

COMING UP: Journalist sharing post-war story

Forgiving those who tried to kill her

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

Can a person really forgive someone for trying to kill them?

Yes. In fact, it's almost a necessary part of the healing process, according to Kathleen Kenna.

The Markham native is not just paying lip service to her belief.

On March 4, 2002 Ms Kenna was almost killed by a homemade grenade in Afghanistan while she was covering the war for the Toronto Star.

The improvised explosive device was thrown into her vehicle, rolled under her seat and exploded.

Ms Kenna suffered extensive injuries to her right leg and still has shrapnel imbedded in her body.

She spent months in the hospital, which was followed up with two years of rehabilitation and five surgeries.

During that time, Ms Kenna said she focused on her physical rehabilitation, not the psychological.

"I really didn't think I needed it. I've always been an over-achiever. ... I can handle this," she told The Sun-Tribune.

But that wasn't the case.

She doesn't know exactly when she realized she had to forgive the alleged Al Qaedas who irrevocably changed her life 10 years ago, but she knew she had to.

"I don't know that healing can be complete without forgiveness," she said.

"It's been a journey for me. ... Forgiveness is something (that occurs) in stages," the 58-year-old said.

Ms Kenna's wounds rendered her unable to return to The Star's bureau in India, where she was stationed at the time, because of her need for regular medical care, so she left journalism and went back to school.

She earned a graduate degree in rehabilitation counselling.

"Forgiveness really helps people heal," Ms Kenna said. "People need hope. Hope helps in improving our health."

As part of Ms Kenna's journey, she devoted her graduate work to research and training to help Iraq and Afghan war veterans.

"Because the U.S. military risked their lives to save mine, I made a personal commitment to repay their selfishness," Ms Kenna wrote in a recent article published by The Star.

She almost bled to death following the attack and American soldiers donated their blood. They gave so much, she is now O-negative. Before the attack, she was O-positive.

'NO HARD FEELINGS'

As part of her personal mission to show forgiveness is possible, Ms Kenna is giving a presentation entitled *The Importance of Forgiveness in War and Peace*, April 13 at Christ Church Anglican, 254 Sunset Blvd.

Her cousin, Stouffville resident Ken Prentice, is organizing the event.

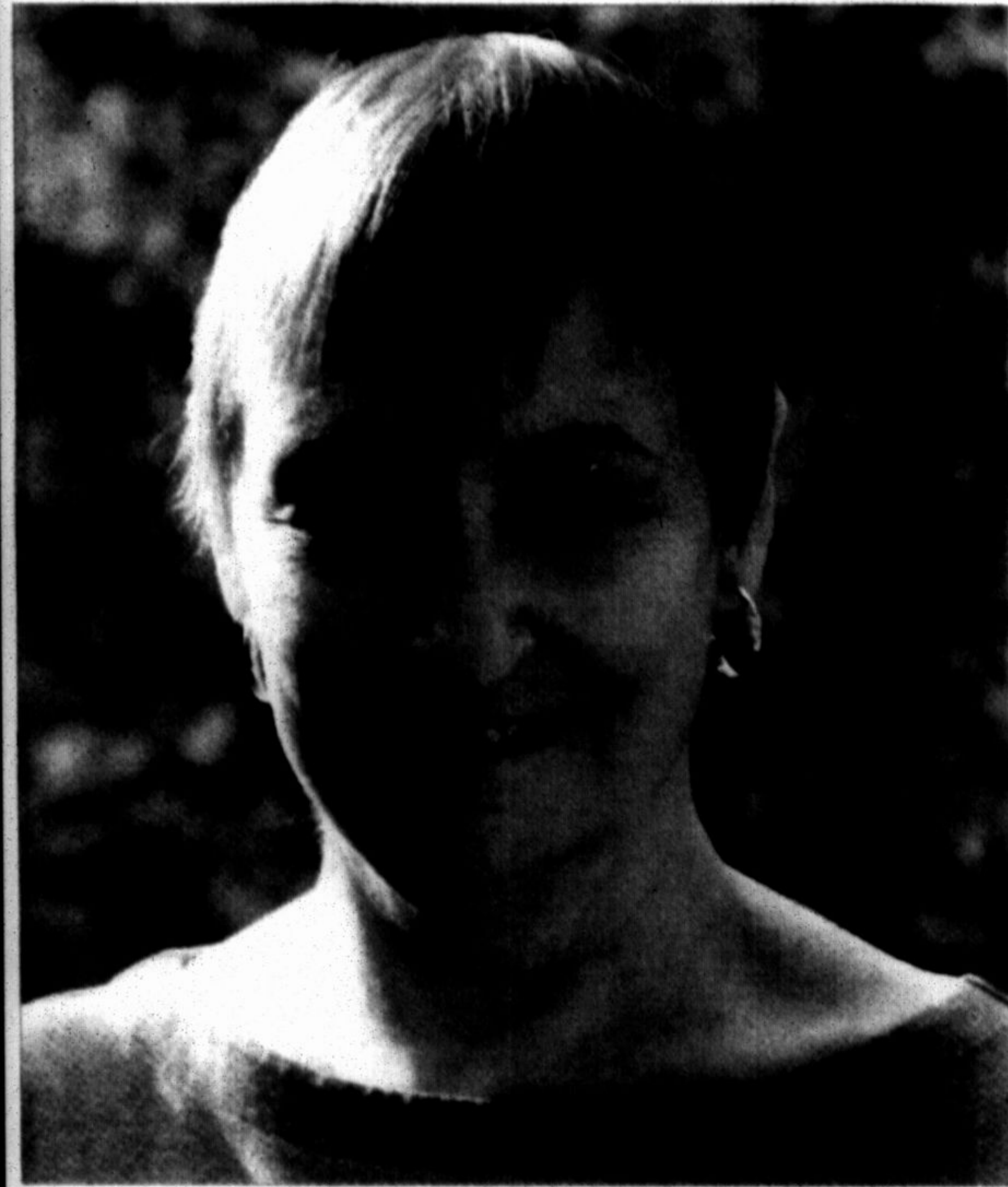
"Can we, post-war, forgive people who have wished us harm or by their actions shown they wished us harm?" Ms Kenna asked.

"Just by reaching out, meeting people again, breaking bread ... after 10 years, for me, there is no grudge, there are no hard feelings," she said.

Ms Kenna now lives in Portland, Oregon with her husband, Hadi Dadashian, whom she married just over a year before the bombing. She is once again writing.

Tickets are \$12 each and available at the Christ Church office by calling 905-640-1461, or from Mr. Prentice, at 905-642-9507. The presentation begins at 7:30 p.m.

with files from Torstar News Service



Former Toronto Star reporter Kathleen Kenna was almost killed by a homemade grenade in Afghanistan in 2002. She'll talk about it April 13.

LATCHAM GALLERY

Have your artwork juried

Latcham Gallery will accept pieces to be considered for its annual juried show Monday only, between noon and 8 p.m.

The exhibition is open to all artists living in Ontario and working in any media.

Artists can drop off a maximum of two recent — between 2010 and 2012 — original works that must be ready for exhibition.

Pieces must also fit through an entrance of 6.5 feet by four feet.

Notification of acceptance will be

made by phone. The jury's decision is final.

The exhibition's opening reception is April 14, 1 to 3 p.m. The show runs until May 26.

The jurors include: James Campbell, executive director/curator of the Visual Arts Centre of Clarington; award-winning sculptor and photographer Marlene Hilton Moore and; Greg Murphy, dean of the school of media, art and design at Durham College.

For more information, go to www.latchamgallery.ca

MAKE NEW FRIENDS

Check out our web exclusive feature about how people are meeting up through the many clubs and organizations seeking new members throughout the region.



THE SCORE

► Game-night coverage of the Spirit in the OJHL finals online only due to holiday weekend deadlines.

OPENING THIS WEEK

► Film reviewer David Budo checks out *The Moth Diaries* and the DVD *War Horse* in the latest posts on Budo's Bottom Line. Grab the popcorn.



EXCLUSIVELY at yorkregion.com

WEIRD

(BECAUSE NORMAL ISN'T WORKING)

These days, it's normal to deal with financial debt, high divorce rates, and bad relationships. Maybe it's time to shake things up. Join us as we explore life beyond normal in our next series — WEIRD.

April 08: Weird Way To Save The World
April 15: Weird View of Money

in **2** one
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sunday Service at 10:00 am

www.in2one.ca

1400 The Park
1400 Avenue, Stouffville