



Ramblin' Ruth

On The House

By Ruth LeBlanc

When my husband died from cancer two years ago I waited 12 months before deciding to put the house up for sale.

Within a week of listing it I had a change of heart and pulled it off the market. Kirk B. Nice, my realtor, lived up to his name and was very graceful about my change of heart. Too much had changed and I realized I could not bear to part with the house and yard my late husband and I had loved for over 20 years.

I decided renovations were the way to go and that is exactly what I have done. I couldn't erase the horrors that occurred during my husband's illness, but I decided I could change my surroundings to make life

more bearable. Then I met John, a contractor who has a huge heart and a toolbox to match, and he has helped me become a building supply store junkie, while recognizing my inability to be a handyman's helper.

Because of my lack of practical skills, John sometimes sees me as having a princess syndrome that he vows to break, but there is little or no chance of that. From an early age I became aware that if there was a twig on the ground I would trip over it, and if there was an accident waiting to happen I would trigger it.

After watching me cut myself every time I undertook a minor task involving tools and projects, and hearing me exclaim, "Oh my gawd" at least a hundred times, he has excused me entirely from the building process.

The old house is crooked from the ground up

and even the simplest of home improvements is a challenge. But in spite of the difficulties, the old bathroom has been demolished and is now a thing of beauty. The bedroom has had garden doors installed and John built a deck and, later in the spring, even finished it with garden boxes overflowing with flowers. What a beautiful sight for me to see each morning.

The deck was built in late March and, filled with excitement, John erected a seasonal enclosure the next weekend outside the French doors. Soon after, on a stormy early April day, he disappeared to the deck and was gone a long time before I finally went to see what was keeping him.

Outside on the deck snow had filled the roof of the enclosure, and as John struggled to remove it, the whole thing collapsed on top of his head, the metal bending and

twisting in the wind. Knowing this would upset me, he tried in vain to fix it, but to no avail. I found him outside, up to his knees in snow and nursing a sore head, as he held onto a bent rod with the fabric roofing material around him on the ground.

Other than this mishap all the work has gone smoothly, with the house looking better by the day. There is much left to do, but Rome wasn't built in a day and this house won't be improved to perfection for quite a while yet.

Life goes on for anyone who loses someone they love. As difficult as it is, you have no choice but to move forward or get lost in the past. Many readers asked where I had moved to and I now realize I have just moved on.

Each day is a gift that I savour and I know that I have done the right thing by staying at my house at the lake.

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Coming Home To Willowgrove

By Kate Gilderdale
Stouffville Free Press

When Ron Shantz accepted the position as new executive director at Willowgrove, it felt like coming home.

The Stouffville campus comprises Glenbrook Day Camp, Willowgrove Outdoor Education Centre and Willowgrove Primary School. Fraser Lake Camp in Bancroft, a residential summer camp for young people aged from 8 to 16, is also part of the Willowgrove community.

"When I was 11 years old in 1964, I spent a week at Fraser Lake Camp," recalled Mr. Shantz, an ordained minister. "Over the years I continued to come back as a camper and then as a member of staff."

He joined the board of directors in the 1980s and was part of a team that moved the old barn to its current location on the Stouffville property and helped to build the beautiful outdoor pool near the camp office. "Camp had a profound impact on me as a child. It's a critical age when you leave childhood and enter adolescence."

He was, he said, a juvenile delinquent when he first attended Fraser Lake. "The impact that it had was to do with people more than programs. It was a place where you felt you could belong, a place that was safe and healthy and part of the Christian faith community. Within the Mennonite tradition

there's an overall sense of community that is such a gift and that we share with the rest of the world."

He left Stouffville for Oakville in 1992, where he served as executive director of Prince Charles Place, a non-profit housing project built by the church for low-income families. "We have developed a holistic ministry called Kerr Street Ministries," he said. It started out as a modest day camp, using school playgrounds and the town pool as facilities.

"We saw kids running around the neighbourhood and I saw myself as a child in those kids and remembered the impact Fraser Camp had on my life. In a few short years we went from 15 kids and three volunteer staff to over 200 kids, 24 paid staff and about 40 volunteers."

Working with churches of many different denominations, they started to break down existing stereotypes and barriers and form trusting relationships with the young campers and their families, many of whom were headed by single parents.

Now Mr. Shantz is looking forward to his latest challenge in the beautiful campus on McCowan Road. "The school becomes a classroom beyond the walls. It's an oasis," he said. "I had the opportunity to step away for 20 years and see how other parts of the world are doing things. It's like coming home bringing new ideas, a fresh vision."

GOOD EAT CHINESE RESTAURANT



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For over 40 years the number to call for the best quality Chinese Food in Stouffville has been the same - 905-640-6565. That's the phone number of the Good Eat Chinese Restaurant. Raymond Luo, the current owner of this cosy Downtown Stouffville eatery, is maintaining the restaurant's long established tradition of excellence in Chinese Food. "We use only the best quality chicken breast, beef, pork and shrimp," says Raymond, who is trained in the art of Chinese cuisine. "We support local farms by buying fresh vegetables from them."

Raymond upgraded his Chinese Food preparation skills by taking fusion cooking training last year. Fusion cooking results in

the best tasting food by using fresh food and high quality vegetable oil to produce food that is healthier with less grease. "That means less cholesterol, and we use no MSG so our food is natural." The Good Eat Restaurant also specializes in catering to parties. The Stouffville Legion, Eastern Gate seniors group, and several area churches have all shown their confidence by having Raymond cater their events.

Good Eat Restaurant's manageress Surina Yiu says she is seeing more and more new faces in the restaurant as Stouffville continues to grow. "Stouffville is still a very friendly town to live and do business in," she says.

Raymond and Surina would like to express their gratitude to all their patrons who support the restaurant. "Thank you Stouffville for voting the Good Eat Chinese Restaurant the number one Chinese Food restaurant in Town."

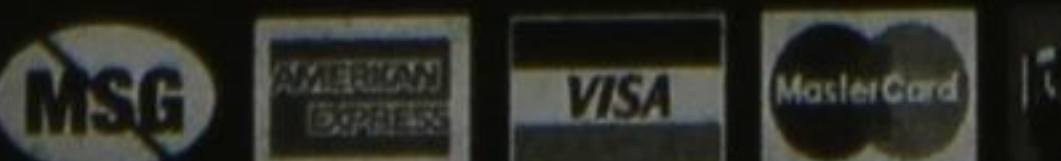
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Young campers explore the cornfields at Willowgrove.

Ron Shantz stands beside the swimming pool he helped to build at Willowgrove on McCowan Rd.

