

# Reflections *of life*<sup>®</sup> MAGAZINE

*Your complimentary subscription:*

Thoughts and  
ideas to help  
you through  
your journey

- We Are Not Alone - Finding Support in Bereavement
- Grief is a Journey
- The Trans Canada Trail in British Columbia
- Gardening  
The Art of the Earth
- Memorials Speak to Genealogists

# Our Gift to you



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Spring, traditionally a time of renewal, is upon us. Spring brings with it a myriad of rituals. If this is a different kind of spring for you because of a recent loss, perhaps the ideas offered here will help you through the days ahead.

At Remco we understand how memorials can be important for generations to come – an idea that is explored further in the article, Memorialization – A Genealogist's Tool.

An earlier issue of Reflections of Life offered an introduction to the concept of how our culture influences our thoughts and decisions when it comes to creating a memorial. In these pages the editorial team explores how Chinese Canadians have adapted traditions of their culture in ceremonies and memorials.

Along with this complimentary magazine we send our thanks for allowing us to serve you.

  
Dave Reeson  
President



# Reflections of life MAGAZINE



## From the Editor

Spring is a great time to reconnect with nature and its healing energy. In these pages you'll find details about the Trans Canada Trail in British Columbia, including the reopening of the impressive Myra Canyon Trestles section after the devastating Kelowna Mountain fire in August of 2003.

Also in this issue you'll find the first article in a series that explores the many ways in which memorial services can be very individual and significant. Our publisher, Harvey Linnen, shares the details of two different and very personal memorial services that he and his family have planned over the past few years.

It is our hope that you will find items of comfort and interest in Reflections of Life.

Your feedback is always welcome.

*Brenda Caswell*

Respectfully,  
Brenda Caswell  
Managing Editor

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# We Are Not Alone

## Finding Support in Bereavement



**T**here is no Grief 101 course to teach us how to deal with our grief, or how to reach out to people who are experiencing their own grief. It's something we have to learn "in real time." However, there is a growing movement across the country to help people through their bereavement in healthy and constructive ways.

Local support groups have sprung up across Canada, some associated with hospices or hospitals, and others formed by local churches. For example, a church in Calgary is home to the wonderfully named Good Grief support group. An organization called Bereaved Families of Ontario provides support to anyone experiencing the loss of a family member through a network of local affiliates. Other groups focus on support to specific age groups, such as to children or teens who have lost a parent or a sibling. Still others are aimed at widows and widowers over age 50.

The common thread running through all of these support groups is just that: they provide support to the grieving in a group setting. "Groups are there to provide support, friendship and above all else, hope," says Adaline Leir, who is a chapter leader and facilitator with the Regina chapter of The Compassionate Friends. "We're there for parents who

## Looking for a support group?

The Compassionate Friends have a website [www.tcfcanada.net](http://www.tcfcanada.net) with a meeting locator for all chapter locations in Canada. You can also email TCF at [nationaloffice@tcfcanada.net](mailto:nationaloffice@tcfcanada.net) or call toll-free at 866-823-0141.

There are many individual grief support groups across the country that are operated by local social service agencies or churches. Check with agencies or churches in your area for local groups or do an Internet search for grief support groups. Your local library may also have contact information.

## Several TCF chapters worldwide have adopted the following:

“The secret to TCFs’ success is simple: as seasoned grievors reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal. The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.”

have had a child or children die, at any age, from any cause. We hold monthly sharing meetings and we reach out between meetings with letters and phone calls. Being in a self-help support group lets people know they are not alone in their grief. It also helps parents recognize what they need and what they don’t need – especially the clichés that some people feel they must offer.”

The Compassionate Friends is an international, non-profit, self-help organization that was founded in the United Kingdom in 1969, and now has more than 1,000 chapters in 30 countries. It came to Canada in 1977, and the Regina chapter began 25 years ago, in 1983. Adaline Leir and her husband Herb discovered the local chapter after their daughter Kimberley died at age six. Born with physical and mental disabilities, Kimberley required 24-hour care. By a fortunate twist of fate, Herb was downsized out of his job a few months before Kimberley died, allowing them to spend some quality time together. At the same time, the opportunity to be with Kimberley only intensified the emptiness after she died.

“About two weeks after Kim’s death we were left to fend for ourselves, as family and friends returned to their normal routines,” Adaline recalls. “We knew we needed something.” She went to her local library branch and checked out every book there on grief and bereavement. “There wasn’t a lot, but I read a story of a bereaved step-dad, and I could relate. The man mentioned The Compassionate Friends, and I remembered seeing a photo in the Regina Leader-Post of a man holding a picture of his daughter and a lady holding a picture of her son. I went back to the library and asked if such an organization existed,” Adaline continues. “The librarian gave me a name and phone number, and within two weeks we were at our first sharing meeting.”

Interviewed on what would have been Kimberley’s 29th birthday, Adaline says she and Herb observe the day in different ways; going to a different restaurant, or even traveling to a different place. They also look at family photo albums, and light a candle in the shape of a butterfly, the symbol of new life adopted by The Compassionate Friends.

“What it all boils down to is to realize that we are not alone. We don’t need to walk through this grief alone. There is somebody there to listen and to care,” says Adaline.

## No Time For Goodbyes *By Janice Harris Lord*

Janice Harris Lord of Dallas, Texas is the director of Victim Services for Mothers Against Drunk Driving and a licensed professional counsellor. She is one of the most widely recognized and respected leaders in the victim rights field. Janice, a survivor of an attempted homicide, has written this book for those who have lost someone as a result of a sudden motor vehicle accident or a homicide.

Lord shares with us experiences of people who’ve lost someone to a sudden or violent death and provides sound advice. She covers various kinds of sudden death and explains how these experiences can affect each grieving person confronted by this type of tragedy. People who lose loved ones to violent deaths are not only dealing with the pain of grief, but also have many frustrations with the criminal system, insurance companies, legalities, law suits and the length of time (in years) that it can take to hopefully be resolved.

The author encourages us to use as many tools as possible to help us through our journey – such as not running away from our grief, respecting and expressing our many feelings, and seeking help for strength and support from family, friends, counsellors and support groups. (Being involved in a support group helps us to realize we’re NOT alone and we learn from others that we CAN survive this tragic event.)

She talks about planning for and being aware of grief triggers or as she calls them “spasms of grief” such as hearing a specific song on the radio, seeing someone who resembles our loved one, or finding a note we had received from them.

Lord gives hope and practical suggestions to survivors grieving the tragic and violent death of a loved one – “Even though there will always be good and bad days, the day will come when you will realize you can feel sad without becoming engulfed in your grief. It is hard to say when healing starts, but when looking back, it is easier to see.” *reviewed by Adaline Leir*



# Eastern Traditions in a Western World

The millions of people who can trace their roots to China honour many traditions while respecting the culture of their new countries. Many Chinese traditions are represented in non-denominational and Christian funeral services as well as established Eastern religions.

The traditional Chinese view is that life leads to either a happy ending or a sad ending. A long life that ends while asleep and includes marriage, a son, respect and a loving grandson is a “five-blossoms death”. A sad ending can result from dying at a young age, accidental death and especially suicide.

If a person had a happy ending, those at the funeral will want to touch the body. If the ending was sad, people may choose to keep their distance. Traditionally, suicide victims must be buried separately from their ancestors.

Loud, vocal expressions of grief are commonplace. In China, wealthy families would often hire professional mourners to ensure that their grief was expressed appropriately. Today, showing highly visible emotion remains a sign of respect. Eulogies and tributes never say anything negative about the deceased.

Other traditions abound. Funeral guests may be given “bak gim” – a small white envelope containing a piece of candy and a coin. The candy is eaten after the service to sweeten the memory. The coin is to be spent on something to bring happiness. After the service, family members may be given three grains of rice to swallow with a bit of water, symbolizing the earth, wind, fire and water that are essential to life. Eating together after the service helps fill the emptiness of those left behind.

While many of the customs that are part of traditional Chinese culture may be seen differently by younger generations, they remain a source of comfort. As a young Chinese woman and lifelong Christian remarked after her aunt’s funeral “knowing that we passed out ‘bak gim’, just as they did for my grandfather and all the great-grandfathers before him, somehow gave me peace of mind.”

# “People’s stories should be remembered forever.”

– AMI Memorials



At AMI we provide memorials that convey the symbols and messages of Aboriginal people.

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Joseph  
Bear



Dan  
Pelletier

◀ **AMI’s memorial to RCMP officer Constable Robin Cameron tells her story, and provides a proud symbol and role model on her reserve in Saskatchewan.**

Information is available at funeral homes and Remco offices across Western Canada.

Visit our showroom and head office:

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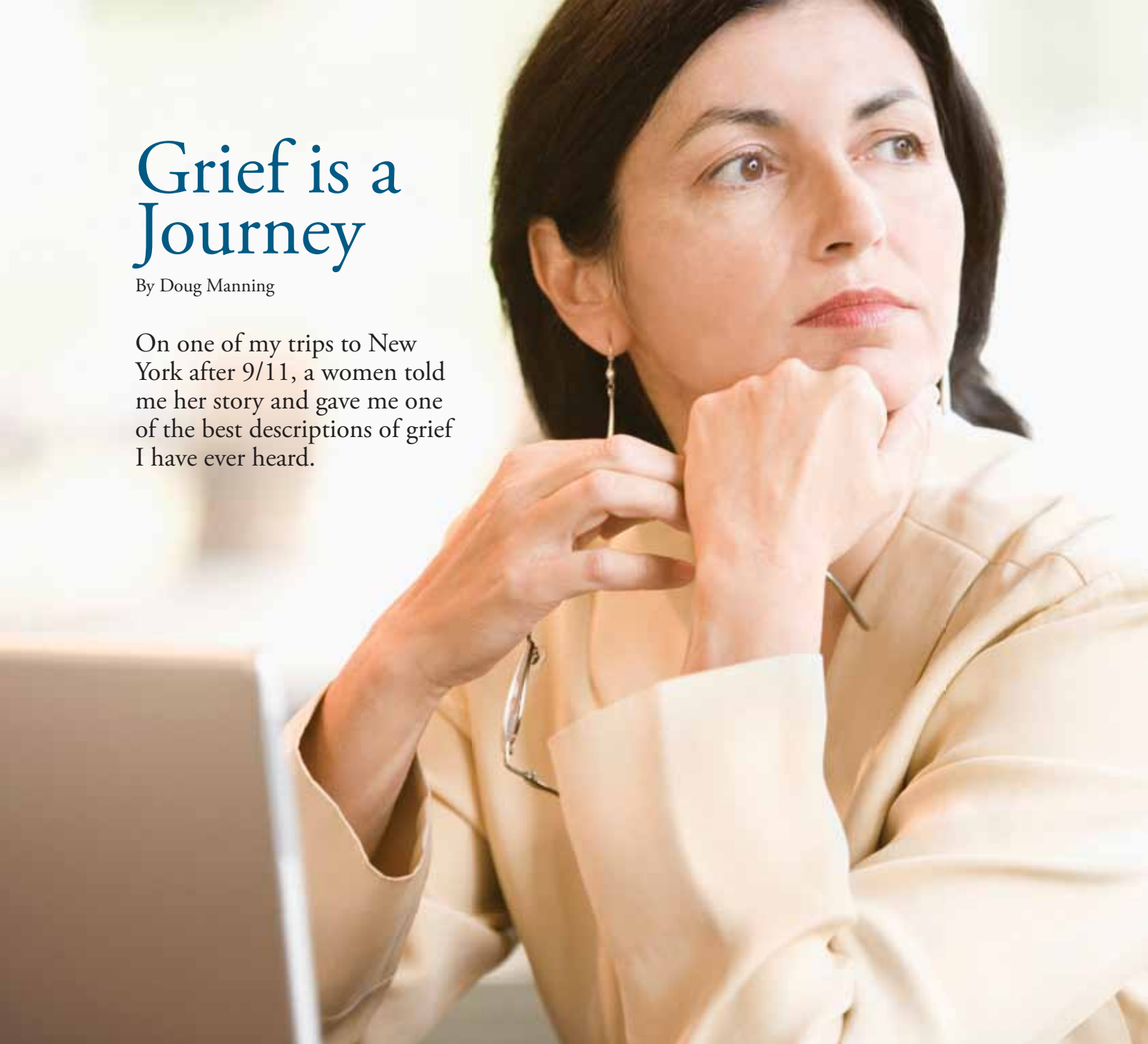


**AMI**  
MEMORIALS

# Grief is a Journey

By Doug Manning

On one of my trips to New York after 9/11, a women told me her story and gave me one of the best descriptions of grief I have ever heard.



## OUR AUTHOR:

Doug Manning has authored 35 books and produced over 25 audio and video products in the areas of grief and elder care. He has worked with professionals and families in the Oklahoma City bombing, Jonesboro and Fort Worth shootings and the World Trade Center and Pentagon tragedies of 9/11. Manning travels extensively offering workshops for individuals caring for aged or ill loved ones, those travelling through the grief process and for professionals who deal with people in crisis or health related issues.

Recently he launched The Care Community – a web site on grief and caring for elderly loved ones. Visit The Care Community at [www.thecarecommunity.com](http://www.thecarecommunity.com).

Provided by In-Sight Books, Inc.  
**Care Community**  
[thecarecommunity.com](http://thecarecommunity.com)



She said: “My daughter died four years ago. She now lives on my shoulder and in my heart. I feel her presence there and we seem to talk to each other. I find great comfort in her just being there.” She spread her hand in front of her face and said, “She used to be right here. She was in front of my eyes twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Every thought I had was about her. Everything I did was in light of what she would want. I stopped being a person and became a bereaved parent full-time. When someone would ask me how I was, I would want to scream, ‘can’t you see? She’s right there, how do you think I am?’”

“As time went by the family seemed to talk about her less and less. I resented their moving on. Were they just going to forget her? Is that all she meant to them? The holidays were especially hard. It seemed like everyone wanted things to go back to normal, but how could they do so unless we totally forgot she ever existed?”

“Gradually, she began to slip from right in front of my eyes. I would realize that I had not thought of her in a half-hour, then it might be an hour, then even longer. I panicked. I thought I had to keep her right in front of my face or I was not properly honouring and remembering her. I was afraid I would not feel her presence if she was not right there.”

“As time passed, it became harder and harder to keep her there. She would slip a little and I would pull her back, only to have her slip a little more. The day finally came when it was all right for her to move. She changed from being with me face-to-face to being with me heart to heart.”

That is a beautiful description of one person’s grief. While it is not the picture of everyone’s grief, it does remind us that grief is an ever-changing journey through intense pain until we gradually learn a new way to feel the presence of a love we cannot live without.



## Grief is a Journey

We move from seeing the person by sight

To seeing them in memories.

Memories are also in constant motion.

At first they are too painful for endurance, and every memory breaks our hearts.

Gradually they help us establish the significance of our love and of our loss

In time memories become our most precious possession.

The ones that once hurt the most become the ones we never tire of telling.

Over time, the memories wrap themselves around our being,

And our loved one is reborn inside of our hearts.

That is called the journey of grief.

- DM

## Don't Take My Grief Away From Me

How To Walk Through Grief and Learn to Live Again *By Doug Manning*

The first section of this book is intended for reading prior to a loved one’s funeral. Manning emphasizes that grief is real and natural and not a weakness; our feelings and reactions are normal and grief is not an enemy – but is a friend. He suggests that we give ourselves permission to grieve.

The remainder of the book should ideally be read a week or two after the funeral and provides suggestions for a healthy approach to the journey of grief. In great pain, we seem to be facing hundreds of questions with “WHY?” being at the top of the list. Although there are no answers, it is still important to ask these questions rather than to be stoic or deny our grief. Denial does not make one’s feelings and grief go away. This is the time when we need supportive people around us rather than those who try to hurry us through or diminish our grief. And he proposes that we give ourselves permission to heal.

For those supporting someone who has suffered a loss, Manning offers the advice that when the bereaved have a need to talk – to tell their story over and over again – all one really needs to do is “lay on our ears” and listen. ~ reviewed by Adaline Leir



# The Canadian Police Service Dog National Monument

*Engraved on monument:*

## **The Working Dog**

**My eyes are your eyes,**

**To watch and protect  
you and yours.**

**My ears are your ears,**

**To hear and detect evil  
minds in the dark.**

**My nose is your nose,**

**To scent the invader of  
your domain.**

**And so you may live,**

**My life is also yours.**

*-Anonymous*

Canada's police dogs make a valuable contribution to our society. Specially trained, police dogs assist in tracking and apprehending suspects, searching buildings and outdoor areas for suspects or evidence, and detecting narcotics.

Thirty-two Canadian police dogs have lost their lives in the line of duty. Believing that their sacrifice deserved to be recognized, Canadian Pacific Railway Police Constable Doug Marianchuk founded the Canadian Police Service Dog National Monument Society in 1998.

Over the next nine years, Marianchuk worked with other officers who also recognized the need for a national monument. Progress was slow, and a major obstacle was finding a suitable location for the monument. It all came together when Inspector Lawrence Aimoe, Officer in Charge of the RCMP Police Service Dog Training Centre in Innisfail, Alberta offered a place in the memorial garden at the training centre.

The monument is beautifully constructed. Alberta artist Diane Anderson created a life-sized bronze sculpture of a German Shepherd dog. It's proudly displayed on a base of exposed aggregate and polished granite, the work of Alberta stonemason Dave Jardine. Attached to the base are plaques for each of the police dogs killed in the line of duty, along with their department's crest, partner's name and the date they died.

Also featured is the poem *The Working Dog*. Written by an unknown supporter, this poem reflects on the loyalty and work ethic displayed by police service dogs.

Canada's thirty-two fallen police dogs were remembered when the monument was officially unveiled in June, 2007. Canine handlers, including those of many of the dogs being honoured; police officers and members of the public were there to salute these brave canine heroes.

"The police service dogs that have paid the supreme sacrifice certainly deserve to be remembered for eternity for what they have done for society. This monument will do just that," says Doug Marianchuk.

Visitors are welcome at the RCMP Police Service Dog Training Centre in Innisfail to view the monument and demonstrations. From the May long weekend until the September long weekend, the demonstrations are held every Wednesday afternoon, beginning at 2 p.m. and lasting about 45 minutes.

Large groups are required to pre-book by contacting the Training Centre either by e-mail or at 403-227-3346.

To reach the Centre, take Exit 365 off Alberta's Queen Elizabeth II highway (Hwy #2) at Innisfail, travel east and follow the signs.

**Another  
memorial is being  
unveiled in Carlyle,  
Saskatchewan this year  
dedicated to Constable  
Willis E. Rhodeniser, Canada's  
first dog handler to be killed  
in the line of duty, on August  
26, 1939, near Fort Qu'Appelle,  
Saskatchewan. He was interred  
with full military honours in the  
local cemetery at Bridgewater,  
Nova Scotia. His dog "Tell"  
survived the incident and went on  
to serve with another partner.**



# The Trans Canada Trail in British Columbia

Looking for a place for tranquil restoration?

Initiated during Canada's 125th Anniversary celebrations, the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) is an 18,000-kilometre recreational corridor linking all Canadian provinces and territories. Along its winding path it connects over 800 major cities and small towns. This network of hundreds of local and regional trails, when completed, will be the longest trail of its kind in the world.

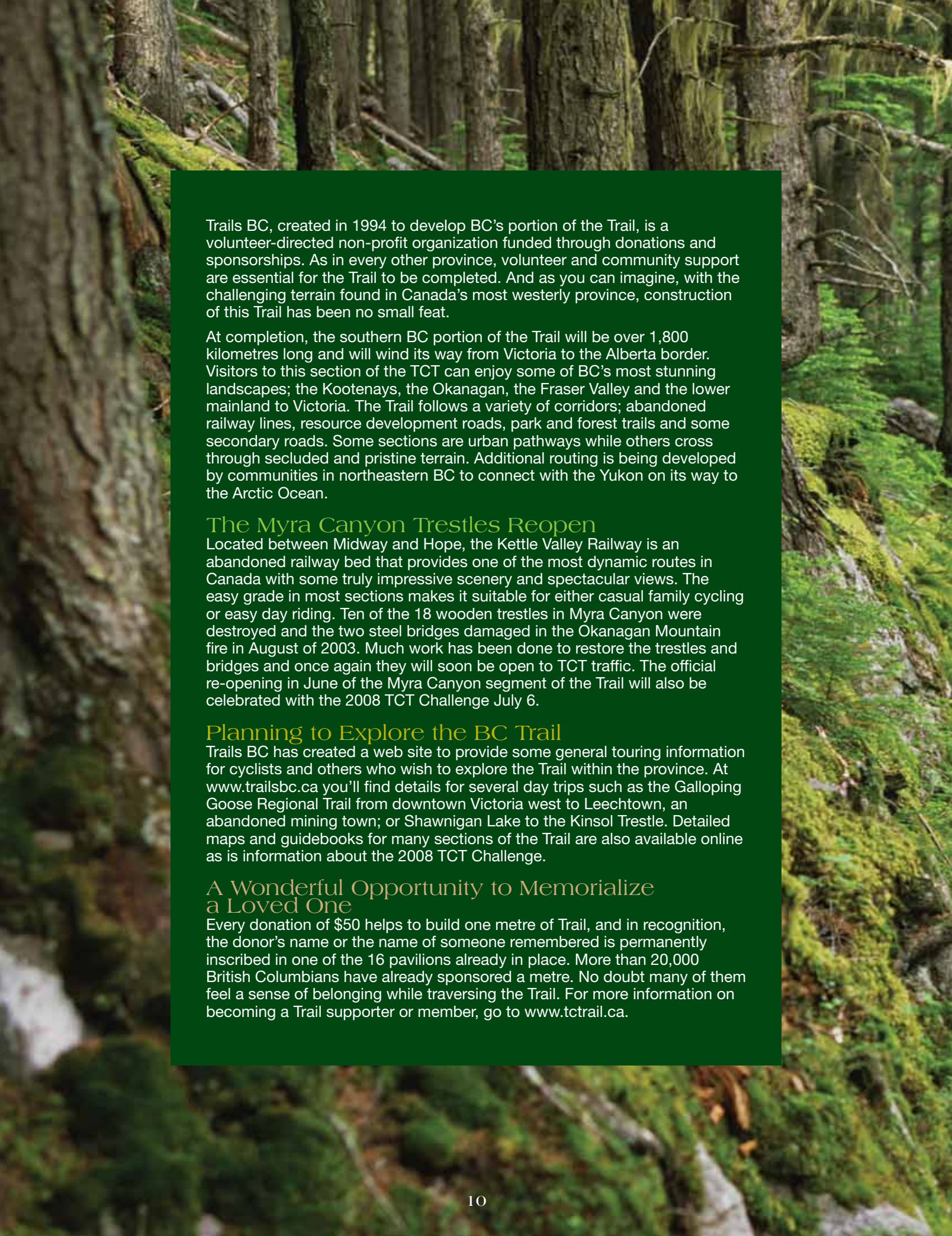
The Trail offers a world-class outdoor facility to enjoy Canada's diverse nature, ecology, cultures, heritage, and communities year-round. At the same time, the Trail provides opportunities for Canadians to be more active and healthier.

Since the Trans Canada Trail is a national undertaking, there's a lot of information to share. In this issue, we'll cover some of the highlights of the Trail within the borders of British Columbia.



Photo courtesy of Dave Turner

The North Vancouver pavilion represents the partnership between the Trans Canada Trail and First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples. The two totem poles depict Grandmother and Grandfather Greeting Figures with arms outstretched, welcoming all people to the City of North Vancouver and the Trans Canada Trail.



Trails BC, created in 1994 to develop BC's portion of the Trail, is a volunteer-directed non-profit organization funded through donations and sponsorships. As in every other province, volunteer and community support are essential for the Trail to be completed. And as you can imagine, with the challenging terrain found in Canada's most westerly province, construction of this Trail has been no small feat.

At completion, the southern BC portion of the Trail will be over 1,800 kilometres long and will wind its way from Victoria to the Alberta border. Visitors to this section of the TCT can enjoy some of BC's most stunning landscapes; the Kootenays, the Okanagan, the Fraser Valley and the lower mainland to Victoria. The Trail follows a variety of corridors; abandoned railway lines, resource development roads, park and forest trails and some secondary roads. Some sections are urban pathways while others cross through secluded and pristine terrain. Additional routing is being developed by communities in northeastern BC to connect with the Yukon on its way to the Arctic Ocean.

### The Myra Canyon Trestles Reopen

Located between Midway and Hope, the Kettle Valley Railway is an abandoned railway bed that provides one of the most dynamic routes in Canada with some truly impressive scenery and spectacular views. The easy grade in most sections makes it suitable for either casual family cycling or easy day riding. Ten of the 18 wooden trestles in Myra Canyon were destroyed and the two steel bridges damaged in the Okanagan Mountain fire in August of 2003. Much work has been done to restore the trestles and bridges and once again they will soon be open to TCT traffic. The official re-opening in June of the Myra Canyon segment of the Trail will also be celebrated with the 2008 TCT Challenge July 6.

### Planning to Explore the BC Trail

Trails BC has created a web site to provide some general touring information for cyclists and others who wish to explore the Trail within the province. At [www.trailsbc.ca](http://www.trailsbc.ca) you'll find details for several day trips such as the Galloping Goose Regional Trail from downtown Victoria west to Leechtown, an abandoned mining town; or Shawnigan Lake to the Kinsol Trestle. Detailed maps and guidebooks for many sections of the Trail are also available online as is information about the 2008 TCT Challenge.

### A Wonderful Opportunity to Memorialize a Loved One

Every donation of \$50 helps to build one metre of Trail, and in recognition, the donor's name or the name of someone remembered is permanently inscribed in one of the 16 pavilions already in place. More than 20,000 British Columbians have already sponsored a metre. No doubt many of them feel a sense of belonging while traversing the Trail. For more information on becoming a Trail supporter or member, go to [www.tctrail.ca](http://www.tctrail.ca).



## Safety First

Guidelines have been developed to ensure a safe and enjoyable trails experience for all.

- Respect the Trail's natural resources – pack out what you pack in; keep your dog on a leash; do not collect natural materials along the way, and leave heritage features in place so others can enjoy them, too.
- Be aware of and courteous to other Trail users. Obey all posted signs. Stay on the Trail. And observe all fire restrictions and take due care with fires.
- When biking or hiking long distances, ensure you have the proper equipment on hand; advise family or friends of your travel plans; use common sense and recognize your limitations.
- Be prepared to be self-reliant in case of emergencies.
- Know how to avoid bears and cougars and what to do if you encounter them.

Other guidelines, safety information and resources are listed on [www.trailsbc.ca](http://www.trailsbc.ca)


*Acknowledgement and thanks to the Trans Canada Trail and Trails BC for information and photos used in this article.*



**F**or centuries the butterfly has symbolized new life – from caterpillar to the cocoon to the emerging of a new and beautiful butterfly. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross told us of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of children’s dormitories in the World War II concentration camps. Since Elisabeth believed in the innate intuitiveness of children, she concluded that these children knew their fate and were leaving the world a message.

# Spring ~

Although spring won’t wash away our grief



Spring – a new season; although some of us may fear spring and have thoughts such as, “How dare it be spring; my loved one died in the spring. It’s an insult.” Next, we notice the first blades of green grass and then shoots from the crocuses and yellow daffodils poking out of the snow.

We need to realize that although spring won’t wash away our grief, it can help to remind us of the new subtle changes within us and that there is hope in “new life.”

Perhaps this is the year to consider working on enhancing some of these changes by creating a butterfly garden filled with flowers and shrubs that will attract the butterflies as well as the humming birds. Both prefer bright red flowers that are tube or trumpet shaped that have an abundance of nectar.

Some popular choices are: asters, coneflowers, day-lilies, delphiniums, goldenrods, holly hocks, lantana, lupine, milkweed, peonies, phlox and the butterfly bush. To enhance your garden you may wish to purchase or construct a small water fountain. On warm summer evenings turn on the fountain, sit and relax. May the memories that come flooding in be warm and soothing.

~Adaline Leir

# *Renewal*

it can remind us of new subtle changes within us.

# Comfort Food



Contributed by  
Bill & Lorna Quine

## The Magic of Braising

Taking a tough, inexpensive cut of meat and turning it into something wonderful – that’s what braising is all about. The pot roast we all know and love, Italian *osso buco*, tagine from Morocco and a host of other dishes around the world share the same braising technique – browning the meat and then cooking it slowly with a little liquid in a tightly covered pot.

Less tender cuts of meat come from parts of the animal that are more exercised, more muscled and more flavorful. With braising, the connective tissue that holds the muscles together breaks down, changing it first into collagen and then into gelatin. The gelatin and fat which are expelled during cooking ultimately are reabsorbed into the meat. The result is that wonderful, satisfying stickiness – and that fabulous smell coming out of the oven for a few hours – that everyone loves.

There are just two rules for braising that can’t be broken.

First, never try to braise a leaner, more expensive cut of meat. Lesser cuts always give the best results.

Second, never try to rush the process. Take the time to let the magic happen – and take the time to enjoy the results.

Here are two of our favourites. The first one is actually fairly quick-cooking as far as braising goes!



## “Sticky” Pork Chops

Pork shoulder butt steaks  
Beef stock

These chops are often quite large. You may find that one is enough to feed two people, but no matter how many you cook, the method is the same.

Brown chops on both sides.

Add beef stock to come about half way up the sides.

Bring to a boil, cover and reduce heat to a simmer.

Cook until very tender (40 minutes to one hour), adding more stock if necessary.

When chops are done, remove cover, turn heat back to high and reduce liquid until it is thick and syrupy.

Turn chops a couple of times in the reduced sauce to make sure they are thoroughly coated before serving.

## Braised Brisket

2 – 3 pound well trimmed brisket

Marinade:

1 cup red wine

½ cup each – carrot, celery, onion  
and parsnip chopped in ½" dice

1 bay leaf

½ tsp. thyme

2 cloves garlic

To cook:

1 tbsp. ketchup

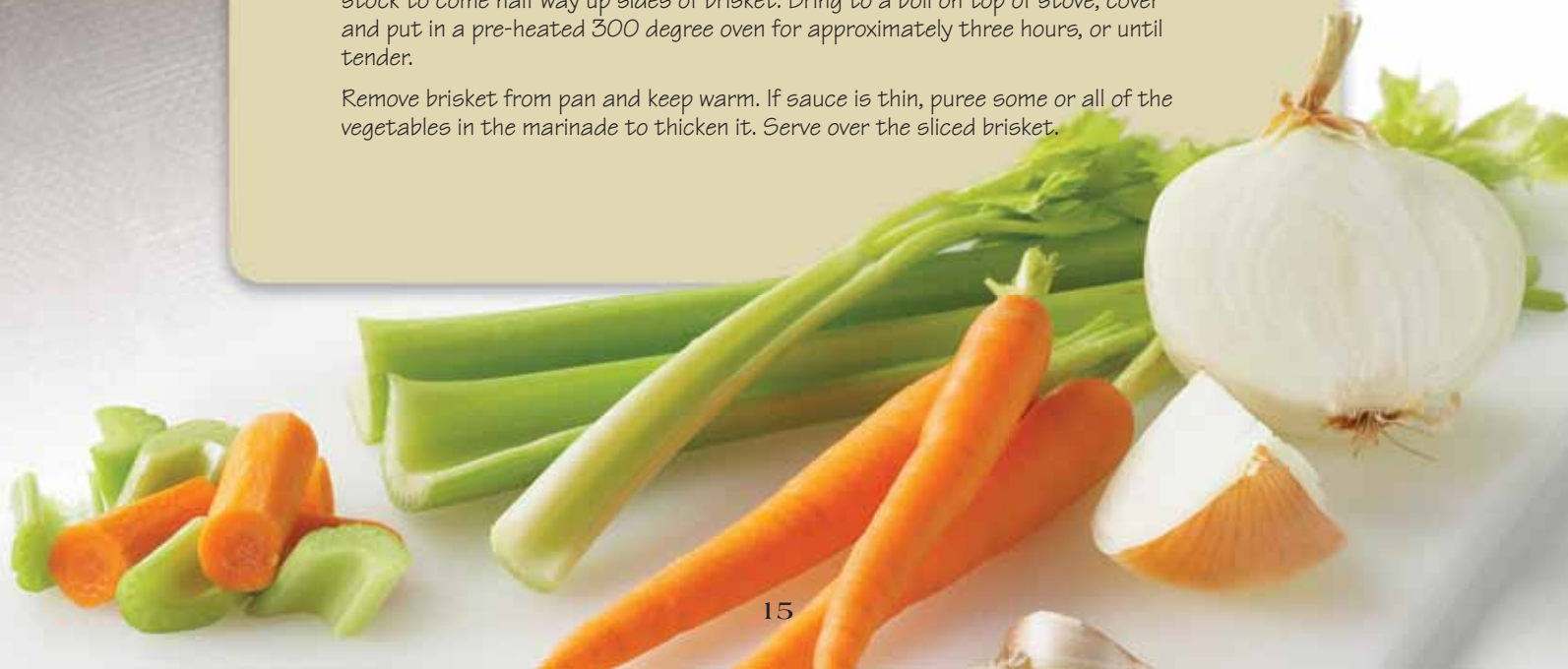
Beef stock

Salt to taste

Combine marinade ingredients in a large freezer bag. Add brisket and marinate in fridge at least eight hours, turning a few times.

To cook, dry the meat, reserving marinade. Brown the meat in oil in an oven proof casserole. Remove when browned and add one tablespoon of ketchup to the pan, stirring up brown bits. Return brisket to pan along with marinade and enough beef stock to come half way up sides of brisket. Bring to a boil on top of stove, cover and put in a pre-heated 300 degree oven for approximately three hours, or until tender.

Remove brisket from pan and keep warm. If sauce is thin, puree some or all of the vegetables in the marinade to thicken it. Serve over the sliced brisket.



# Gardening The Art of the Earth

“Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas.”

~ Elizabeth Murray

The relationship between people and plants is as old as humanity itself. As early as 35,000 BC, fruits, nuts, and roots were gathered for food. By 8,500 BC, Mesopotamians were raising cereal grains and Neolithic cultures involved farming. By Roman times, gardening was no longer simply a way to produce food. A garden was seen as a source of beauty and spiritual well-being.

Today, gardening is growing in popularity – and taking on an increasingly important role in the health of Canadians. While the overall level of physical activity in Canada is dropping, walking and gardening retain their popularity. Even among 18 – 24 year olds, gardening is commonplace. In the 45 – 64 age group, almost 80 percent of Canadians spend some time gardening.

Gardening combines physical activity with pleasure, satisfaction and relaxation, improving health and increasing happiness.

Research shows that even modest levels of physical activity have a positive effect on health. Regular physical activity helps keep muscles strong and joints flexible, improves stamina, provides more energy and helps maintain a healthy body weight. This kind of activity can cut the risk of coronary heart disease and adult-onset diabetes by up to 50 percent.



Gardening has a positive effect on the mind as well as the body. Gardening provides a positive focus and offers the satisfaction of seeing one's efforts result in something beautiful or delicious ... or both. As gardeners often say, "you can bury a lot of troubles digging in the dirt."

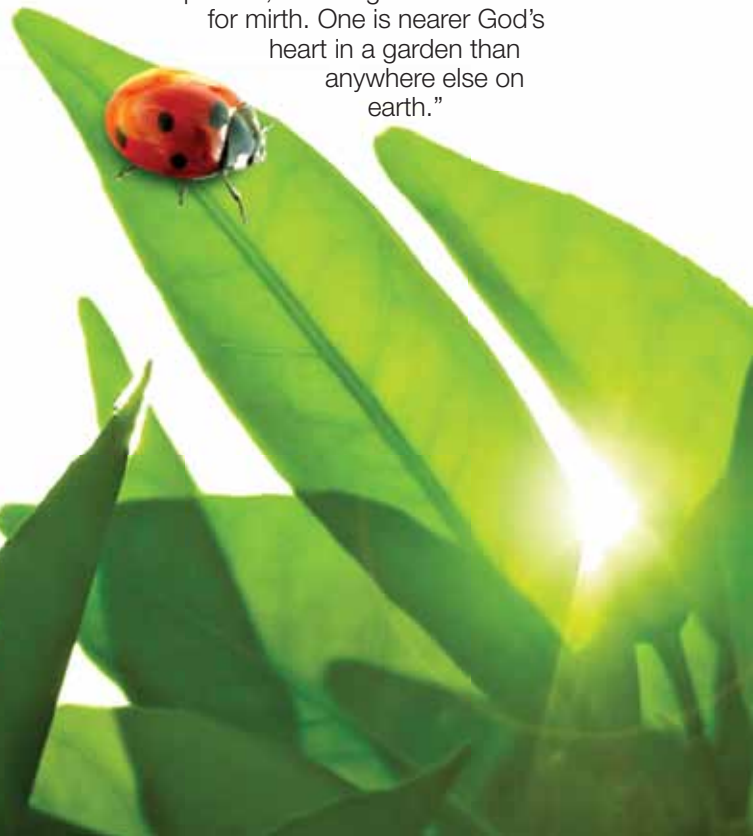


Gardening as a formal therapeutic tool is also on the rise. Horticultural Therapy is defined by the Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association as "the formalized discipline of the use of horticultural activities ... to enable people to participate in their own healing process." Beginning in the 1940s, gardening saw increased use in treatment programs for hospitalized war veterans. Today, Horticultural Therapy is part of rehabilitation, vocational and occupational training programs in psychiatric and mental health clinics, hospitals, correctional facilities, schools, nursing homes and senior centers.

To get the most from your gardening time, a proper warm-up is important. Begin with some arm, back, neck and leg stretches. Work up to more physically demanding tasks. Switch between lighter and heavier work and take regular breaks.

When bending or kneeling vary your position. A soft pad under your knees can make you more comfortable. When lifting, remember to stand close to the object with your feet shoulder-width apart. Keep the object close to your body and lift slowly and smoothly with your legs, avoiding twisting.

Whether yours is a large garden with walkways and flowerbeds, a small vegetable plot or a few containers on a balcony, gardening can be a lifelong way to improve health and bring happiness. In the words of Dorothy Frances Gurney, found on signs and plaques in gardens throughout the world "The kiss of the sun for pardon, the song of the birds for mirth. One is nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth."



I remember the first time I entered the doors of a funeral home in my community. And I remember the second time.

It was the difference between night and day, and it was the staff at the funeral home that made the difference.

The first time, my wife and I had no idea how to deal with the sudden loss of our beautiful 18-year-old daughter in an automobile accident.

We'd been referred to this funeral home by a friend who had been involved in grief counseling. Our friend knew that we were lost in uncharted territory, and would need a guide.

How could anyone understand what we were going through? How could we bear to deal with the business of funeral planning in the midst of our deep personal pain?

What we found there was not a business, but a supporting team. People who could walk us gently through the questions that needed to be asked. People who could help



us discover how to celebrate our daughter's life and plan her memorial in a way that meant the most to us, in our own personal situation.

The best description I can give is that we felt at home there. We knew our wishes were being respected and being fulfilled. We knew our daughter's body was being properly cared for.

Only a few days later, we welcomed a roomful of relatives and friends to that funeral home for a wonderful, comfortable, exhausting, tearful (sometimes joyful) and very supportive evening of sharing. That was the night before the funeral at our church, and I can remember every detail of that comforting room – not because it was unique, but because it belonged to us and our daughter that night.

“ I don’t know what your concept of a funeral home is. Mine has changed dramatically with life experience.”



On the day of the funeral, we were quietly supported in all the details of transportation to the service, and to the cemetery afterwards, and then home for the continued comfort of family and friends.

Handling the details confidently and gently on our behalf lifted a weight from our shoulders – shoulders that were already bearing more than we could manage.

Dealing with the service, the memorial, the flowers, casket, photographs, music and so many other details could have been very difficult, but with the help of the staff, these tasks became ways of celebrating a life.

Seven years later, when my wife passed away from a long disease, I visited the same funeral home a second time.

The grief was no less, but the pressure of worry was gone. I knew that even though I had not seen the funeral home staff for several years, it would be their business to welcome me and serve me just as they’d done before.

I knew that they would lift problems from me at a time when all my resources were demanded for the more important needs of my children and myself.

I don’t know what your concept of a funeral home is. Mine has changed dramatically with life experience.

Today I can say I see a deep value in the people that manage my funeral home. But it is more than “see” the value. I feel it. And I feel it so deeply that I cannot pass a funeral home on any street without sensing images and recollections that are warm and reinforcing.

I’m glad that there are people like that in the world. They are needed. By me, for sure. Perhaps by you, as well.

“ I’m glad that there are people like that in the world. They are needed. By me, for sure. Perhaps by you, as well.”

*Do you have a story about an interesting way that a memorial service was made very personal? Send it to [editor@hjlinnen.com](mailto:editor@hjlinnen.com) and we’ll consider it for publication in a future issue.*

# Memorials Speak to Genealogists

“If only these stones could speak” is a sentiment often expressed by poets and songwriters. In fact, stones – and other grave markers – do speak, as any genealogist will tell you.

Genealogy is the study and tracing of families, and cemeteries are vital sources of information for genealogists. Celeste Rider is the librarian for the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society (SGS). When searching for family information, cemetery records and the Saskatchewan Residents Index database at the SGS office are invaluable aids, but Rider also recommends a visit to a cemetery. Stones and markers often reveal the correct spelling of names, which sometimes get muddled in the telling and re-telling of family stories. Stones – especially the older ones – may also provide a more complete picture of the person’s origin and interests, and the maiden names of family members.

“Symbols used by fraternal orders might indicate what kind of religion or background a person came from,” Rider explains. “An iron cross could indicate that the person was of Russian-German descent, for example.”

Laura Grzyb of Regina is a dedicated genealogist. She has been filling in branches of her family tree, and her

husband’s, since she received a baby book when her first child was born. She has visited every cemetery in Saskatchewan where there are family stones, and even made a trip to Ontario to view some of the family stones there.

“I have found long-lost family members who are also doing their genealogy, and they have filled in entire branches of my tree for me. Next year my husband and my mom and I are going to Vimy Ridge to see the stone memorializing Thomas Armstrong, my mom’s uncle,” Grzyb says.

As you would expect, there are active genealogical societies in every province, but if you’re looking for a cemetery in Alberta, check first with the searchable index offered by the Alberta Family Histories Society: <http://www.afhs.ab.ca/data/cemeteries/index.html>. In British Columbia visit the Cemetery Finding Aid: <http://www.islandnet.com/bccfa/homepage.html>.

If you are planning a memorial for a loved one, consider how a symbol or a photo would add meaningful information to the memorial for generations to come. There is renewed interest in memorializing important parts of an individual’s life, and new technologies have created more options for memorialization.





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remember

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