

Creatively Speaking

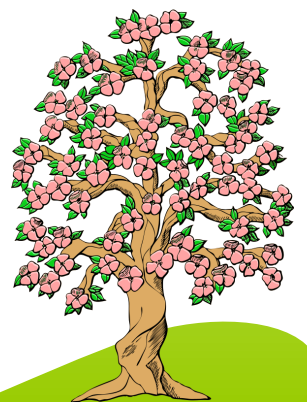
THE ELLINGTON WRITERS

Well, after a relatively long hiatus we are back. Our next issue has arrived. Because of the unfortunate series of outbreaks that plagued the residencies this year, our group was unable to meet for over five weeks and this meant that although the creative juices might have been stirring somewhere, there was nothing in the vault, so to speak, on paper that we could turn to. Now that this has been rectified we are able to present our next issue which, given how difficult it has been to determine when Winter actually ended and Spring actually began, you should maybe consider as both our Winter and Spring offering. Rumour has it that many of you have been waiting for more tidbits from us. If that is the case, we hope that you enjoy these few sprinklings that are finally coming your way.

By: The Ellington Writers

IN MEMORY OF HELENE HUNTER

The Ellington Writers were saddened by the passing of a member of our group recently, Helene Hunter. She was a consistent participant in weekly gatherings up until a few months ago when her health kept her from continuing to remain active. Whenever she was present though, the group could expect her ever sharp sense of humour to tag along with her. She never took herself too seriously, but always had some good advice if you were inclined to need or ask for it. She was well-known in the Ellington community and was a great help to those around her. While she loved doing puzzles, and even took up a game or two of euchre, what the writers in our group will remember most were her comical anecdotes about ongoing battles with her oxygen tanks and hoses. She was always reminding us that they had a life of their own, that they were creatures that stalked her, tangled her, hissed at and tripped her, but that she couldn't do without them. Helene was truly a breath of fresh air in our group and she will be missed by us and all others who knew her well within the Ellington and beyond.





MEMORIES OF GRAMPA'S FARM

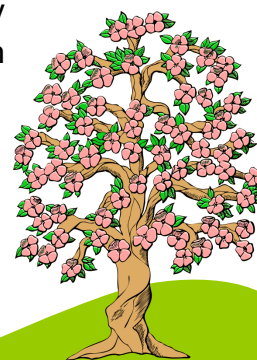
I have many memories of my grandfather's farm in the Ayton area of grey County. Getting the opportunity to go there was always an adventure. Every summer my brother actually spent all of his holiday time there. At the end of the each day my father, my sister and I would go to pick him up.

I remember on one occasion we had to go and pick him up early though and this was due to an accident that he was involved in. It seems that one of the jobs my brother did for my grandfather was cutting grass. He did this manually with a large scythe. On this particular day, my brother was working in a ditch and, unfortunately, lost his balance and fell. The sharp blade of the scythe ultimately cut him deeply enough that he needed a total of 21 stitches to close the wound. My aunt, who was a nurse, happened to be on hand or things could have been quite bad. She tied a piece of cloth around his leg to act as a tourniquet. The town doctor was promptly summoned and the stitching procedure was performed on the kitchen table, my aunt dutifully applying the chloroform. My sister and I were only there for two or three days so managed to stay away from any major mishaps.

The meals that we had there were always delicious and we enjoyed gathering the eggs that often found their way in various forms to the dinner table. My sister and I also enjoyed doing small chores that took us into various parts of the farm. At that time I remember that my grandfather had a black gentleman named Sam who worked as his hired helper. Sam's favourite spot to sit in the farmhouse was behind the kitchen fire-place where it was nice and warm. Sam lived in town as I recall, but all of the grandkids made sure to have a visit with him when we were on the farm.

On Sundays, if we were there, we went to church in a buggy drawn by Maud, the blind yet special Sunday horse. Just point her and she knew where to go. Some of my best memories were of the wonderful times spent at this location free from care, a truly special place for me growing up.

By: Thelma Hornberger





A FAVOURITE AUTHOR REVISITED

One of the authors that I have enjoyed for many years is Rosamunde Pilcher. A writer of short fiction and romance novels, I visited her again when I was not feeling well and needed a sense of belonging, a sense of comfort.

This well-loved lady who was born in Cornwall, but now resides in Scotland is very observant. She gathers the environment that she describes and places it effectively both in and around the lives of her characters. In this way I find she is able to create a place that evolves from the past and moves into the future.

Not only do the characters in her stories recall their own memories, but they speak to the reader's memories. You become aware that the relationships, the homes, the animals are all part of a country you have visited and wish to visit again. Simply put, she is able to evoke through her description of a specific landscape, a feeling that you are a part of the landscape as well.

There is a magic in her mention of a summer's day as you hike along a familiar path, wave to a family picnicking in a green and golden meadow that you recognize, follow the sound of a river in the distance that will bring adventure and a new and happier beginning.

This is the strength of Pilcher's writing for me. She provides an escape into a comfortable, romantic, picturesque world that is easy to remain in.

By: Dorothy Hart

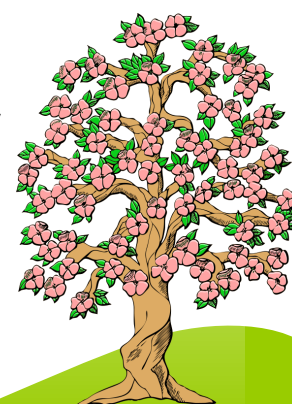
A STICH IN TIME

A favourite past time of mine and one that gives me great enjoyment is sewing. I guess that is why I brought my sewing machine with me when I moved to the Ellington. I never know when I might get the urge to create.

Since moving here over two years ago I have focused on the specific art of quilt-making. My son and his wife gave me the material and patterns to complete two $\frac{3}{4}$ size quilts which turned out quite well. I have also made a 12 x 24 inch wall quilt featuring a red flower and green stems.



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In my spare time I am making a second wall quilt and now I have more material from my daughter to begin yet another project. If I'm not careful I will be starting up a factory in my own apartment.

One of the nice things about quilting though is that I can give my finished products away if I choose to do so. I have given one of the quilts I made to my grand- daughter who lives in Montreal and another to my grandson who lives in Toronto. It's my way of keeping our family stitched together.

By: Elda Port

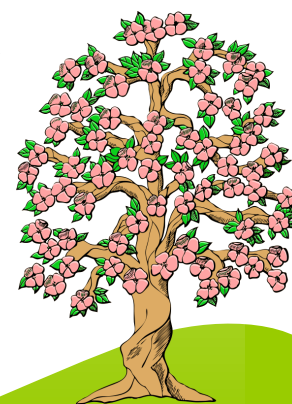
A DECISION THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR A DIFFERENT LIFE

I have been fortunate for most of my life. Born in the peaceful, rich country of Canada to parents who were stable fourth generation descendants of the British Isles, I got a good start. My parents had been raised with a language, a basic education and had been farmers filled with the skills and confidence that they were able to pass on to me.

Although they never tried to pressure me or insist on a particular path of employment or education, there was an expectation that I wouldn't squander my opportunities and this advice I took to heart. I did well in school. From an early age I also liked to work with my hands and could build and fix things. My schooling and my interest in fixing, creating and building would turn out to help me in my later decisions.

I turned 18 in the winter of 1943. Canada had been at war in Europe for four years. My training had been at a Vocational Institute focusing on becoming a machinist or tool maker. I had already been working part-time in the munitions industry as part of our support for the war effort. Of course, military recruitment was still at the forefront of the government's initiative and the current need was for army personnel to replace our troops in Europe. My wish had always been to join the air force, but this was not to be and this was where a decision on my part could be made.

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The option of deferment to recruitment was open to me in favour of further education. I had good school marks on training in a skilled trade that was badly needed at this time. After much thought, it was my decision to apply to continue my education until Grade 13 which was two years away. My Principal, Mr. Warden, after some discussion and reluctance it seemed to me, signed the forms that allowed me to do this. That act, that simple signing of a form that allowed me to pursue my own chosen course, changed the path of my life immensely. Two years later the war ended and with it military recruitment ceased as well. I had made the right decision and it impacted my life from that point on.

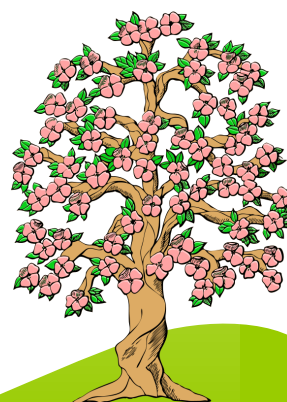
By: Ken Reeve

ASCENDING MY FEARS

I take the last of several tentative steps into the elevator that will catapult me to the top of the CN tower. The doors close. I don't know how I let my friend talk me into doing this, but she assures me that everything will be fine. There are six of us in this tube, this upright glass sarcophagus. Well, that's what it looks like to me as I begin to imagine the worst. Just the thought of leaving the ground in this has me starting to breathe heavily. Before I can ask to be let off, before I can cry out to my fellow passengers that I have changed my mind, there is a click, a quick jerk and we are heading skyward.

As we rise, my friend has the temerity to ask me how I am doing. I throw daggers at her. How am I doing? How do you think I'm doing? We are defying gravity in a way that was not meant to be. I can't breathe. That's how I'm doing. I don't want to open my eyes, but I do. I feel sweat beading up on me and I look straight ahead, trying to focus on the horizon. I see Lake Ontario out in front of me, sailboats the size of corks bobbing around in the water. I try to stay in the moment. I can see that we are now moving above the highest apartment and corporate complexes and I flip into quiet scream mode. Nothing comes out of my mouth at this point, but a crackling of entombed air.

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I can make out small airplanes at our level in the distance, circling us like vultures waiting for a carcass or two to fall. The chatter of people around me is reduced to static. Nothing makes sense. My ears begin to pop and I remember to swallow.

Suddenly my friend grabs my arm and tells me to look down. The people are just ants she says laughing. I elbow her into submission, squeeze her hand until she yelps and focus my attention on the sweater pilling on the person in front of me. I need to get off. We must be really high now I tell myself because the air is thinning. My oxygen intake seems to be waning and I fight the urge to black out.

And then the movement stops. We have not left earth completely I surmise. Another click, softer than the first at ground level is heard and the doors open again. We begin to disembark and my friend says something inane like “we’re here.” I want to crack her one for being so cavalier about the journey we have just been on, about casting aside my fears like so much chaff in the wind, but I will wait before I have my revenge. After all, as I inch my way onto solid ground and feel the reassurance of floor at my feet, I still need to get back down!

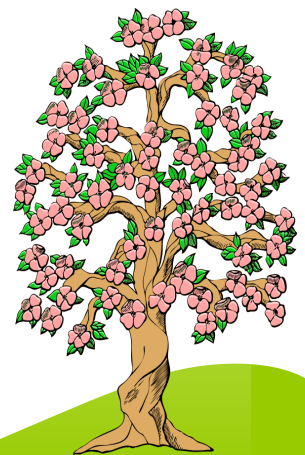
By: David McConnell

FIRST TIME BRINGING THE COWS HOME

Around 1940, we were a city-bred family living on the Niagara Escarpment in Caledon. My father worked in the sandstone quarry which was on a 100 acre lot where we also lived in a small bungalow provided by the owner.

My parents’ plan was to be as self-sufficient as possible. We had a large vegetable garden and kept chickens, ducks, geese and milk cows. Not much of the land was arable and fences were poorly designed. On one occasion the cows got out and wandered into the wooded concession across the road from us. Fortunately, there was rarely any motor traffic as our road was a dead end. My father and I walked through the woods and found the small herd.

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Now came the problem because an opposition of wills emerged and slowly moved into play. On the one side, my father and I knew that we needed to drive these cows home. On the other side, the cows were not only disinclined to go, but also decided that they didn't want to stay together. In order to foil our intent they decided to separate into two groups. This meant that in order for us to succeed we would now need two drivers, my dad and me.

I was nervous to say the least because I was only ten at the time and not experienced in the least. My father assured me that the cows instinct was to lead and find their own way home. I just had to be the commanding presence moving them ever towards the fence. He patiently convinced me to drive my group through the dense woods while he waited with his.

Happily the plan worked. The 15-20 minute walk successfully ended before suppertime and before milking time. Despite my pride at having completed this test with flying colours, I determined that I was not a natural cow herder and didn't become one. You might say that the experience did not moooooove me.

By: Helen Hansen

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of the CREATIVELY SPEAKING newsletter!

A special THANKS to David McConnell, for his ongoing support and volunteer contributions to the Ellington Writers Club program.

For information on how you can actively become involved with this writing program, please contact the Recreation Department.

Stay tuned for our next edition to be released mid Summer!

