



# Alarmed and Dangerous

By Kate Gilderdale

At midnight a couple of weeks ago, the fire alarm went off here in paradise.

'Twas a dark, unstormy night and the Wallethead of High Park were tucked up in bed, as visions of sugarplums (or, more likely, an amusing little merlot) danced in our heads. We were rudely awakened by the clarion cry of the alarm, shrieking through the apartment and nearly blowing out the aged eardrums.

After staggering about blindly looking for bathrobes and flip-flops, we ventured into the hallway, which was empty and mercifully free of smoke. The emergency exit is right beside our front door, but as Mr. Wallethead pointed out, 18 floors down is a long walk for the old and the feckless. It was split second decision-making time but unfortunately decisiveness has never been a family trait.

To while away the time we didn't have, I started searching for the 'what to do in case

of fire' instructions I had neglected to read when we signed our lease. The siren went on screaming like a banshee, which made it hard to concentrate and the instructions were, shall we say, ambivalent.

Under the heading 'Should we stay or leave?' it was suggested, rather unhelpfully I thought, that it was up to us. In a world which is dedicated to protecting idiots from themselves no matter how self-destructive or stupid their behaviour, it came as a bit of a shock to discover that here we were in a real-life potential remake of Towering Inferno, being advised that we were 'responsible for our own safety'.

At least in the movie we could have turned to the late, great, hunky hero Steve McQueen for guidance, but now, in the cold light of midnight, we were on our own, with not so much as a film crew in sight.

What with Mr. Wallethead's reluctance to take the long and difficult walk downstairs at 12.15 a.m. and my sudden realization that, as part of my personal winterization program, I had removed the polish on my toenails (my only concession to girly glamour) and would have to appear in public without it, we made an executive non-decision to stay where we were until

help arrived. Or not.

Just as I had almost decided to stop dithering and do something (I hadn't quite worked out what) I looked out of the window and saw a fire engine racing up to the building, lights flashing and sirens blaring, adding to the glorious cacophony inside. A couple of minutes later the sirens on the fire truck stopped abruptly and it pulled away. Almost immediately, the screeching inside the apartment ceased and a voice advised us that it was a false alarm and we could all go back to our apartments.

On the upside, we were still in ours, so we didn't even have to press the elevator button for home. And at least I have now actually read the brochure on fire safety, even though I'm not sure it was much help.

They say the ability to make decisions declines as you get older, so if ever there is a true alarm, we'll probably be toast. In the meantime, I'll call on my old friend Anon to wrap this rambling diatribe up with a pithy comment on not getting any younger.

"You know you've reached a certain age when a doctor, not a policeman, tells you to slow down, all you exercise are your prerogatives and it takes you longer to rest than to get tired."

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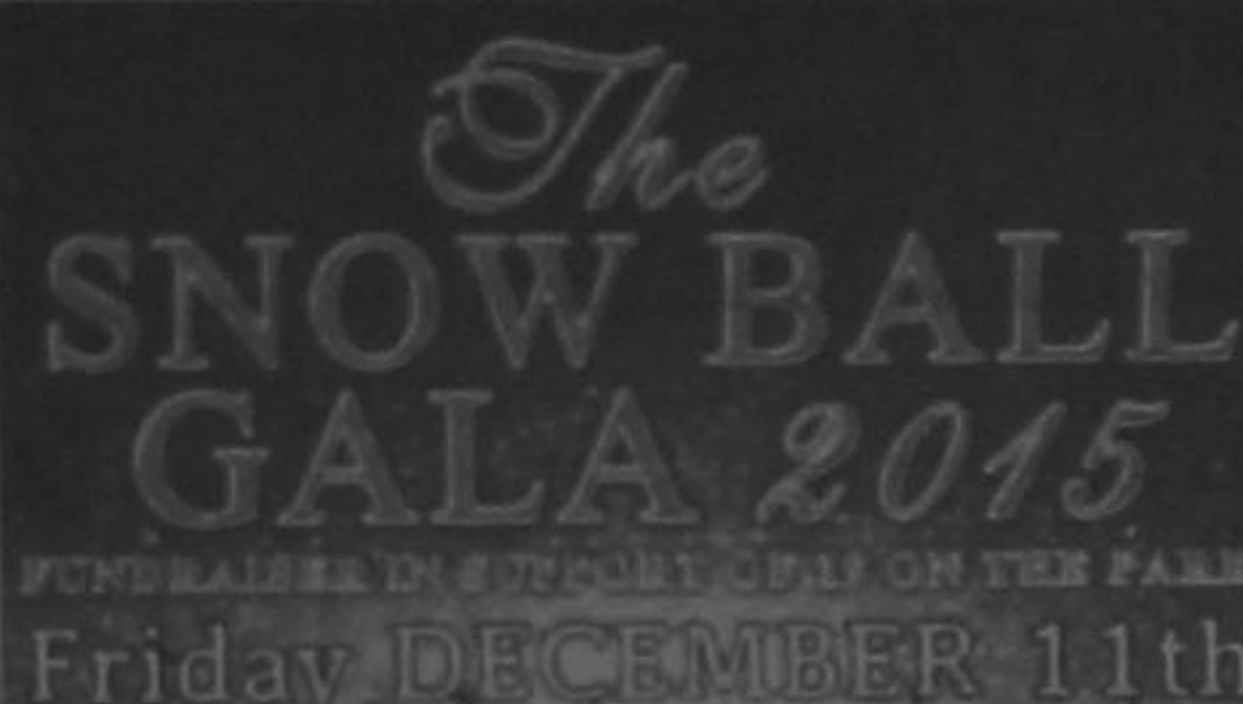
## Snowball Gala to be an Elegant and Memorable Fundraiser for 19 on the Park

By Valerie Curgenvan

The curtain is about to go up for Snowball Gala 2015 at The Lebovic Centre for Arts & Entertainment-19 on the Park on Friday December 11th.

Let me give you a taste of what you will experience at this elegant and memorable fundraiser for Stouffville's arts centre: Upon entering our foyer you will find a plethora of silent auction items and fine art that has been generously donated by local artisans and businesses. Perhaps you will find a wonderful holiday gift for that someone special? Peruse the silent auction while sipping a beverage and continue your bidding upstairs before entering our Great Hall, where tables of eight will be seasonally decorated for the occasion by Sheridan Nurseries. At each ladies place, you will find a graciously donated surprise from Aveda.

The menu for the evening has been specially created by Pedro at Fishbone Bistro for this evening, and will consist of an elegant three course dinner. Wines have been generously donated by local artisanal wineries Applewood, Gallucci and Willowsprings.



For your entertainment, two local artists will take the stage. Classically trained opera singer Lauren Margison will perform selections from her varied repertoire, while award winning actor and playwright Johnny Wideman is to entertain us with a short story penned just for this event. To round off the evening, Toronto Band Graham Playford and the Flying J's will get everyone on their feet with superb covers of various genres.

Each of the generous local businesses and individuals that have supported our fundraising efforts for 19 on the Park will be recognized throughout the evening, in particular our Platinum Sponsors Fieldgate Developments and The Joseph Lebovic Foundation.

All proceeds from the Gala will help enable your arts centre to continue presenting the quality performances we all desire and can be proud to have in Stouffville.

To obtain tickets, \$100 plus HST, please contact 19 on the Park at 905-640-2322 or online at [19onthepark.ca](http://19onthepark.ca).

Valerie Curgenvan is Gala Chair for the 19 on the Park Advisory Committee.

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