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Ramblin' Ruth



**A Bucket Load Of Trouble**

By Ruth LeBlanc

In the past month my life has been filled with a loss, a soaking and an accident.

First came the loss of yet another cat, this one named Lucky. He belonged to a couple who went to Florida to escape the cold, leaving him in good hands - or so they thought - until they returned home in April.

One day, about a week before they were due back, I opened the door to let the dogs in and out he ran. A frantic search proved futile. Lucky was not so lucky and was never seen again despite all my efforts to find him.

The worst part was telling the owners I had lost their beloved cat of thirteen years. They were gracious and understanding as I returned his assorted toys, but I don't think they will recommend me as a cat sitter any time soon.

After Lucky's disappearance I went to the local supermarket one day in late April, when out of the blue it started to rain, then sleet and snow. Braving the cold, I ran from my car into the store

wearing just a light jacket over my dress.

When I came out, I stood under the awning waiting for a break in the rain before going back to the car. Suddenly I heard a gurgling sound from above. As I looked up, a barrel load of ice cold water, mixed with slush, came pouring down over my head.

I wasn't as worried about getting wet and frozen as I was about who might have witnessed my unexpected shower. Pulling lumps of slush from the back of my head and shaking like a dog after a swim, I scanned the parking lot and sidewalk. Most people avoided looking in my direction and one man was grinning like a fool as he poked his partner. No one would meet my eye as I shook my jacket and walked with as much dignity as I could muster back to the car.

To all of you who did the ice bucket challenge, I take my hat off to you. Freezing cold water being poured over your head might be okay if you are a seal, but for me it was one bucket too many.

And finally, I purchased a 'handyman

special' just down the road close to Big Bald Lake as an investment. The previous owner had painted it an awful shade of robin's egg blue. From the dog house to the deck this blue made you look, shudder and drive by.

Undaunted by the colour, and knowing that a bucket of paint would remedy the problem, I did an inspection and made an offer. Since then walls have been removed, bins have been filled and, on a day of demolition, the accident happened.

Sweeping rubble into a pile, I felt the floor give way and down I went into the crawl space, hanging on for dear life. My flip flops flew off my feet and I was left dangling as I tried to pull myself up.

Eventually I clawed my way back, but my body paid the price for the fall. My right foot is purple, my leg is sporting a large goose egg and my torso feels like a steam roller ran over it. Just another day in the Kawarthas.

So luck has been in short supply for the cat, my head and now my body. Tomorrow I am going to try my hand at using the chain saw. Need I say more?

**At Your Gallery**

By Chai Duncan

The Latcham Gallery is thrilled to present *Hybrid Vigour*, a solo exhibition by Markham-based artist Xiaojing Yan.

Elegantly weaving together works in paper, bronze, video and pearls that explore her Chinese/Canadian hybrid cultural identity, Yan creates art that is smart, personal and poetic. *Cloud Cell* (2014) is a breathtaking example of her sculptural art.

It is made from 13,000 freshwater pearls strung along multiple threads of monofilament that create a rendering in three dimensions - a floating apparition - and resembles both a traditional scholar's stone and a menacing mushroom cloud.

Other works in the exhibition also carry layers of meaning that leave us contemplating the reality that change is the only constant element of human existence. By juxtaposing the solidity of tradition, family and history alongside the fluid, tenuousness of the experience of immigration, Yan explores a duality that is greater than the sum of its parts.

With nods to both east and west, her works uncover an experience that is common wherever there are populations on the move seeking a life transformed. This exhibition is not to be missed.

Xiaojing Yan will give a talk at the gallery on Wednesday, June 17 at 7 p.m. Admission is by a suggested donation of \$5. *Hybrid Vigour* is on view until July 4.

Chai Duncan is curator at The Latcham Gallery.



*Cloud Cell* is among the arresting works featured in *Hybrid Vigour*, which runs until July 4 at The Latcham Gallery.

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**STOUFFVILLE SENIOR OF THE MONTH**

**GARY McDONNELL**

**Age:** Gary is 70 years old.

**NUMBER OF YEARS IN STOUFFVILLE AREA:**  
Gary has lived in Stouffville for 27 years. He spent the first five years of his life in Kirkland Lake, ON, where his family lived while his father helped build the Alaska Highway. He then moved to the Toronto area, where he lived until moving to Stouffville with his wife Lena in 1988.

**CAREER:**  
Gary worked in the sports marketing division of the Toronto headquarters of Saatchi and Saatchi, a large British based advertising agency. His accounts included the Canadian Football League and the Wrigley Chewing Gum Co. While there he organized the Wrigley Triple A Hockey Tournament, which went on to become the Telus Cup. He went on to found Sports Tours International, organizing international tours and tournaments for sports teams including a European junket for the Canadian Mens' and Womens' Underwater Hockey Teams. He continues to run the business.

**HOBBIES:**  
Gary and Lena love to travel, with Gary's business lending itself to such pursuits. "We've covered every square inch of Europe." He also enjoys golfing and curling.

**FAMILY:**  
Gary and Lena's daughter Heather is an urban developer in Toronto. He has two sisters, Shirley and Joan.

**PET PEEVE:**  
The fact that there are not enough subways in Toronto to make travelling to the big city even more enjoyable.

**LIFE HLITE:** "There have been so many things I can't single out just one. Family, business - I've worked with so many fascinating people. I've been very lucky."

**WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?** "I'd get rid of it - divide it up among close relatives and to charity."

**IF YOU KNOW A SENIOR THAT IS WORTHY OF SENIOR OF THE MONTH GIVE US AN E-MAIL AT FARMERJACKS@ROGERS.COM**

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