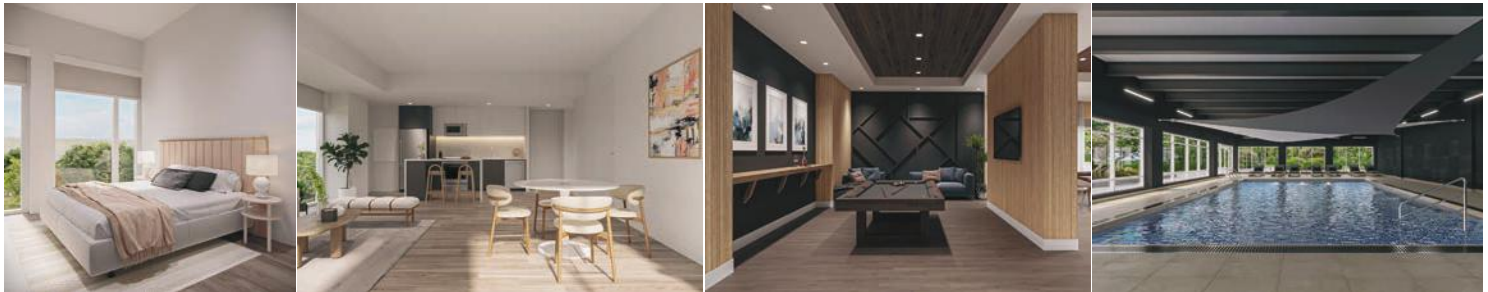
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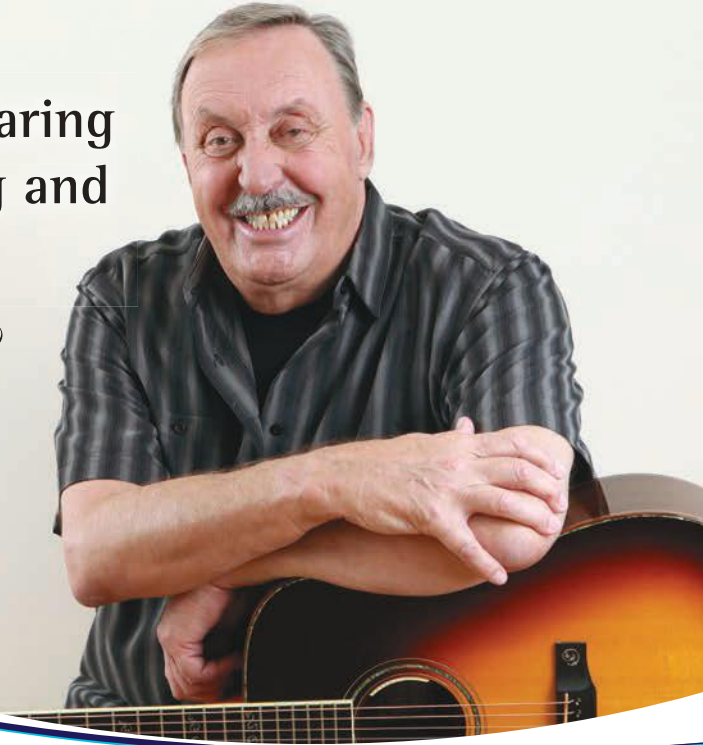
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September 2025

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Lifestyle Magazine



**PRESIDENT** George E. Coyle

**VICE PRESIDENT** Douglas Nickerson

**DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS,  
DIGITAL MEDIA & PUBLISHING** Bryan Wiltsie

**EDITOR** Pam Dillon

**DESIGN MANAGER** Jon Hudon

**LEAD DESIGNER** Marc Lahaie

**OFFICE MANAGER** Sarah Nickerson

**MEDIA CONSULTANTS** Stella Waugh, Jennifer Geleta  
Blair Kirkpatrick, Kristie Ottway

**CONTRIBUTORS** Iris Winston, Jason Marshall,  
Caroline Andrews, Janet Gray,  
Dan Lalonde, Kim Renault,  
Meg Stickl, Petr Mauer,  
Rose Simpson, Laura Lynn Eggleston,  
June Coxon

**DESIGN/PRODUCTION** **CMG** COYLE  
media group

**COYLE MEDIA GROUP**

67 Neil Avenue Stittsville, Ont, K2S 1B9

T. 613 271 8903

coylemediagroup.com

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## OLIVIA CHOW

MAYOR OF CANADA'S LARGEST CITY

By Iris Winston

## THE NEW RETIREMENT DREAM

By Caroline Andrews

## SEPTEMBER TREATS

On the Cover: At 66, Olivia Chow became the 66th mayor of

Canada's largest city. Photo: Office of Mayor Olivia Chow

Above: Toronto's mayor is an avid cyclist.

Photo: Office of Mayor Olivia Chow

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from the editor



## MAKING LIFE BETTER

In the past, politicians in office typically weren't profiled in *Fifty-Five Plus*, so I'm glad we're shaking things up here. After all, a 68-year-old grandmother of four is leading Canada's largest city.

Olivia Chow isn't your average granny.

As an avid cyclist, a widow, a woman of Asian descent and an immigrant who moved to Canada from Hong Kong in 1970, she exemplifies a can-do attitude. You'll want to read the cover feature written by Iris Winston, who is another female go-getter challenging public perceptions about when it's time to bow out of work life.

At an age when a lot of people are, indeed, retiring or slowing down, Olivia Chow is in the thick of a high-pressure, high-profile job. She's grappling with bureaucracy, budget constraints, conflicting public demands, political opposition and intergovernmental negotiations.

Public scrutiny and criticism are constant. So are the attacks on social media. Still, this long-time politician persists in her efforts to make life better for people. You may not agree with her values or priorities; that's politics. What's inspiring, though, is her willingness to serve as political leader of a major city facing major challenges—from housing affordability to community safety.

Perhaps age is an advantage. Thanks to decades of public contribution, advocacy, problem solving and leadership, she has focus. A July CTV News story by Chris Fox articulates it well. *Called Olivia Chow would easily win re-election unless John Tory enters race, new poll suggests*, the story talks about the next municipal election in Toronto.

Asked to comment at the time, Olivia changed the subject. She was launching a pilot project to provide air conditioning units to seniors.

"There is so much work that needs to be done in so many areas and I am not at all thinking about elections, re-elections. I am trying to find more money to buy more of these air condition units," she told the reporter.

Like the rest of us, Toronto's mayor has had her share of health and family challenges. Her husband, politician Jack Layton, died at age 61 in 2011. He had cancer. She'd had it, too. Still, this trailblazer keeping going and focusing on what needs to be done, what's possible.

And that's something to consider.

Pam Dillon



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# Olivia Chow

Mayor of Canada's largest city is championing a place where everybody belongs

By Iris Winston

Photos: Office of Mayor Olivia Chow

**A**t 66, Olivia Chow became the 66th mayor of Canada's largest city, making her latest mark in a remarkable life highlighted by four decades of public service.

Her approach is simple. "I try to make life better for people," says Olivia, a fine arts, philosophy and religious studies graduate. "I wasn't trained as a politician, but I saw a need and felt that I could contribute. It always starts with what needs to be done, then what I need to do first and what more I could do. It's not about what position I hold."

As mayor of Toronto, Olivia Chow has pledged to build the city into a place that's more caring, safe and affordable.



In conversation with Ontario premier Doug Ford.



Her initial foray into the political arena was as a school trustee. She was first elected to the Toronto District School Board in 1985 and served there for six years before becoming a Toronto city councillor.

By this time, she was married to Jack Layton, also a city councillor and similarly propelled by a determination to help people through politics, a route that was to take them both into the federal arena. He became leader of the New Democratic Party in 2003 moving the NDP to unprecedented heights when he became Leader of the Official Opposition in 2011. She stood by his side in the House of Commons as the NDP representative for Trinity-Spadina from 2006 until his untimely death in 2011, then continued to represent the riding until 2014.

Through the years that they served municipally and federally, they were frequently described as “a power couple in Canadian politics, two city councillors and MPs as devoted to each other as they were to their causes.”

With an oversized portrait of Jack on one wall of her mayoralty office, she continues to be inspired by her husband and their shared service motives and views. (For the record, Jack was equally inspired by Olivia. He had 32 photographs of her around his office on Parliament Hill.)

“His book is on my bookshelf and all his ideas are very much in my mind,” says Olivia. “Our children used to say that we weren’t normal because we never fought.

We had a very good relationship and had nothing to fight about. We mostly took time to think about how to effect change to make life better for people. Most of our time was spent coming up with ideas and then making them happen.”

The theme of identifying needs and finding ways to meet them endures as Olivia moves forward along the path that she and Jack set for themselves. Olivia, who immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong with her family in 1970, says she originally decided to run for school board because “both my parents were educators. I felt I had something to offer and had a unique perspective as an immigrant. There weren’t enough immigrant voices being heard at the time and I knew that the education system could reflect more of the experience of the immigrant. For instance, academics are very important to immigrants. That’s why they come to this country, for a better life for their children.”

She and her family had escaped from a period of violence and bombings in Hong Kong during the cultural revolution in mainland China. “The main catalyst for leaving was to seek safety and security,” says Olivia, adding that her parents were also looking for a better future for her and her brother.

As senior educators in Hong Kong, her parents had hoped to be similarly employed in Canada, but were disappointed.

“It’s hard to find a first job if you don’t have Canadian experience and, if you don’t have Canadian experience, it’s harder to find that first job,” says Olivia. “Good employment for newcomers is very important. My parents also came at a time when there wasn’t a great need for teachers and having the connection between what is needed and what immigrants bring in matters a lot.

“My mother was very adaptable,” she adds. “She started working as a maid in a hotel. My father tried being a taxi driver and delivering Chinese food, but he couldn’t accept the situation. It broke him. That story is similar to many immigrants’ stories today. In many ways, Toronto’s story is also my story.”

**“In many ways, Toronto’s story is also my story.”**

During Olivia’s years as a school trustee, she often encountered issues directly affected by city policies. For example, early on, she ensured high school students could be eligible for metro passes. She worked to have many different languages accommodated when residents called 911 and was also very involved in childcare matters. Such issues led her to run for Toronto City Council. During her time in office then, she was named best city councillor by *Now* magazine seven times, as well as best MP by the same magazine in 2010 and top Torontonians by the *Toronto Sun* in 2012.

Later, as an MP, she was a strong advocate for universal childcare. She introduced an early learning and childcare bill, intended to establish an affordable national program. That initiative was part of her ongoing commitment to a more equitable and affordable society. (A national childcare program was finally introduced in 2021.)



Olivia is very active in the community.

During her years away from public office Olivia wrote a memoir, *My Journey*, published by Harper Collins in 2014, and the next year she joined the faculty of Toronto Metropolitan University as a visiting professor. While there, her work focused on community engagement and leadership development.

Her current agenda as mayor, still focused on community engagement and affordability, includes the building of more affordable housing in downtown Toronto. At the time of this conversation with *Fifty-Five Plus*, she had just returned from a groundbreaking ceremony for a low-cost housing project on a parking lot.

“You don’t need as many parking lots downtown,” says Olivia, who regularly cycles, walks or uses public transit. “A lot more people in public housing are cycling and walking. Hopefully, we will be able to build more housing faster.”

Also on her immediate to-do list is introduction

of a by-law to prevent renovations. (Renovation is the practice of evicting long-term tenants in order to charge a much higher rent when changes have been made to the property.)

“Evicting tenants, often seniors, just to renovate is unfair,” says Olivia, who is also working on ways to allow more seniors to age in place, rather than having to go into long-term care. “Usually, they’ve lived in a building for some years and all their friends and community are in the same neighbourhood. We’re helping some folks to buy a building so that they can be cooperative co-owners. It then becomes non-market. It’s happening and it’s working.”

In general, “it’s lovely to live downtown and walk, bike or use TTC. I’m quite blessed that my kids and grandkids all live within walkable distance,” says Olivia, who is Grandma Olly to her four grandchildren. “I’m never going to move.”

Although these days she has little time to return to her artistic roots as a sculptor and painter, she says, “Creativity comes in many formats. Finding creative approaches is a form of artistic expression. Bringing people together, thinking outside the box and harnessing that energy requires creativity. There’s never just one solution to a problem.”

She views Toronto as “a place of hope, a city of second chances” and, as mayor of Toronto, she has pledged to “work tirelessly to build a city that is more caring, more affordable and safe, where everyone belongs.”



The mayor’s agenda includes the building of more affordable housing in downtown Toronto.





# The Little Things

By Jason Marshall

## Unlock that Memory Vault

# W

ho doesn't love a good treasure hunt?

People are enamored with unearthing hidden gems—literally and figuratively. In literature. TV.

Movies. Pop culture. Even ancient history.

Buried pirate gold under the X. Ponce de León and eternal youth. Pick any adventure of Indiana Jones.

There was Jacques Cousteau and undersea mysteries. Now, the addictive curse of Oak Island.

As kids, we chased gold at the bottom of cereal boxes or under the liner of a Pepsi cap.

In adulthood we still seek it. Instant-win scratch tickets. Scouring thrift store shelves. Or every time we drop a fishing line in the water.

It's all around us. Also sealed inside us.

And the key to unlocking those riches?

Ice cream.

All it took was a text asking my favourite flavour of ice cream.

It led me to an inner vault I didn't know existed. My answer unlocked it.

Childhood memories flooded out. Rapid fire and detonating like fireworks.

Ten-year-old me at the ice cream counter. Breath fogging up the glass, as I agonized over what two scoops I wanted. Tiger Tail looked amazing, but black licorice had no place in the ice cream world.

Licorice belonged with the penny candies. But you could also get lunch there. I was buying chuckwagons with my brother. Then touring around in his car, windows down and music blaring.

Then I'm at my first concert watching Ozzy Osbourne. Sitting beside Donnie. His dad drove us there. And there's his mom and her homemade pizza. Crispy pepperoni on top of the cheese. Square slices.

Friday night sleepovers at his place. Crashing on the couch watching TV. Then waking up to Saturday morning cartoons and Atari until the sun set.

I'd bike the 10 minutes home, usually pedaling like my life depended on it. We'd just rented and watched *Friday the 13th* and I was convinced Jason Vorhees was one stride behind me the whole way.

The corner store had VHS tapes and, at first, we also had to rent a VCR. We binge watched movies before binge watching was cool. One night we plowed through *Dirty Harry*, *Raging Bull* and *Mad Max*. All three could handle Jason Vorhees. No doubt.

Movies were a pre-teen staple. Friday nights at the O'Brien Theatre in Arnnprior. A Cheech and Chong all-night movie marathon. Now that's random.

There were heart-pounding moments leading up to movie night. Seeking courage to ask a girl to go. Feeling

regret if I didn't. And anxiety if I did. Should I pretend I'm stretching and put my arm around her? Or just wait until she reaches for popcorn and do the same for a buttery hand hold?

The year *The Outsiders* movie was released I vowed I'd go alone. I knew I needed my full focus on Ponyboy, Sodapop and the Greasers. I'd gone to the library to borrow the book and couldn't wait for the words to hit the big screen.

The library. I hear the creak of the plank flooring and smell the books as I walk through the big wooden front door. Then the tummy butterflies when returning a book three days late and having to pay a fine.

How much was the late fee? Maybe a quarter. But I needed my quarters for the arcade. Pac-Man and pinball weren't free. Survivor's *Eye of the Tiger* playing on the jukebox. Who could afford to drop a quarter in there when the world needed saving from space invaders?

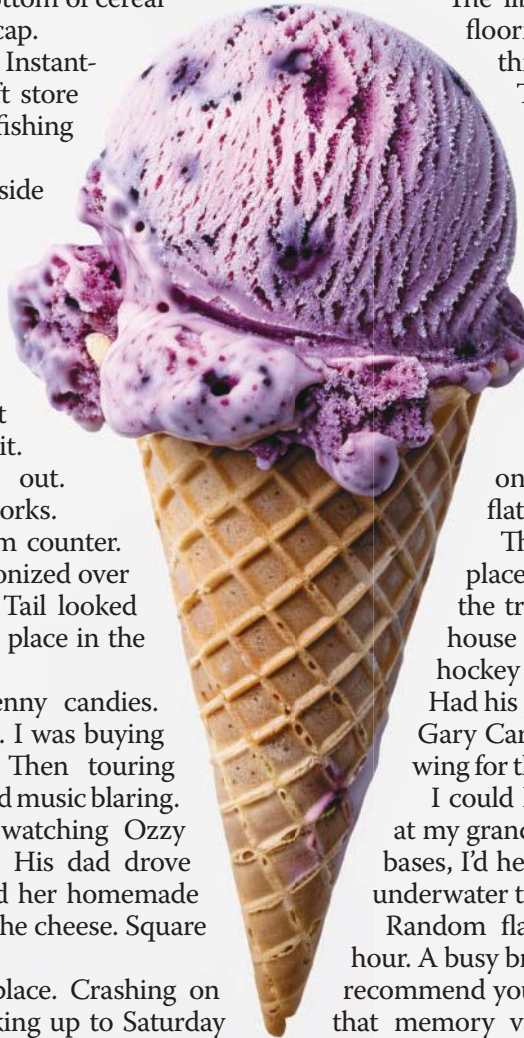
And we needed our pennies to put on the railroad track so the train could flatten them out.

That was right beside my granny's place. Her entire house would shake when the trains rolled by. And right behind her house was a little general store that sold hockey cards. Always looking for Guy Lafleur. Had his posters on my bedroom wall. His and Gary Carter's. I was either going to play right wing for the Canadiens or be the Expos catcher.

I could hit home runs. Right over the hedge at my grandma's house. Then after rounding the bases, I'd head to the creek next door to look for underwater treasure through my swim mask.

Random flashes went on for at least another hour. A busy brain and a full heart. I wholeheartedly recommend you try this. Let yourself go and unlock that memory vault. You'll see firsthand the most valuable treasures can be little things from within. After all they make all the difference.

The little things and two scoops of pralines and cream.



*Jason Marshall has been a writer and journalist for more than 30 years, and is an on-air host and station manager at Valley Heritage Radio just outside of Renfrew, Ontario. And he's truly a big kid at heart. You can email him anytime at [jason@valleyheritageradio.ca](mailto:jason@valleyheritageradio.ca).*



# PURE OR MIXED?

By Iris Winston



**A** boxer that he named Mr. Bumble was my cousin Bill's first dog. Then came other Mr. Bumbles, always boxers. He had loved his first pup so much that he attempted to recreate the first Mr. B over and over again after he had gone.



Of course, that's impossible. Bill might have other boxers who looked exactly like the first. But every dog is an individual. So their temperaments would vary. They might also have different health issues.

Certainly, the general characteristics of dogs bred for specific purposes, such as hunting, herding or guarding, will be evident in purebreds of the particular breeds. But whether an animal is outgoing or shy, exuberant or quiet, more interested in food than toys or more or less anxious if separated from his person varies with each animal and may change in accordance with their lifetime experiences.

Various health issues are more likely to appear in certain breeds. For example, boxers, who are not generally particularly long-lived, are more likely to suffer from corneal ulcers than a number of other breeds. Large, long-legged dogs such as Great Danes tend to be prone to bone cancer. Some health issues, such as kidney problems, are more associated with age than with a specific breed of dog, although Dalmatians seem to have more urinary tract infections and kidney stones than other breeds. Meanwhile, other diseases, such as hip dysplasia, thyroid irregularities and certain

hereditary cancers are genetically linked.

This is one of the reasons that many people speak of hybrid vigour suggesting that mixed breeds tend to be healthier and to live longer than purebred dogs. "Mutts" or random-bred dogs do have access to a much wider gene pool. But, as canine expert, author and psychologist Stanley Coren points out, they have an equal chance of doubling any problems through unsupervised and indiscriminate breeding as they do of halving the incidence of any inherited health issues.

In general, he says, "the jury is still out on whether mixed-breed dogs are healthier overall. Thus far, the data suggests that mixed-breed dogs can inherit many of the problems associated with each of the breeds that goes into their makeup."

In looking at personality, some people argue that the more a mixed-breed dog looks like one of his ancestors, the more likely he is to demonstrate behavioural characteristics associated with that part of his background. Other dog experts say that "distinctive physical traits are not highly correlated to inheritable behaviour traits."



Geneticist Elinor Karlsson of the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School says that the assumption that breed is predictive of behaviour in dogs is not accurate much of the time. A recent genetic study of 2,155 purebred and mixed-breed dogs she and her team conducted, combined with 18,385 owner surveys, challenged existing views on dog breed stereotypes and personality traits. It noted that “although many physical traits were associated with breeds, behaviour was much more variable among individual dogs. Among behavioural traits, biddability—how well dogs respond to human direction—was the most heritable by breed but varied significantly among individual dogs.”

Therefore, the report noted, “dog breed is generally a poor predictor of individual behaviour and should not be used to inform decisions relating to the selection of a pet dog.”

The researchers emphasized that including mixed-breed dogs in the study was important because “it shed

light on how ancestry affects behaviour while removing purebred stereotypes that could affect the way the dog is treated—and therefore behaves.”

As Philadelphia-based dog trainer Curtis Kelly says, “Dogs are as individual as people. Breed gives a loose guideline for what kind of behaviours to expect, but it’s certainly not a hard-and-fast rule. Even within a litter, dogs can show very different personalities. Puppies will show you who they are at eight weeks old. It’s our job to believe them.”

Much of the time, it is the pup or adult dog who reaches out to you that makes the choice. And that can be the beginning of a perfect pairing for the rest of that canine’s life.

*Almonte, Ontario, writer Iris Winston is a former executive director of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. She has been an animal lover all her life. Her pets have always been important members of her family.*



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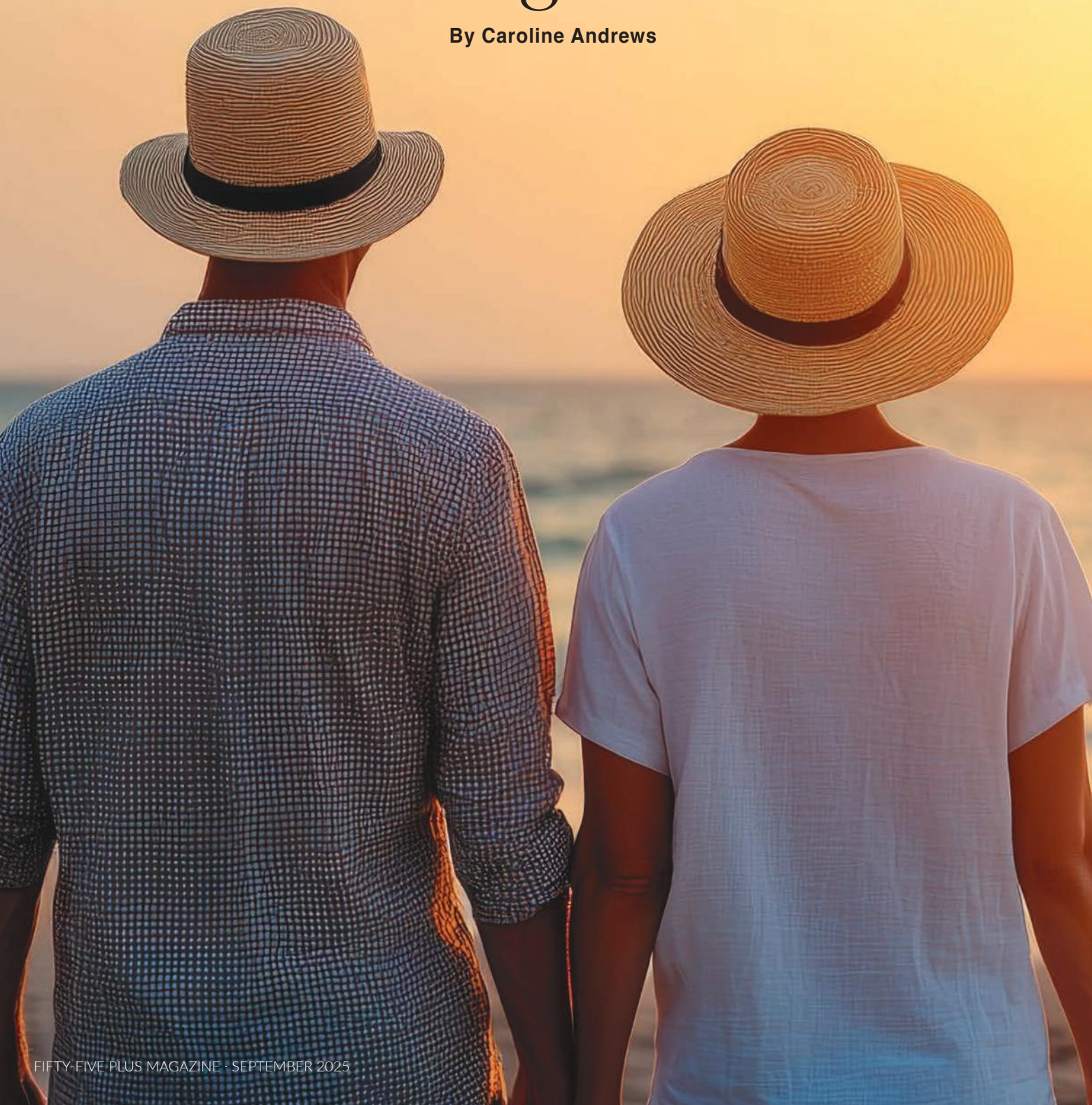
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The New Retirement Dream:

# City Condo, Country Cottage, or Something in Between?

By Caroline Andrews



**A**s retirement approaches, many Canadians are reevaluating what their ideal lifestyle looks like. Gone are the days of one-size-fits-all retirement plans. Today, the “new retirement dream” is more personal, more flexible and more diverse than ever. For some, it means embracing urban energy in a sleek downtown condo. For others, it’s the quiet of a country cottage surrounded by nature. And for a growing number, it’s something in between—a hybrid lifestyle that offers the best of both worlds.

So how do you choose? It depends on your values, goals, finances and vision for the next chapter of your life. Here, we explore the pros and cons of each option to help you find your ideal fit.

### **City Condo: Simplified Living and Cultural Access**

Urban living offers retirees proximity to amenities, entertainment and essential services. Neighbourhoods across greater Ottawa—including the downtown core, Westboro, the Glebe, Old Ottawa East and Beechwood Village—have become increasingly attractive to older adults who want walkable access to cafes, theatres, shops, parks and cultural landmarks like the NAC, Parliament Hill and the Rideau Canal. Even suburban areas near Kanata Centrum, Barrhaven Town Centre, the Innes Road corridor and Place d’Orléans are developing urban-like pockets that support a more walkable lifestyle.

#### **Pros:**

- Convenience: No more yard work or snow removal.
- Accessibility: Elevators and wide doorways are in many buildings.
- Walkability: Everything from groceries to galleries is nearby.
- Proximity to health care: Hospitals and specialists are close.

#### **Cons:**

- Smaller space: Downsizing is often necessary.
- Noise and bustle: City life isn’t for everyone.
- Condo fees: Those costs can be high and unpredictable.
- Limited outdoor space: Balconies offer only a taste of nature.
- A city condo is ideal for those who prioritize lifestyle, convenience and low-maintenance living.

### **Country Cottage: Peace, Privacy, and Nature**

On the other end of the spectrum is rural or cottage living. Whether it’s a year-round home in Lanark County or a summer escape in the Gatineau Hills, many retirees seek the quiet and simplicity of nature.

#### **Pros:**

- Tranquility: Escape from traffic and noise.
- Outdoor lifestyle: Enjoy gardening, hiking and seasonal activities.
- Space and privacy: There is room to breathe, with fewer neighbours.
- Lower property taxes: Typically they’re less than in the city.

#### **Cons:**

- Isolation: There is more distance from services and family.
- Maintenance: There is more upkeep with wells, septic systems and rural roads.
- Winter access: Snow removal and road conditions can be a concern.
- Connectivity: Internet and cell service may be spotty.

Country living is best suited to those who value peace and are prepared for the responsibilities that come with it.



### Something in Between: The Hybrid Lifestyle

Many retirees are now choosing a blended lifestyle: a low-maintenance home in a small town or suburb, combined with a seasonal getaway or travel. Think of a bungalow in Stittsville and winters in Florida or a condo in Westboro and a shared family cottage on Big Rideau Lake.

#### Pros:

- Flexibility: Enjoy the best of both urban and rural living.
- Lower stress: Avoid year-round commitment to one place.
- Family and social connection: Stay close to loved ones.
- Travel-friendly: Lock-and-leave homes allow you to explore.

#### Cons:

- Two-property costs: This requires careful budgeting.
- Logistics: Managing multiple homes isn't simple.
- Transition fatigue: Regular moves can be tiring.
- A hybrid lifestyle appeals to those who want variety but are willing to manage a bit more complexity.

### How to Choose What's Right for You

Still unsure? Consider the following questions:

1. What kind of setting makes you feel most at ease?
2. Do you want to live near family, friends or health services?
3. Are daily conveniences within reach?
4. Do you prefer walkable communities or are you fine driving?
5. Are travel and hobbies part of your plan?

6. What can you realistically afford?

7. Are you energized or overwhelmed by change?

Speak with a real estate professional who understands the 55+ market. An experienced agent can help you evaluate your options, assess your home equity and connect you with the right downsizing or staging resources.

### Planning for the Future

Whatever you decide, consider the long term. Will your new home continue to support your needs as you age? Features like a main-floor bedroom, proximity to care services or a building with elevators can future-proof your living arrangements.

Try out your options before committing. Spend a weekend downtown, rent a cottage or visit small towns to see how each lifestyle feels in practice.

### The Bottom Line

The new retirement dream is about more than slowing down; it's about curating a lifestyle that fits your goals and passions. Whether you're drawn to the buzz of city life, the calm of cottage country or a bit of both, thoughtful planning will help you live this next chapter to the fullest.

With the right preparation, support and a little adventure, your retirement lifestyle can be exactly what you've always dreamed of—or even better.



*Caroline Andrews is a real estate advisor with Engel & Völkers Ottawa, a seniors real estate specialist (SRES®) and an interior design consultant.*

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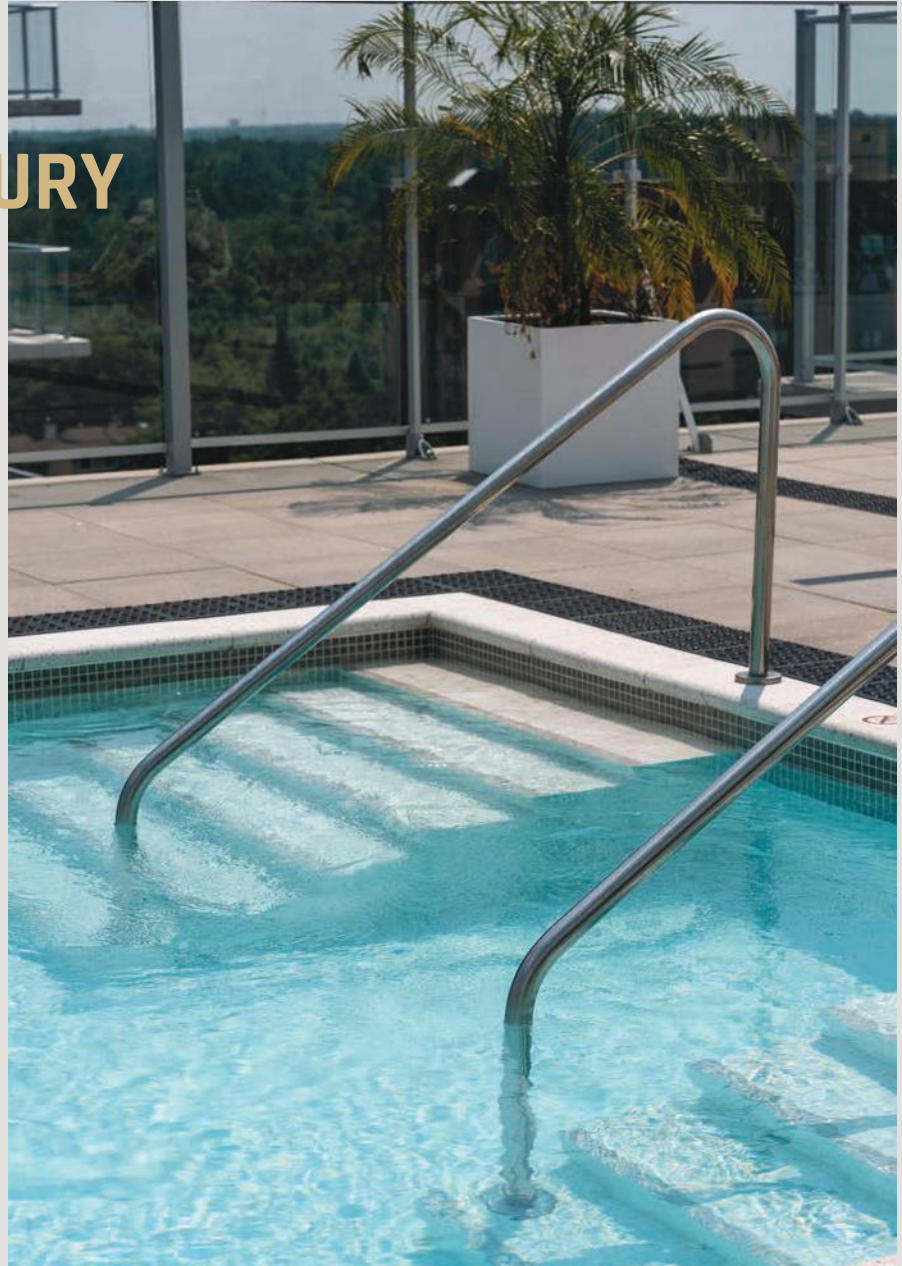
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# A HOW-TO MANUAL FOR SPOTTING SCAMMERS

Canadian seniors are prime targets for scam artists. In fact, over 25 per cent of fraud losses last year affected seniors, according to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC). Don't add yourself to the list.

To that end, it's worth reading a new book by Johnathan Walton called *Anatomy of a Con Artist: The 14 Red Flags to Spot Scammers, Grifters, and Thieves*. Johnathan is an Emmy-winning former TV reporter and current reality TV producer who also happens to be a guy who got hoodwinked—big time—by scammers. That's why he wrote a book about it.

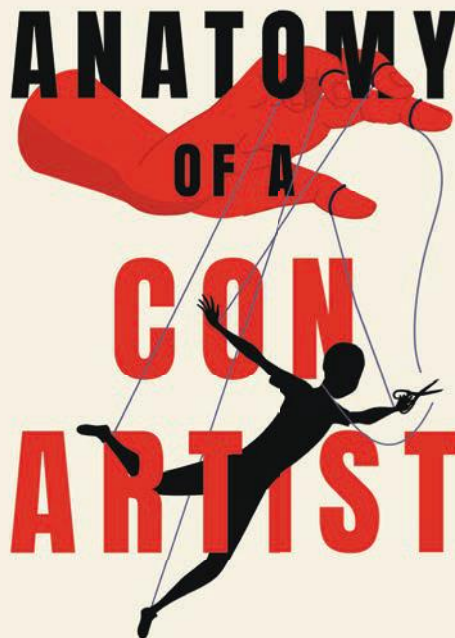
In *Anatomy of a Con Artist*, he describes his real-life experience of getting conned out of nearly \$100,000—and how to make sure it doesn't happen to you. Speaking to

the reader as a friend, Johnathan details fourteen red flags to heed before it's too late, including tactics such as beak wetting, isolation and “just wanting to help.”

Some con artists scheme for money, some for attention, some just for the thrill of lying. And if you think it can't happen to you, then you're exactly the kind of mark a professional con artist is looking for. With Johnathan's guidance, you're far more likely to spot scammers from miles away—and cross the street when you see them coming.

“Some people play golf on the weekends,” he says. “I hunt con artists.” He also says con artists are everywhere. In *Anatomy of a Con Artist*, he lays out “the tells” based on hundreds of real-life cases he's investigated, including:

The 14 Red Flags to Spot Scammers, Grifters, and Thieves



JOHNATHAN WALTON

CO-CREATOR OF THE QUEEN OF THE CON PODCAST

**Red Flag #1**—A Stranger Offering Help: Someone new and overly helpful insinuates themselves into your life.

**Red Flag #3**—Drama, Drama, Drama: Constant dramatic “emergencies” to pull you in.

**Red Flag #8**—Beak Wetting: Faux generosity—gifts, money or favours to bring your guard down.

The book also reveals that, after being taken for nearly 100K, Johnathan was turned away by police. So, using the investigative skills he'd honed as a TV reporter, he launched his own investigation and built a criminal case authorities could not ignore. After getting his con artist charged, prosecuted and convicted, Johnathan has devoted his life to helping other victims do the same. This book, published by Rodale Books, packs in all he has learned. ISBN 9780593797167



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# Enjoying a Richer (But Not More Expensive) Retirement

By Janet Gray

**H**ow do you define rich? It's definitely a word that is wide open to interpretation. While dictionary definitions identify 'having abundant possessions and especially material wealth,' they also include 'having high value or quality.' So, "rich" can be either a judgment of the quantity (how much actual money or assets you have) or a judgment of the quality (an estimate or a feeling of the worth) of what you have. Let's focus here on quality.

Retirement, at its essence, is about freedom. Free from work responsibilities and day-to-day routines, you have more time to realize your dreams and goals. Many retirees over 55 (and now, more and more, at a younger age) have waited for this freedom to travel, focus on a hobby and spend more time with family and friends.

Retirement offers the freedom to reshape your daily life, but enjoying a richer experience doesn't have to mean spending more. With some thoughtful and meaningful lifestyle changes, you can boost your quality of life while keeping costs in check.



Learn to embrace the concepts of free and low cost! One of the simplest ways to enrich your retirement is to take advantage of the wealth of free and inexpensive activities available in your community. Make use of local parks, walking trails and community centres, which typically offer programs ranging from fitness classes to book clubs and art workshops. Many communities, large and small, provide free outdoor concerts, festivals and cultural events, especially in the summer months. You can open doors to enjoyment at little to no cost.

Social connections are key to a fulfilling retirement. Staying in touch with friends, joining clubs or volunteering can provide a sense of purpose and belonging. Volunteering, in particular, not only helps others but also keeps you mentally and physically active—often at no cost. Consider mentoring, tutoring or helping out at local charities or community events.

Prioritizing health can lead to a richer retirement experience. Regular exercise, such as walking, swimming or yoga, improves physical and mental well-being and can be done inexpensively. Cooking at home with fresh, local ingredients supports both your health and your wallet. Grow a backyard or patio edible garden. A healthy lifestyle can also help prevent costly medical issues down the road.

Discover community resources and seniors' discounts. Retirees have access to a variety of discounts on travel, dining, entertainment and transportation. Always ask about senior rates and consider joining retiree-focused organizations like CARP (Canadian Association of Retired Persons) for additional benefits. Many provinces and municipalities also offer property tax credits, reduced transit fares and other perks for seniors.

There are also a variety of income tax credits and deductions, including the age amount, pension income

amount and credits for medical expenses. These savings add up, leaving more room in your spending plan for the things you love.

Create—and stick to—a spending plan (budget). A detailed monthly plan helps you track spending and identify areas where you can save. You will find that by focusing on what truly brings you joy—whether it's gardening, painting or spending time with family—you can cut back on less meaningful expenses without feeling deprived. And allow for more things that bring richness to your life.

Perhaps most importantly, studies show that those who regularly practice gratitude and mindfulness report higher levels of happiness and satisfaction. Keeping a gratitude journal, meditating or simply reflecting on positive experiences can shift your focus away from material wants and toward appreciating what you have.

By making these lifestyle changes, you can enjoy a richer, more meaningful retirement experience—without significantly increasing your costs. The key is to focus on health, connection and purposeful living while making the most of the resources and opportunities available to you.



*Janet Gray, CFP is an advice-only financial planner with Money Coaches Canada. Based in Ottawa, she serves clients Canada-wide. <https://moneycoachescanada.ca/about/Janet-Gray/>*



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A photograph of Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin sitting at a bar. Jane Fonda, on the left, has blonde hair and is wearing a pink blazer over a white collared shirt. Lily Tomlin, on the right, has dark curly hair and is wearing a black patterned top with a red and white scarf. A martini glass with a green olive is on the bar in front of them. The background is slightly blurred, showing a warm light fixture.

# THE SILVER SISTERHOOD OF THE SILVER SCREEN

By Dan Lalande

*Grace and Frankie* stars Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin Photo courtesy of Netflix/Everett Collection

Chick flicks.

As any movie connoisseur can tell you, that genre's history is as fractured as a life-releasing egg. In the days of the silent film industry, women played an invaluable role as actors, storytellers, directors and editors. Then, in 1927, came sound. Ironically, this was what muted their voices. A tremendous amount of capital was required to redesign shooting facilities and exhibition houses. Bankers were willing to pony up only as long as one liability was off the books: women, then deemed a financial liability. Desperate for the money, the big studios went about creating a masculine monoculture.

The evidence of that inequality remains onscreen: check out those ol' black-and-whites on networks like TCM and Tubi. You'll find but a handful of stories about women, despite such dynamic presences as Katherine Hepburn, Barbara Stanwyck and Joan Crawford. As for comedy, thank God for the saucy Mae West, who could not be cut down to size.

The recalibration that would be the "chic flick" would have to wait ... a very long time. It wasn't until the 1980s, after a long battle by feminist film critics, that female-engineered films about gender-based issues found themselves back on the screen. Looking to make the political digestible, the creatives behind these vehicles erred on the side of comedy. Smart move. They doubled the size of their audience, did big box office and created a vehicle that's kept female creatives employed ever since.

Many of those pioneers—Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, Sally Field, Diane Keaton and others—now star in a popular subgenre devoted to an issue that glamour- fixated Hollywood has long ignored: aging.

These "silver sisterhood" films include such titles as *Book Club(s)*, *Poms* and *Eighty for Brady*. Then, there's

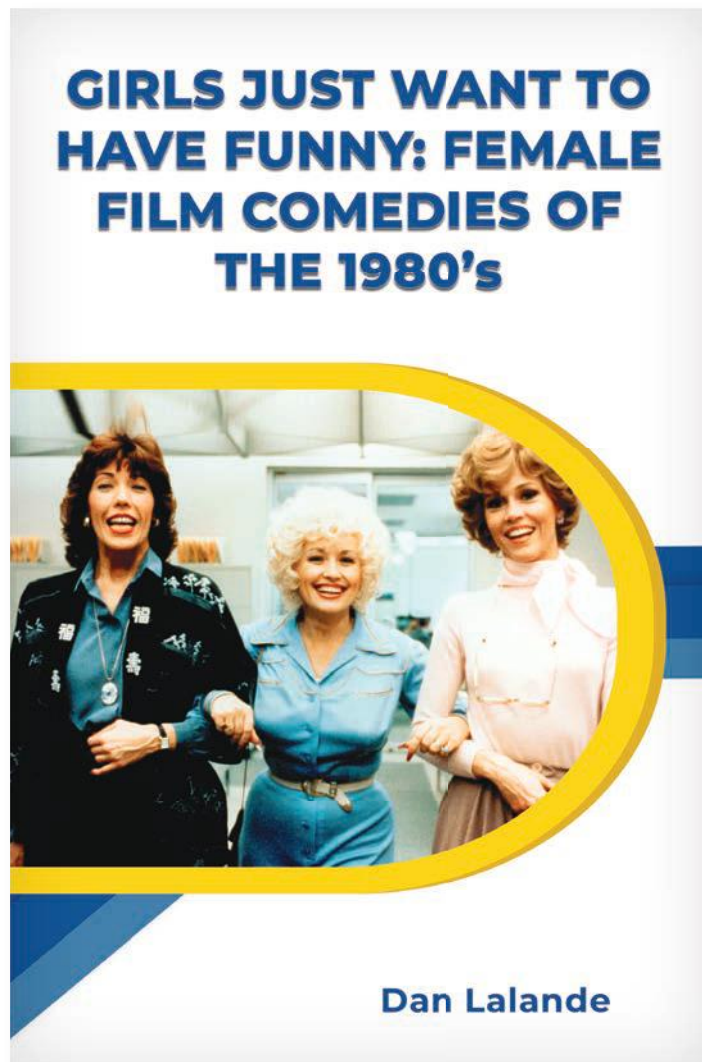
TV's *Grace and Frankie*—yes, it's a two-hander, but it always makes room for seasoned actresses alongside co-producers/stars Fonda and Tomlin.

They're lighthearted but not insubstantial looks at post-feminist existentialism. The women therein, whether they're simply sharing wine or going on travel junkets, exchange evolving views on health, family, romance and sex. Battle-scarred Boomers, they walk a tightrope between independence and loneliness; their professional years are behind them, but they maintain a need for purpose; they struggle with sticky definitions of "age-appropriate behaviour" but remain devoted to fun. Small wonder the moral of these ensemble pieces is almost always *Thank God we have each other!*

They're a happy, watchable affirmation that the solidarity that spawned the feminist movement not only holds, it's serving an important new purpose. And while the odd critic feels that these films betray that thinking, emphasizing the mini rivalries that break out within each story, in the end, the bond almost always re-forms.

The films vary in quality but there's no denying their cultural value. On Netflix, Apple TV, Amazon Prime and the two "Pluses," Disney and Paramount, female friendship is not only alive and well, but it's also dramatically demonstrating its value within the final fraction of life's timeline. In 2013, the animated *Frozen* broke ground when Prince Charming's mythologized kiss was replaced by an act of sisterly appreciation. Today, that same appreciation is all over the screen.

Dan Lalande's book *Girls Just Want to Have Funny: Female Film Comedies of the 1980s* will be available later in the year.



Worth the Drive

# September is Sensational in PEC

By Kim Renault



Fall wine tours are popular. Photo: Destination Ontario, Humyn/Rami Accoume



**Grange of Prince Edward.**  
**Photo: Destination Ontario: Humyn/Rami Accoume**

**W**hen some friends were recently discussing their next getaway, the location was a no-brainer: Prince Edward County. Known as PEC or the County, this Eastern Ontario destination is popular for a multitude of reasons. And September is prime time for mature visitors in this part of the world.

For starters, PEC is within easy driving distance of Ottawa, Toronto, Kingston and all the places in between. What's more, summer crowds have thinned, the weather is lovely and the leaves are starting to show their colours. Harvest season is also at its peak, so festivals and special events are plentiful. And since September is grape harvest time, it's ideal for tastings and vineyard tours. As a wine region PEC is renowned, especially for pinot noir and chardonnay. Breweries also draw fans. The County's farm-to-table restaurants, food trucks, artisan producers, farm stands and markets are also revered, so bring your appetite.

The arts scene is thriving too, with plenty of galleries and studios in the area. You'll also love the shopping. Browse vintage finds, check out charming shops and boutiques and explore the antique barns throughout Bloomfield, Wellington and Picton. Outdoors, Sandbanks Provincial Park is a big draw, as is the Millennium Trail for cycling and Lake on the Mountain, Point Petre and Prince Edward Point for hiking and birdwatching.

As for events, the September lineup is eclectic.

Taste! Community Grown is taking place Saturday, September 14, at Parsons Brewing Company, 876 County Rd 49, Picton. An end-of-season celebration of local farmers, growers, makers, purveyors, chefs and more, this event includes a vendor market, a concert and a roving dinner. The vendor market runs from noon to 5 p.m. and you can purchase a PEC Wine Passport to get five tasting samples and a sample glass so you can sip as you shop.

In the evening, there's a concert by Secret Beach, a PEC cover band featuring Justin Rutledge, Annelise Noronha, Jeremy Kelly, Ben Vandergaast, Kevin Howley and Jim Hardy. In addition, a roving dinner will feature small plates and wine pairings from local chefs. See pecwines.com for details.

The 31st PEC Studio Tour Weekend is happening Friday, September 19, through Sunday, September 21. Some 62 juried artists are featured in 39 studio/galleries throughout the County. Presented by PEC Arts Council, this free event is an annual favourite. You can map your own route, meet the artists and watch live demonstrations. Painters, sculptors, fibre artists, print makers, potters, ceramicists, jewelry designers,



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photographic artists, mixed media artists, a woodturner and a feathersmith are featured. See pecstudiotour.com for details.

The Ontario Cheese Festival is happening Sunday, September 28, at The Cape in Picton, PEC. A celebration of all things dairy, as well as makers and producers, this event will showcase goodies from artisan dairies as well as craft beer, wine, cider, distillers and vendors specializing in niche foods, with most sourced locally.

Tickets, \$75 each, include samples of artisan and farmstead cheeses and specialty foods, six alcohol tasting tickets for small-batch wine, craft beer and cider and spirits, a souvenir festival glass for tastings and an insulated swag tote bag for purchases.

Tutored tastings are presented by Vanessa Simmons, Canada's best-known cheese sommelier, and Roxanne Renwick, a leading cheese educator. There's also live music and free parking. See ontariocheesefestival.com for details.

For more information about PEC attractions, accommodations and dining, visit visitthecounty.com.



Hillier. Photo: Daph & Nico



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Tickets, \$75 each, include samples of artisan and farmstead cheeses and specialty foods, six alcohol tasting tickets for small-batch wine, craft beer and cider and spirits, a souvenir festival glass for tastings and an insulated swag tote bag for purchases.

Tutored tastings are presented by Vanessa Simmons, Canada's best-known cheese sommelier, and Roxanne Renwick, a leading cheese educator. There's also live music and free parking. See [ontariocheesefestival.com](http://ontariocheesefestival.com) for details.

For more information about PEC attractions, accommodations and dining, visit [visitthecounty.com](http://visitthecounty.com).

Picton has many charms. Photo: Suzy Lamont Photography



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# STRONGER TOGETHER:

How Accountability Boosts Fitness for Adults 50+

By Meg Stickl



**M**eg, if you hadn't rung my doorbell today, there's no way I would have gotten off my couch!"

I still remember the first time I heard a client say this to me. I was surprised, but I appreciated his honesty. Bill had been retired for a few years and reached out because he wanted help improving his strength and balance—and he knew he needed a little extra encouragement to stay consistent.

Bill used to exercise regularly at a gym, but over time he found he needed more personalized support. He often told me how much he appreciated that I came to his home, checked in with him weekly, and made sure he exercised safely and properly. With his history of back issues, having professional guidance was crucial for him.

When it comes to reaching our fitness goals, there are a lot of roadblocks that can get in the way. Like Bill, you might find it hard to get motivated some days. Maybe you feel like you don't have enough time or you're unsure where to start, especially if you're managing a medical condition or recovering from surgery.

Setting yourself up for success comes down to a few key factors—and one of the most powerful is accountability.

Research backs this up. A survey by the Fitness Alliance found that 70 per cent of people who worked out with an accountability partner reported greater consistency in their exercise habits.

### **Accountability Can Take Many Forms**

For some, accountability means working with a personal trainer who checks in and adjusts exercises as needed. For others, it might be finding a workout buddy or joining a group fitness class where you're surrounded by friendly faces and shared goals.

When I first started teaching fitness classes over 17 years ago, I quickly noticed how important social connection was for sticking with a routine.

I'll never forget Suzanne and Gwen, two classmates who attended my group sessions twice a week. Every Tuesday and Thursday, Suzanne would pick Gwen up and they'd arrive at class laughing, chatting, and full of energy. After class, they would head upstairs for coffee and more conversation. They rarely missed a session—not just because they loved the workouts, but because they loved the company.

If you're struggling to stay committed to your fitness goals, finding a class or a workout buddy can make a world of difference. Joining an exercise group (whether in-person or online) can help you stay socially connected—and having someone else counting on you can be a powerful motivator.

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In fact, a study by the University of Exeter found that participants in group exercise programs reported higher motivation levels and were 20 per cent more likely to stay engaged with their fitness plans over time.

### **Already Motivated? Here's How to Keep Going Strong**

You might be someone who doesn't necessarily need external accountability. Maybe you consider yourself a self-motivator—someone who finds motivation from within.

Over the years, I've met many people like this. (If you're curious about your own motivation style, you can take my Motivation Type Quiz at [activitiesinmotion.ca](http://activitiesinmotion.ca).)

Self-motivators often notice that:

- They are driven by internal goals and values.
- They hold themselves accountable because they see the personal importance of exercise.
- Their motivation isn't influenced much by what others do.
- However, they may lose focus when life gets busy or when other people's needs take priority.
- They can regain their momentum by reconnecting with their original why—the personal reason they started exercising in the first place.

One inspiring example is Sonya, a member of the AIM Fitness Online Membership. Sonya consistently follows along with exercise videos and sets herself up for success by:

1. Setting clear quarterly fitness goals.
2. Planning her exercise days and times each week.
3. Tracking her walking distance weekly.
4. Regularly reevaluating her goals and reflect what to continue progressing.

When we hold ourselves accountable, whether with a friend, a trainer or through personal goal-setting, the results are powerful. It feels incredible to see our health improve and know that we made it happen.

### **The Takeaway**

Take a moment to reflect. What kind of accountability would support you best right now? Maybe it's joining a group, partnering with a friend or creating a plan just for yourself.

Everyone is different. The most important thing is finding the support system—internal or external—that helps you stay consistent, motivated and proud of your progress.

**You've got this!**



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AT  
80,  
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TO  
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AT

By Dan Lalande  
Photos by Petr Mauer



The legendary singer has released a book called *Sneezy Waters: A Very Fine Biography*.



The singer is still performing live.

“Thanks for taking an interest in the old man,” says Sneezy Waters, the twinkle in his eyes as bright as the afternoon sun I have to negotiate to make him out at the foot of the Bronson Avenue building where he graciously awaits me. I’m the latest person in an eight-decade procession to be instantly won over by his companionable vibe, a legacy that includes fellow musicians, other artists of all stripes and audiences around the world.

On the teetering legs he likes to test via long walks through Ottawa Centre, he leads me up to his surprisingly roomy apartment. It’s the latest stop in a nomadic, colourful life that he chronicled in a book, *Sneezy Waters: A Very Fine Biography*, he wrote to appease his restlessness during the COVID lockdown. We settle in among the guitars, awards and a shyly investigative cat named Fiddle as he and his partner, visual artist Ruby Ewen, trace his origins in amiable first person:

The legendary folk and country singer, born Peter Hodgson, was the product of a musical family: his dad was a member of the U of T glee club and his mother was a classically trained pianist. Young Peter split his time between jamming on guitar with his brother John in their Mechanicsville home and singing at St. Luke’s church in Chinatown.

Otherwise, the family was busy crisscrossing the U.S. and Europe. The travel bug bit young Peter hard: A few years later, he left high school to revisit those spots and countless more, as a prototypical tramping troubadour of the late 60s and early 70s. It was a coming-of-age staked on the kindness of strangers: He busked wherever he could, hitchhiked from spot to spot and crashed wherever people would let him. His favourite gig remains the two weeks he played in Osaka, Japan as part of Expo ’70 with his then-band, the folk ensemble Rosewood Daydream.



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Whenever he found himself back in Ottawa, he'd be sharing the stage at the famous Le Hibou coffee house or singing for his supper on Sparks Street. Busking, in fact, was what boosted him to the big time:

One day, while strumming the strings in front of Irving Rivers' eclectic emporium in the ByWard Market, Sneezy was approached by playwright Maynard Collins. Maynard had a rough draft of a one-man show about the last days of a prematurely plagued country singer. Recognizing much of one of his idols, Hank Williams, in the part, Sneezy helped the writer refashion it into *Hank Williams: The Show He Never Gave*.



**Born Peter Hodgson, Sneezy Waters comes from a musical family.**

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While I didn't imagine that the songs were much of a hurdle, I wondered if Sneezy had ever acted before. "Well," he conceded, pouring himself a little more tea, "I'd acted *up*. I'd told lies."

Judging by the video recording of his stint as Williams—the film version of the play shot in 1981, currently available on YouTube—that was more than enough. Sneezy offers an impressively nuanced performance, deftly detailing the doomed deity. Hank Williams' less than dignified end is a fate Sneezy himself has managed to dodge; he cut ties with his own addictions a decade and a half ago to settle into a life of relative health and much-appreciated comfort.

Having a "secret identity" helped, that of serving as an IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) stagehand at the National Arts Centre, where he performed technically complex tasks within the multi-theatre venue's shadows. Along with his longstanding membership in the musicians' union, it's saved him from the usual indignities suffered by seasoned artists in the twilight years.

Still, getting to where he is today has been a bit of a jolt. "I was shocked!" he says about turning 80. "After all, I'd been in my 70s for so long."

He's still playing, though: at the Old Ottawa South Community Centre as part of a weekly musical drop-in, at the Abbotsford House for seniors when they stage hootenannies, or Irene's Pub, where he wows 'em with his current band. Whatever the setting, he still gets the pre-show jitters—"until he gets on stage," qualifies Ruby, who has witnessed many a performance. "Then, his love of making the audience comfortable takes over." Adds Sneezy, "I have a way of bringing people in."

Otherwise, there are his off-stage comforts: fond memories of the great musicians with whom he's played, the artists from other disciplines with whom he's collaborated, and Ruby, his kindly confidante and occasional caretaker.

Says Sneezy, "Life's easy when you have people who believe in you."



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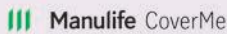
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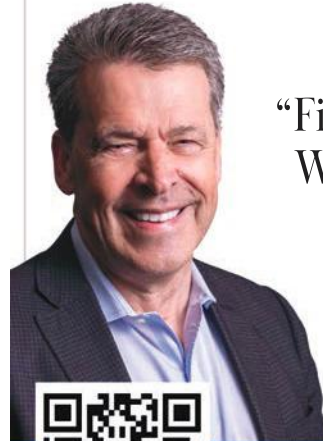
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Living Well At Home provides programs for seniors and veterans with dementia to connect, engage and enjoy activities in a safe, supervised setting. Photo: Perley Health

# Perley Health is making life better in the community with Living Well At Home

*New integrated offering includes adult day program, respite house, assisted living and remote care monitoring to support seniors and vets as well as caregivers*

Thanks to Perley Health, it's now easier than ever for seniors and veterans to stay safe, supported and connected as they age in place. Living Well at Home, the Perley's new suite of community-based programs, consolidates existing services under one coordinated offering. As part of this change, Perley Health has assumed full management of both the adult day program and the respite house from a third-party provider.

With these services now under the Living Well at Home umbrella, it's less complicated for caregivers to access respite and for individuals to receive the care they need close to home.

"This is about simplifying our service for families while raising the bar on care," says Tanya MacDonald, director, senior living and community programs at Perley Health. "We're building on Perley Health's 128-year history to extend the same level of excellence and compassion into people's homes and communities. Whether someone needs a short break, daytime care for a loved one with dementia or help living independently, Living Well at Home is here to help."

## Aging in Place with Dignity and Connection

Living Well at Home offers a streamlined, person-centred approach to care with options that include:

- **Adult Day Program:** Open four days a week, it provides structured care for older adults and veterans living with dementia. Participants benefit from access to Perley Health's recreation therapy services, as they take part in supervised activities that promote connection and routine. For caregivers, the program offers a reliable source of daytime support.
- **Respite House:** Short-term daytime or overnight care is offered in a dementia-friendly bungalow located on Perley Health's Ottawa campus. With 12 private bedrooms, 24-hour staffing, home-cooked meals and engaging activities, the respite house is a welcoming space for guests, while providing a vital break for caregivers. Guests also enjoy access to recreation therapy services. Veterans receive priority access to reserved bedrooms, with care teams trained to support the unique physical and mental health needs that may accompany military service.
- **Assisted Living:** Perley Health delivers personal support services to seniors and veterans living in the Perley Health Senior Living Apartments and the wider community. Services include help with bathing and dressing, as well as medication reminders and 24/7 emergency response. Personalized care plans and consistent staffing ensure familiarity, dignity and peace of mind.

With caregiver burnout becoming a growing concern, Perley Health's Living Well At Home makes a difference, offering caregivers a much-needed break and more peace of mind. They can rest assured their loved ones are in a trusted, dementia-informed environment that fosters dignity, connection and purpose.

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All services under Living Well at Home are accessed via referral through Ontario Health at Home, which also coordinates publicly funded support. While some services may involve a modest co-payment, Perley Health is committed to ensuring equitable access for all. To help clients and caregivers navigate the system, Perley Health offers dedicated liaison support to guide them through the referral process, coordinate services and ensure a smooth, stress-free experience.

## **Innovating to Meet the Needs of Aging Canadians**

Perley Health is nationally recognized for its leadership in frailty-informed care for seniors and veterans. With more than 600 residents and tenants across its Ottawa campus, the Perley has a goal to double the number of seniors and veterans served by expanding into the community with programs such as Living Well at Home.

“As Canada’s population ages, demand for home- and community-based care continues to grow,” notes Tanya. “We’re meeting this moment with innovation by offering trusted, flexible and coordinated care that supports people before they need long-term care. Living Well at Home helps people live independently and with dignity, while also giving families meaningful support and helping the broader healthcare system respond to rising demand.”

[perleyhealth.ca/living-well-at-home](http://perleyhealth.ca/living-well-at-home)

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# The information you need before you need it



Many seniors make **significant life decisions** in moments of crisis. When this happens to you or your family, you often don't have adequate **tools, resources and information** to make the **best decisions for yourself**, or your loved ones.

Smart Aging is a series of interactive workshops covering **key topics facing seniors today**. Each workshop is designed to provide you with the information you need, before you need it, to **make smart decisions** at key transition points in your life. Smart Aging is truly innovative and **the only program of its kind** in North America!

## Core Program (8 weeks)

The Smart Aging Core Program is a series of 8 weekly, interactive workshops on foundational topics that every older adult should address. Topics include: health, housing, socialization, financial concerns, and more.

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**English:** Mondays, Oct 13 – Dec 2  
**French:** Tuesdays, Oct 14 – Dec 11

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## Stand-Alone Workshops

The COA has also developed a series of 10 additional stand-alone workshops as part of the Smart Aging Program. These workshops can be taken independently.

### Thriving Solo as an Older Adult

Participants will consider the benefits, challenges, joys, and concerns of navigating life as a single older adult.

**French:** Tues, Sept 30  
**English:** Wed, Oct 1  
10 am – 12 pm

### Aging in Place Home Modifications

Participants will explore whether they can or should stay in their current home and which home modifications might ease their lives.

Wed, Oct 29  
**French:** 10 am – 12 pm  
**English:** 1 pm – 3 pm

### Nurturing Mental Wellness and Resiliency

Participants will increase their knowledge related to mental wellness and resiliency as they age.

**French:** Wed, Nov 5  
**English:** Wed, Nov 12  
10 am – 12 pm





**The south wind evokes warmth, movement, growth, and openness of the heart.**

In that same spirit, the Southwinds Café invites older adults to gather for **thought-provoking sessions** where ideas flow and everyone feels at home.

- Hear from inspiring guests
- Explore a variety of topics
- Share your thoughts in a welcoming setting
- Connect with fellow older adults

**Fridays, 10 am - 12 pm**

- **Sept 19 - Living with Parkinson's**  
Learn about supporting those living with a neurological condition
- **Oct 24 - Mind Your Brain Health**  
Understand the difference between normal aging, memory loss, and dementia. Learn the 8 golden habits to reduce the risk of dementia.

## From Ears to Toes

**Thursday, October 16**

**English: 10 am - 12 pm**

**French: 1 pm - 3 pm**

Join us to learn more about hearing and footcare as we age.

Following informative expert presentations, there will also be opportunities for hearing tests and footcare (by appointment).

Watch our Events page for further information and registration.

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This course helps Canadians aged 55+ **stay confident and safe** behind the wheel while maintaining their independence. Refresh your knowledge of traffic laws, sharpen your awareness, and learn how to adapt to changes in road conditions, technology, and driving habits—all in a supportive, relaxed setting.

Watch our Events page for several upcoming dates and locations this fall.

# Join the Walk of Ages and Celebrate Aging



**Saturday, September 27, 2025**

10:00 am – 2:00 pm



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Find out more at <https://bit.ly/WOA-MDG-2025>



Chris White with folk legend David Wiffen. Photo: CKCU

# Carleton University Radio at 50: Still Making Waves

By Rose Simpson

**A**t midnight November 17, 1975, Carleton University embarked on a grand experiment which literally changed the landscape of music in Ottawa. Its campus radio station, Radio Carleton, had just won a coveted FM licence – one of two universities in Canada that were given permission to broadcast into the wider community. Before the licence, its broadcast was limited to the university’s maze of tunnels and its residences where the only students who could listen needed plug-in radios.

Today, CKCU-FM is still going strong, still broadcasting an eclectic mixture of music, cultural programming and talk radio. It is set to celebrate its 50th anniversary with a gala, a book and an alumni weekend scheduled for November 14-15.

*Fifty-Five Plus* writer Rose Simpson recently caught up with some of the original volunteers and staffers who were there on opening day.

# Today's Best Hearing Aid

If you searched online or talked to friends in the quest to find THE best hearing aid, you were likely left confused by all the conflicting reports. This is normal because, truth is, there is no device that will be perfect for everyone. Why? Well, because no two hearing profiles are alike and individual needs vary tremendously. We are all so unique. Your "Best Hearing Aid" is the one that will address *your* hearing levels, *your* hearing capabilities, and all *your* unique wants and needs, and so, it may be much different than your friend's device.

The good news is that across the many Manufacturers, there are some fantastic products to choose from. Some have a great wind manager for outdoor enthusiasts, others are geared to the musicians, others excel in connectivity, and so on and so forth. So, finding *your* best device is possible.... the key is to avoid dispensers with pre-determined product portfolios and instead seek one where ALL of the Manufacturer products will be considered to find the one most suited to you.

Offering just that is Hearing Freedom, a locally owned and operated clinic. Their practice of customizing the solution to the individual is rare in today's market where clinics are often Manufacturer-owned or have limited their product offerings to a few preferred Manufacturers. Hearing Freedom is therefore a gem worth seeking out.

The unique and refreshing approach was established over 20 years ago by Rosanne McNamee, Doctor of Audiology. After interviewing for employment in Ottawa, she was disheartened to discover Manufacturer limitations and a focus on sales tactics and sales targets. "To properly address hearing loss, *everything* available in the market must be considered each and every time." says McNamee, "And this evaluation must be done with the *patient's* particular needs and wants in mind, not my employer's profit margins." And so, she decided to set up her own business, doing it her way and putting people first.



At Hearing Freedom, there are no predetermined products or plans. Each and every intervention plan is as unique as the person seeking help. The experience begins with a thorough hearing evaluation which is followed by a detailed needs assessment. There is the option of a pre-purchase demo as well as a trial period on purchased hearing aids. Thereafter, continued support is provided under the clinic's service plan.

In addition, there are no HISs at Hearing Freedom. Rather, you will be seen by experienced Registered Audiologists. With Masters or Doctorate degrees, Audiologists are the most qualified in their field. They service both children and adults, whether they are private pay or third party supported (WSIB, VAC, etc).

"Not only is hearing complex, so are today's hearing aid options," McNamee explains. "Dealing with the most qualified health care professional, in the most independent setting, is crucial to success." At Hearing Freedom you can be certain that you have chosen the best place to trust with your hearing needs.

So, if you believe in your right to the best, fullest and most customized service available, go to Hearing Freedom in Manotick.

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### **Steve Colwill**

Steve Colwill won the lottery to become the first voice on CKCU-FM, and officially opened the new FM station by dropping the needle on Joni Mitchell's *You Turn Me On, I'm a Radio*.

"It was the first song I could think of that had the word radio in it," says Steve who began as a student volunteer and went on to a 39-year career at CHEZ-FM. "Back then nobody went to journalism or broadcast school. You learned from your mistakes, and you'd either sink or swim."

Steve came to Carleton from Elliot Lake, Ontario, where his father ran the local newspaper. As a teenager, he became obsessed with the rock, pop and soul music that was being created all over the world, but there was no radio station that played it in his small town. He and his mates would ride around in cars in the evening hoping to pick up signals from the US and took trips to Toronto and Sudbury to pick up the newest releases and bring them home for their collections.

So when he heard Carleton University had a small, closed circuit radio station, he packed his bags and moved to Ottawa. That decision changed his life forever.

"CKCU gave me a career," he says. "It was a stepping stone, and literally changed my life, and I am forever grateful for that."

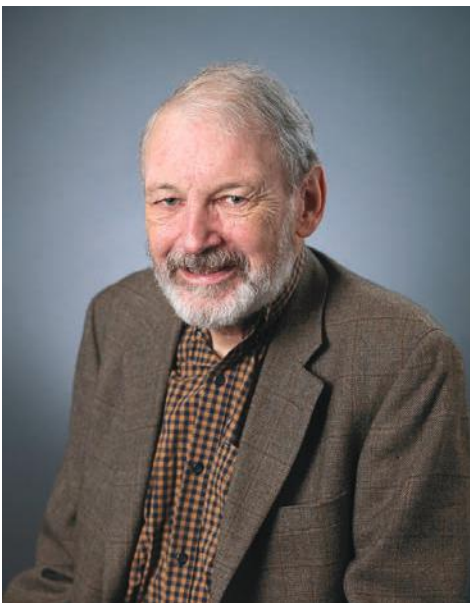
### **Kathie Donovan**

Ottawa television personality Kathie Donovan came in search of a connection. After spending her early twenties backpacking and working on a kibbutz, Kathie arrived at Carleton hoping for a career in broadcast.

"The main thing for me then, and now, has been to make people feel they aren't alone because I felt alone, and radio was my best friend growing up," says the self-styled happiness expert who spent decades at CTV Ottawa as a journalist and co-host with Joel Haslam of *Regional Contact*.

It was trial by fire at CKCU and Kathie remembers being thrown into the studio so the program director could see if she could cut it.

"It might have been luck and timing that launched me into a long and fulfilling career in broadcasting. I'm forever grateful."



### **Paul Park**

CKCU gave long-time Parliament Hill journalist Paul Park the opportunity to scratch an itch.

He had arrived at Carleton as a political science student with an interest in federal politics and was immediately given a job on a program called *Parliament in Review*. That experience led him to the Hill where, at 22, he became one of the youngest reporters awarded a Parliamentary Press Gallery pass, which is considered a golden ticket to the "show". Fifty years later, Paul is still working on the Hill as a reporter for *The Wire Report*, a subsidiary of *The Hill Times*.



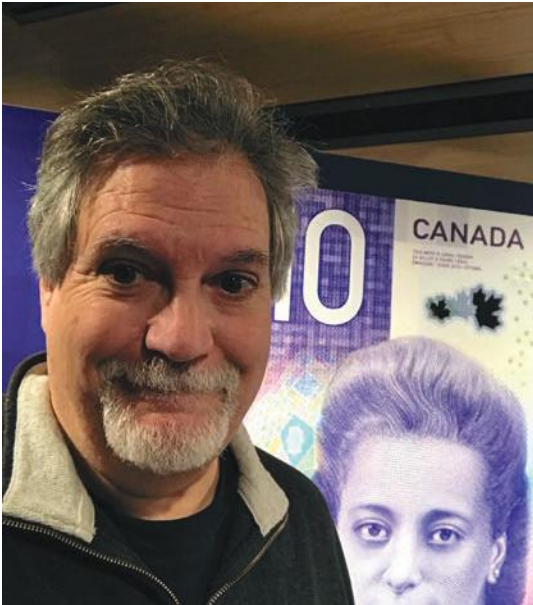
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### Ken Ross

Journalism student Ken Ross was another early alumnus who drifted into the CKCU-FM studio looking for a sense of purpose.

“I was intrigued when I heard the first broadcast,” he says. “I wanted an outlet. I realized that journalism was the wrong business for me because I was a writer.”

CKCU allowed Ken to flex his creative muscles, and soon he co-created *Special Blend* which was a mixture of current affairs, music and comedy. After 50 years, that show is still on the air today.

Since graduating from Carleton, Ken has had a successful career in animation, radio, and as the director of the museum at the Bank of Canada.

“CKCU changed everything,” he says. “It was a critical time in my life, and the friends I made were the people I wanted to hang with.”

### Barry McLoughlin

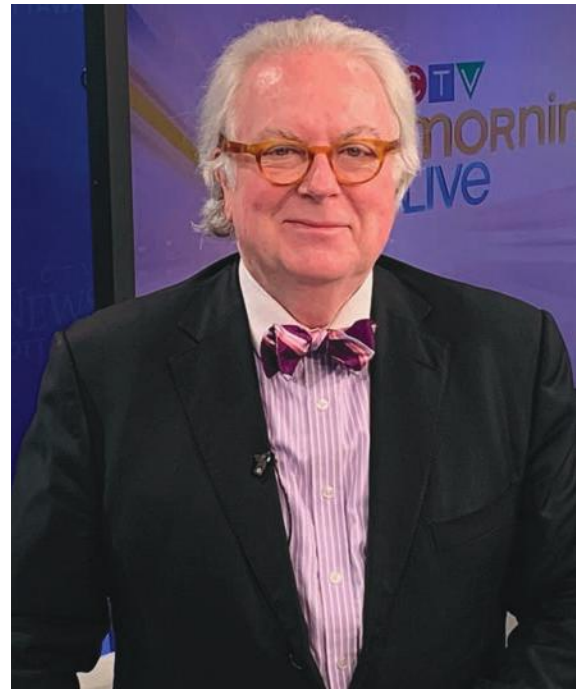
Media expert and radio commentator Barry McLoughlin began his career with CKCU when it was still being broadcast over closed circuit through the tunnels, and into the residences.

“We spent too many hours in the tunnels and at the time, Radio Carleton was blasting at every intersection in the maze,” he recalls. “That meant that almost every student at Carleton was listening to the only radio station that was playing through the campus.”

“It helped me find my voice in comedy and in public presentation as we were working without a script and it helped me move into standup comedy at Yuk Yuk’s in Toronto.”

Before pursuing a career in communications, Barry worked on several successful comedy shows including *Shhh! It’s the News* for Global TV with Ken Shaw and Don Harron.

Years later, Barry passed on his love of campus radio to his son, Brendan McLoughlin, who spent a decade hosting a weekly political commentary program called *The Filibuster*. Brendan now works in the Canadian film industry.



If you volunteered at CKCU and want to join its Reunion Weekend, more information is available at [alumni@ckcufm.com](mailto:alumni@ckcufm.com).



*Canadian Spaces* co-host Anne-Marie Brugger with Brent Smith.  
Photo: CKCU

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# CANADIAN SPACES: A HOME FOR FOLK FANS

By Rose Simpson

Longtime Folk Festival hosts Chopper  
McKinnon and Karen Flanagan-McCarthy.



Folk Festival co-founders Chris White and Chopper McKinnon.

Over the past 50 years, CKCU-FM has allowed Ottawans to hear an eclectic blend of musical styles presented by enthusiastic student and community volunteers. The station's best-known volunteer is perhaps the late Chopper McKinnon, who championed Canadian folk and roots music.

In 1980, an overall-wearing bearded folk enthusiast named Allan "Chopper" McKinnon launched a show on CKCU-FM that showcased his favourite music. Chopper became hooked on the folk scene while attending Woodroffe High School in Ottawa. He was a self-styled "coffee house junkie" who dedicated his life to promoting Canadian artists and folk music. The program was called *Canadian Spaces* and it featured recorded and live performances with an emphasis on Canadian acoustic singer-songwriters.

"*Canadian Spaces* has provided a unique mixture of Canadian music you have to hunt far and wide to hear on any other station," fellow CKCU host Doug Torrance recalled in 1991 on the occasion of the program's 10th anniversary. "I think there's a real hunger for homegrown Canadian acoustic music." Over the years, Chopper gave a platform to well-known performers like Valdy, Ferron, Ian Tamblyn and the iconic Stan Rogers. He also featured up-and-coming performers like Jane Siberry and Laura Smith, who credited *Canadian Spaces* for their success early in their careers.



Chopper with Valdy.  
Photo: Ottawa Folk Festival

“Chopper loved music,” artist Connie Kaldor wrote after hearing of his death in 2013. “He dedicated his energy to help the music thrive in his community. He involved people along the way and did not view himself as a lone wolf but as part of a grand gang of good-hearted folks with that weakness for melody and words. Okay, and perhaps Scotch.”

As a result of his efforts, Chopper and his band of volunteers built a devoted audience he referred to as Space Cadets. This set the stage for the creation of the CKCU Ottawa Folk Festival, which presented local, national and international artists for two decades. It continues today under the banner CityFolk and is held annually in Ottawa.

“*Canadian Spaces* has also served, at the national level, as a role model for other community radio stations,” says Chopper’s biographer, Joyce MacPhee. “Many of these stations now have similar shows and Chopper has been called the guru of Canadian folk shows on community radio.” Chopper hosted *Canadian Spaces* for 33 years. Following his death, the show is more popular than ever. It has a rotating roster of hosts including Ottawa Folk Festival co-founder Chris White, Anne-Marie Brugger, Teresa Bandrowska, Carolyn Sutherland, Ray Harris, Trevor Pool, Birdie Whyte and Calum Jackson.

*Canadian Spaces* airs for two hours every Saturday morning, opening with 40 minutes of uninterrupted folk music followed by in-depth interviews, live performances and announcements for local concerts. It continues to top the list for the most money donated to CKCU’s yearly funding drive.



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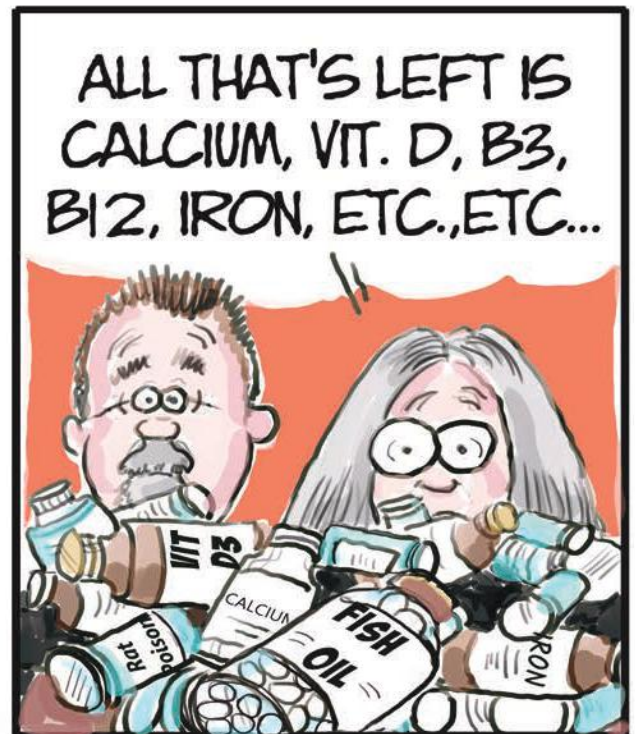
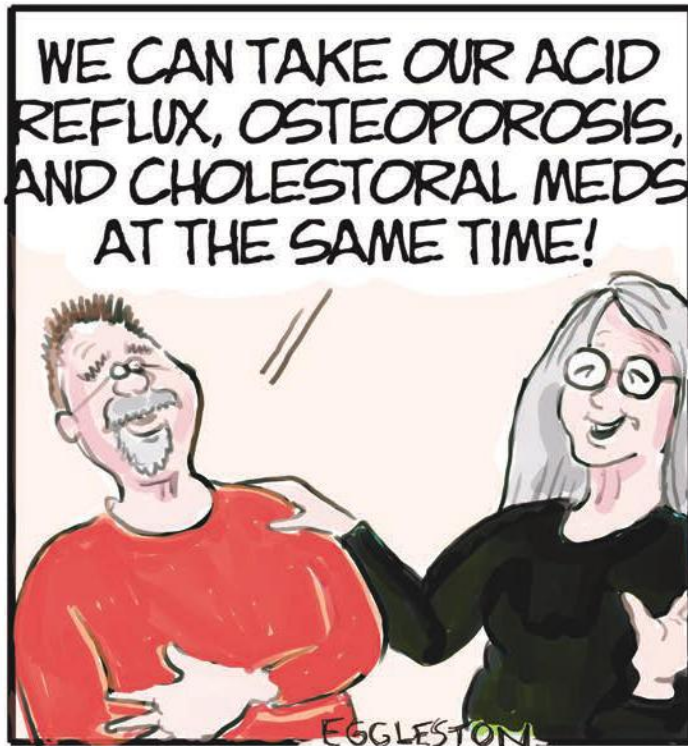
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# Lola and

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By Laura Lynn Eggleston



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# September Treats

**S**eptember is a golden time for a multitude of reasons. It's still warm enough to barbecue, enjoy a picnic and dine outdoors on many days. It's also cool enough that you don't have to worry about overheating your home when you turn on the oven to whip up a sheet-pan dinner or to bake a treat for dessert. These recipes and photos from Foodland Ontario, [foodlandontario.ca](http://foodlandontario.ca), will inspire you to get cooking.

## Shades of Green and Halloumi Salad

While this salad is quick enough for a weeknight dinner, it is impressive enough for entertaining.

**Preparation Time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking Time:** 5 to 6 minutes

**Standing Time:** 10 minutes

**Makes** 4 to 6 servings

**Dressing:** In small bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar and honey. Season with salt and pepper. (Dressing can be refrigerated for up to 5 days.)

**Pickled Shallots:** In small saucepan, combine vinegar, honey, red pepper flakes and salt. Bring to boil over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve honey. Place shallots in small, heatproof bowl; pour in vinegar mixture. Stir. Let stand at room temperature while preparing salad. (Cooled shallots can be refrigerated in covered jar for up to 1 week.)

**Salad:** In small saucepan of boiling salted water, cook green beans for 2 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold running water. Drain again; pat dry. In large bowl, combine beans, romaine, spinach, cucumber, snap peas and mint. Pour in two-thirds of dressing; toss to coat. Arrange on large platter. Remove about 1/4 cup (50 mL) shallots from liquid and drain well. Scatter over salad. Heat large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Pat halloumi dry. Add oil to skillet; swirl to coat. Add halloumi, cook, turning once, for 2 to 3 minutes until both sides are golden. Place warm halloumi on salad. Drizzle with remaining dressing. Sprinkle with nuts.

### **Dressing:**

1/3 cup (75 mL) olive oil, 2 tbsp (25 mL) red wine vinegar

2 tsp (10 mL) Ontario honey, Salt and pepper

### **Pickled Shallots:**

1/3 cup (75 mL) white vinegar, 2 tsp (10 mL) Ontario honey, 1/4 tsp (1 mL) each crushed red pepper flakes and salt, 2 Ontario shallots, thinly sliced crosswise

### **Salad:**

1/2 cup (125 mL) halved Ontario green beans

6 cups (1.5 L) thickly sliced (crosswise) Ontario romaine leaves, 2 cups (500 mL) fresh Ontario spinach leaves

1 cup (250 mL) diced Ontario greenhouse cucumber

1 cup (250 mL) Ontario sugar snap peas, trimmed and sliced crosswise, 1/4 cup (50 mL) thinly sliced fresh

Ontario mint, 1 tsp (5 mL) olive oil, 8 slices Ontario halloumi cheese, about 100 g, 1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped pistachios or other nuts

### **Nutritional Information:**

**1 serving** (when recipe serves 6)

**PROTEIN:** 6 grams

**FAT:** 19 grams

**CARBOHYDRATE:** 11 grams

**CALORIES:** 244

**FIBRE:** 4 grams

**SODIUM:** 320 mg



## Backyard Picnic Farro Salad

This salad is delicious as is or with leftover Ontario chicken or Ontario feta tossed in for a bit more protein.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking Time:** 25 minutes

**Makes** 8 servings

**Salad:** In saucepan, cook farro according to package directions, adding corn kernels during the last minute of cooking. Drain both well and rinse under cold water to stop the cooking. Drain very well, then pat dry and place in salad bowl. Add spinach, tomatoes, zucchini, green onions and olives; toss to combine.

**Dressing:** In small bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, mustard and garlic. Season with salt and pepper.

Pour dressing over salad, add basil; toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper to taste, if desired.

### **Salad:**

- 1 cup (250 mL) farro
- 2 cobs Ontario corn, kernels removed (about 2 cups/500 mL)
- 4 cups (1 L) Ontario baby spinach or arugula
- 1 cup (250 mL) Ontario greenhouse or field cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup (250 mL) diced Ontario zucchini
- 2 Ontario Green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) olives (black or green), pitted and chopped
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) Ontario basil leaves, barely torn

### **Dressing:**

- 1/4 cup (50 mL) olive oil
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp (5 mL) Dijon mustard
- 1 clove Ontario garlic, crushed or minced
- Salt and pepper

### **Nutritional Information:**

#### **1 serving**

**PROTEIN:** 4 grams

**FAT:** 8 grams

**CARBOHYDRATE:** 26 grams

**CALORIES:** 190

**FIBRE:** 2 grams

**SODIUM:** 110 mg



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# Sheet-Pan Steak and Pepper Sandwiches

Marinated steak, peppers, onions and mushrooms can be roast together and piled onto crusty buns with cheese for a delicious dinner.

**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

**Marinating Time:** Up to 8 hours

**Cooking Time:** 25 minutes

**Broiling Time:** 2 minutes

**Serves** 4

Place steak in shallow dish. Sprinkle with Worcestershire sauce and 1 tsp (5 mL) of the steak spice. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or up to 8 hours.

In large bowl, toss 2 cloves of the minced garlic, onion, peppers, mushrooms, oil and remaining steak spice. Place steak in centre of parchment paper-lined rimmed baking sheet. Arrange vegetables around steak. Roast in 400°F (200°C) oven until medium-rare (145°F/63°C), about 20 to 25 minutes or until desired doneness. Transfer to cutting board; cover lightly with foil. Toss vegetables with balsamic vinegar; keep warm.

Slice buns in half. In small bowl, combine butter with remaining garlic; spread over cut sides of buns. Place cheese slice on top cut side of each bun. Broil until bun is golden and cheese is melted. Cut steak across the grain into thin slices. Arrange on bottom cut side of each bun; top with vegetables.

## Nutritional Information:

**1 serving**

**PROTEIN:** 42 grams

**FAT:** 31 grams

**CARBOHYDRATE:** 47 grams

**CALORIES:** 638

**FIBRE:** 4 grams

**SODIUM:** 865 mg

500 g 3/4-inch (2 cm) boneless Ontario beef top sirloin grilling steak  
2 tbsp (25 mL) Worcestershire sauce  
2 tsp (10 mL) Montreal steak spice  
4 cloves Ontario garlic, minced  
1 large Ontario onion, sliced  
1 each Ontario greenhouse sweet orange and red pepper, cut into thin strips  
2 cups (500 mL) sliced Ontario cremini mushrooms  
2 tbsp (25 mL) vegetable oil  
4 tsp (20 mL) balsamic vinegar  
4 crusty Italian buns  
3 tbsp (45 mL) butter, softened  
4 slices old Ontario cheddar cheese



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## Stromboli

For a fun and tasty dinner experience, make stromboli. Serve with tomato sauce on the side for dipping. If the dough springs back when rolling it, let it rest for a minute and then roll again.

**Baking Time:** 25 minutes

**Preparation Time:** 25 minutes

**Serves** 4

On lightly floured surface, cut dough into 4 equal portions and shape into balls; let rest for 5 minutes. With floured rolling pin, roll out each ball into 9- x 6-inch (23 x 15 cm) rectangle. Spread each dough with 1 tbsp (15 mL) of the tomato sauce, leaving 1-inch (2.5 cm) border. Sprinkle each with 1/4 cup (50 mL) of the cheese; top with 2 slices of ham, overlapping and trimming to fit, if necessary, 3 pepperoni slices and 1/4 cup (50 mL) each of tomato and red pepper. Sprinkle with 1 tbsp (15 mL) of the onion and 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) of Italian seasoning. Starting at the long end, tightly roll up dough. Place seam-side down on large parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Cut 2 slits in dough. Brush with egg and sprinkle with a pinch of Italian seasoning. Bake in 450°F (230°C) oven for 20 to 25 minutes or until dough is puffed and golden.

1 prepared pizza dough (600 g)  
1/4 cup (50 mL) tomato sauce  
2 cups (500 mL) shredded Ontario mozzarella cheese  
8 slices Ontario ham (about 140 g)  
12 Ontario pepperoni slices  
1 cup (250 mL) chopped Ontario greenhouse tomato  
1 cup (250 mL) diced Ontario greenhouse sweet red pepper  
1/4 cup (50 mL) finely chopped Ontario red onion  
Dried Italian seasoning  
1 Ontario egg, beaten

### **Nutritional Information:**

**1 stromboli**

**PROTEIN:** 34 grams

**FAT:** 26 grams

**CARBOHYDRATE:** 74 grams

**CALORIES:** 660

**FIBRE:** 3 grams

**SODIUM:** 1315 mg



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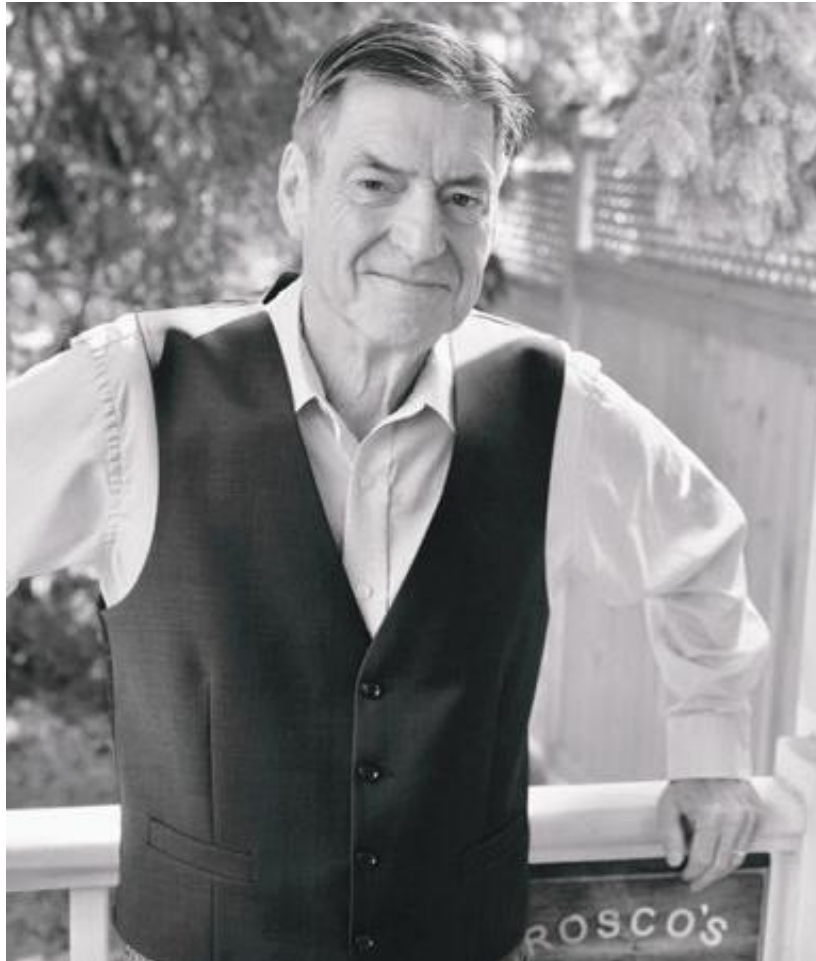


An Homage to Noir

ROSS DAVID WILSON

# ROSS D. WILSON'S NOVEL TAKE ON FILM NOIR

By Dan Lalande



Author, actor and comedian Ross D. Wilson is a film noir fan.

“I enjoyed the banter between the characters.”

You will, too, after you pick up film noir fan Ross D. Wilson’s self-published novel *The Fairfax File*. It’s a witty, spirited parody of the shadowy subworld created by pulp deities Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler and embodied on the big screen by iconic tough guys like Humphrey Bogart and Robert Mitchum. You’ll meet all of the archetypes of the genre—blustery despots, slippery dames, lunkheaded muscle men, etc—but the proletarian poetry of their badinage, the source of Ross’s inspiration, will sound decidedly, hilariously different. The titular detective, Frank Fairfax, walks through this den of money, sex and danger as if he was wearing clown shoes.



Ross Wilson's self-published novel, *The Fairfax File*, is receiving four- and five-star reviews.

To prove that Ross is just as sharp as the tongues of his characters, consider that this energetic work, his first, is the product of a man of 70. When pressed for what that might mean to same-age scribes-in-the-making, Ross stays true to the comic tone of his book: “Any message I have for fellow Boomers I’ll send by Western Union.”

Fairfax has had more identities than the ones purported by those shady femme fatales around which the genre’s plots often figure. It began as a short play when Ross, an actor and comedian, lived in Vancouver in the late 80s. When he returned to his hometown of Ottawa a few years later, he converted it to a feature-length screenplay. While optioned by a production company, it was never produced. The property lay fallow for a while, till the booming business of self-publishing inspired Ross to flesh it out into a novel—its ideal form, judging by the four- and five-star reviews the book is receiving online.

The secret to making the story longer and more readable, according to Ross, was hiding in the setting. “I changed the year in the book to coincide with the year of my birth,” he explains. “I spent hours online researching 1954, especially New York City.”

Film noir may have sprung up in the immediate post-war period, but it continued throughout the early 50s, an era marked by McCarthyism, the Beat Generation and other cultural developments offering Ross ancillary plot threads.

Like P.I. Frank Fairfax trying to untangle the book’s spiderweb-like case, Ross’s attempt to control his own distribution was met with a few frustrations. While self-publishing offers a golden opportunity to first-time writers, it can deliver, like a mob boss’ agitated goon, the odd sucker punch. “There were glitches along the way,” Ross confesses. “The first copies that went out were sized at 8.5 x 11 inches. That’s a great size for a colouring book—not a paperback. I also had some royalty issues. But I sorted that out myself.” Indeed. The book is currently available on Amazon (*The Fairfax File: Wilson, Ross David*: Amazon.ca: Books) and will soon be up for grabs via Ross’s website. “I’d also like to set up some readings,” Ross adds enthusiastically. “That would be a lot of fun.”

Given the book’s jokey jockeying, that’s an understatement as subtle as a buried clue.

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



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# Eugene Monette's Full-Circle Legacy

When the Foundation gathers for staff meetings, inspiring tales of Legacy Donors are frequently shared — individuals whose generous contributions leave lasting impressions on the lives of countless families.

Take the Monette family, for example. The Monettes were well-known in parts of Ottawa and Quebec. Their family's lumber and trucking businesses, Monette Cartage, stretched back generations. Eugene Monette ran the business with his brother for years. As his son Pat shares,

*"He was the only man I knew who would thank you when he gave you your pay cheque."*



In addition to being a kind and generous leader, Eugene was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather who courageously faced the challenges of heart disease. Undergoing life-saving heart surgeries at the Heart Institute, Eugene recognized the profound impact the Institute had on him and his family. "He believed in the Heart Institute because they really helped him," his daughter Deborah recalls. Helped him be well enough to care for Helen, his wife of 59 years, when she fell ill and required specialized care. Determined to stay by her side, Eugene would tell the staff at the care home, "I'm not going anywhere without her".

Inspired by the life-saving care he received, Eugene chose to leave a legacy gift, naming the Ottawa Heart Institute beneficiary of his life insurance policy. His decision ensured that generations to come benefited from the Institute's cutting-edge medical care and pioneering research. Eugene's granddaughter Jessica feels a deep connection to his legacy, describing a "full-circle" moment when she was referred to the Heart Institute's Postpartum Program.

*"Knowing my grandfather's gift helped me is incredibly meaningful," she says.*

Eugene's story illustrates the fact that legacy gifts are measured by their impact, not their size. Every donation helps advance innovative patient care, education, prevention, and groundbreaking research for patients battling heart disease.



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# Leaving a Legacy of Care: One Grateful Daughter's Gift to Perley Health

When Dianne's father suffered a stroke at age 96, she faced a difficult question many families eventually confront: where could he go to receive the care he needed, with the dignity he deserved?

For Dianne, there was only one answer — Perley Health.

Her father, Bill had a great marriage of 50+ years, 4 children, 7 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. He was also a Navy Veteran with a long and fascinating life that included service in intelligence during the Bay of Pigs era.

Bill spent his final time at Perley Health before passing away in October 2022. That time, Dianne says, gave her father something money can't buy: a renewed sense of purpose, connection, and community.

What struck Dianne and other visiting family members was how warm and dignified Perley Health felt. "The Perley doesn't seem like long-term care, it made dad feel like he was at home."

Dianne also fondly remembers sing-alongs, kind, thoughtful caregivers, and many meaningful moments. "There was one young man who always answered the phone when I called. He'd say, Your dad is unavailable at the moment, but he's okay." "It gave me such peace of mind." Dianne also remembers, Teddy, the only personal



support worker that Bill would let help shave his beard.

It's these heartwarming memories and experiences that inspired Dianne to make a deeply personal choice: she included a gift to Perley Health in her will.



"I'm not rich," she says. "But I picked a number that worked after taking care of my family members. I knew I wanted to include Perley—and a local animal shelter, because animals have given me a lot too."

Dianne sees her gift as a way of saying thank you—and paying it forward.

"My dad had a really good final year. I hope the gift in my will to the Perley will give more seniors and Veterans that chance to be cared for with dignity and respect."

Gifts in wills, like Dianne's—no matter the size—help Perley Health continue to provide compassionate, life-enriching care for seniors and Veterans. Leaving a gift in your will is a powerful way to support the causes that matter most to you, long into the future.

For Dianne, it's the legacy of kindness at Perley Health that will last.

Would you like more information about how to include Perley Health in your will?

Please reach out to start a conversation.

**Delphine Haslé, CFRE**  
Executive Director & Chief Development Officer

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# No Stone Left Alone:

## Unique Ceremony Honours Second World War Veterans

By June Coxon

For years, young people have been learning about the sacrifices and lives of World War II veterans through a program called No Stone Left Alone (NSLA). Conceived by Edmontonian Maureen Bianchini Purvis, NSLA was launched in Edmonton in 2011 with a mission to educate youth, to ensure no Canadian veteran is forgotten and to honour those who served, sacrificed and died during the Second World War.

Through NSLA, every young participant receives a Canadian veteran's name. They locate the person's grave, research information about the veteran and, during a remembrance ceremony, they say their veteran's name aloud while placing a poppy on the person's grave.



A student places a poppy on the gravesite of a Second World War veteran during a No Stone Left Alone ceremony at Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa. Photo: Beechwood Cemetery Foundation

It's an idea that has caught on. The number of NSLA participants and events has grown yearly. In 2024, 13,469 students from 217 communities honoured 123,687 veterans in 327 events across nine countries. Since 2021, participants from at least a dozen Ontario locations, including Ottawa, Almonte, Kemptville and Belleville, have taken part in a NSLA event.

To avoid conflicting with November 11 events, NSLA ceremonies were first held on different days and now they are also held during different months. As Maureen, NSLA's founder, explains, she has never felt that gathering for just a few hours on one day is enough.

### Ottawa ceremonies

Nick McCarthy, director of marketing and community outreach at Ottawa's Beechwood Cemetery, discovered NSLA in 2017 while exploring programs promoting inter-generational remembrance and education. "Their mission aligned closely with Beechwood's role as Canada's national cemetery," he says. "After connecting with their team I helped launch the first Ottawa-based NSLA ceremony in 2018. Approximately 75 students attended that Beechwood ceremony, honouring around 5,000 veterans by placing poppies at gravesites and offering words of reflection."

Nick became a NSLA regional co-ordinator in 2018 to support the foundation's expansion throughout Ontario. "Since then," he says, "I've worked to grow its presence province-wide and establish long-term partnerships with local schools, youth organizations and remembrance advocates."

Maureen Bianchini Purvis laying a poppy at the grave of her mother, Lillian Mary Bianchini.



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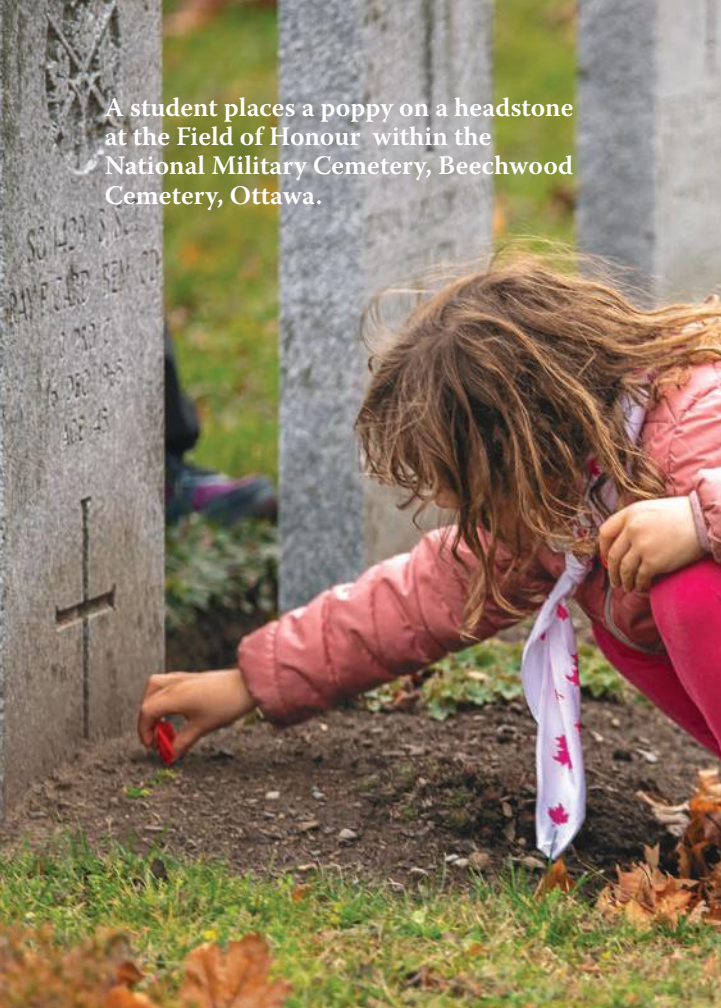
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A student places a poppy on a headstone at the Field of Honour within the National Military Cemetery, Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa.



In 2024, over 300 students participated in a NSLA ceremony at Beechwood cemetery, honouring thousands of veterans interred there. Nick explains that Beechwood is the only Ottawa cemetery formally involved with NSLA school-based ceremonies, but he hopes ceremonies will expand to other sites. He mentions Beechwood also hosted a second NSLA ceremony in 2024 with the National Capital Region (NCR) branch of Girl Guides Canada; over 200 girl guides participated. Combined, these events resulted in poppies being placed on over 8,000 headstones, making Ottawa's contribution one of the largest regional efforts. This year, the NSLA ceremony for NCR Girl Guides at Beechwood is November 8 at 2 p.m. See [beechwoodottawa.ca](http://beechwoodottawa.ca) for details.

All told, says Maureen, "We're expecting 500 events worldwide this year." The idea for NSLA originated when she was a youngster and her mother, World War II veteran Lillian Mary Bianchini, was dying. Maureen promised her mom she would always remember her on November 11. Since then, she has placed a poppy on her mother's gravesite annually. First she did so alone, then with her husband and later with her husband and their two daughters.

When those daughters asked why other veterans' graves didn't get poppies and said they thought they should, Maureen agreed. That's how NSLA was born. To date, NSLA has been honoured with eight awards and Maureen has received Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal for her efforts. [nostoneleftalone.ca](http://nostoneleftalone.ca)



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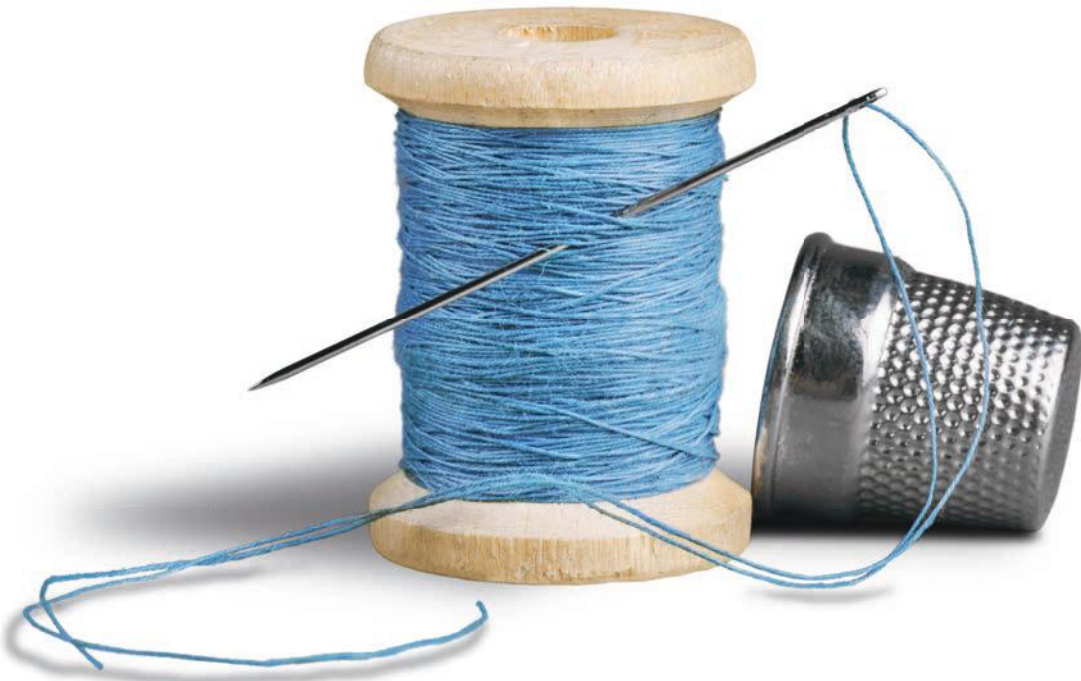
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# No needlework or gardening, please

by Iris Winston



**A** loose button remains loose for too long in my house. That's because sewing of any kind tends to be pushed to the bottom of every to-do list I set up.

It's been that way for a very long time. My difficult relationship with a needle and thread began early. My mother, who was a highly skilled seamstress and creative dress designer, despaired of my pathetic efforts and clearly found them painful to watch. She did try to show me what to do at the beginning, but soon gave me up as a hopeless case as far as any type of needlework was concerned.

From the first attempt to thread a needle, through trying to follow instructions to aim for small, neat stitches to avoiding attaching the wrong pieces of material to each other, I was a dud in every way. I lacked patience with the intricacy of guiding thread into the small slit of the needle. To keep threading to a minimum, I chose to have a long, long thread, thinking this was a way to avoid rethreading as often. In fact, it usually meant the thread tangled and slowed me down. Then I would try to speed up the process with long stitches, resulting in less effective work on a hem or a generally untidy look to anything I put together.

Frequently, the end result was a sigh from my mother, and a promise to take over.

I didn't take much convincing that sewing and I were incompatible. Other factors carried me along the same route. Students in the British grammar school for girls I attended were streamed for some subjects. While I was busy with Latin, French and German classes, for example, a different group took domestic science (home economics in North America), which included a large sewing component. Even physics, the academic class I found the most challenging, was preferable to wielding needle and thread, never mind trying to run a straight seam on a sewing machine. Therefore, sewing and I never met in school.

However, a few years later, after a well-meaning friend gave me her old sewing machine, I decided to try to conquer the needlework mountain. Armed with a simple pattern and material recommended by a knowledgeable sales clerk, I began. It did not go well. I quickly found out that I had to unpick and redo more often than sew. And, when another friend

visited and observed that I was trying to sew, I acknowledged that trying was not accomplishing much. I cut my losses and disposed of the machine, accepting that we weren't on the same wavelength. There was no way I would ever either sew for pleasure or be good enough at the task to make the blood, sweat and tears along the way worthwhile.

I was fortunate to have a body shape that fit into ready-made clothes of the right size, so there was even less reason to stagger along the homemade route. In any case, it was much more fun to search for bargain items on sale than to waste good quality material in producing items of clothing that I knew would never see the light of day.

From here on, I chose to keep sewing to the bare minimum of turning up hems, sewing on buttons and mending, when there was no alternative. That remained my policy during the family years. I did keep basic sewing tools in an unobtrusive spot in the basement. On the few occasions when I couldn't avoid attempting to fix a dropped hem or securing a loose button, I would do it as quietly as possible, because I knew that, once alerted to the rare event of Mum with a needle in her hand, there would be a lineup of husband and kids waiting with items that needed mending.

Another task in my negative column is anything to do with gardening. The deal soon after we married was that I would deal with household tasks indoors and my husband would take care of the outside work. Eventually, his many health issues make him unable to fulfill the original agreement. But he dropped the ball long before that. I was fine with such outdoor jobs as snow shovelling even when we lived in Edmonton and there was a huge amount of snow, but not with the outdoor jobs of summer.

Although I love having vases of fresh flowers in the house, I am just not into planting and tending them while they are growing. The problem extends to house plants, which rarely stay looking healthy on my watch.

Many years ago I was given an aspidistra. I had heard that this type of plant, known for its hardiness, was virtually indestructible and that it could be split in two. The result when I tried it was that I had two aspidistras dying in two parts of the house. I know when I'm beaten.

So I will continue to avoid sewing and gardening.



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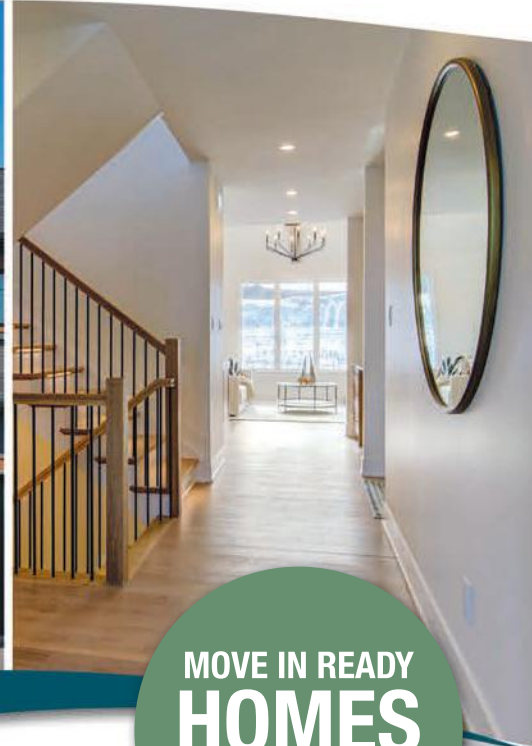
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