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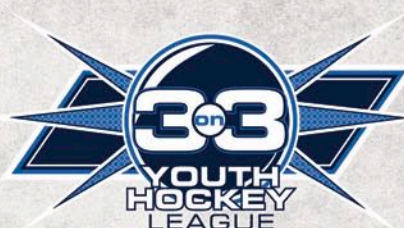


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From the Publisher

Welcome to The Local Biz Magazine Spring 2013 edition!

In this issue, our horoscope columnist Noanie Beregi guides us through the many potential physical and psychological benefits that can be reaped from hypnosis. For those of you with an entrepreneurial streak, Sai Nabar joins us to lay down the steps to starting your very own small business. If you have more of an aesthetic, environmental bent, then take a look at our gardening article and get some hot tips from Toronto master gardener, Maureen Hulbert.

I would like to take a moment to thank Emmanuel Lopez, our film columnist, for the contributions he has made to The Local Biz Magazine. This will be his last issue with us, and we wish him the best. As always, you can turn to "Ask Sue-Ann" for advice in spiritual matters; in this issue she addresses family tension, and angelic visions. Corry Hamilton gets green in this edition of "Taking the Lead," and looks into environmentally friendly options when it comes to pets and pet care. Looking to increase the value of your property? Ryan Smith will give you the low down on turning your bathroom renovation into an investment. In "Teens, Tweens and Inbetweens," Sam Burtch shares her insight on how to deal with those stressful spring-time exams. Our resident hair-dresser, Steph Pommells, will have you prepared to look your best this spring in "Treat Yourself," and Dennis Brown reminds us to invest in our relationships in "Coaches Corner." Shirley Ouellette shares yet another delicious recipe, and a little slice of history to boot, in "Tasteful Talk."

I know I say it all the time, but thank you, readers, for sticking with us. As always, you can find copies of The Local Biz Magazine at any of our distributors, a list of which can be accessed on our website, www.thelocalbizmagazine.ca. If you can't get to a distributor to pick up an issue, or want to review an old favourite, remember that you can download your free copy from our website under 'archives.' I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as I did!

Antoine Elhashem
Publisher

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From the Editor

Welcome to Spring 2013!

I toyed with the idea of including 'at long last' in that greeting, but lately it just isn't as emphatic. The Canadian Winter that was once mythological in stature seems to be growing more meagre every year. While snow fall and bitter cold still make their customary appearance, they are nothing in comparison to the frigid air and towering snow banks I remember from my childhood. Granted, I was significantly shorter then, so snow banks that appeared as insurmountable barricades probably never got over three or four feet in height, but the point still stands. I feel like I would be sacrificing my status as a die-hard Canadian if I complained too much about this year's half-hearted attempt at a traditional winter. Whether these are the affects of global warming or just one phase of a natural cycle, I do not know. However, you must admit that it is suspicious, and that observable evidence is becoming increasingly more stacked against any remaining global warming nay-sayers.

On the other hand, never let it be said that I don't appreciate the warmer weather, or the renewed sense of vitality that comes with it. In this issue we decided to explore the season of growth with a follow-up article for the green thumb. You might recall that we recently published an article in our last issue on what to do for your garden in winter. Unfortunately, several factual errors slipped through the usually air-tight Local Biz process (the Latin names were listed as individual plants alongside their English counterparts). Which is why, in this issue, we went strait to the source and brought in Toronto Master Gardener Maureen Hulbert to set the gardening record strait.

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce that this issue will be the last for our film columnist Emmanuel Lopez; Emmanuel, it has been a pleasure to work with you, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

I think that about sums up all the updates that I wanted to cover in this editorial, and so I will let you, readers, move on to all the engaging content that we have packed into The Local Biz Magazine Spring 2013!

Sherry Hucklebridge
Editor



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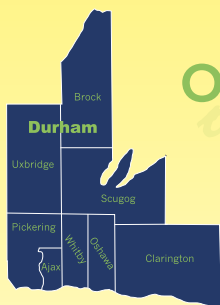
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The Small Business Roadmap

By Sai Nabar



Starting a small business is a lot like becoming a parent; it will change your life. Not only do you have to prepare for your start-up emotionally and financially, but you need to be tuned into the constant needs and demands of a business until it's mature enough to function with minimal supervision. Just like your child, your business will always need you every now and then, regardless of how established it is. Everyone has a unique reason to start a business and take a dive into entrepreneurship. Some of us sink, some of us swim. In this article, we'll explore the path you can follow to make sure your mind's child has the best chance of survival and gets a chance to thrive.



Traits of a successful entrepreneur

Starting a business is a lot of work. Anyone who tells you otherwise either doesn't know what they're talking about or has never started a business in their life. The hours are long, sacrifices are great and you are peppered with new problems and challenges every day.

1. Strong leaders

To be a good entrepreneur, you have to be a great leader. Leaders have great communication skills and the ability to energize a team of people toward a common goal. You need to have the ability to keep their eyes on the prize and work effectively to get there as a team. A leader knows how to earn the trust and respect of his team.

2. Highly self-motivated

Entrepreneurs enjoy challenges and will work tirelessly to solve problems that confront them. They adapt well to changing situations. Successful entrepreneurs are always self-motivated and are great at injecting this enthusiasm into their team by motivating them towards new goals and opportunities.

3. Thirst for knowledge

While successful entrepreneurs are typically strong personalities overall, the best have learned that there's always a lesson to be learnt. They are rarely afraid to ask questions when it means the answers will provide them insight that they can then leverage.

4. Integrity

You will find that successful, sustainable business people maintain the highest standards of integrity. After all, if you cannot prove yourself a credible business person and nobody will do business with you, you are out of business.

5. Rampant networkers

In almost every case, entrepreneurs never get to success alone. The successful entrepreneurs understand it takes a network of contacts, business partners, financial partners, peers and resources to succeed. They nurture these relationships and surround themselves with people who can help make them more effective.

6. Calculated risk-taking

Successful entrepreneurs are risk takers who have overcome one very significant hurdle; they are not afraid to fail. In fact, entrepreneurs are often successful as a result of their calculated risk taking and able to make the best decisions in even the worst of cases.

7. Innovators

Entrepreneurs are defined by their drive to constantly develop new ideas and improving on existing norms. They welcome change and know how to capitalize on it.

8. Competitive spirit

Entrepreneurs enjoy a challenge and they like to win. They would have to, since starting a business is pretty much one of the biggest challenges a person can take on in their lifetime. In business, you are constantly at war to grow market share.

Kick start your dream business

When you think about starting a business, you have a pre-existing idea about what that business will be. You also feel relatively certain about whether you will start your business from scratch, buy an established business or purchase a franchise. These various models all have their pros and cons. You need to decide right at the beginning which model suits you and your product/business the best.

1. Build from the ground up

Pros

- You can create your own work culture.
- You can operate the business the way you want.
- It's prestigious to own a successful, independent business.
- You gain business knowledge and experience, which you can use for the rest of your life.
- You have more freedom and can use your creativity.

Cons

- The start-up phase takes time to complete.
- You must be able to adapt to change quickly.
- Increased responsibility.

Is business the right choice for you? Here are five questions to ask before you start your own business:

1. **Am I passionate about my product or service?** The start-up phase is stressful and will take a lot out of you. Your enthusiasm for your product or service is often the difference between you and your competitors. You are the face of your business, your passion for the business idea will reel in the customers, make deals and attract investors.
2. **What is my tolerance for risk?** A start-up is risky business. You may or may not succeed. Nothing about starting a business is for the faint of heart. If you're risk-averse, entrepreneurship probably isn't the right path for you.
3. **Am I good at making decisions?** As a business owner, you will need to make quick and sometimes very tough decisions. No one else can make these tough decisions for you. The choices you make can lead to success or downfall, so you must feel confident in your ability to make the right call.
4. **Am I willing to take on numerous responsibilities?** As a corporate employee you have a fixed set of specialized tasks. As a business owner, you don't have that luxury. You will need to juggle many roles, if this isn't your thing, entrepreneurship probably won't be either.
5. **Will I be able to avoid burnout?** As a startup owner, you'll have to work seven days a week and might not be able to make enough time for loved ones. This can get frustrating and lead to burnout even before your business takes off. To overcome this situation you need to have the mettle to be a true entrepreneur and have the right support system in place.

Take time to think over these questions. Be honest with yourself. Some of us are entrepreneurs and some aren't. If you think you have what it takes to go the entire way, then go for it. Build your dream.

2. Take over an existing business

Pros

- If you're lucky you'll get to buy over a well-established business which runs like a well-oiled machine and needs minimal guidance and support from you.
- You can operate the business the way you want and have input from the experienced staff.
- It's prestigious to own a successful independent business, especially if it has been around for a long time.
- You gain business insights from the success and failure of the business in the past.

Cons

- The existing staff might not take kindly to the change in management.
- The business might have some inherent failures, like big debts, bad reputation, law suits, bad work culture, etc...you need to make sure you do your due diligence before buying the business.

3. Buy a franchise

Pros

- When you buy a franchise, you are buying an established concept that has been successful, so the rate of failure is low.
- You get a lot of help starting your business and running it afterwards.
- Your business will benefit from the collective buying power of the parent company as the franchisor can afford to buy in bulk and pass the savings along to the franchisee.
- Many well-known franchises have national, brand-name recognition. Buying a franchise can be like buying a business with built-in customers.

Cons

- As a franchisee, you are not the one actually running the show, and some franchisors exert a degree of control that you may find excruciating.
- Besides the original franchise fee and royalties, a percentage of your franchise's business revenue will need to be paid to the franchisor each month. The franchisor may also charge additional fees.
- Buying into well-known franchises is very expensive. If this is your choice, you need to have extremely deep pockets or the ability to arrange the necessary financing.

Business structure

Of all the decisions you make when starting a business, the structure is probably the most important one. Not only will this decision have an impact on how much you pay in taxes each year, but it will affect the amount of paperwork your business is required to do, the personal liability you face and your ability to raise money.

1. Sole proprietorship

Legally, if you set up your business as a sole proprietorship, the business is considered to be an extension of yourself. As a sole proprietor, you are responsible for all the liabilities and obligations your business incurs. This means, if the business fails, any of your assets, including your home, car, etc. can be seized to pay off the liabilities. On the positive side, a sole proprietorship is the easiest form of business to set up and operate.

2. Partnership

If you don't want to go the distance alone and be the sole owner and operator of your business, you may wish to legally set up your business as a partnership. You can create a partnership between two people, or thirty; the law doesn't set a limit on how many partners may be involved. There are three types of partnerships in Canada; General Partnership, Limited Partnership and Limited Liability Partnerships. These are relatively easy business set-ups to operate. If the partners have a falling out, the business can be dissolved and the assets are allocated as per the partnership agreement.

3. Incorporation

A corporation (or limited company) is a distinct legal entity separate from its owners/shareholders. No member of the company can be held personally liable for the debts, obligations or acts of the company. A shareholder is only liable for the unpaid portion of shares owned. While this limited liability is an advantage, a corporation is the most expensive and difficult form of business ownership to set up and operate.

Now that you've successfully done some introspection, it's time to put things on paper and breathe life into your dream.

The Business Pre-launch to do list



1. Business plan

A business plan is a formal statement of a set of business goals, the reasons why you think they are attainable, and the plan for reaching each of those goals. It may also contain background information about the organization or team attempting to reach those goals.

When planning a new business, a three to five year business plan is required. This will help you as well as other stakeholders understand the business situation and point out possible pit falls. When making a business plan, be

conservative and, as far as possible, try to base the projections on existing industry and geographical averages.

The business plan is important. It isn't just paper work so take your time and do it well. Dwell on things like exit plans; it's never easy to pull the plug on your dreams, but sometimes you might have to and it's always nice to have thought of it before. The business plan is also important if you plan on getting loans from the bank or funding from investors.

2. Financing

There are a number of options when it comes to financing. You'll need a combination of some of the following:

Personal assets: You'll need to use some of your own money for start-up, either from your savings or from personal property you can sell.

Friends and Family: More times than not, your friends and family know how much your dream means to you and would love to help you achieve it. While borrowing from family and friends is an option and lots of entrepreneurs do it, you need to be careful and make sure you make formal agreements with them on paper, regarding how and when you'll pay them back.

Financial institutions: Banks, trust companies and credit unions are common sources of financing for small businesses. They can provide a number of options, including personal lines of credit, short-term loans and long-term mortgage loans.

Angel investors: Angels are wealthy individuals or groups who invest their own money in promising new businesses, usually ones in the same field they come from. This might be a place where your networking comes in handy.

Venture capitalists: They offer money, management expertise and connections for a share in the business. As a rule of thumb, venture capital companies won't look at an opportunity that requires less than \$400,000, and most prefer a deal size of at least \$2 million.

Government and non-profit financing options: There are several government and non-profit organizations set up to help sprouting small businesses. Many of them include valuable hands-on training, planning assistance and mentoring services. In Canada, we are lucky to have a good infrastructure set-up to help small businesses.

3. Legal help

It is essential to get a core team to help you get off the ground and a good lawyer is a part of that team. Find a lawyer who can help you:

- Form a corporation or partnership.
- Purchase a business or franchise and draft the agreements.
- Review start-up documents such as loan agreements, leases and contracts.
- Deal with any copyright, patent or trade-mark issues.
- Represent you in the event you get involved in a lawsuit.
- Wind down or sell your business.

4. Licensing

Find out if your business requires government permission to operate, contact your local Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) www.ontario.ca/sbec or the Canada-Ontario Business Service Centre www.cbcs.org/ontario.

5. Premise

Unless yours is a home-based business, you'll need to rent or buy premises. If you decide to rent premises, you'll need to sign a lease with the owner. Make sure your lawyer goes over it carefully and explains it to you before you sign it, so that you know what you're

committing to. If you decide to purchase, get help from a real estate agent who specializes in commercial properties and have your lawyer review your offer before you buy.

You may also want to look into renting space at a business incubator. For more information on business incubators, contact the Canadian Association of Business Incubators (CABI) www.cabi.ca.

6. Insurance

The types of insurance available today are seemingly endless, so having an experienced insurance agent or broker can really make a difference. He/she can help you evaluate the risks in your particular business and advise you on the coverage you need.

Post-launch business operations

Once you've taken care of the pre-launch leg work, it's time for your dream to take wings. Other than the usual day-to-day operations of your business, you will need to allot time to accounting, marketing and human resources. It doesn't matter how good your idea is and how superior your product is — if you don't have these in place, your business will run into problems.

1. Accounting and Business Records

Having a good accountant on board is integral to the success of your business, even if he/she just works with you on a part time basis. A capable accountant can actually save you a lot of money and help you manage your business more effectively. Some of the responsibilities of your accountant are:

- Preparing budgets and cash flow statements.
- Setting up your financial record-keeping system.
- Preparing GST, RST, payroll deductions, etc.
- Dealing with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)
- Preparing your income tax return.

2. Marketing and Communication

You can have the best product or service around, but if people don't know about it, your business will fail. So, hone your message and try to promote your business in the most effective way. Where do your potential customers go to get information about businesses similar to yours? What would drive them to patronize your business over the competition?

Some of the marketing aids that you need to get are:

Business cards, which should clearly state your contact details, business address and the nature of your business.

Advertise in:

- local newspapers and magazines that cater to your target market
- local radio spots
- the yellow pages
- billboards

Preparing direct mail or distributing flyers to your target market

Creating a website - often time these can be done for a very small fee or even for free by students that need the experience.

Networking - meet new people through networking groups, including potential customers, suppliers and fellow business owners. Word of mouth is still something that can make or break businesses.

3. Human resources

While you may not need to hire employees at first, chances are you'll have to at some point, particularly as your business grows. Standards for employment and occupational health and safety are governed by the Ministry of Labour (www.labour.gov.on.ca), which administers and enforces the:

- Employment Standards Act
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Pay Equity Act
- Smoking in the Workplace Act

Control Functions and Financials

The best way to assess your progress is to revisit your business plan. If you took the time and prepared a comprehensive business plan, you will have derived projections for where you should be at key milestones (six months, one year etc.) up to 5 years.



- How did your business do in comparison to the projections?
- Are your sales what they should be?
- Are your expenses in line?

If not, it's time to find out why and how you can change it. You need to honestly review three main areas of your business:

1. Management

As a business owner, you will be juggling a lot of duties. You will constantly need to access whether or not you are using all your resources effectively. Some questions to ask yourself are:

- Are you selling when and where the customers are available and doing non-revenue generating work after business hours?
- Have you made it clear which tasks are most important for achieving business milestones?
- Can you make better use of the internet to market and sell your product/service?
- Do you need to hire more people or delegate more effectively to free yourself up to focus on key areas?
- Do you provide positive feedback as well as constructive criticism?
- Are you having meetings when a phone call or e-mail would be just as productive?
- Are you the best person to sell your product/service? If not, who is?

2. Sales and Marketing

It's not enough to have a superior product or service. You have to get out and sell it. At the end of the day, if you don't have a cash register that's ringing, you don't really have a business. Ask yourself:

- Can you adjust your price or modify your product or service to better satisfy your customers?
- Have you developed good relationships with your customers?
- Have you asked them for feedback and acted on it?
- Are you getting referrals from your customers?
- Is your message on the mark or does it need refinement or change?
- Are your advertising efforts cost-effective?

3. Financials

The financial health of your business is the most important part of the whole business.

- Are your customers paying on a timely basis?
- Are there ways you can reduce your costs?
- Are you using your resources in the most effective way? (human resources, loans, utilities, etc.)

When you've finished your assessment, adjust your business plan accordingly and review it again in three months.

The only constant in business is change, so learn to embrace it! Be alert to changes in the economy, your industry, your market and your customer base. Build a great team, be ready to respond proactively to situations and, finally, learn from your mistakes. Inspect where you've gone wrong and develop a plan for avoiding mistakes in the future. There is nothing more liberating and exhilarating than seeing your dream take wings.

Sai Nabar is a freelance writer and a co-founder of KarmaKarts.com, an e-commerce start-up focused on helping small local businesses increase their foot traffic. She's a world traveler and loves spending time with her 3 year old and two wonderful dogs.

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Kick Start your *Spring Garden*

By Maureen Hulbert

*“In the spring, at the end of the day,
you should smell like dirt.”*

If you find yourself nodding in agreement with Margaret Atwood, you must be a gardener. While we were all happy to see the return of snow in late December, bringing a proper Canadian winter, the arrival of yet more snow in March does not fill us with joy. Rather, we avidly await the first crocuses and snowdrops, harbingers of a gardener's favourite season. What better way to reinvigorate yourself and your garden than getting outside. A couple of hours on the weekend for the next few weeks is all you need to help get your garden, and yourself, back in shape.

But wait! Don't be too quick to start stomping around the garden beds when they are very wet. In early spring, soil holds a lot of moisture from melting snow and spring rain. Walking in wet garden beds will compact the soil significantly, eliminating air pockets in the soil which are vital for healthy root systems and good soil structure. Wait until the soil is somewhat dry, or lay down planks to walk on, which will distribute your weight over a larger area and reduce compaction.

Start by cleaning up winter debris such as garbage that's blown in, branches that have fallen due to winter wind, and dead foliage. While you're carefully picking your way through, check for frost heave – exposed root crowns will quickly die out in the wind and sun. Carefully press the plant back into the soil with your hands, adding a shovelful of compost or mulch around the crown to make sure the root crown stays covered.

Cut back plants that were left for winter interest. Grasses and some perennials, such as coneflower (*Echinacea*) and black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*), can be cut back to two or three inches above the soil level - be careful not to cut off emerging new shoots. For grasses, you may find hedge shears work best to cut back the thick clumps.

Remove twine and burlap from evergreens, roses and newly planted shrubs about mid April. Next, give the lawn a good raking with a fan rake. It removes dead grass and other debris from the surface, lifts and separates the blades so the sun can get at them, and scratches up the soil to help air and moisture to penetrate.



Lawns

Speaking of lawns, remember that you can no longer spray pesticides on your lawn. That doesn't mean, however, that you can't have a great-looking lawn. After fall, mid-April to early June is the second best time to seed your lawn. Over-seeding in the spring and fall is one of the best things you can do to keep your lawn thick and crowd out any weed seeds that blow by.

If the early spring is very wet, hold off on the seeding. The soil is still very cool in spring, and cold, wet weather promotes disease. When you do seed, use a spreader and drop the seeds half in one direction and half at 90 degrees to the first direction. Rake it in with a fan rake to settle it into the soil. This is also the time to add topsoil and seed to bare patches in the lawn if you have them. Water well and keep the area moist until the grass is well-established—light and frequent waterings for at least three weeks (every other morning if it doesn't rain). No foot traffic for at least six to eight weeks.

Once your lawn is established, you want to water infrequently to promote deep root growth—about 1" of water per week (half an hour of watering in the early morning or evening once a week).

If you want to easily add a professional touch to your garden, try edging your borders where they meet your lawn. A crisp, clean edge makes everything in the garden look better. Using a half-moon edger or a gas-powered model, cut straight down to the depth of the edger, then angle up towards the bed until you are level with the bed surface.

Soil Improvement

It takes several years to create good garden soil, and regular soil improvement should be part of every gardener's routine. Once you've cleaned up the debris and cut back dead seed heads, add a couple of inches of well-rotted manure or compost all around your plantings on top of last year's mulch. Some gardeners like to dig in soil amendments to get the nutrients closer to the roots, but you shouldn't—the worms will do the work for you and they won't damage the soil structure in the process. Remove any weeds that you see sprouting up while you're there. Finally, top-dress the beds with 2 to 3" of fresh mulch—shredded bark is a good choice because it will enrich the soil as it decomposes.

If you have acid-loving plants in your garden, such as rhododendrons or azaleas, now is a good time to add a soil acidifier around those shrubs. Many come in granular form that you simply spread loosely around the base of the shrub in the quantities suggested on the product label.



Transplanting

You can transplant or divide perennials or small shrubs now before they leaf out. Make sure the ground is neither waterlogged nor frozen before you start, because you don't want to damage the plant. Time your transplanting for a cooler part of the day to reduce stress—early morning or evening is best.

To divide perennials such as hosta or astilbe, use a garden spade to dig all around, then under the clump. Try to lift as much of the root ball as you can. Carefully divide the clump into sections, each with its own viable root system. You might need a sharp knife to cleanly cut through the roots, some gardeners prefer to use two garden forks back to back. The centre of the clump may be worn out because it is the oldest part—if it is, just toss it on the compost pile. Replant the divided sections right away, to minimize moisture loss and stress.

To transplant shrubs, first loosely tie up the branches to reduce the chance of breakage. Dig around the shrub with a garden spade, then underneath at a 45-degree angle. Holding the base of the shrub in one hand, leverage the spade with your other to see if you have severed all the roots. If you haven't, you may need to dig deeper, or if there are only one or two roots hanging on, get a friend to use a sharp knife or a pair of loppers to cut them. A cleanly cut root will heal much faster than a torn one. Replant immediately in the new location. For all transplanting, make sure you water the new plants well.



Pruning

Be careful what you prune in spring! Shrubs that flower in the spring (before June 15, roughly) set their flower buds the previous summer and must come through the winter intact—they flower on last year's wood or "old wood." If you prune them now, you will cut off the flower buds and wonder why your shrub is not flowering. Examples of spring-flowering shrubs include lilac, forsythia, and viburnum.

Shrubs that flower in the summer or early fall (after June 15) set their flower buds on this year's wood or "new wood." They can be pruned now because they will produce new wood that will hold the flower buds this year. Examples of summer-flowering shrubs include hydrangea, spiraea, and butterfly bush.

Hydrangeas have become very popular again in recent years, due to the introduction of many hardier and longer-blooming varieties. When cutting back in the spring, you must know what type of hydrangea you have. Annabelle Hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*) has large, white, snowball-shaped flowers and tends to flop over in the rain. This type of hydrangea can and should be cut back to six or eight inches above the ground, to renew the plant and to ensure it grows short, stubby canes that can more easily hold up the large flower-heads in the rain.

Pee Gee Hydrangeas (*Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora*), such as Limelight or Unique, have more cone-shaped, or panicle-like flowers, which emerge white, then fade to lime green and pink. The branching structure is more shrub-like than Annabelle Hydrangea. Deadheading the flowers is all that is required for these lovely, low maintenance shrubs.

Some of the newer hydrangeas, such as Endless Summer (*Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Bailmer'), produce flowers all summer by flowering on both old and new wood. They may produce pink or blue flowers, depending on the acidity of the soil. These should be deadheaded after blooming only, in order to ensure continuous bloom.

Prune evergreen shrubs for shape now, before new growth begins. If you have evergreen shrubs with an upright habit as opposed to a rounded habit, cutting off the central leader (usually the highest growing point on the shrub) will promote bushy side growth over the season. This is a good idea if you want to thicken a cedar hedge, for example.

If you're not sure when your shrubs flower, don't prune them now. Wait and see when they flower this year, and then write it down for future reference.

New Planting

Mid-April to the end of June is the best time of year to add new plants to your garden. Trees and shrubs especially benefit from being planted in the spring, as they are large plants with correspondingly large root systems, and this gives them the longest possible growing period in which to set down roots. Don't be discouraged if you plant a tree and do not notice any new top growth for a few years. A newly-planted tree will put most of its energy into its root system, which will then help nourish the tree as it grows. A common rule of thumb is that an inch of trunk diameter equals a year of replacement root growth. So a three-inch caliper young tree may sit for three years in the ground before you notice any significant growth above ground, but it has been very busy increasing its root system during that time. It can make more sense to buy young trees (which are also cheaper) than larger ones, because the younger trees adapt to their existing soil more quickly, and they begin putting on noticeable top growth sooner.

What should you plant this year? Landscape Ontario and the Ontario Invasive Plant Council have launched a new educational program for homeowners called Grow Me Instead. The program highlights beautiful, non-invasive plants for common garden uses. It's a great way to find something a little unusual for your garden, and help keep invasive plants out of our natural areas. Looking for a shade tree for example? Instead of Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*), the Grow Me Instead guide suggests Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) or Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*). Need a groundcover for a shady spot? Try Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) rather than Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*). Look for the Grow Me Instead signs at your local garden centre or go online to www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca.

Vegetables



If you already have a veggie patch, then cold weather crops can be direct-seeded outdoors about mid-April – check your seed packets for confirmation about planting times. If you don't have a vegetable patch, consider starting one this year. A raised bed is easy to start, and if you don't like it, it's easy to remove next year. Simply choose a spot in your backyard with at least 6 hours of sunlight a day – the more sunlight, the wider variety of vegetables you can grow. Lay some corrugated cardboard over a rectangular patch of lawn, edge it with some non-treated wood planks, and fill with a good soil mix. Water it well to settle the soil, then add more until it's a few inches below the top edge. Once it's dry, you are ready to sow. Peas, spinach and lettuces are all good candidates for direct-sowing now. Can you smell the fresh dirt already?

Maureen Hulbert studied landscape design and plant material at Humber College. Down to Earth Gardens and Design began in 2004 to offer unique garden designs tailored to individual needs and installation of plant material by knowledgeable gardeners. Her personal and professional outlook is to always keep gardens practical, beautiful and sustainable within the urban environment.

Film Talk

by Emmanuel Lopez-Motivatorman

The Spring Movie Season

Hello movie lovers! Have I mentioned that I was a comic book/sci fi/fantasy movie geek growing up? Well, I am just happy that we now live in a time where it is celebrated and cool to be a nerd, just like highly respected filmmakers Steven Spielberg and J.J. Abrams. Another term being used is "fanboy," so there are many ways for referring to people who have a deep passion for a particular medium or concept. My deep passion is for comic book/sci fi/fantasy movies and this spring season has an abundance of choices that will hopefully excite your inner geek too!

In March comes the fantasy adventure, *Jack the Giant Slayer* and is a modern day fairy tale about a young farmer named Jack (Nicholas Hoult) determined to save a princess from a land of giants. Director Bryan Singer also helmed the first two *X-Men* movies, so this should be entertaining. Another fantasy adventure film, *Oz: The Great and Powerful*, is a prequel to *The Wizard of Oz* story where a small-time magician named Oscar Diggs (James Franco) is hurled into the Land of Oz. There he meets three enchantresses who will eventually become the famous witches from the classic story. Then there is the supernatural horror film, *Carrie*, the third adaptation of Stephen King's novel, this time starring Chloe Grace Moretz as the teen with telekinetic powers, Carrie White. I grew up loving director Brian De Palma's version with Sissy Spacek as an amazing Carrie so let's see what this new take is like.

If you are looking for laughter there's the comedy *The Incredible Burt Wonderstone* which is about two rival magicians Burt Wonderstone (Steve Carell) and Steve Gray (Jim Carrey). Both actors had hilarious scenes together in *Bruce Almighty*, so this new film could have some memorable scenes! The 3D animated feature *The Croods* is about a prehistoric family going on a road trip to an uncharted and fantastical world. This features the vocal talents of Nicolas Cage, Ryan Reynolds and Emma Stone. From the movie trailer comes a nice message about going out into the world and trying new things in life. The action thriller *G.I. Joe: Retaliation* is a sequel to 2009's *G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra* and stars Dwayne Johnson, Bruce Willis and Channing Tatum returning as Duke. Willis plays the original G.I. Joe coming out of retirement to help his fellow Joe's.

In April comes the film *Oblivion*, which is described as a science fiction version of *Groundhog Day*. It stars Tom Cruise as Jack Harper, a repairman on a future, devastated Earth. He discovers a crashed spacecraft that triggers a chain of events that forces him to question everything he knows. The movie trailer is reminiscent of the animated movie *Wall-E* and Cruise's character has a very cool ship! The comedy *The Big Wedding* is about a long divorced couple being forced to pretend they are still happily married at their son's wedding. The film has a large ensemble cast including Susan Sarandon, Robin Williams, Katherine Heigl, Amanda Seyfried with Robert De Niro and Diane Keaton as the couple.

In May, fanboys everywhere will be eager to see the superhero action film *Iron Man 3* which follows after *The Avengers* movie storyline and again stars Robert Downey Jr. as Tony Stark a.k.a. Iron Man. This time Stark uses his ingenuity to fight those who destroyed his private world and faces the new enemy, Mandarin (Ben Kingsley). The film *The Great Gatsby* is an adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel of the same name directed by Baz Luhrmann, who created the visually stunning *Moulin Rouge*. The story is about Nick Carraway (Tobey Maguire) who is fascinated by the mysterious past and lavish lifestyle of

his neighbor, Jay Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio). The movie trailer already shows off Luhrmann's splashy cinematic style.

The science fiction movie *About Time* tells the tale of Tim Lake (Domhnall Gleeson), a man who can travel through time and who learns his unique gift can't save him from the ups and downs that affect all families. Actress Rachel McAdams also stars, which is interesting because she also appeared in *The Time Traveler's Wife*. I absolutely love the concept of time travel so I am eager to see this! Another science fiction film, *Star Trek: Into Darkness*, is the long-awaited sequel to director J.J. Abrams's 2009 re-imaging of the highly successful *Star Trek*. In this story, the crew of the U.S.S. Enterprise find that an unstoppable force has attacked Starfleet and left Earth in chaos. Chris Pine returns as Captain Kirk as does Zachary Quinto as Spock. The trailer shows one amazing scene of the Enterprise rising out of an ocean. The 3D animated fantasy-adventure film *Epic* is about a teenage girl named Mary (Amanda Seyfried) who finds herself in a tiny secret world within the forest. There she must help a team of whimsical characters and warriors (Colin Farrell) to save their world that has been at war. Other voice talents include Beyoncé Knowles and Steven Tyler.

So there's your sampling of spring movies to choose from! If you love sci fi/fantasy films then this spring has a lot to offer. And there are many other genres of movies to look forward to. Remember to embrace whatever deep passion you have whether it's for movies or other mediums. What you love energizes your spirit AND is a big part of who you are!

EMMANUEL LOPEZ a.k.a. MOTIVATORMAN is an author, speaker, social media consultant and movie blogger featured in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Globe and Mail*. He provides "movie prescriptions" for those going through difficult times. He has written over 500 tips on his *Movies that Motivate* blog and has done motivational talks at TD Canada Trust, Royal Ontario Museum, Lululemon Athletica and The Art Institute of Boston. Emmanuel recently released his first eBook "15 Movies To Help You Overcome Difficult Times".



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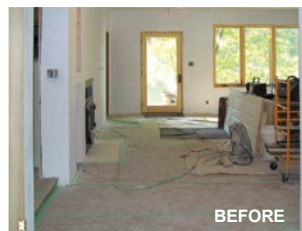
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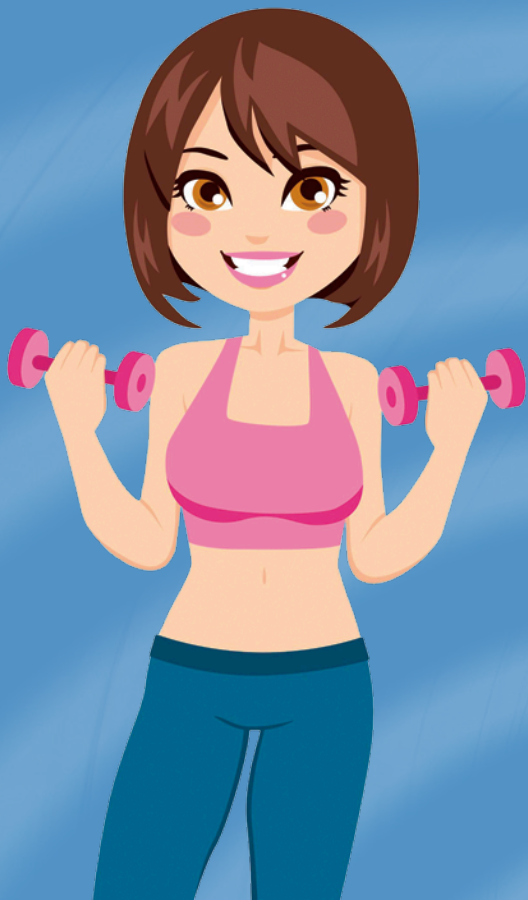


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Getting Hea Throu Hypn

MOTHER NATURE SO EASILY EMBRACES CHANGE; HER SPRING SEEDS SHAKE OFF THE CHILL OF WHAT SEEMED LIKE THE LONGEST WINTER EVER, AND THE NORTH POLE SUMMONS BACK ITS THICK BLANKET OF SNOW. SOON THOSE SEEDS WILL SPROUT HOPE AND RENEWAL NOT ONLY UPON THE EARTH BUT IN THE MINDS AND THOUGHTS OF IT'S PEOPLE. SPRING IS THE TIME WHEN WE FACE OUR TRUTHS; A TIME THAT WE STAND AND PEER DIRECTLY AT OURSELVES IN THE MIRROR AND RE-EVALUATE.

ng althy ugh nosis

By Noanie Beregi



As humans, we often move mountains to maintain our status quo and avoid change at all costs. Looking in the mirror, we can't stop the flow of negative self-talk as it bombards us with a complete book of failures. We scan our body and look for signs of youth and beauty. We interpret the lines around our eyes as checkmarks waiting to tick off the long list of to-dos on the get-fit/get-healthy agenda. We gasp as we glimpse an odd reflection and the pink elephant still standing in the room behind us. The elephant has followed us everywhere since we made those New Year's Resolutions months earlier. The hand written list that starts with the statement; I promise to quit smoking, go to the gym more often, eat more fruits and vegetables, drink plenty of water and a footnote at the bottom that exclaims "stop thinking so negatively about everything." It stands behind us with arms crossed waiting for us to go and get the actual list of New Year's Resolutions and pin it back up on the kitchen cork board. In locating it, we cringe as we imagine ourselves sorting through the garbage at our local Tim Horton's drive-thru. The list is there, having been tossed out along with the empty donut boxes that had piled up on the floor of the back seat of the car.

Shaking our heads, we know we don't even need the list to remember all the things we should automatically be doing for ourselves. We know the personal health commitments we have to make but what interferes with implementation? Why do we find it so tough to even get started? If we do start eating properly and going to the gym, why do we stop midway through and give up? We all know we should get loads of sleep, formally exercise, eat nutritious foods, drink more water, lose a few pounds, meditate daily, and much more but, when it comes down to the crunch, we opt out. What stops us from meeting our own personal health goals?

This is the negative self-talk that went through my mind one spring almost twenty years ago:

Its spring, and its my time to give up the smoking habit. I am on a mission to streamline my life and my body. It is time to discover the new me deep down underneath all this extra weight. I am smoking over a pack and a half a day, and that has got to stop. I enjoy everything about smoking, but it is a huge hurdle that stands in the way of getting anywhere in my life. How could I even attempt to get healthy while slowly poisoning myself? Smoking promises to kill me quite young, but in return it gives me the false satisfaction that I am calm and cool. At the same time, to give it up would be one big challenge. In the back of my mind, I know I need to quit, but I have tried so often that no one takes me seriously anymore. One of my biggest fears is the fact that if I give up smoking, I would gain even more weight.

I had tried every method at the time to quit the filthy habit, but nothing worked; I consciously wanted to quit, but I was addicted. During that spring, I mentioned my dilemma to a close friend and he went on to explain about a method he used, which had worked for him; something called hypnosis. He mentioned that weight gain was not an issue because they put some type of statement in the hypnotic suggestions to eliminate giving up one addiction and replacing it with another. Therefore the issue of weight gain was no longer an issue. In those days, hypnosis was a little radical, but I needed something above and beyond the norm. My friend had been smoke free for over ten years after he experienced hypnosis.

I was eager to try hypnosis in the hope that I could get control of my life and maybe begin to attempt the get-fit/get-healthy agenda that I so seriously wanted and needed. Four sessions later, I walked away a non-smoker who was motivated to become a healthier individual. I have never had a craving for another cigarette since I left that office. That day, hypnosis ignited something so incredible inside of me that I have expressed my gratitude by sending thank-you cards yearly to the hypnotherapist, right up until he eventually retired.

You can read ten different books about hypnosis and get ten different ideas of how and why it works. I would like to share my thoughts; hypnosis is a condition of focused attention in which suggestibility is heightened, and it is these suggestions that can lead to total transformation. I believe that hypnosis talks to the two voices in our mind. If you look at your own reasoning abilities, you see that we often have conflicting voices in our head when we cannot make a decision.

One example might be the following scenario: You are hungry and you just got off the phone with your spouse telling you about the dinner they have ready and waiting for you when you arrive home from a long day at work. Driving home, you spot the golden arches from afar, your stomach growls louder and louder as you approach, and you hit the indicator lights and turn into the restaurant parking lot. At that moment, those two voices start yakking at you don't they? You are torn as your car veers toward an empty parking space...and the squabbling begins... One voice says "just a small hamburger" and the other voice keeps saying things like "wait till you get home, that dinner will taste even better because you're so hungry."

It is this constant disagreement between two opposing voices that causes a lot of major problems. Your conscious mind is usually the one that goes straight home, but it is the unconscious mind that knocks you off course. It is very difficult to gain access to the unconscious mind and make beneficial changes because there is a built-in security system that filters everything coming into it. Hypnosis allows you to bypass the security system in the unconscious mind and with the help of positive suggestions; hypnosis harmonizes the conscious and unconscious mind so that they agree.

Let's use quitting smoking as another example in understanding hypnotherapy: Your conscious mind wants to quit. The unconscious mind wakes you up in the middle of the night and urges you to get in the car and drive to a store twelve miles away (because it is the only one open at this late hour) just to buy cigarettes. You get back in the car and light up a cigarette and take a drag. You flip down the sun visor and look at yourself because you want to see if it is the same guy that went to bed the night before with the intention to give up the habit and, to your surprise, it is.

The unconscious mind is a much stronger force than the conscious, and it actually is the part of which is supposed to keep you alive and healthy. Smoking is unhealthy, and our unconscious has failed to protect us for some unknown reason. This indicates a problem in the unconscious mind's programming, something I label as 'a glitch in thinking.'

...THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND IS A MUCH STRONGER FORCE THAN THE CONSCIOUS, AND IT ACTUALLY IS THE PART OF WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO KEEP YOU ALIVE AND HEALTHY....

Hypnosis fixes this glitch. It gets both voices to agree and when both agree, the possibilities are endless. Just remember the last time you actually set your mind to doing something and in no time it was done, this is where both unconscious and conscious minds are working together in unison.

Do you remember what Henry Ford implied in a statement he was known to reiterate? "If you think you can do it, or you think you cannot do it, you are usually correct." Hypnosis reinforces the fact that you can do whatever it is you have decided to accomplish. It eliminates the voice that second guesses your authority. Hypnosis supports positive action, and helps eradicate the negative thought process that tends to impede completion.

Hypnosis has so many applications, the following are just a few examples of what hypnosis can help you accomplish;

- Increase Relaxation
- Slow the Aging Process
- Speed the Healing Process
- Sharpen Memory
- Build Confidence



- Decrease Public Speaking Fears
- Effective Pain Control
- Improve Sex Life
- Reduce Anxiety
- Elimination of Allergies
- Overcome Bereavement
- Eliminate Headaches
- Raise Spiritual Consciousness
- Improve Indecisiveness
- Increase Motivation
- Eliminate Habits and Phobia and much more...

* I have read more than once that a certain golfer does hypnosis before every tournament; another way to enforce muscle memory and sharpen focus.

People have fears that hypnosis is some type of mind control, but the truth is that you will not do anything you do not wish to do. Stage hypnosis works off of the fact that people only volunteer to go on stage, and they are usually people with a secret inner desire to act out without the filters of social norms. The motivating factor behind the success of stage hypnosis is a volunteer's fulfillment of an inner desire to become an exhibitionist. The reality is that people do what is suggested by the hypnotist because they want to participate and entertain the audience. It is a shame that hypnosis has been exploited in this way, because it leaves people with the impression that it can be used as a form of control.

With the discovery of new drugs, modern surgical procedures, clean air technology, pollution control, advancement in food technology, state-of-the-art equipment, and the progress of modern technology, you would think society would be much healthier than it is today. We are less healthy than the last generation, and predictions have it that our children will not outlive us. Prevention is the key to health and wellness. We all need to exercise more, eat better, lose those extra pounds, enjoy the great outdoors more often, and get more sleep. If you are having difficulty actualizing your goals of total fitness and health, remember this quote from Albert Einstein; "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it." You can change and you can have whatever it is you image for yourself. If you just can't seem to put things in motion, it might be time to investigate whether hypnosis is the factor that gives you the motivating edge in all your lists of to-dos on the get-fit/get-healthy agenda.

Noanie Beregi was motivated by the success of her own journey from being an unhealthy smoker to becoming a strong advocate of health and wellness, a journey started over twenty years ago with the use of Hypnotherapy. She now uses her skills as a Practitioner of Hypnotherapy, a Register Holistic Nutritionist, a Reiki Master/Teacher, and a Spiritual Medium.

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April 3

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April 4th - 13th

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April 27th

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May 29

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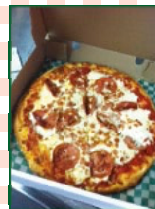
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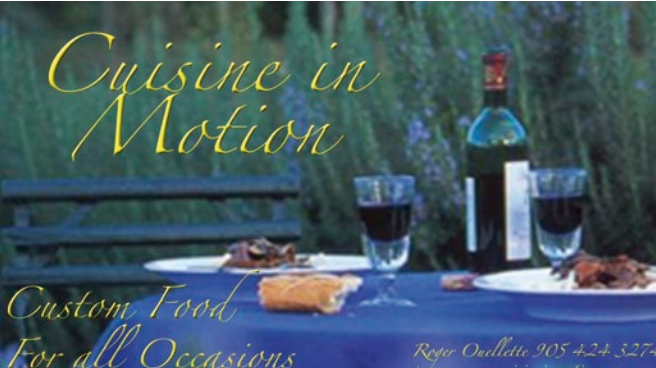


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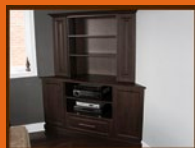
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Treat Yourself

by Stephanie Pommells

So the winter is done! Say bye-bye to those chunky knit scarves and style flattening hats. Enter the lustrous locks and rich colours that you want to show off.

Lets start with the tools and their uses:

Wands - I'm a big fan of the look that this funny, concave tool creates (think Taylor Swift). However, a word of caution is in order for this tool; if improperly used, wands can lead to some serious damage. Many of these tools come with a heat of 450 degrees and can cause nasty burns to the skin and hair. They are designed to be used quickly and with larger sections of hair. Using a wand properly is essential to maintaining healthy locks. First, start at the nape of the neck. Grab a section about the size of a toonie. Holding the wand about 3" down from the scalp, start CAREFULLY wrapping the hair around the wand in the direction away from your face. Hold for only a few seconds, then release. I find if you hold the wand at an angle with the handle up and heated rod down it's easier to manage. Now, waves have been around for awhile, and the difference with this season is dirtying it up. Use a dry wax like KMS Dry Spray Wax to give the final look some texture.

Flat iron - Straight hair is always so finished and polished looking, and it is here to stay. Now, many people are washing their hair at night and ironing the kinks out in the morning, as this is a fast option. But, often times, the hair just looks flat and 'blah.' Blowdrying the hair first will give it some much needed body to prevent that drowned rat look. I know this is trending right now, but unless you're doing runway or editorial trust me, it's not a good look. So to start with, when using a hot tool in the hair you should always start with a heat-protecting spray. Blow dry your hair using a round brush or flat brush, concentrating on volume on the roots and getting all the moisture out. After that's done start at the nape of your neck, whether you are curling or flat ironing the hair to achieve your desired look, take skinny rectangular sections. Finish up with a light, serum-like Moroccan oil to control the fly-aways and give you some shine.

Now THE essential product

Considering that this season is calling for undone updos, braids, low pony's, and the earlier discussed 'wet look,' an essential product to have is pomade. This product will give you shine and pliability to manipulate your hair into the shapes you're trying to get. Only a tiny amount is needed and it's an essential styling product for men this season as well! Try Mellogoo by Goldwell Style Sign. I know that this may not work to change everyone, but if I can impact just one person to change for the better then that is good enough for me.

Mens styles:

Three words to describe men's style this spring; SOPHISTICATED, FUN, SEXY. Gone is that soccer player faux hawk and hair tattooed style. In is that longer hair you can run your fingers through. It's a total revisit to the 90210 Beverly Hills days! Longer on top, short on the sides, kinda boxy. Texturizer scissors and razors are taking a bit of a break for this season. Side parts are in as well, so a comb is essential boys!

All in all, spring is here and it's time to celebrate and unleash our personalities to the world, no longer hiding from the cold!

Stephanie Pommells is a hair dresser and salon owner at Pure Sense Salon. With her artistic sense and impeccable attention to detail she enjoys working with clients to give them what they need. She enjoys writing and researching the latest techniques in order to expanded her expertise.

Consumer Report

by Ryan Smith

How To Increase Your Home Value With Bathroom Improvements

Have you ever wondered what type of renovations would add the most money to your home? Many home owners look for ways to add value to their homes through improvements. You may have heard that one of the best renovations for your buck is a bathroom renovation, and it's true!

The Almighty Bathroom

Bathrooms of today have come a long way from the bathrooms of our parents and grandparents. There are so many options available for home owners: showers that "rain" on you, warm air hydrotherapy bathtubs, sinks that look like water worn boulders, all glass stand up showers, heated flooring etc. The nice part about bathroom renovations is that you can pamper yourself now and smile on your way to the bank when you sell, because homes with good kitchens and bathrooms are in demand! The one thing to keep in mind is to make sure it's not TOO great. You don't want to over renovate for your neighbourhood and spend more than the market will allow. It's been shown time and time again, it's tough to get your money back when you have the most expensive or most remodelled home on the street.

Explore and Plan

When doing a bathroom renovation, it's important that it fits the style and price range of your home and your family, as well as space restrictions. A great place to start is by product price comparison shopping. The great thing about the big-box stores and bathroom speciality stores is that you can see a lot of displays and products in one place. You don't need to skim through a catalogue to see what you like, comparison shop, and see if it will be in your price range. Some of the larger stores even offer a design staff to help you on a "freebie" basis if you buy from them.

The big-box stores are useful if you are very price conscious. They have a fair amount of brands and products in different budgets. But, it can also be fun to explore some of the avant-garde fixtures in some of the high-end outlets, and then see if something similar can be achieved for less at the other stores. You would be surprised what you can get on a restricted budget these days. If your bathroom is really important to you and if the budget (and the neighbourhood) can take it, go for a truly luxurious spa of a bath.

Another thing to know is that simplicity is "in" today. I think it may be because life tends to be so rushed and complicated. Simplicity does not mean boring, far from it. The simple can pamper and provide great visual appeal. So you don't have to worry about going over the top with lots of things. Sometimes simple is better! But ultimately, you need to be comfortable with your bathroom design.

So when you are ready to start, put together a plan within your budget and you are on your way. Improved bathrooms can actually add tens of thousands of dollars in equity to your home.

Ryan runs a real estate team serving the Durham Region. In his free time he is actively involved in many charities and community events. He is the current president of JCI Whitby and sits on number of local charity boards. When he is not selling houses he is giving back to his community.



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Teens, Tweens & Inbetween

by Samantha Burtch Whitteker

"The difference between school and life? In school, you're taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson." - Tom Bodett

Spring is a great time of year; the snow melts, the cold air disappears and you get to put away the stinky coats and boots. Kids know that soon they won't have to get all bundled up before recess, the class won't be full of water and socks won't get wet while you're playing in the snow. Going to high school in spring is different in so many ways - It's exam time.

This time of year is so stressful, you can't even imagine. You have to study for over two exams that will last an hour and a half to two hours, which you have to write at nine in the morning. I don't know anyone who is fully awake at nine am, so writing exams then is not so smart. I know, personally, that before I actually write my exams I freak out a little bit. You don't know what to expect, or how long you should study for, or if you will remember any of it. Which is why I thought, since this is my second rounds of exams, I should give you guys some tips for anyone out there who is nervous;

Tip 1 - Do not just read over your notes from class and expect to memorize them. Some people can do that, but you will remember so much more if you actually take the time to read them out loud and write them on another sheet of paper at the same time.

Tip 2 - Do not wait till the last minute to start reviewing. In grade 9 you don't have to hand in exam review for any classes as part of a formal exam, but in grade 10 you do. If you wait until the last night you won't finish it, and the next day you will be too tired to even remember what you studied from the night before.

Tip 3 - Don't stress. This is a hard tip to really follow, and I don't always remember it myself. If you stress, it just makes exams so much scarier and seem like so much more work than it is. I get myself so stressed sometimes, I make myself sick and then I can't even do my work at school or home. I try to remind myself to calm down, relax and don't sweat the small stuff.

Tip 4 - Take breaks while studying. Every once and a while, go do something else. Watch a little TV, make a snack or go outside. Do something to take your mind off exams and when you go back to studying, review what you just studied and you will feel more refreshed.

Repeat at the end of June and then you can enjoy your summer.

That's about all I can say so good luck to anyone who has to do an exam this spring!

Samantha Burtch Whitteker is a 15 year old with long blonde hair and blue eyes. She loves to shop; babysit to make money to go shopping, read and write. When she can't express herself through words she writes. She loves living in Port Perry with her family.

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Tasteful Talk

by Shirley Ouellette



So, despite the end of the Maya Calendar which prompted predictions of the end of the world, we have arrived in 2013. If we consider this a second chance then we need to reflect on the damage we have caused to our home planet and how we can reduce these effects. There are many ways we can do this, but here we are focusing on food, buying and eating local produce and what that means to our Durham Region. After the Second World War, food production became an "industry" and this heralded the beginning of the end of home cooking in the developed world. As women were drawn into work and convenience foods began popping up in stores there was a steep decline in the purchase of raw foods. When foods are produced in large quantities, it drives the cost down and in turn allows the producer to offer lower priced items to the consumer, when families are living on a tight budget the appeal of the savings far outweigh possible consequences. But, what is the price of a bargain? For consumers, the price of a bargain may not be apparent for some time, if we are choosing "cheap" food options they may not only be devoid of nutrients, but also contain substances that can actually be harmful to your body. For our local producers, the price of our bargain may mean the end of their livelihood as they cannot compete with the marked down prices of the large conglomerates. So with all that being said, when our budgets are tight how do we feed ourselves nutritious food and support our local farmers? We can start with eating seasonal local produce that is packed with vitamins and minerals because it is fresh and has not been stored or travelled many miles to reach you, it also costs less as there is usually an abundance. Right now, in the late winter and early spring, root vegetables are widely available. Winter squash, potatoes and parsnips are full of potassium, vitamins and fibre; greens like leeks and cabbage are a good source of vitamin C; carrots and sweet potatoes are packed with beta carotene and potassium, all elements that are essential to good health. I know it is very hard to only live on seasonal produce especially early in the year, but if we just practice conscious buying and whenever there is a choice, buy local Durham's and support our farmers. Salute!

Shirley Ouellette grew up in the far south west of England. Since living in Canada she has been actively involved in promoting the Local Food Movement. Sustainability concepts on a broad spectrum are close to her heart and she encourages everyone she comes into contact with to consciously practice sustainable living habits.

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Tasteful Recipes

by Shirley Ouellette



Butternut Squash Soup

You will need...

6 Cups of Stock
(homemade meat or vegetable stock, or a good quality store bought one)
2 Garlic Cloves
1 Large Butternut Squash
Ground Cumin and Cinnamon
Sea Salt and Fresh Ground Black Pepper to taste

How it's done...

In the winter edition of Local Biz, I gave you my recipe for turkey stock, you can use this base idea for any meat stocks, or omit the meat and add more vegetables if you want to go vegetarian. Take the butternut squash, cut in half length wise and scoop out the seeds, roast cut side up for 45 minutes at 400F until soft. Allow to cool. Crush the garlic cloves and cook them over a very low heat in an ounce of butter, do not let them brown or burn. Peel away the outer skin of the squash, and put the flesh into a food processor or blender and process until smooth. Add the cooked garlic and slowly add stock until the soup is desired consistency. Pour into a saucepan and heat slowly. Add a teaspoon of cumin and cinnamon. Once heated through but not boiling, add salt and pepper to taste. Pour into warm bowls and serve with a swirl of cream and some rustic bread.

Did you know?

Butternut squash can be stored for lengthy periods as long as they are firm, dry and have no bruises, plus they are packed full of beta carotene, potassium and vitamin C.

Wine pick for this dish?

A Riesling goes well with this soup well able to stand up to the richness of the cream, another option is a good strong local beer, especially if you are serving with bread and a selection of cheeses; one of our favourite weekend lunches. Salute!

Taking the Lead



by Corry Hamilton

The Green Trend in Pet Care

More pet owners are going green than ever before. They want to improve and sustain the health of not only their pet, but of the planet. They are making responsible choices; whether it is through adopting a pet rather than buying one, choosing natural or recycled products or purchasing organic food and treats.

Most people wouldn't think of adoption as a green trend, but when you consider the cost of buying a pet through a breeder or a pet store; adoption fees are much less and you are saving the life of an animal.

A lot of pet owners are also examining their diet and feeding their pets like they feed themselves—more organic, pesticide free fruits and veggies and free range meat. They realize that you are what you eat and for pets with allergies or sensitivities, it can sometimes cut down on trips to the vet and decrease costs for medication.

Using recycled materials such as old fire hoses to make tough dog toys or recycled pop bottles to make pet beds make everyone feel as though they are doing a little something for the planet. Even cat owners are getting in on the action by buying cardboard cat scratchers that can be recycled and plant based cat litters that can be composted. With dogs producing so much waste over their lifetime, it is no wonder that pet owners are choosing biodegradable poop bags. Some are 100% corn based and can biodegrade within 40 days.

So whether you choose hemp leashes, vegetable dyed collars or organic/natural products and foods; every pet owner can do their part to support not only the health of their pet but also the planet.

We loved the name of Corry's business, so much, we decided to name her column Taking the Lead. Corry's furry family is full of special needs animals and when she isn't planning her next great international adventure, you can find her curled up with a book, snapping pictures or taking a nap with her cats.



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Ask Sue-Ann



by Sue-Ann Bavlanka

Dear Sue-Ann:

My poor mom had yet another stroke. They had to do surgery on her brain. While I was there, we had to leave my mother's cubical for a minute. We had to sit in front of another poor soul's room. I was comparing the 2 monitors, between this poor soul and my moms, and noticed his breathing had gone very shallow. All of a sudden he went into a seizure. He was gasping for breath and his body was flailing around so violently. I have never witnessed this before. I had such chills and I felt so helpless. We summoned some help for the man and it arrived quickly. I then saw an angel, or something, right above him. I didn't know if I was seeing things or if it was true. The doctor came back in and asked me what exactly I saw with regards to the man. I told him. He told me I had saved the man's life! I cannot get the visual out of my head. As I walked around the hospital for the rest of the day, I saw the beautiful statues and pictures of the angel St. Michael. As I looked at these beautiful pictures and statues, I realized this was the Angel I saw above this man. Is that possible for me to see this? I also am wondering what was the purpose of me seeing this. I know that all things happen for a reason.

Stressed and at the Hospital

First of all, let me say that I am so sorry to hear about your mom. When parents are sick and in the hospital, it is a very stressful time. However, everyone is always where they should be when they should be there, no matter what is taking place. What a blessing for you to experience the Angelic Realm. It is absolutely possible and I get reports of it all the time. The purpose is to provide you with comfort during your time of stress. Angels are always around us to support and guide. The re-telling of your story will provide comfort to others who are experiencing stress and praying for their loved ones. Thank you for sharing this story.

Dear Sue-Ann:

I am getting married this summer. It has become such an emotional strain. The tension between my mother and myself is unbearable. Do you have any suggestions?

Stressed out Bride

Tension arises when things appear to be out of your control. You are stepping into the next phase of your life and your mom's role in your life is changing. Just as you have been dreaming of this wedding for your entire life, so has your mother. The details of your day are as important to her as they are to you. It is more difficult for some mothers to accept the change in roles. Change can be frightening and, when there is an element of fear, there is tension. Know that her motivator is love. You cannot control how she feels, your role is to understand. There is a middle ground in every situation. Listen with loving intentions and peace will prevail.

Blessings,
 Sue-Ann

Sue-Ann is a mother of 3 and resides in the Oshawa area. She chooses to utilize her undeniable psychic ability to assist you in resolving all of life's issues. You may see her on Divine Lane, Rogers Durham Cable 10, Tuesday's at 9pm. You can find out more and forward your submissions to Sue-Ann at www.divinelane.com

The Best Return on your investment... Ever!

Over the last year the most common areas of concern in my coaching, or just in regular conversation, is that of family hurt and pain. I know this is not new; it's just more intensified.

For a lot of adults, as they evaluate their life, some of the questions that so often come up are; why was it so difficult for our family to tell the truth to each other? Why was it so difficult to compliment and encourage each other? Parents felt they had to protect the kids, spouses living their life in compartments, siblings not been totally honest with each other. We even see this in churches. Can the congregation handle the whole truth of who God is, and what he really expects from us?

Yet there is a great verse that says; "Know the truth and the truth will set you free."

So many of us suffer with the dysfunction of not truly knowing who we are and not being totally comfortable in our own skin. Positive feedback and validation was not easily forthcoming when we were young.

How often did you hear 'I'm so proud of you, you are amazing'? For a lot of people, gifts were often times discouraged. You grew up living someone else's desire, dreams and expectations of you.

The other systematic problem, along with lack of recognition and validation, is the lack of strong, positive father influence. The role of a father is huge in the lives of children; it can make or break us. The impact of absentee dad's is massive. Now, a dad doesn't have to be away from the family to be absent. We have seen dads who are with the family, but play no or very little roles in the lives of their children. The hurt and dysfunction that results can be felt for a lifetime. We see children and adults who are missing this influence make bad choices in friends and marriages, joining cults, committing crimes or just anything to get the approval and validation they didn't receive.

My most powerful word of advice this new season and year is choose to make things right, choose to be great. Be a successful investor into the life of others. To the young couples with children, validate and show unconditional love to your children, let them know daily how special and loved they are. For older families, it's never too late to begin. Start with speaking the truth to each other; tell them how you are really feeling. Make the choice to make things right. Don't wait until people die, then have to lie at their funeral. Fathers, no one plays a greater role in shaping your children's future. Please step up to the plate this year.

Make this year the best year yet. Tell people now how amazing they truly are, the return on your investment... Priceless.



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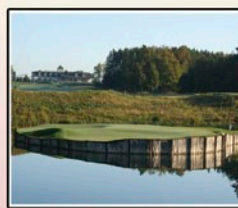
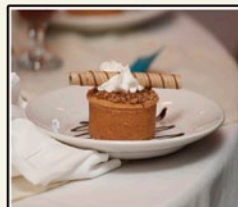
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Horoscope (March 2013 - May 2013)

by Noanie Beregi

Aquarius (Jan. 21st – Feb. 19th)

Ignite the child within and new creativity will be born. Like a burst of sunlight, this energy will be expressed in all aspects of your personal and professional life. Your abilities to contribute creatively in both teamwork and collaborative efforts at this time are enormous.

Pisces (Feb. 20th – March 20th)

Self-understanding has given you the ability to face your current problems with sure-footedness and humour. You know that by facing things with your sense of humour you will continue to maintain balance. Taking things too seriously will always take us off balance. In the end the goal is to be able to finally laugh at something that was once painful, and gently move on.

Aries (March 21st – April 20th)

Romance is yours in the new year and understanding that, during romantic involvements, we can see our potential dreams and visions, and yet, in romantic involvements we are challenged to truly be ourselves rather than to pretend to be other than who we are.

Taurus (April 21st – May 20th)

You have famed and reigned in the beasts within and have come out of last year with a strong sense of faith and trust in your abilities. It is time to tap into the inner unlimited source of this strength and stand in the experience of being even more of who you are.

Gemini (May 21st – June 21st)

Stand your ground is your mantra in the next three months. You have the courage to stand by what you value and not to compromise or to settle for less. By trusting your intuition and learning from past experiences, you are able to move forward in a new direction with great confidence in yourself.

Cancer (June 21st – July 21st)

Time to cut through the old roles, masks or defences to experience more of your own child-like innocence and curiosity. It is time to remember who you really are and present it to the world. The world awaits your arrival. You may need to talk to someone to help you bring out the true you, that person will help peel away the onion layers that you have been hiding beneath.

Leo (July 22nd – Aug. 22nd)

Good fortune continues for you into the new year. You have the ability to create magic because of your inherent gift and talents. Remember to use the unlimited resources of skilled communication that are within your nature.

Virgo (Aug. 23rd – Sept. 22nd)

Recognizing and awakening; this is the best time to break repetitive patterns that bind, limit and restrict growth and evolution. In the coming months you will experience greater compassion and acceptance of self by releasing limiting egoist needs and surrendering to the deeper love and wisdom that wants to be expressed within your spiritual nature.

Libra (Sept. 23rd – Oct. 22nd)

Doubt and confusion has all but vanished and in the next three months a sense of mental clarity, inventiveness, and originality will dominate. This will lead to moments of the "aha" experience whereby inspiration and ideas surface giving you the opportunity to implement an original idea or an important dream or purpose that can be actualized.

Scorpio (Oct. 23rd – Nov. 21st)

A conflict arises and there is opportunity to move through it with the results of growth, renewal and regeneration but to get to this wonderful end you need four skills; to participate, tell the truth, pay attention to detail and to not be attached to the eventual outcome; a win/win for all involved.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22nd – Dec. 21st)

You are moving in a new direction in the next three months so remember to operate from a place of integrity and to make sure that mind, heart, and action are in alignment. If all three areas are not aligned you have other choices, and it is never wrong to reassess and change direction again.

Capricorn (Dec. 22nd – Jan. 20th)

Fear has kept you in total limbo for the past few months and this limbo is caused by both the fear of failure and the fear of success. The next three months is time set aside for you to move through old fears and finally release them. Replace fear with faith; believe in yourself and your future. Put one foot in front of the other and move forward, you will be given more directions along the path, look for signs and symbols as you move.

A long-time resident of Brooklin, Noanie works with the mystic tarot and her intuitive senses to help guide you and your family into 2013. Enjoy reading your horoscopes and with each and every word she sends out the power of healing to all that are intrigued.





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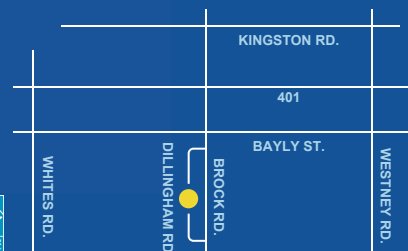
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