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## Local kids ski at Mount Hood



**SUBMITTED PHOTO**  
 A little heat wave can't stop the truly dedicated skier! Representatives from the Milton Heights Ski Academy recently took flight to the 11,235 ft high Mount Hood. They trained there at a height of 8,500 feet on the Plamer and Zig Zag Glaciers. Back row from left to right are: Meghan Greaves, Natasha Luca, Sara Walter, Reid McEachran, Andre Charbonneau, Rory Somerville-Bat and Brendan Somerville-Bat. In the front row from left to right are: Dylan Luca and Tyler Walter.



## Tony Bethell's new House

### Wife of Great Escape survivor endows hospice in his name

By BERNADETTE WARD

The gently rolling black ribbon is dappled with sunlight filtering through the canopy of ancient trees and is bordered with wildflowers that sway gently as a summer breeze tugs at them. This is the road that works its way over Caledon Mountain and cuts a swath through God's country of Bellfountain and Erin.

It is a tonic for any battered soul and it's no small wonder that Tony Bethell loved his farm here.

He has been gone barely a year, but his passing has left Lorna MacDougall, his wife of 34 years, bereft.

"He was a very special guy, that husband of mine," she says with pride.

Special indeed; his was the story that puts stars in the eyes of young boys dreaming of glory and heroes; the stuff that movies are made of.

Born Richard Anthony Bethell on April 9, 1922 in Dar es Saalem, Tanganyika (now Tanzania), Bethell joined the services at 18 in England and was secretly shipped to Georgia, Alabama, via Toronto for air training.

He returned to England in 1941 with his American Army wings and joined RAF Squadron 268 in 1942. He was shot down in December of 1942 and spent the next three years in Stalag Luft III, a German PoW camp.

He was one of 76 prisoners to escape through tunnel Harry during a daring escape known as Operation 200, named for the number of soldiers that were to escape. It was also the operation that the movie, *The Great Escape*, starring Steve McQueen was based on.

Sent out in two and threes, Bethell and his partner Cookie Long were free for three days, trying to find a way out. On the third day at noon hour they attempted to clear the town but were caught.

Of the 76 that did make it out of the tunnel, only three men made it out of the country; the rest were recaptured.

According to his widow, Bethell and Long could hear from their jail cell the sounds of prisoners being moved and originally thought them lucky.

They were not however. On Hitler's orders, fifty of the escaped 76 were taken out in small groups and shot in the back of the head. Their graves and remains were later identified by England's M15/M16.

Cookie Long was the last of the 50. He died on the 6th of April 1944.

Not unexpectedly, the war left its mark on Bethell.

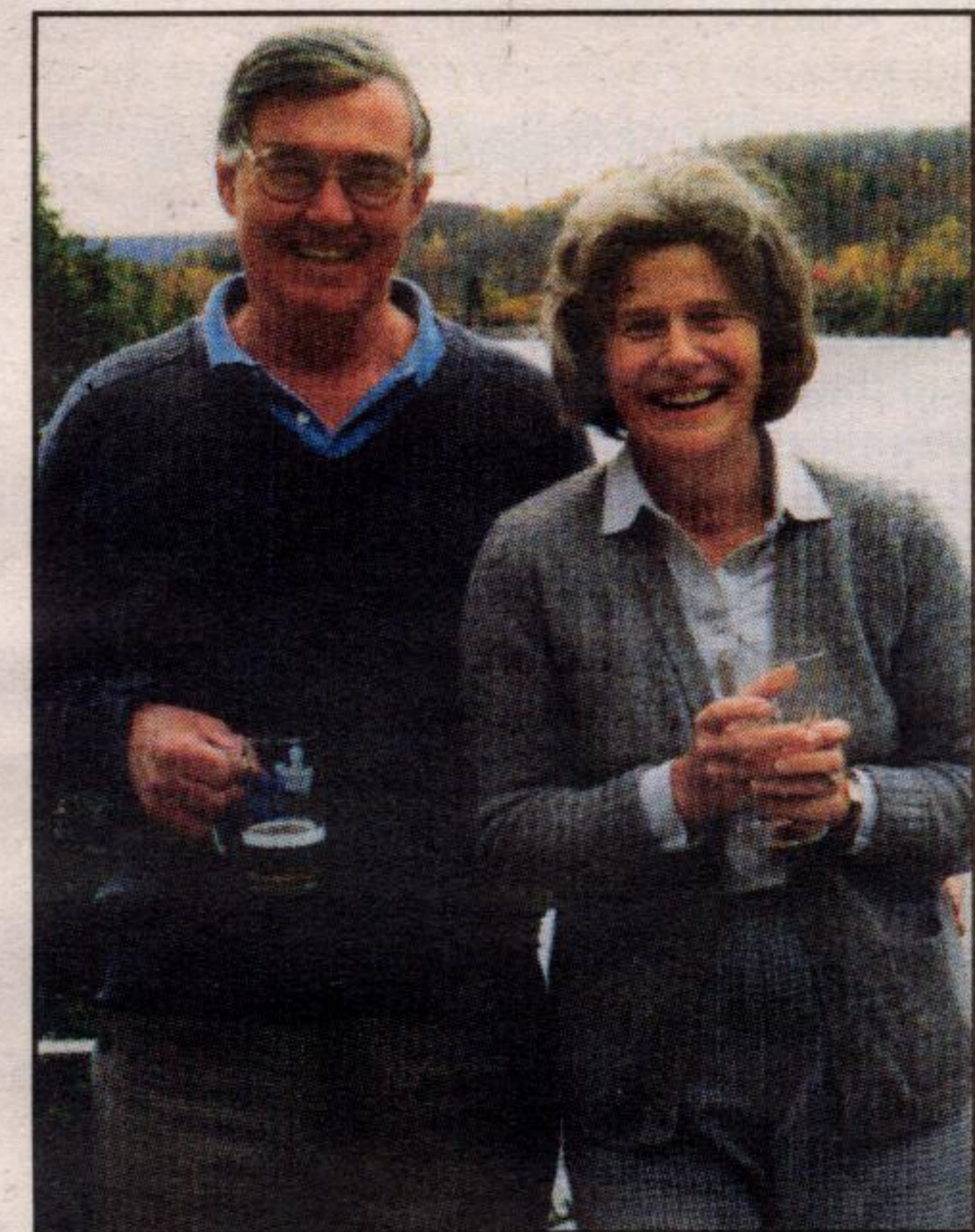
"He never talked about it except with close family," said MacDougall. "He never really got over it."

There was only one exception. At the request of one of his granddaughters, he spoke to her high school history class. He was unable to tell the whole story in just one class and was asked to return and complete the story, which he did.

Although he did not speak publicly about his experiences, he did put a book together in 1994-95. It was intended to give relatives of those 50 who were shot, some memories of what their loved ones went through.

"Many of them did not know what life in the camp had been like you see," said MacDougall.

Despite a great deal of begging from some very interested parties, MacDougall



Tony Bethell and Lorna MacDougall

says she will not allow the book to be published as it was her late husband's wish that it not be done.

After the war ended, Bethell worked in import/export in Africa and then re-enlisted in the RAF and worked in Washington. He married and had five children - three sons and two daughters.

He eventually moved to Montreal and worked as a stockbroker. After his first marriage ended he met and married Lorna MacDougall McMaster in 1970, she a widow with three children of her own.

They bought the farm in Caledon in 1993 where Bethell and MacDougall settled into pastoral peace.

"He loved his life," said MacDougall. "He always wanted to live on a farm and was happiest when on his tractor."

Bethell's death in February of 2004 has given MacDougall the impetus to leave a mark of her own.

When he became ill and it was apparent that there would be no return from his bout with cancer, they decided Bethell would remain in his home until the end.

MacDougall knows they were fortunate. They had the resources to have help brought in when needed and their ranch home was large enough to accommodate extra people and equipment.

She also believes in palliative care outside the hospital setting and so she has donated \$2 million towards the creation of a Caledon hospice to be named Bethell House, after Tony. The groundwork is now being laid with the first step a hospice foundation. Then, the fundraising can begin for the remaining funds.

MacDougall is emphatic about what she wants when she describes this new hospice.

It is to be a hospice she says, in the "home for the needy or afflicted" Oxford sense. There is to be a building, where those terminally ill can spend their last days surrounded by their families and friends, not restricted to a visiting hour. Where favourite foods can be prepared and each cheerfully decorated room will open to a natural setting.

"When you're dying, you might as well have the things that you love and are comfortable with," says MacDougall. "This is what I'm hoping Hospice Caledon is going to build."



## Dear Tracey

**TRACEY MCGRATH is a Senior Financial Consultant for Investors Group and Halton area resident for over 30 years.**

**Each week she will answer your questions about Tax, Estate, and Financial Planning.**

TRACEY MCGRATH  
 Certified Financial Planner

PREPARE to PROSPER

**Dear Tracey:**

At 40 years old, I am now considering going back to school fulltime. While I do have modest savings, do you have any suggestions on funding such an endeavor?

**Signed, searching for alternatives**

**Dear Searching:** Going back to school doesn't have to mean going into debt. While RRSPs are intended to help you invest for your retirement, borrowing funds to finance higher education is also an investment in the future.

The Lifelong Learning Plan (LLP) is a program that provides individuals with an opportunity to withdraw up to \$10,000 per year, or up to \$20,000 in total, in the form of an interest-free loan to finance an LLP student's full-time education. An LLP student can either be the individual who holds the RRSP or his or her spouse or common-law partner.

To qualify, the student must be enrolled or have received a written offer to enroll in a qualifying education program at a university, college or other institution that qualifies for the education tax credit.

The amount withdrawn is not added to income provided the student repays the RRSP over a 10 year period - some specifics apply.

While the LLP is a very flexible program, you should keep in mind that you are losing the tax-deferred growth while the funds are not in the RRSP. If non-registered funds are available, they should generally be considered first unless there are negative tax consequences to doing so.

**Good luck and happy learning.**

Tracey

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