

# Silver



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**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RUTH CLARKE CENTRE FOR SENIORS**

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## *2012 begins with optimism and promise...*

As I write this on a day almost at the end of the old year, I look out on the roof of my gazebo and am delighted to see it covered with the first real snow of the winter.

The tall grasses in front of the gazebo also bear snow-weight, their frothy tops arch to touch the ground in places. And the birdfeeders—swarmed by finches and chickadees on Christmas day—now hang motionless under snow-mounded roofs. There isn't a bird in sight today.

So the good news is, with the advent of snow, the waiting is over and I can begin to plan my summer garden while it's white and pristine. I don't know why or how snow on the ground helps with the planning process, but it does.

This Port Hope garden, after four full growing seasons, is beginning to take shape as the bushes fill out and some of the perennials leap upward and bloom with gusto.

There are some serious mistakes—like planting one fast-growing and hardy raspberry plant. It has now burgeoned into a monster patch sending monsterlets into other parts of the garden. I shall have to spend a lot of time in early spring removing roots to tame the beast if I can. Its leafy invaders threaten the existence of a beautiful little Japanese maple and a marvelous hydrangea.

I'm also toying with the idea of starting a rose garden. As if there wasn't more than enough to do! My friend Joan in Oshawa has been giving me plants she culls from her gardens for many years and they have more than adequately bolstered those I've found in nurseries. But no roses. Ah, well, I have months yet to contemplate whether or not I will add roses to the mix.

All this thinking and planning puts me in another space, despite the snow. One in which I wander the paths of my garden and feel the heat of the sun on my shoulders. Not a bad fantasy with which to begin 2012.

*Anastasia Erland*

## *Notes left over from 2011*

Once again our *Pancakes with Santa* event was a tremendous success. This free event on Saturday, December 17, brought lots of happy little faces to sit on Santa's knee after they'd enjoyed pancakes with mom and dad and often, grandma and grandpa.

A big thank you to the volunteers who helped make it a memorable morning. And thanks as well to those who loaned grills or other equipment.

Chief pancake flipper Mary Cappler was joined by Betty Beharry Lal and Arlene Pettipas. Mixing up the batter and helping in the kitchen were Marg Reynolds, Joan Macklin and partner George. Linda Tarrington helped with special toppings of fruits and other goodies. Accepting donations at the door was Florence Thickson. Linda and Florence also made Rice Crispy Squares and assembled Santa's giveaway bags. Supervising it all was Amy MacGillivray, who did the organizing.

Our thanks to the Town Recreation Centre for providing the creative activity centre for the kids. It was a buzz with children coloring and making things. And thanks to the jolly old elf himself. Santa put a lot of smiles on a lot of faces.

The sizeable donation of non-perishable food brought in by the participants was taken to the Community Health Centre for their post-Christmas Food Cupboard. The CHC thanked the donors and the Ruth Clarke for bringing in these needed supplies.

## Profile of a Dynamo

### *No challenge too big, no idea too difficult!*

Lorraine Deacon is a fairly new member of the Ruth Clarke Centre. With her twinkling eyes, beaming smile and friendly, helpful attitude, she's what we used to call a real go-getter!

And though she loves to play euchre, Lorraine is now introducing members to a new idea—Dime Bingo. This four-person game is lots of fun. Lorraine learned to play it in Nova Scotia when she was caring for a friend who was ill. They used to enjoy playing it with a group of neighbors every Sunday afternoon.

The game is simple: Each game, the players donate a dime to the general pot. Then one player shuffles and deals from a deck of regular cards. The players sort and lay their cards on the table. The caller then calls out cards one by one from a master deck.

If a player has the card called, it is discarded in the centre of the table. The first person in the room to discard all their cards yells Bingo! and wins the dime jackpot. Lorraine also plays some variations: for example, all players are asked to stand. As the cards are called, they sit down if they hold that card. The last person standing wins the pot.

Lorraine is used to introducing things and being first at something. In 1973, she was the first female to drive for the Purolator delivery service. They designed a baby blue uniform with a red tie just for her—which she finished off by wearing with white cowboy boots.

She also taught herself to play guitar. “Strumming a guitar is a great pastime to relieve stress,” she says. In the 1960s, when she lived in Toronto, Lorraine jammed a couple of times with Anne Murray at a neighborhood establishment.

As a single mom, Lorraine raised two boys with a varied and interesting series of jobs and activities. Among other things, she's made lawn chairs, learned how to be her own mechanic (fixing and selling old cars) and even made lamps from egg crates.

She describes her life as sometimes difficult, but lots of fun as well. “I always made enough money for the boys and me to survive. Sometimes it was tough, but we got through it together.”

“For fun, I did things like dress up as Santa Claus every year (in a home-made costume). They always looked forward to that.

“At Easter, I also made a bunny costume out of an old sheet. I added a big puffy tail and coat hanger ears, filled a basket with tiny Easter eggs and went out and distributed the eggs to the kids in the neighborhood.”

The looks on the kids' faces were priceless, Lorraine says, “I love to make folks happy!”

Later on, she notes, “I taught my boys how to play hockey and also how to drive. I just stepped into both parent roles.”

Lorraine loves challenges. She was still driving in ladies' racing at Mosport in the 1990s and really enjoyed zipping around the track in her '69 Camaro. “It was just plain fun.” It was just recently that she regretfully sold her snowmobile.

Though her own marriage didn't last, Lorraine's touchstone was always her parents. They were married for 65 years. “Our house was full of music. Dad played the harmonica and mom played piano. Dad taught us how to dance. The whole family joined in. Mom and dad never stopped looking at each other with love in their eyes all the time they were together.” Lorraine looked after them when they were older.

Now Lorraine's sons and their wives have provided her with three grandchildren and a great-grandchild. Both families live fairly close to Port Hope.

Emphysema hasn't kept Lorraine from singing and she still enjoys playing guitar. “I have good days and days when I get a little cranky. Playing music helps. You just keep going.”

Last summer, Lorraine entered a seniors' talent contest—The Chartwell Senior Star Competition at Northumberland Mall—and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Nowadays photography is a special interest. Lorraine loves taking pictures of family, friends and pets.

Judging from the favorable reaction to the first couple of sessions of Dime Bingo, we'll be seeing more of Lorraine. Watch for more information on future sessions.