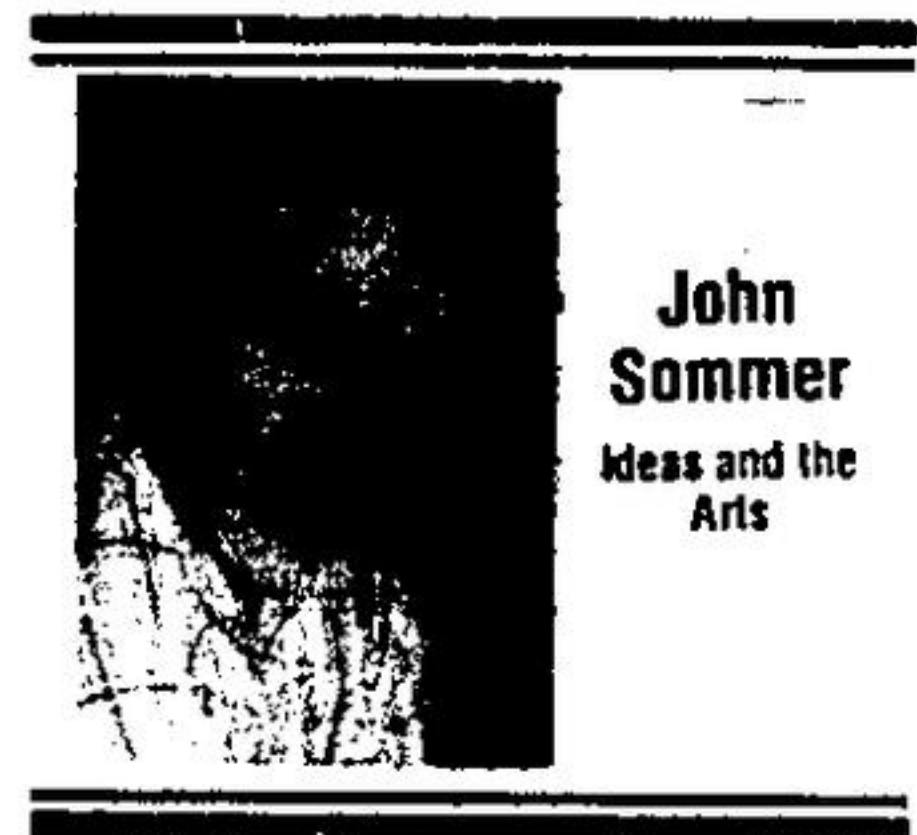


# Margaret Laurence's story leaves a lump in the throat



**John Sommer**  
Ideas and the Arts

Some writings are so closely connected to Christmas that I read them every year. It would be tedious to give you the whole list here but I want to mention one that belongs to my holiday reading since it was published 10 years ago. It's "The Olden Days Coat" by Margaret Laurence, the story of a little girl who, with some time on her hand on Christmas Eve, is in a wondrous way transported back in time to meet her grandmother as a girl her own age, showing her a gift that will unite them again in the present. The story is simple and totally artless but leaves the reader with a lump in the throat. It makes you aware that we are links in an endless chain of generations, that eternity means to be reborn again and again into the family of man and woman that make up mankind. Margaret Laurence has, like no other Canadian writer, made this endless chain of life the theme of all her books. She wrote five novels that have all become a part of our national heritage: "This Side Jordan," "The Stone Angel," "A Jest of God," "The Fire Dwellers," and "The Diviners." These are the titles of books we will read as long as there is a Canada, because they tell us so much about our country and about ourselves. She was born in 1926 and she died in 1987. She wrote her five great novels between the age of 30 and 37, and she was given a Governor General's Award for two of them. One, "A Jest of God," was made into a movie by Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward. She was made a Companion of the Order of Canada in 1971. At one point in her life she became the target of the lunatic fringe, who called her rich and radiant novel "The Diviners" "obscene, pornographic, immoral and blasphemous!"

Now, two years after she left us, she has given us a gift from the grave in the form of a most moving memoir titled "Dance on the

Earth." A friend gave it to me for Christmas and I have been living with it, and in it, since then.

The memoir has four parts each devoted to a woman. The first part is named Verna after Verna Simpson, Margaret Laurence's mother, who died at the age of 34 when the author was herself only four years old. This chapter is a dirge for a mother only recalled in the dimmest of memories. It is also a reconstruction of her mother's life and contains strongly worded opinions of the author about the position of women in the modern world, about the education of women, about the partnership of the sexes, about abortion and other related matters. Hers is a grave voice, a responsible voice, never spurious nor superficial, always fair, seeking understanding instead of confrontation.

The next chapter is about Margaret Simpson, the older sister of her mother, who became her "Mum" after her mother died, and eventually married her father. This is a memoir of sweet affection for a wonderful and very much loved woman. Margaret Laurence has a priceless gift. She can write the most heartrending sentiments without becoming maudlin or sentimental. Her prose is dark gold without any addition of cheaper metals.

The third chapter is in praise of Elsie Fry, the mother of her beloved husband Jack Laurence, and the last chapter is finally about the writer herself. Here she writes about her struggle to become a writer, her loves and friendships, her concerns, her fears, and her

joys. Margaret Laurence as dying when she composed this book, yet her affirmation of life was so strong that she gave her book the title "Dance on the Earth." She took this title from a hymn by Sydney Carter, which goes like this:

"I danced in the morning when the world was begun,  
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun  
And I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth -  
At Bethlehem I had my birth.  
Dance then wherever you may be;  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,

I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,

I will lead you all in the Dance, said he."

## RECYCLING.

It only works if we all do our part!

Please Remember to  
Recycle This Newspaper

## MAID SERVICE? WHO'S BEST?



For "FREE" Estimates  
CALL 873-2165

## DENTURE THERAPY CLINIC

T.H. METTLER  
Denture Therapist

72 Mill St., Georgetown  
877-8974

102 East Dr., Bramalea  
(Corner Bramalea Rd. & East Dr.)  
791-2314

## Lifestyles

### Yoga classes start soon

Yoga enthusiasts interested in developing their skills to the instructional level can enrol in Sheridan College's unique Yoga Teachers' Certificate Program in January.

The Oakville Campus program is exclusive to the area, offering the only local opportunity to pursue Yoga for either self-improvement or to obtain a teacher's certificate.

As well as expanding a student's self-awareness, this program also explores different breathing techniques to reduce tension and produce a relaxed state of mind.

A certified yoga instructor can teach courses through recreational facilities, children's cen-

tres, boards of education, and facilities serving the disabled or handicapped.

Twelve-week certificate courses, beginning in January, include Hatha Yoga 1, Instructional Yoga 1, Hatha Yoga 3, Instructional Yoga 3, or Intermediate (recreational) Hatha Yoga.

Visit the Continuing Education Office at the Sheridan campus nearest you, or contact Magda Benedek at (416) 481-0962 for information or registration.

*Elizabeth's Fashions*  
*Bridal Boutique*

77 Main Street South  
Downtown Georgetown  
873-1470

## NELL'S DRIVING SCHOOL

Approved by the Ontario Safety League

NEW COURSE  
Jan. 22-  
Feb. 14

6:30-9:30 p.m.

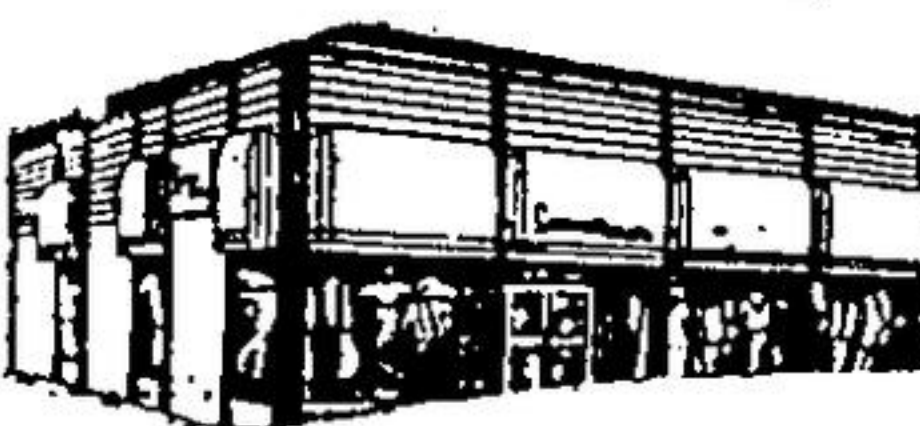
*Nell and family wish everyone a Healthy & Safe New Year!*



For Information  
About Courses or  
Private Lessons:

PHONE 877-2671

OPEN  
Mon.-Sat. 9-6  
Fridays 9-9



# Sussman's for Her

MAIN STREET ARTHUR



WINTER CLEARANCE  
**SAVE 30% OFF**  
ENTIRE WINTER STOCK

PLEASE!!  
All Christmas Exchanges by Sat., Jan. 6th

### OUTERWEAR

All winter coats and jackets from London Fog, Sterling Stall, Luhta, Novelti, Far West and many more.

NOW **30% OFF**  
Regular and Petites

### DRESSES

Daywear and Party Dresses from Joseph Ribkoff, Simon Chang, Rouie, Pantel, Linda Lundstrom, Maggie London and many more!

**SAVE 30%**  
Regular and Petites

### CAREER DRESSING

Blazers, skirts, pants, blouses and sweaters from Jones New York, Mr. Jax, Simon Chang, Louben, Mister Leonard, Garey Petites, Tan Jay, Chic Petites, Pantman and more.

**ALL AT 30% OFF**  
Regular and Petites

### ACCESSORIES

All Warm Winter Hats, Scarves, Mittens, Gloves and Jewellery.

**SAVE 30% OFF**

**SAVE 10% OFF ALL CRUISEWEAR!!**

## Foodstuffs

Chicken Soup Stock **\$1.29** LB



YELLOW or GREEN SPLIT PEAS

**45¢** LB

DELUXE MIXED NUTS

**\$4.75** LB

## Foodstuffs

92 Main St. S., Downtown Georgetown  
877-8569