

ACROSS THE FENCE

With Joanne Stevenson



Mom is awesome!

I have recently been elevated to the status of "awesome" by my 12½-year-old son, and "cool" by my almost 11-year-old daughter. And all I had to do was twist myself into knots, do flips, stand on my head, and scream 'til my throat was raw.

It used to be so easy to impress the kids. I could reach the cookie jar *without using a chair!* I could dress a Barbie doll when all other attempts had failed. I could retrieve the toy that had sunk to the bottom of the pool.

More importantly, I could rid the room of monsters at bedtime, sickness would diminish with a snuggle on the couch, and I could make those boo-boos disappear simply by kissing it better.

Ah, those were heady days indeed. The adoring looks that said "My mom can do anything" were surpassed only by my own adoring gaze that said "I would do anything for you."

As the kids have become increasingly independent and have mastered a few skills of their own, those adoring looks have turned to indifference at best, and outright contempt at times (most often when punishments are issued - I'm happy to say so far that's not very often).

So to be elevated in their esteem is no easy feat and I'm basking in the afterglow.

So what did I do? I went to Canada's Wonderland with my son and the MSB band a few weeks ago. And I went on almost all of the rides.

I always enjoyed fast rides and roller-coasters in my younger days. I was game for any ride at the Ex and was ecstatic when Wonderland was first built. Finally, some decent, challenging rides!

But after a decade of either being pregnant and not being able to go on any rides, or taking these excursions with young kids

in tow where I spent most of the day in Smurf Village, I admit I had lost my nerve. And after doing the Fall Fair with the flu one year, (don't ride the Gravitron when you're already feeling queasy), I was a little afraid to try Wonderland's rides again.

My son agreed to let me start with the "tame" rides and work my way up to the more adventurous. It's a wonderful feeling to face your fears and overcome them. I did all the rides except The Bat and Top Gun. I might try them on another occasion, but after 10 hours of turning upside-down and having my brains rattled around, I thought I should lay off.

My daughter's class went to Ontario Place before school finished. Of course she had heard all about Wonderland and was expecting great things from me. Thank goodness the rides at Ontario Place are more gentle than Wonderland - I'm not sure I'd have done so well two weeks in a row otherwise.

It took some coaxing from the kids, but a few of us moms agreed to brave the water-raft ride. Scaling flights of stairs that left you winded; clinging to the wall lest we blow away; mustering up all our courage to sit in that inflatable "water toy;" trusting in God and modern safety standards that we'd survive the plummet.

It took even more coaxing - some would call it whining - to get this same group of moms to leave the raft ride and get these hungry kids some dinner before the bus left.

So while I'm "awesome" in my son's eyes and "cool" to my daughter, I'm enough of a realist to know this will be short-lived. And I wonder what new stunts I'll have to do to rate so highly in the future. I think I'll draw the line at handing over the car keys and my credit cards.

Seniors to pay for all drugs

ASSIC ALERT

The government recently passed legislation that requires a co-payment or deductible from everyone who has a prescription filled under the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. Those receiving prescriptions from this program include seniors, people on social assistance, individuals living in long term care facilities and people who qualify for the Trillium drug program.

If you are a social assistance recipient you will be charged \$2 for each prescription you have filled. Seniors with net incomes below \$16,000 (single) or \$24,000 (couple) will pay \$2 per prescription. Seniors with incomes above these levels will pay the first \$100 annually of all prescriptions that are cov-

ered by the Ontario Drug Benefit Program and then pay the dispensing fee up to the ODB maximum of \$6.11 per prescription.

Those qualifying for the Trillium drug program will be charged the \$2 co-payment on each prescription after meeting the sliding deductible that is based on income.

Since this system is based on income, the Ministry of Health will receive information from the federal government about seniors' income levels, based on whether the person is receiving Old Age Security and the full Guaranteed Income Supplement. A decision will then be made as to whether the senior will pay the co-payment or the deductible amount.

The computer system, called the Drug Benefit Network, will have information from the Ministry of Health about whether to charge the co-payment or the deductible. The Network will keep track of every prescription that is charged to the Drug Benefit regardless of where

you had the prescription filled. The pharmacist will know when you have reached your \$100 deductible.

If you are seeing more than one doctor or using more than one pharmacy, your health professionals might not know all the drugs you are taking and therefore it is a good idea to have all your prescriptions filled at the same place.

For more information about the changes to the program, call the Ministry of Health info-line at 1-800-268-1154 or call the seniors info-line at 1-888-405-0405.

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Suicide workshop

The Canadian Mental Health Association is holding a two-day suicide intervention workshop in Oakville next Tuesday and Wednesday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Participants will be taught emergency first aid to intervene in a potential suicide situation. This workshop is designed for anyone who may come in contact with a person at risk of suicide.

To register or for more details, call Lisa LaChapelle at (905) 945-5044.

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PLUG IN

Energy Savings by Design

Planting a tree, shrub or vine can provide benefits greatly outweighing the cost. Well-planned landscaping can not only provide energy savings, but also can increase the beauty and value of your home.

Planting trees that lose their leaves on the southern and western sides of your home provides summer shading to cool your home, lowering summer cooling costs. In winter these same trees will allow the sun to shine in to provide natural light and warmth into your home.

Planting evergreen shrubs and trees on the northern and western sides of your home creates a natural winter wind-break, cutting winter heating costs. Shading your air conditioning unit not only saves energy, but helps lengthen the life of the unit. The shade pro-

vided by a tree or shrub cases the strain on an air conditioner unit. Just be sure not to block the air circulation necessary to run the machine efficiently.

Vines are another quick and beautiful energy saver. Deciduous vines provide quick-growing shade on the walls of your home. Consult a professional landscaper to help you choose the right vine. Studies show landscaping can also improve the resale value of your home and reduce noise pollution.

Remember, before beginning a landscaping project, call us to find out if there are underground lines running through it, don't climb it or build anything in it. Call if the tree growing trees under power needs trimming.

For energy savings, beauty and noise reduction, nothing from your meter beats landscaping.



WHAT YOU CAN DO IN AN ELECTRICAL EMERGENCY

If someone receives an electric shock from **LIVE INDOOR ELECTRICITY**, shut off the power if possible. If not possible, use a dry wooden stick, dry rope, or dry clothing to move the victim away from the power source.

If someone is in contact with a **LIVE OUTDOOR POWER LINE**, the only safe thing to do is to call your electric utility and have them turn the power off! Call an ambulance immediately! **DO NOT** attempt to move any outdoor electrical equipment or the victim.

In case of an **ELECTRICAL FIRE** unplug the appliance when possible. If smoke comes from wires or electric motors, turn the power off. If a fire is small, use a fire extinguisher rated specifically for electrical fires or plain baking soda to put it out. **NEVER** use water to put out an electrical fire. In doubt? Call the fire department! Be sure to give your name, address, and tell them it's an electrical fire. If a fire is too big, get everyone out of the house immediately!

If a **POWER LINE OR BROKE WIRE** is down near your house, **DO NOT** touch it! **NEVER** assume the wire is dead. Be sure to contact us so we can make necessary repairs.