

The Local Biz

Winter 2008 **FREE**

Magazine



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In picture: Tyrone Blacksmith Shop in Clarington. Built around 1860 and now designated as an Industrial Building or Complex by Ontario Heritage Act.

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From the Editor

The holiday season is here but somehow, the feeling of Halloween still lingers in the air like black smoke. It wasn't the ghosts or monsters that still have us trembling but the global financial meltdown that struck weeks before. As we prepare for what is usually the busiest time of year for retail businesses, no one can bring themselves to say the terrifying word: recession.



But the business slowdown we're facing doesn't have to be catastrophic. Small businesses are uniquely situated to ride out market volatility, assuming they're smart and agile with their finances. While large firms react to a slowdown by trimming their workforce—adding hundreds or thousands more people to an already ominous unemployment level—small businesses will always try to keep going with the staff they have and sometimes even add a new staffer or two. The secret, as always, is not to panic.

Consumers can be just as guilty of hitting the panic button in a recession. Faced with a shrinking paycheck, many of us will retreat to the big box stores that offer lower prices but, while doing so, are cutting their workforces, paying their remaining employees little and buying an awful lot of cheap product from China. This does our economy no favours.

Supporting local businesses keeps money and jobs in our communities where they belong and this is a point that becomes especially important as resources tighten. This holiday season, many of us will be scaling back our spending but hopefully we can do it in a smart, targeted way that will best benefit our friends and neighbours. In times of struggle, it's important to remember that we're all in this together.

Scott Dagostino

Editor-in-Chief

Our apologies, readers. Last issue we ran an article titled **Protect Your Business Protect Your Health**. By error we noted that the author of the article, Whitney Collins, was from Your Quantum Connection. Whitney Collins is owner and operator of **Durham Homeopathy and Family Wellness Centre**, a wonderful and caring business located in Ajax. For more information, please visit www.durhamhomeopathy.com

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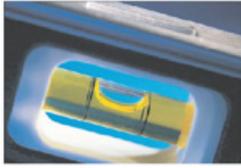
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NEW Family Traditions



By Angela Jaciw-Zurakowsky

Sometimes we get caught up with the commercialism and stress of the holiday season and waste our energies on the wrong things. Our most treasured memories of childhood are often those little things that were done with our families during the holidays. The expensive presents are often quickly forgotten.

Wonderful memories are created through the traditions of each family, most of them arising from religion and culture. But by building on these traditions we inherit from our past, new traditions can be started to define the uniqueness of every family.

Whether your family consists of two people or ten, consists of a single parent, blended family or second family, or consists of united cultures and religions, new traditions can merge ideas from different backgrounds or be something unique. They can involve special foods, the preparation of treats, family outings such as cutting a Christmas tree, viewing neighbourhood lights or valuable time spent together reading, playing games and making crafts.

Traditions can be as simple as starting a Christmas library and having each family member read aloud their favourite story. Whatever it is, it should have an element that is unique to your family. For example, if outings are always done at the same time every year, have a special snack associated with them and everyone participating.

When my children were younger, family and friends continually spoiled them with many wonderful gifts. I felt that it was important that my children be the givers as well as the recipients in the gift-giving tradition. In the spirit of the holidays we started a new family tradition: every year a special handmade gift would be crafted with love and presented to close friends and family. The crafts became more sophisticated as the children's abilities developed. Various tree decorations, miniature gingerbread house candle holders, knitted scarves and wooden spoon reindeer were amongst these treasured gifts. The rules we followed in choosing a craft were that

the children could make it themselves and the finished product was unique. The reactions of our loved ones truly emphasized the fact that it is always the thought put into a gift that counts the most (I've included two examples of holiday crafts you can try with your family [see sidebar on next page]: both the Poinsettia tree decorations and the Ice Candles are inexpensive and easy to make).

Below are some guidelines for establishing new traditions in your family that will help create happy memories for everyone for many years to come.

- Traditions must be enjoyed by the whole family with full participation
- Spend quality time together as a family
- Spend time not money and avoid activities which are too commercialized
- Be consistent—do the same thing every year in order to establish a true family tradition
- Be creative with your ideas and get input from all family members
- Be flexible and allow new traditions to evolve, especially as the children get older
- Have fun! A true tradition is one that is anxiously anticipated and is not executed out of obligation.

This holiday season, do something special with your family that does not involve a mall trip. Enjoy the time with your children and treasured memories will be the gift that you give to your family and yourself.

Angela Jaciw-Zurakowsky of One Call Coverage Inc. is a mother of five children and understands the challenges of a busy household. She strongly believes that all children should be entitled to the best childcare available.

Poinsettia Tree Decoration

Materials:

- Dry pumpkin seeds
- Cardboard
- Acrylic craft paints (red, burgundy, pink or white)
- Small gold or pearl beads
- Glitter glue
- Low heat glue gun and glue sticks
- Narrow ribbon

(All materials can be purchased at the dollar store)



Cut a 5 cm diameter circle from the cardboard.

Starting with the outside of the circle, with a small dab of glue and the seed pointing outwards, glue the seeds in a circular fashion.

Glue additional rows in a circular fashion, overlapping with the previous rows.

Paint the decoration with desired colour, let dry and paint with the glitter glue.

Glue the beads in the centre of the flower.

Attach a narrow ribbon for hanging.



Ice Candle

Materials:

- Large plastic container (at least 4 Litre size—children's pail, plastic ice cream container, cat litter container, etc.)
- Water
- Tea light
- Small soup can
- Assorted evergreens, berries, pine cones etc.

(All materials can be found on a nice nature walk and in your recycle bin)



Fill the container with water and place a tin can (such as a soup can) or cup in the center. Weigh the can down with rocks or beans so that it is about an inch from the bottom of container

Get creative: tint the water with food coloring to make different colored candles and/or add pretty leaves, cranberries or other natural treasures to the water before freezing.

Place your container outside or in the freezer until the water is frozen solid.

Carefully remove the ice from the bucket (run a little warm water around the outside of the bucket) Carefully remove the tin can from the center of the block of ice. Place a tea light into that space, set your candle in a prominent spot outside and light.



By Kelly Weldrick

The holiday season—with its warm ambiance, gift giving and endless parties and social events—isn't the best time of year for many women. Many experience the dreaded “holiday blues,” missing love, stressed about holiday hype, or going through tough times in their lives. The festivities of the season only bring them down and it's a struggle for some women to get through those few weeks, let alone enjoy them.

But if this is you, there is something simple you can do that will inspire a whole new feeling—and it's created with just a touch of makeup.

Fall and holiday makeup is traditionally richer and darker. For ladies already feeling blue, however, these are not your best choices. Opt for lighter, brighter eye shades, not dark dismal tones. Instantly brighten a tired eyelid with creams, pale pinks or soft beiges close to the lash line. To define, work with medium shades in the crease: jewel tones, matte lavenders, soft burgundies or brighter purples. Then, in the outer crease, lightly apply a basic medium brown—an excellent shade worn by every eye color. Avoid the rich, dark browns, navys and charcoals that are traditionally used to create the “smoky” eye.

Get yourself the quickest, most inexpensive, non-surgical eye lift there is: have your eyebrows shaped and waxed. You will be amazed how, with even just a little waxing, your eye lifts instantly and you now have more space to play with color. Plus, your eyes have more balance. Highlight your newly enhanced brow bone with shimmer: snowy whites, sparkling golds and silvers and shimmering champagnes.

And finally, uplift your mood by uplifting your lashes. Curl them first and apply two coats of mascara on the top and one on the bottom. If you're daring, apply false eyelashes to the entire lash or just on the outer corners for an instant eye opener.

Whatever you do to combat your holiday blues, you can be assured that lightening and brightening your makeup will lighten and brighten your mood!

Kelly Weldrick from *Makeup in Motion* is a makeup artist and beauty consultant for Durham Region. She lives with her family in Oshawa.

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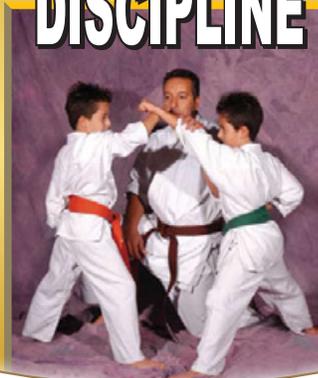
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Your ECO-FRIENDLY Baby

By Kimberly Watson

Last month, Jeff and Jennifer Philip became the proud parents of their first child, Logan Louis Xavier Philip. Before he becomes potty trained, little Logan will go through anywhere from 5000 to 10,000 diapers. If these are standard disposable diapers, Jeff and Jennifer's baby will be contributing approximately two and a half tonnes of waste to our landfills before he is three years old and he's not alone: according to Environment Canada, more than four million disposable diapers are discarded in Canada each day.

It wasn't always that bad: prior to the 1960s, cloth diapers were the common practice but, in the spring of 1961, busy moms welcomed Pampers' introduction of the convenient disposable diaper.

Since then, using disposable diapers has become a standard practice for 95 percent of families but, with recycling being a common practice in most households, people are beginning to understand that these "throw-away" diapers can take as long as five hundred years to completely break down.

As President of ECOrganics, a local company dedicated to providing natural, organic and eco-friendly products and services, Jeff Philip now has one more major reason to be proud of his eco-friendly high-performance diaper that can be flushed or composted. While cloth diapers are arguably still the most earth-friendly choice, Philip's convenient alternative will break down completely in as little as two months.

Philip takes enormous pride in carefully selecting affordable, all-natural products that are safe and free of chemicals, dyes, toxins and pesticides to protect the health of both his family and yours. He says, "It's so nice to be a part of something that allows us to breathe easier knowing that you can do something good for yourself, your family, and the environment that our children will grow up in."

The choice of what type of diaper to use is a personal one but, with increasing awareness and education about health and environmental issues, we are able to make more informed decisions towards a happier and healthier lifestyle.

Kimberly Watson of *The Business Blanket* is a Virtual Administrator and Photographer who specializes in Marketing, Event Planning, and Freelance Writing. She is currently developing her motivational "Power of Passion" seminar for small business owners.

Think Outside the Wreath

By Susan Légaré



Oh joy! It's that time of year again. Department stores have Christmas decorations up and the music is playing—didn't the kids just go back to school? December 25th seems to come sooner and sooner each year and, in this festive season, our calendars get filled fast! We have to start juggling office parties with family get-togethers with visiting friends! But how can you be sure the guest list for your party will make a point of coming to your shindig before anyone else's? Here are some tips for you to ensure a great holiday event:

Plan Ahead

The holidays mean chaos for many and, as I said, those calendars fill quickly. It may seem overboard to be planning weeks in advance but if you do so, not only will your guests be able to attend but you're not going to feel as much stress. After all, you have other things to do than get that party ready—you have to make room for nights filled with apple cider!

Think Outside the Wreath

We all know Christmas is the predominant holiday celebrated at this time of year but don't forget other faiths and cultures. Incorporating different traditions from other countries could make for a fun night for all involved. I'm not suggesting putting away the Christmas tree by any means; merely remembering that, in a society as diverse as ours, the possibilities are endless. Do some research and have a little fun with it!

Bring Nature Indoors

Your décor does not have to be complicated. Look to the outdoors for your inspiration! My favourite table centrepieces and accents use fruit and berries as the focal point. In December, cranberries, red and green apples and juniper berries all look fabulous in clear vases. For more grand decorations, bring in some tree boughs. Strategically place them around the room or, if you feel more ambitious, use strong twine and floral wire to make your own garland.

Create Food Stations

There's no need to place everything you're cooking in fancy bowls and plates and have everyone sit at the dining room table. Instead, keep the dishes clean and have people serve themselves. If you have some hot creations (any kinds of stews, soups and casseroles are great for this), pop a ladle in the pot and let folks venture into the kitchen when they're ready. In the dining area, you can have your cold appetizers and in the entryway, the bar. This creates a great flow to the party and minimizes cramped areas.

Pick a Theme, Any Theme

Instead of inviting friends and family over for that predictable feast, why not spruce it up a bit? Having a theme for your get-together creates a buzz from the moment guests walk through your door. If you're keen on Christmas, show it. Have Frosty the Snowman and other classics playing on TVs in every room. Looking for something for the adults? As soon as you've greeted your guests, hand them their allotted 'spending money.' Have different casino games set up so they can have a blast betting on black 8 in roulette or trying for that elusive four-of-a-kind in poker.

Have fun creating something that is you. Hopefully my tips will help you out with what to do or maybe spark some ideas of your own! The most important thing at this time of year is to celebrate with the people you love.

Susan Légaré at *Moments That Shine* takes pride in that no two of her parties are alike. Her passion for Canadian music and hockey are evident as soon as you walk in to her office in Whitby.



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Reiki ...for Dogs?

By Corry Hamilton

Eye rolls, head shaking and even laughter are just some of the reactions people have when I ask them if I can try to rebalance their pet's energy. To say they are skeptical would be an understatement. Most people who know me know that I have a degree in biochemistry. They find it hard to believe that someone who is logical and rational can support a therapy that hasn't been proven in a double blind study. But I have seen what Reiki can do—not just for people but also their pets. I tell people to try it before dismissing it as a viable treatment option.



Reiki is a Japanese form of energy healing that is a widely accepted form of complementary medicine—a gentle, painless and non-invasive therapy for people and pets. It complements and

embraces both traditional and holistic therapies, lessening the side effects from traditional medicine. Because our pets are so close and bond with us, they will often internalize and reflect our problems. An example of this would be if we are stressed at work and bring it home with us; our pets sense this emotion and take it on as their own feelings. This sympathetic connection can manifest itself as either a physical or emotional problem but Reiki can heal both.

Once my clients get over their surprise and disbelief at the idea, I share a success story or two with them. If they are cat people, they hear Myelo's story. Myelo was born blind and refused to have his nails cut. It would take two people to do it. Terrified, Myelo would run around the house looking for an escape route and, after having his nails cut, would be anxious for hours. After a 5-10 minute Reiki session, however, Myelo would be calm enough for one person to cut his nails and the once-anxious cat would have a nap afterwards. What a huge difference!

Dog people usually hear about Roscoe, a bulldog who develops a serious infection every seven or eight months, due to complications from ear canal surgery. He would refuse to eat because of the pain in his mouth until Reiki

enabled him to eat again. While he still requires antibiotics, Roscoe can now keep up his strength and fight off these infections.



Animals are more sensitive to energy than people. Some pets will immediately settle down and accept the treatment, while others will seek to avoid it. The duration of a treatment varies from 30-60 minutes. The treatment can be hands on or delivered from a short distance. Your pet will enter a deep state of relaxation and, after the treatment, will generally drink more water and go to the bathroom more often, trying to expel the toxins.

In general, Reiki won't necessarily cure your pet but can bring about significant health improvements. The number of treatments necessary depends on the severity of the illness and how long your pet has suffered. The healing effects of Reiki treatments build upon one another. For healthy pets, a maintenance Reiki treatment every month will suffice. For pets suffering from minor health problems such as a cold or sprain, weekly treatments would be beneficial. For chronic conditions, such as arthritis, four consecutive treatments plus weekly treatments can help your pet manage pain. If your pet is seriously ill, they can receive treatments as often as necessary. Occasionally, pets will miraculously respond to just a few treatments but each animal is different. Some pets will heal themselves, while others may not notice any change whatsoever.

Always discuss complementary treatments with your veterinarian. They should have a record of the complementary treatments you are using. Be skeptical. Educate yourself about Reiki. Try a session. See how you feel. You always have a choice when it comes to the treatment of your pet.

Corry Hamilton of *Taking the Lead* loves anything with fins, fur or feathers. She wants to see pets happy, healthy and treated like part of the family.

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The **Power** of the *Purse* **Women in Business**

By Tina Dezsi

Can your business survive in this crazy economy? I believe that it can prosper. Studies from across North America show that women are a major market and the lion's force driving the economy today. According to the Royal Bank's Women Entrepreneurs statistics, women generate approximately 40% of new start-up businesses in Canada. Women-owned and women-led businesses provide 1.7 million jobs in Canada, compared to the 1.5 million jobs provided by Canada's top 100 companies.

If your business is selling jockstraps, for instance, your market could be strictly men but women are the majority market for home furnishings (94%), vacations (92%), houses (91%), consumer electronics (51%) and even cars (60% of purchases and 90% influence). Large businesses such as Home Depot and Sharp Electronics are already taking advantage—advertising on women-focused TV networks like the Learning Channel, the Food Network and W. Although I advise business owners to spread their marketing dollars over numerous forms of media such as print, radio, TV and web, I believe the key ingredient to a successful marketing campaign is relationship building.

It has never been more important to build your business through referrals. The costs associated with obtaining a new client far outweigh the costs involved in keeping your existing ones happy. Building relationships though a consistent customer service program is absolutely mandatory but the real key is taking it a step further and making *yourself* part of your brand. Build a solid reputation in your community by giving back—helping charities and ensuring that you are also making referrals to other local businesses. Join at least three different associations and truly get involved within that culture. Working by the "Pay it Forward" rule always sets you apart from your competition in your customer's minds and adding value to your local region will build your reputation as an integral part of that society.

Tina Dezsi is the CEO and Founder of *Power of Women Exchange*, a networking group for women entrepreneurs, executives and business professionals, and has been awarded the prestigious Peter Perry Business Person of the Year 2008.

The Coach CORNER

Life Coach - Dennis Brown

"The Grasshopper"

"We saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. We felt like grasshoppers next to them, and that's what we looked like to them!" Numbers 13:33

How we see our self and how we believe others see us will greatly impact our success in life. The above statement was the report brought back by ten of the twelve spies sent to scout out the land God promised the children of Israel back in Biblical times, the time of Moses.

What can we learn from this story? The giants that they spoke about said nothing about what these men looked like to them. The report that the spies brought back was about how *they* saw themselves. How often do we downplay our potential because of our own inner insecurities when facing our giants? How often do we assume that others see us as small? Actually, it's nowhere close to what you think. For most of us, it's a label we put on ourselves to justify our fear of not living up to our full potential.

When we label ourselves as not being good enough, not getting the right breaks, not having the right education etc, etc, know that even as we may see ourselves as very small, we are still capable of great accomplishments.

A grasshopper is capable of jumping twenty times its body length. A human being doing that would be jumping the equivalent of forty yards in a single leap. How's that for exceeding your expectation even when downplaying your potential?

The only person that can prevent you from accomplishing your dreams is you. The only obstacle we have to overcome is unbelief—not believing in our selves, not believing in what is truly possible.

My challenge to you this month is to ask yourself: what is truly possible for me? If I stop seeing myself as small, what am I truly capable of accomplishing? What if I truly *believe* all things are possible?

Dennis of *Dennis Brown & Associates* applies his passion in helping others unlock their full potential, enabling them to live the abundant lives they were created to have.



Dennis Brown

Business Coach - Peter Miller

"Listening to Your Clients: The Foundation of Successful Business"

Starting and running a business is easy, I'm told: simply find out what your clients want and deliver it with unwavering consistency and excellence.

Okay so it's not that easy! I believe in the value of truly understanding the customer experience. We have all received what I am sure the provider felt was outstanding customer service. They probably did their best yet there were still little things that make us hesitate to refer them. Sometimes, it is as inconsequential as a poorly prepared and presented invoice. It is more frequently the actual service which a business owner must constantly evaluate from a quality perspective and then learn to see through their customers' eyes. The owner is frequently surprised to find it very different. Unfortunately, the small problem items seem to stand out against an otherwise outstanding customer experience

Continual market research is how a business determines if it is delivering what their clients want and ensuring they are both pleased enough to award you more of their business and confident enough to recommend your business to their friends. Big business spends millions of dollars on market research because the decision-makers are usually some distance from their clients.

Small businesses have the opportunity for more intimacy with their clients. Business owners need to ensure they are receptive to every comment their clients make and to actually respond to any trend in those comments. Follow up on service by talking with clients and specifically asking about all aspects of the service provided. "If I could improve on one thing, what would it be?" is often a good question to end with. Collect all the thoughts and suggestions and, on a regular basis, review them and decide what you can do better. In these demanding economic times, being the best in the eyes of your customer is what counts.

We can all be better tomorrow than we were yesterday so keep your ears and mind open, probe a little if you can, then take action. You'll be surprised how well you will do.

Peter Miller of *Essential Communications* is the program coordinator, facilitator and coach for the OSEB program.



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