

Proudly Canadian in one easy read

It's not every day that I can read a book that can actually give me a feel-good buzz.

Feel good about my country, or even go so far as to feel good about mankind in general.

The book, *The Day The World Came to Town*, was written by Jim DeFede, a journalist currently working for the *Miami Herald*.

Suggested to me by Marie Vickery of Halton Hills Public Library, the book documents the events in Gander, Newfoundland following the September 11 terrorist attacks, and how the town's 10,000 residents rose to the occasion, taking in the more than 6,000 passengers who were stranded for days while the air space over the United States was closed.

Marie feels every Canadian should read it—and after reading it for myself, I agree.

I found there was a certain irony that an American journalist should write about a bunch of Newfies who eventually became our best goodwill ambassadors for Canada.

Being unaccustomed to Newfies in the first place, DeFede admits he found researching his book was quite a discovery in its own right, as he personally experienced true Newfie hospitality, just like the 6,000-plus passengers discovered for themselves, those days following September 11.

The book is written in small chapters, almost story vignettes, and each deals with a certain passenger, or group of passengers, and their personal challenges during their stay in Gander.

As the story progresses, the vignettes all come together to a common end. It's quite uplifting.

At first, the passengers, or 'plane people' as their hosts dubbed them, couldn't believe their good fortune with the outreach of hospitality.

Initially, they even mistrusted the offers of help from their impromptu hosts, certain there was some catch. And in a town where no one locked their doors? Unbelievable!

Total strangers in town offered them the use of their cars, Internet access in their homes to e-

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mail family members, or the use of their bathtubs or showers, complete with fresh towels.

Locals drove them around town to shop for food and clothing, while others set up temporary shelters in schools, Lions Club halls, even at the fire hall, so they had a place to eat and sleep.

The local Wal-Mart and Canadian Tire stores gave away goods to anyone stranded in Gander. Items like sleeping bags, or underwear (their luggage was impounded on the planes) were given away—anything to make them comfortable while the 38 planes sat on the runway.

Town residents sat up all night, watching over their guests, making sure they had no need of anything if they happen to wake in the night.

Even the local Canadian Tire store sent a truck out of town to pick up for a load of toys to help keep the kids occupied, since they had none in stock in their own stores.

As time passed, the passengers learned to accept the offers of sincere generosity and goodwill from their Newfie hosts. In doing so, many developed friendships that will last a lifetime.

I've never met a Newfie I didn't like—their sense of humour and ability to see life in the most simplistic terms is a credit to them.

If you need a boost about being Canadian, read *The Day The World Came to Town*. I'm sure you'll also get the same feel-good buzz.

But most importantly, you'll gain a greater respect for our cousins out there on 'De Rock'.

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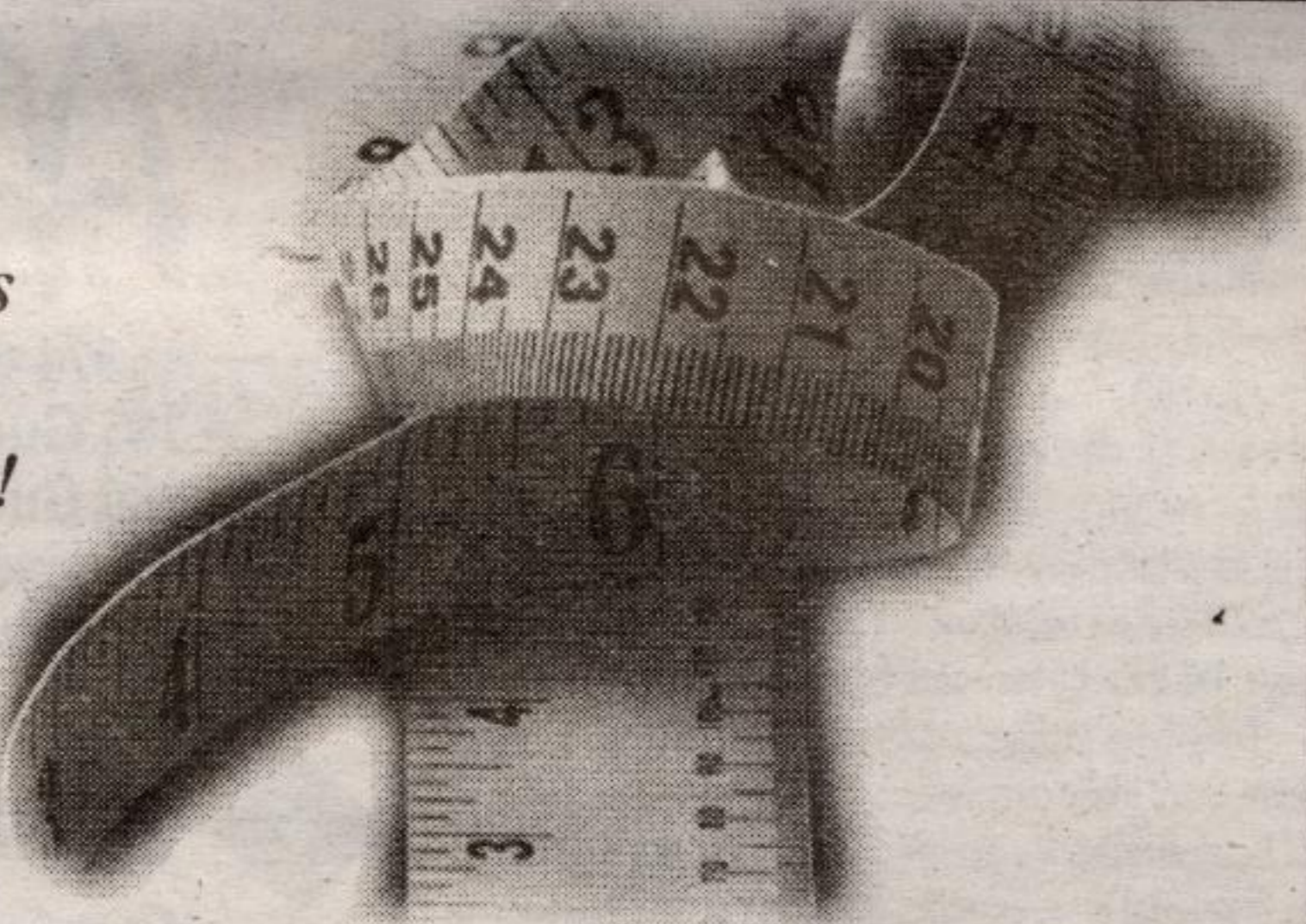
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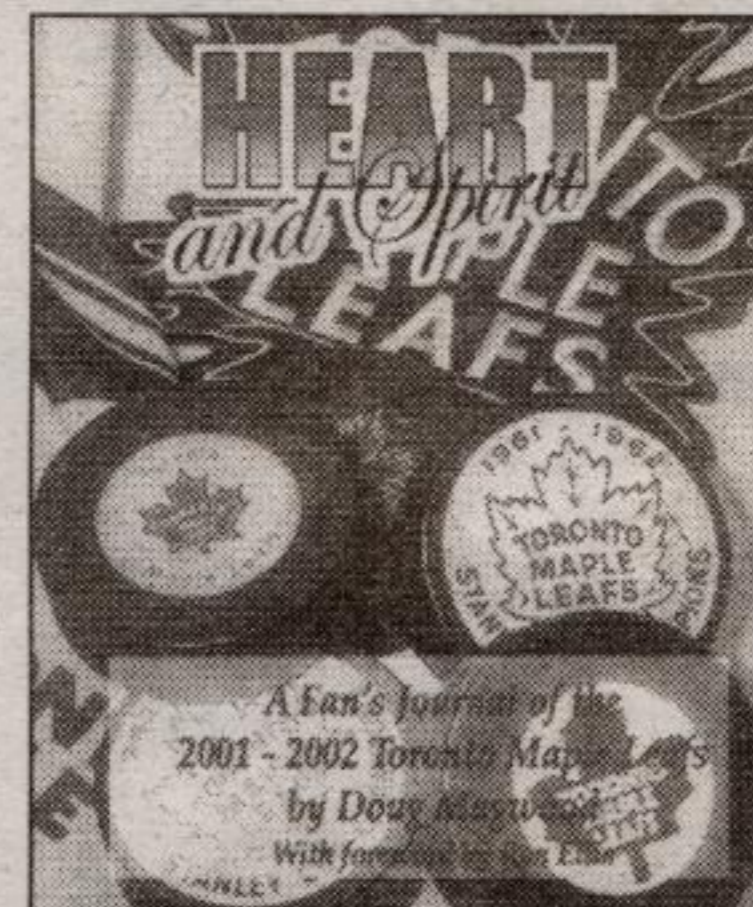
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Where: A Novel Escape, 140 Guelph Street, Georgetown
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with proceeds to the Credit Valley Hospital
With a foreword by Ron Ellis and a strong endorsement
by referee Bryan Lewis this book is sure to be loved by
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