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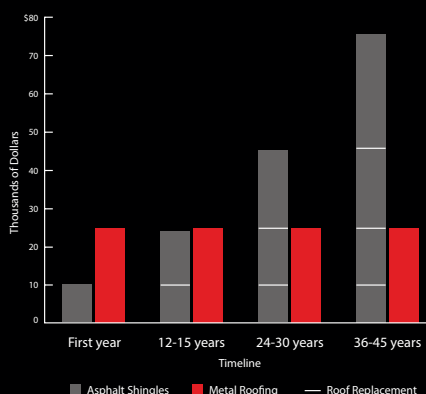
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YOUR PLACE OR MINE? 2025
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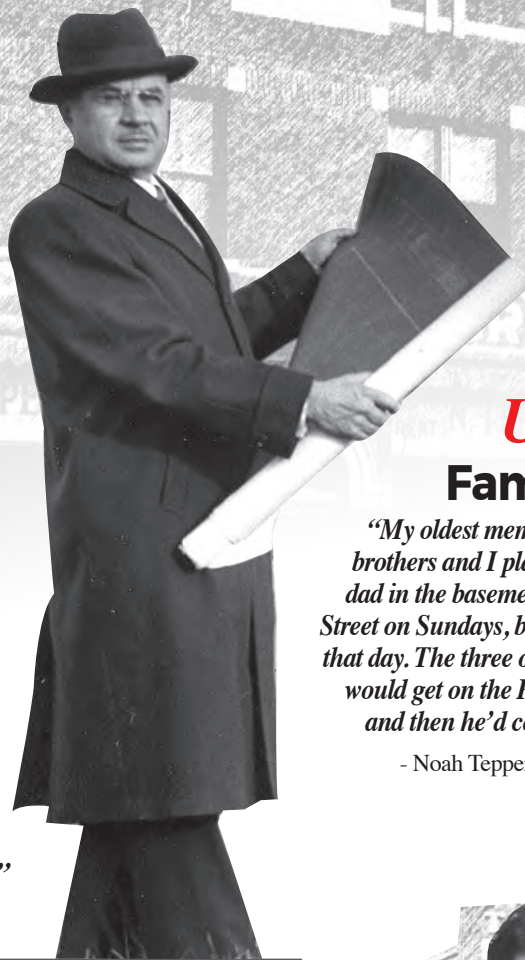
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"100 years doesn't happen by accident. [Our father] has an expression: "by when", whenever we set out to do something. That creates discipline. He also taught us the importance of investing in people, re-investing in the business and building for the future."

- Andrew Tepperman



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"My oldest memory of Tepperman's is of my brothers and I playing hide-and seek with our dad in the basement of the old store on Ottawa Street on Sundays, back when retail stores closed that day. The three of us would hide and our dad would get on the PA system and count to ten... and then he'd come and get us, one by one."

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ON THE COVER

Stephanie Bradt and Deidre Ritsche take on extreme renovation challenges on HGTV's Hoarder House Flippers.

Photography by Heike Delmore
Hair by Megan Ellis
Make-Up by Rayvenne Sarkis

See page 16



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Putting the Sun in Sunrooms!

What better way to brighten up your home than by bringing in the sun? Imagine a space where you can soak in natural light and enjoy fresh air, all without leaving the comfort of your home. That's what Seaton Sunrooms has been delivering for over fifty years. Founded in 1974 by Vern and Linda Seaton, the company built a reputation for quality craftsmanship and custom design. In 2015, their daughter, Brooke Watorek, and her husband, Jason Watorek, purchased the company, ensuring its legacy of excellence continued. They believe a sunroom should be more than just an addition—it should be a place to relax, recharge and enjoy the outdoors year-round.

"Many homeowners want to make their outdoor space more usable," says Brooke. "Sunrooms are a place where you can enjoy coffee in the morning and wine at night." Leading busy lives themselves, Brooke and Jason value having a sunroom in their home. They describe it as "a personal oasis as sunrooms have a calming effect on people."

Installing a custom sunroom with motorized screens or rolling shutters serves to let in natural light or fully bridge the gap between the inside and outside world at the owner's whim. Seaton Sunrooms can achieve your dream of living in a controlled natural setting.

One of their recent installations is a glass patio cover paired with retractable screens. This allows access to the best of both worlds. In the case of rain, excessive wind or insects, the screens act as guards. Despite the barrier keeping out the elements, the room remains vast, allowing for a light and airy feel. Smell the dewy rain, get fresh air and feel the sun on your face, all from the comfort of your home!

The best part is the speed with which sunrooms can be installed.

Motorized screens can be completed in as little as one day. Larger-scale projects average around one week. If you are worried about extended timelines or coordinating contractors, you can relax (in your new sunroom). Not only do they prioritize efficiency, but Seaton Sunrooms also uses quality, locally-sourced material. Rest assured that their products will be permanent; but nothing is more special than that permanent impression of ease and enjoyment after basking in a sunroom. Brooke says customers feel proud upon seeing their completed sunrooms. With the help of their master design team, customers feel empowered to see their vision come to fruition. There is nothing like having a space that is special to them—a true light in their life.

By enhancing the exteriors of homes, Seaton Sunrooms adds to your space instead of changing it. Ultimately, their goal is to expand and improve your outdoor living area, crafting a home that you're proud of. "A sunroom adds value to your home," Brooke continues. "It allows a homeowner to feel outside with all the comfort being inside. It's also very pleasant not having to store your patio furniture!"

Sunrooms are the perfect place to make lasting memories, celebrate milestones, and kick back to enjoy the view. To find out more information, you can either visit Seaton Sunroom's showroom at 4600 Rhodes Dr. in Windsor, where full-size sunrooms are on display, or you can call 519-944-6006. There is also a contact form you can fill out on their website which will provide a quote.

Bring light back into your life and contact Seaton Sunrooms now!



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Don't play politics with your portfolio

How have stock markets performed after past elections?

You may be surprised to learn that the stock market has increased regardless of which party controls parliament, with the S&P/TSX Composite providing an annualized return of roughly 10% since 1977.¹ Although there has been volatility over the years, the stock market has done well regardless of which party holds office. These long-term results should serve to give you confidence in the market regardless of election results.

While political leaders may enact laws and regulations in hopes of influencing economic growth, the results are not nearly as predictable as they might imagine. Economic indicators such as jobs, interest rates and inflation can sometimes run counter to prevailing policies.

Do government policies impact your investment returns?

Although changes in government policies can affect investment returns, they're much harder to predict than you might think, and the consequences of policy changes are usually not as expected. We think it's better to follow time-tested investment principles and avoid letting politics influence your long-term strategy.

How do politics impact the markets?

During election years, politicians make many promises that go unfulfilled. That's partly due to governmental systems of checks and balances. However, we believe market forces are more powerful than political forces over the long term. What sounds promising during election campaigns often may not work in reality.

What about other factors that affect the prices of stocks and bonds? Again, it's not about the politics but rather market forces.

Are election years good years to invest?

There's almost always uncertainty about the short-term outlook. Politicians often raise many questions with few easy answers. If you're feeling uncomfortable, remember this: The mix of investments you own will make a larger difference to your long-term "victory" or "defeat" as an investor than any election results.

We believe equity market volatility related to political uncertainty can create attractive buying opportunities for long-term investors. It's also important to ensure you have an appropriate type and amount of fixed-income investments.

¹Source: Morningstar Direct. Total return of the S&P/TSX Composite 1/1/1977 – 10/31/2024. The S&P 500 is an unmanaged index, cannot be invested in directly and is not meant to depict an actual investment. Past performance is not a guarantee of future results.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones financial advisor.

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Every year in Canada, billions of dollars in estate assets are transferred at death. Sometimes these transfers don't go as smoothly as expected. There are, however, ways to minimize the risk of problems by keeping a few points in mind during the estate planning process. After a lifetime of carefully saving, investing and planning, you want the peace of mind of knowing your assets will be distributed as you intended. As a Senior Financial Advisor I can partner with you to make the best choices for your situation.

I've highlighted a few of the most important factors to consider when planning your estate. Of course, each highlighted factor requires significant explanation and understanding to ensure the smooth transition you are seeking.

Will planning

A basic and all too common mistake is not preparing a will. A will communicates your intentions and allows you – rather than the government – to determine how your assets will be distributed when you die. A will facilitates the administration of your estate and can help you avoid some taxes. It also allows you to choose the executor of your estate and the guardians of your children.

Tax implications

Tax issues may feel complicated, I can help you to sort out appropriate solutions related to both investments, life insurance and retirement savings.

Beneficiaries

When a life event such as a birth, death, marriage, separation or divorce occurs, people often remember to review and update their will, but may forget to review their beneficiaries. This common oversight could greatly affect the realization of your final wishes.

Joint ownership

Oft times, individuals choose joint ownership for "simplicity" yet fail to consider the implications of such a choice. I can explain.



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Publisher's Note

At last! Spring is here. Or I hope. As I write this, we are a few days away from time change. Although there are still lingering signs of snow, a soft rain is falling and dispensing of the last remnants of what has been a colder winter than we have been used to over the past few years.

It seems that our winters start and end later every year. I am looking forward to the Spring season with the same enthusiasm as I do every year, but we can never count out snow in April or even May. Trying to predict what the weather will be like in two weeks is not an exact science. In fact, predicting tomorrow is a guess. But I can hope.

This season is the beginning of the year for many of us. I know some don't agree with me, but I find winter very gloomy. Sure, there is happiness around the Holidays, but other than that winter is blah. The constant progress of our communities slows dramatically in the colder months. Now we can get back to it full force.

Driving by the new Gordie Howe International Bridge, which is scheduled to open this fall, I am continually amazed by the scope of the project. This marvel of engineering, along with the required infrastructure on both sides of the border makes this the largest border crossing in North America as well as the longest cable-stayed bridge span on the continent.

The EV sector has taken off with the additional of the \$120 Million NEO Battery Materials Ltd. facility near Windsor Airport. This is over and above the \$5 Billion NextStar battery plant which is bolstering the region's reputation as an attractive place for development.

I can predict that our communities will continue to grow at the pace of the last few years. No matter what is thrown at us we respond with a positive move in the right direction...forward.

I have always been a proponent of buying Canadian whenever possible and I applaud the newfound push for others to do so as well. Moreover, it has never been more important for us to buy local and support our neighbours.

As I said earlier, Spring is the beginning of the year. Let's, all of us, do everything we can to make 2025 a great one.

Bob Robinson



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REVIVING WINDSOR

Meet the Women Featured on HGTV,
Turning Neglected Homes Into Thriving Spaces

STORY BY PAULA JUST / PHOTOGRAPHY BY HEIKE DELMORE
HAIR BY MEGAN ELLIS / MAKE-UP BY RAYVENNE SARKIS



WHEN STEPHANIE BRADT and Deidre Ritsche step into a property, magic happens. These two entrepreneurial women are on a mission to transform Windsor's underappreciated homes into stunning showcases. That's exactly what the duo brought to the screen when they joined HGTV Canada's Hoarder House Flippers, who chose them to host two episodes that aired nationally and internationally. The reality TV show follows house flippers nationwide taking on extreme renovation challenges.

The filming in Windsor took over six months, with over 20 film days and 100 hours of recording. Deidre and Stephanie rehabbed two old houses in the episodes and transformed them into profitable places as hosts and local real estate agents. As usual, they handled all stages, from quality control to more laborious tasks. "We found, bought and renovated the houses with our local team. It's really a documentary of what we do every day," explains Stephanie. "Now people can watch our whole process. The show makes it look easy, but it's definitely not", completed Deidre.

With Stephanie's background in editorial fashion and merchandising and Deidre's global experience in event management, the pair combined a unique perspective in 2016 when they founded Border City Living. "Essentially, we work to attract the right buyer for every property," summarized Deidre. The entrepreneurs specialize in showcasing the potential of more affordable and underappreciated areas, helping buyers see transformation opportunities. As two women without a family background in a very male-dominated industry, both feel they are breaking barriers.

The hoarder houses they chose to rehab for the show were no exception. One was in Riverside, and the other in Walkerville. While the first house, featured in the third episode of the latest season, was ►



Opposite: Stephanie Bradt and Deidre Ritsche. Top: The kitchen of the house in Walkerville was revamped with color and a modern style. Above: The house's living room in Riverside, once filled with garbage and debris, now showcases a contemporary industrial design. Photos: Home Network.

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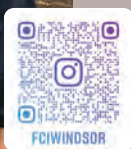


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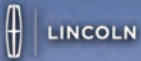
primarily a case of extreme dirt and grime, the second—aired in the sixth episode—was packed with old furniture and collectibles. “Oftentimes, these homes are difficult to maintain for various reasons, and the fact that we are willing to purchase them in their current condition makes all the difference,” explained Deidre.

The renovation process for both properties followed the same steps: before starting any construction work, a cleaning crew was brought in to remove everything inside. During this process, the team assessed the items to determine if anything could be repurposed or donated to the community. In the Riverside house, they found piles of debris, grime, bizarre objects—including taxi-dermy—extreme smoke damage, and used chewing tobacco. In the Walkerville home, they encountered rat droppings and an overwhelming collection of hoarded items, including carpets, silverware sets, a 1940s stamp collection and hundreds of books. Some of these last items were sold to an antique store, generating a profit of just over \$6,000.

After the cleanup, the professionals met with contractor, Matthew Doyscher, to finalize the renovation plans. This is where their creative talents took center stage. Together, they carefully selected materials, finishes and the overall design for each room. The duo’s signature style stands out through bold colour choices and unexpected material combinations—daring decisions such as kitchens in shades of pink, purple and blue. “We like to push the envelope when it comes to design. But we also wanted the eventual buyers to feel at home in these spaces,” explained Stephanie.

They decided to take risks for both projects, especially with the second house, where they opted for vibrant colours throughout multiple rooms. One choice—a mustard yellow—did not work out as planned, leading to a last-minute change that tightened the already fast-paced, eight-week schedule. “The design was unique and eye-catching. We didn’t follow the typical flipper format,” said Stephanie, adding: “We wanted them to stand out, to attract a unique buyer. So these projects had to be bold.”

But don’t be mistaken—they don’t just sit back and plan; they get their hands dirty. During filming, Deidre and Stephanie actively participated in cleaning, construction, and painting to help cut costs and speed things along. Despite dealing with design and construction deadlines, the professionals demonstrated agility, calmness and willingness to face what seemed impossible. ▶



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Fortunately, they have valuable connections that make a difference—something well captured in the reality show. “Our experience, combined with knowing good products and qualified partners, was important,” emphasized Deidre. Stephanie adds: “The only way we could have pulled off those timelines without sacrificing quality or cutting corners is because we have a city with great local trades and businesses who came together to get the job done with us.”

Throughout the episodes, it also becomes clear that their chosen profession presents constant, unexpected challenges. One of the biggest struggles is staying within the initial budget. In the first featured property, they had to allocate an additional \$9,000 due to an issue with the porch that wasn’t initially planned. On the other hand, all construction came to a brief halt while the hardwood flooring was restored.

Even so, both projects exceeded profit expectations. Their keen eye for detail and design secured over six-figure profits in each episode. One of the houses had enough space for a second kitchen, so it was transformed into two separate units, increasing its marketability. The results impressed investors, who were extremely satisfied with the renovations.

Now, Deidre and Stephanie are awaiting confirmation for a third season, which would air on Canada’s new channel, Home Network. “Watching the episodes for the first time was so surreal. We don’t usually document our process that meticulously, so seeing all the moving parts come together like that was special. It reminded us of how many laughs we had on and off camera. We really love what we do and who we work with, and they did a great job capturing it,” stated Deidre.

Besides being pivotal for their business, the program also helped bring attention to Windsor. Several images of the city were shown in the episodes aired by the channel. “Our city looks so incredible on the show. Everyone who watched agreed that Windsor is happening,” declared Stephanie. “It was exciting to have more eyes on us since it was internationally broadcast in the United States, Australia and Norway,” said Deidre. Both agree that the region is growing exponentially and has the potential to attract new residents due to relative affordability and job opportunities. “It’s a city of hardworking people with well-built homes full of history,” Deidre reflects.

Season 2 of Hoarder House Flippers is now streaming on STACK TV, Hulu and Global TV.

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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF BRINGING THE STORE RIGHT TO YOUR DOOR!

IN THE YEAR 2005, the New England Patriots won the Super Bowl, the Chicago White Sox won the world series and Giacomo won the Kentucky Derby; YouTube launched that year. American Idol was the top-rated TV show. Trucker hats, cargo pants, Juicy Couture tracksuits, Boho Chic and Uggs (the 'Croc' of winter) were trending. Somewhere in North America, Starbucks opened its 10,000th coffee store.

And right here in Windsor in 2005, our city experienced the biggest snowfall in our history: 196.3 centimetres to be exact.

Also right here in Windsor in 2005, Michael Campoli (armed with a vision to bring a new way of shopping for window treatments to our region) opened Made to Shade Window Coverings.

For twenty years, the extensive range of premium window treatments can be customer-designed and tailored to suit any space and any budget. With more than 50 years of combined experience, the Made to Shade team strives to provide exceptional quality and the most innovative designs.

By manufacturing their own shades and not maintaining a storefront, customers are truly buying 100% Canadian-made 'factory-direct' when they choose Made to Shade.

"When you love what you do, you're passionate!" Michael exclaims. From Eclipse Vision Shades to Roller Shades to Sunscreens to Venetian blinds and more, Made to Shade is the only factory-direct, 100% Canadian-crafted window covering establishment in Windsor/Essex.

"At Made to Shade, our passion is custom-designed window treatments to enhance any residential or commercial décor. Manufactured right here in Ontario using only premium quality European fabrics, we offer an expansive range of contemporary, appealing, practical, affordable window coverings."

Sales Manager Steven Caruso is particularly pleased to be able to "bring our entire store right to your door" with a fleet of mobile show-rooms.

"Sometimes when you're in a brick-and-mortar store, it's hard to visualize what new window treatments will actually look like in your home. Shopping right in your space not only makes the selection process easier; it also makes for a more fun, comfortable, convenient and personalized experience," Steven says.

"After you've selected your custom window treatment, we'll confirm a mutually convenient installation date with you. Then on installation day--in no more than a few hours—we can transform an



entire residential, commercial or retail space. Our highly trained crews are efficient and respectful. We make it a priority to leave everything in your space just as we found it—only better. You'll never know we were there, but I guarantee you'll love your new window decor!" Michael adds.

Michael also promises that Made to Shade is committed to delivering second-to-none selection, quality, style, service and a worry-free experience from start to finish. The company stands behind all products, workmanship and, "Our Lifetime Warranty Guarantee is the real deal. Whether the work was done yesterday or ten years ago, Made to Shade is there to make it right!"

As they celebrate 20 years of bringing the store right to your door, Michael and Steven look forward to serving you and invite you to visit www.madetoshade.ca or call 519-999-9898 or 1-866-777-4233.



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THE INDIANA DRONES

A BAND BUILT ON TRUST

STORY BY MICHAEL SEGUIN / PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRAVIS LATAM



PERHAPS YOU REMEMBER the iconic scene. You know the one. Our intrepid hero—one Indiana Jones—wanders into a darkened cave. Spikes jut out of the wall like fangs. A golden idol rests atop an altar. He exchanges it with a sack of stones—hands whispering through the dark. But the temple seems to rage against such a slight. He flees—narrowly escaping a boulder.

It's a famous scene. One that everyone can nearly recite from memory.

And it's a scene that helped inspire the name of one of Windsor's most interesting new bands: The Indiana Drones.

"The name is really silly!" Brandon Lefrancois laughs. "But most band names are silly, when you get right down to it. The Rolling Stones. The Beatles. Nirvana. Before they become synonymous with the music, they're just words. It's the music gives them weight."

And when it comes to a spectacular sound, the Indiana Drones certainly provide that weight. While they tentatively describe their music as a combination of alternative, rock, pop and indie, their songs are much, much more than that.

Their chords reverberate across the crowd. The lyrics are at once mournful and poetic. An undeniable energy echoes through the stands, stirring dozens of hearts.



Top: The Indiana Drones are Justin Zuccato, Brendan Friel, Grady Caplin, and Brandon Lefrancois. Above: The Indiana Drones perform during their album release party at the Phog Lounge.

The band is composed of four members: Brandon Lefrancois on drums, Justin Zuccato on vocals, Grady Caplin on the bass and Brendan Friel on the guitar.

"The project began as a solo effort," Justin recalls. "I made an album in 2017, under our band's current name. I wanted a title that started with 'the' and ended with an S. Something to insinuate a collective. I didn't really put my face out there. I wanted people to assume that there was a whole group of people behind it."

And before long, Justin's sounds attracted more and more ears.

"I just kept putting out music in the interim," Justin states. "Singles and albums and the like. Then Brendon and I started talking about pooling our efforts and writing songs together. Initially, the plan was for the two of us to record. But we hit a wall. So we eventually decided to bring in new members, which led us to Brandon and Grady."

"When we were thinking of our dream band, it was easy to choose those two," Brendan explains. "Brandon is one of the busiest session drummers in the city. And Grady is the new young musician in town. He's an incredible guitarist and bassist. He's always touring his butt off."

Together, the four musicians were able to fortify their sound to exciting new heights. Their first self-titled album was released last year, and another is currently in development.

And when asked to explain how they were able to click with each other so well, the band struggles to come up with an answer. However, the explanation for this output might actually be a simple one:

"We just enjoy each other's company," Grady states. "Aside from working well together, we're all really, really close friends. We weren't really sure what to expect when we first came together, but everything just flowed. There was so much synergy and so much creativity."

As well, the Indiana Drones credit the implicit trust they have in one another with helping create such a unique, distinctive sound.

"There's a lot of decisions that need to be made when making a new song," Brendan explains. "But one thing I love about working with this band is that we have this system where everyone stays open to each other. When we reach a crossroads, we'll ask if anyone feels particularly strongly about any decision we make. And if someone does, we follow them. We're like one big entity. We always lean on each other's instincts." ►

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And that trust extends beyond the stage as well. The Indiana Drones also credit their audiences for helping characterize their songs.

"I have a weekly residency at the Phog Lounge," Justin states. "So we started bringing the band around once every three weeks to use as a rehearsal space. We wrote a lot of songs spontaneously—on-stage together. It was a very relaxed environment. There'd be people at the bar, people at their tables, and they'd all become part of the creative process. We would learn a song in real-time and someone at the bar might call out a suggestion. It gave our music a sense of urgency, a certain liveliness."

As well, some of their inspiration might come from a more visual source.

"Whenever we're writing music, we're always watching movies," Justin explains. "I find it helps keep us from being too focused on the music. I always come up with my favourite ideas when I'm giving like 60% to it. We'll have Casino or Pulp Fiction or anything by Scorsese or Tarantino on in the background. Movies are this 'inspiration juice' that keep us going. Which explains the name!"

Despite being such a new band, The Indiana Drones has already performed on an international stage.

"We got to play The Rock Boat 2025 Music Festival," Justin states. It was a music festival on a cruise ship with tons of different stages and awesome bands. We left from Miami and went to Belize and Honduras. "A few of the headliners were Walk the Moon, American Authors and one of our favourite Canadian bands, The Strumbellas. We were the little band on the festival. But that was our first trip out of Windsor, and it went really well!"

Their first album was released last year. Buoyed by this success, they're already hard at work on their next album.

"We have this phenomenal flow together," Justin stresses. "We don't really labor over things when we're all in the room much as we just let it happen. If something doesn't work, we try again and it usually clicks. Our first album was all about that process—about learning each other. Our next album is a step up from that. It's more us. We know our sound, we know each other, and that's so powerful."

The Indiana Drones will be performing at The Horseshoe in Toronto on April 13th, May 11th, June 22nd and July 20th. Their first album is currently available for purchase.

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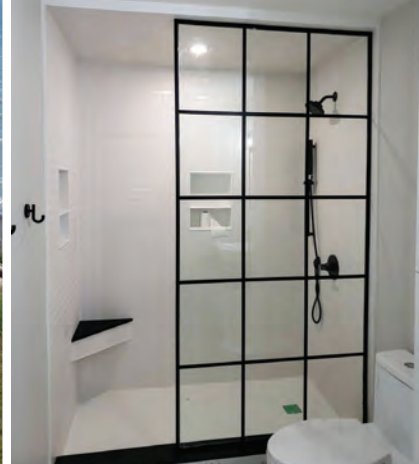


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ERIC LAMARRE, owner of Bay-View Glass and Mirror, operates under a simple philosophy:

“You tell us what you need,” he states. “And we’ll make it happen.”

Bay-View Glass and Mirror provides complete full-service commercial, residential and industrial glass and mirror services. Their work can be seen across the county, gleaming against some of the region’s finest homes and businesses.

And now, Eric has added an exciting new service to his repertoire.

“We are now the Canadian dealer for a new product: AutoSlide,” Eric explains. “It retrofits every door you can think of—a swing door, a garden door, or even a sliding patio door. And with it, we can make any door in your home fully automatic. Basically think of entryways you see at local malls and other outlet stores. Now, we can provide those same automatic doors in your own home—in every make and model.”

Automatic doors offer accessibility for everyone—regardless of physical capabilities or needs.

“This product was designed for people with mobility issues,” Eric states. “The kind of people who require easy entry from maybe the garage into the house. But it’s also great for people who love to entertain! Maybe they constantly have their hands full and they want to walk freely from the kitchen to the backyard. We can just put in these conversion kits and the door will slide right open.”

AutoSlide comes equipped with a range of customizable options, ensuring both comfort and security.

“There’s even Bluetooth capabilities,” Eric explains. “If you have a pet, you can attach a device to their collar so that they can come and go as they please. And if you don’t want Fido leaving the house at night, you can customize the time settings from your phone. If a friend needs to come over to get something when you’re not around, you can simply push a button and let them in.”



If you are curious about how AutoSlide functions, Eric and Bay-View will be offering a demonstration at the Windsor Home & Garden Show from April 11th to the 13th at Central Park Athletics.

And while Eric and his team continue to stretch their talents and offer new services, their ultimate goal remains the same: helping their clients.

"There's nothing we can't do," Eric states. "We are available throughout the entire process—from start to finish. It's never too early to come see us. We can always recommend a trusted contractor for the job."

No matter your needs, Bay-View is always eager to help—regardless of cost or scale.

"Whatever you need, we're there," Eric explains. "No matter how big or how small the project. Maybe you decide a new home is out of your budget. In that case, why not just renovate the bathroom and make your life a little bit more comfortable? Or redo the kitchen? We can help with adding some glass, providing some functionality. Or maybe you are ready to sell and you want to spruce things up a little bit? Nothing like a fresh mirror or new shower to start that bidding war!"

To find out how glass can transform your space, contact Eric and his team at Bay-View Glass and Mirror at (519) 94GLASS (944-5277), or visit the website at bayviewglass.com.

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VIETNAM ADVENTURE

Connecting to a New Culture

STORY BY SERAFINA PIASENTIN / PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN VERMETTE

WHY SHOULD YOU TRAVEL TO VIETNAM? The flight averages around 17 hours from Toronto, English isn't prominent, and the temperature can reach 90 degrees even in the winter! Yet, Dan Vermette says all of this makes it the perfect place to visit.

"When I told people I was going to Vietnam, most responded saying that's the last place they'd visit." This only convinced Dan to book his flight.





“It won’t be overrun with tourists,” he explains, yearning for that authentic experience. “This way, you can become totally immersed in the culture.”

Dan wants there to be a language barrier. He wants there to be culture shock. There should be a struggle to adjust to a new place; otherwise, everything is curated to you. As Dan puts it, hurtling over language barriers and other differences “makes the trip worth it because you have to work for it.”

So, Dan was all-in when he was invited to travel with a Canadian, a Vietnamese Canadian, and a friend who lived in Vietnam. The language barrier eased considerably since he was travelling with his own personal translators.

Sometimes, though, the Canadians had to fend for themselves in the hustling city. Once they got used to the motorbikes driving on the sidewalks when the streetlights were red or how people would take off their shoes before entering a store, they figured out how to survive in a foreign country: charades.

“English isn’t that big of an issue once you find a solution. Signs will have both Vietnamese and ►



Opposite clockwise from top: The koi pond at Vinhomes Central Park; a statue of a man with a child; the Bitexco Financial Tower which reminds Dan of the Stark tower from the Marvel Universe; the rooftop pool at Dan’s hotel, Icon 56 Building.

This page clockwise from top: A Buddhist temple on Phuoc Long Pagoda Island; Nighttime view of Ho Chi Minh City; a stream in Vinhomes Central Park; A fountain in Vinhomes Central Park.

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English on them, especially in touristy areas and airports." But, when interacting with people who only knew Vietnamese, Dan learned to read their body language and communicate with gestures and small words. At no point did he ever feel unwelcome for being a foreigner. Sure, there were times when people in residential cities would stare at him because he was white, but everyone would always smile and greet him. Language should never be the reason to not visit a country. Smiles are the same in every language, after all.

So, why should you travel to Vietnam?

Firstly, it's cheap. Dan says that the most expensive part of his trip was the flight. He paid \$2000 round-trip for two weeks spanning November and December. He does admit that the flight was long—Toronto to Tokyo took 12 hours and Tokyo to Ho Chi Minh City was another five—but the prices in Vietnam made up for it.

Ho Chi Minh, located in the Southern part of the country, is the largest city in Vietnam. However, to stay in an apartment with three bedrooms, two baths, a kitchen, and a living space, he and his friends only paid \$120 a night. In Gò Công, another smaller city nearby, it cost \$20 a night.

He mentions wandering around the city during the day, looking for signs that say "Spa." A full-body massage, which would cost hundreds in Canada, was only \$20. Dan even got his head shaved with a scalp massage for \$10. Plus, if you wanted to visit a gym for the day, it was only \$1.

If it is expenses that deter people from travelling, Dan adds, "You can always make money back, but when will you get this opportunity to travel again?"

Since Dan met up with his Vietnamese friend, his friend had the once-in-a-lifetime experience of visiting his childhood home. In the middle of the jungle outside Ho Chi Minh City, surrounded by coconut trees, this homestead was a simple oasis. To experience the authentic Vietnamese lifestyle was priceless.

Secondly, Vietnam is beautiful and relaxing. Fortunately, the entire trip was planned for Dan; he was just along for the ride. This allowed him to disconnect from his phone completely, only using it for photographs.

"I take photos because I like the artistic aspect. It's not something you see every day." He didn't even purchase an eSIM, meaning he was entirely without data. Often, Dan would wander around Ho Chi Minh with no direction, proving he felt safe.

On one occasion, he wound up in a well-maintained park where they would sweep the grass every day. He cannot recall the name of this place at first, having focused on the experience itself. He describes stumbling upon a hidden meditation garden with a koi pond and bridge. "It was so peaceful with the sound of the bubbling waterfall," he says, wistfully. Later, he researches the name: Công Viên Vinhomes Central Park.

Then, Dan begins explaining his experience in Phước Long Pagoda, a Buddhist place of worship outside Gò Công. He again only remembers his time there rather than its name. He tells how a Vietnamese man brought bags of fish and turtles and took them on a boat to the island temple. They then let the fish go into the water. "It's their sign of giving back to the Earth," Dan explains. Disconnecting from the busyness of the city, responsibilities that wait back home and the digital culture allowed Dan to unwind and just go with the flow. As he watched his fish swim away, he felt like this trip had given him much more than he could ever give back. He recalls swimming in the China Sea and collecting shells along the beach. "Sure, I can find these in Canada, too, but the shells I brought home with me remind me of my memories."

Thirdly, the food is impeccable. "You can tell they don't add preservatives, so it's more natural." Since Vietnam is full of coconut, banana trees and rice fields, the street markets are full of fresh food. "It's a nice feeling to go up to one of these booths and support the hard-working people. They aren't trying to impress you like in restaurants who want your five stars, so buying at markets offers a more natural alternative." This made every meal in Vietnam memorable. He especially enjoyed the coffee which was made with coconut cream. However, Dan was warned not to ingest the water or ice cubes; however, bottled water was easy to come by, and he reports having no problems with the ice.

Dan concludes that "there was no bad part of the trip." He has since been back to Southern Vietnam, and would love to explore the Northern half one day. To those who are now convinced to visit, he advises: "Be smart, pack light and just have fun. Don't have high expectations; just be in the moment and enjoy every interaction." Ultimately, if you disconnect from what you think life has to be, you can open your mind to another kind of lifestyle, one that is beautiful despite its differences.

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CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR

Jesse carried on a family tradition when he went to Canadore College in North Bay for Plumbing techniques – his grandfather was a plumber which sparked his interest in the trade. After joining the CCS team as a Licensed Plumber, Jesse's leadership skills were obvious, and he soon moved on to his current role as the Construction Supervisor.

Jesse oversees the success and quality of each construction project.



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As an independent specialty store offering blinds, draperies, shutters and repair services, Kate points out, "We just do these things and we do them extremely well. Our services and quality far exceed any store which sells paint, tools or flooring as a main business." Kate says, "Many of our repair services, including restringing and resizing of blinds are in fact for products not originally from us. Clients often say that no other business could help them."

Many clients are homeowners who want to dress their windows in ways that reflect their good taste. Some do a single room – others select treatments for their entire home. Other clients are corporate, requiring durable, attractive blinds and other coverings for the windows of their commercial buildings. "Window treatments are esthetic as well as practical. In addition to privacy, they provide insulation against winter cold and summer heat, and protect flooring and furniture from fading," Mark says.

"People appreciate that we have a modern showroom with our products on display and all orders are custom made for your needs," Mark says. "It's beneficial to be able to see, feel and operate our window treatments. As certified motorization experts, having many different options ready for clients to compare is key in the selection process. There are so many choices."

After narrowing down their choices, clients receive a free in-home consultation where the final measurements and colour selection are confirmed. "Many clients are not sure what will work for their windows; especially for hard to cover window arches, sidelights and bay windows. This is where our talented staff work together to create the perfect solution," Kate says.

All blinds and shutters are made to order in North America. Draperies are made locally in Windsor ON, by their fulltime seamstress. In the factory attached to the showroom, staff manufacture PVC verticals and carry out repair services. "Unlike some competitors that operate out of a van, as a 'bricks and mortar

store' in the same location since 1994, we can always be reached on phone or in store 6 days a week if you need service," Mark explains.

All staff are salaried, so there are no intense high-pressure sales people. "We are very experienced, helpful and genuinely interested in finding the right solution for your window covering needs," says Mark. Delivery and installation are approximately 4-6 weeks after the order is placed. Kate and Mark are delighted to have many repeat clients from the company's 31 years in business. "They say their draperies and blinds are still in great condition; they just want to update the colours or styles to match new windows or decor," Kate notes. "We have been serving Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent since 1994 and we continue providing the same enduring quality and service today."

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HÔTEL-DIEU GRACE HEALTHCARE

After much success, Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare, alongside key partners, recently announced a proof of concept expansion to the Mental Health and Addictions Urgent Crisis Centre (MHAUCC). Attending from left were Chief Jason Bellaire, Windsor Police Services; Jonathan Foster, Vice-President of Windsor Regional Hospital, Emergency, Trauma, Mental Health, Allied Health, Cancer Services, Renal, Organizational Effectiveness and Office of Research; Bill Marra, President and CEO of HDGH; Nicole Sbrocca, CEO of Canadian Mental Health Association; and Slawomir Pulcer, Deputy Chief of Essex-Windsor EMS. hdgh.org



THRIVE NATUROPATHIC CLINIC

Dr. Kaitlin Martinello, ND recently opened Thrive Naturopathic Clinic providing complementary and alternative medical services including acupuncture, IV vitamin infusion therapy, herbal medicine and dietary/lifestyle counseling. She has special interest in women's health including hormonal health and fertility support with unique and individualize natural therapies to support women with their goals of optimal health. drkaitlinmartinello.ca



TEPPERMAN'S CELEBRATE 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Since 1925, Tepperman's has been a cornerstone of economic growth, community spirit and philanthropy in Windsor. For over a century, they have invested in our community through sponsorships and charitable partnerships with local organizations. Amongst the many celebrating the recent 100th Anniversary at their Windsor store included the family from left are Julie, Noah, Bill, Rochelle, Andrew and Tina Tepperman. teppermans.com



CIRCLE OF SEVEN

The Circle of Seven, a group of local philanthropists, has reached a milestone with over \$4 Million donated to local organizations and individuals, focusing on health and welfare, youth, sports, arts and culture through local fund-raising efforts. Pictured at this year's cheque presentations is one of the recipients, Kim Willis, Sr Manager, Fund Development from Canadian Mental Health Association along with Tony Haddad, President of the Circle Of Seven. circleofseven.ca

LOADING PHYSIOTHERAPY AND HEALTH CENTRE

After 20 years of ownership, Charlotte Loaring has sold her business to brothers Wesley and Derek Bellemore, who have 16 years combined experience working at the clinic. They are dedicated to maintaining the core values that Loaring Physiotherapy was founded on servicing the community with physiotherapy, massage therapy, dry needling, manual therapy and exercise. loaringphysiotherapy.com



WALLPAPER MASTER CELEBRATES 35 YEARS

Celebrating its 35 Anniversary, Wallpaper Master has become synonymous with flawless execution of designer, custom and specialty wallpaper and wall coverings. Led by Yan Korkue, their team has completed hundreds of projects for a diverse clientele, ranging from prominent retailers to high-end restaurants and celebrity residences. wallpapermaster.ca



HOGS FOR HOSPICE

What was started almost 10 years ago by a dedicated group of local citizens who had a vision of creating a world class motorcycle event that would raise money to support a new Hospice campus in Leamington has successfully netted over \$5,000,000. Be sure to mark your calendars with this year's all the important dates! Blessing of the Bikes - May 4th and the H4H Motorcycle Rally August 1st-3rd. hogsforhospice.com or follow on Facebook for daily updates. Photo courtesy of Hogs for Hospice.

FASHION WEEK WINDSOR

Fashion Week Windsor is happening at The Capital Theatre Windsor. This is the first officially branded fashion week in Windsor-Essex and is highlighting diversity, trade skill and economic growth. Events include the Exhibit on March 25 at Sho Studios, "Sew"cial Talk at the Meteor on March 26 and The Competition at Capitol Theatre on March 27. The Competition will be led by Creative Director Stephen Drouin and his team which include (picture from left) Valentine Yaghoubzadeh, Angelina Ebegbuzie-Terry, Moya McAlister and Katie Wall. Tickets can be purchased through capitoltheatrewindsor.ca/event.



IN HONOUR OF THE ONES WE LOVE

In April, Anita Imperioli, founder of the charity "In Honour of the Ones We Love," will receive the Christian Culture Series Gold Medal from Assumption University. Imperioli has led projects to provide essential items like chemo ports and comfort carts, establish amenities such as a playground, blanket warmers, and a residential home for cancer patients. She introduced the Kids Beating Cancer therapeutic martial arts program to Windsor-Essex, marking a first for the region. inhonour.ca

WHAT'S BRED IN THE BONE

Jody Raffoul, along with Sons Billy and Peter, Perform at The Colosseum at Caesars

STORY BY KAREN TINSLEY / PHOTOGRAPHY BY SYDNEY TAYLOR, CAESARS WINDSOR



THAT WELL-KNOWN and loved metaphor ‘the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree’ could certainly pertain to Leamington’s Raffoul family. Dad Jody is the mighty ‘tree’; eldest sons Billy and Peter are the precious ‘apples’.

Blessed with singing voices ‘from the Gods’, Jody, Billy and Peter possess unrelenting drive, dedication and an admirable ability to teach themselves to play any musical instrument they pick up.

These natural gifts have transformed into three separate success stories for this talented trio.

Each story begins in the lovely town of Leamington where Jody, Billy and Peter were born and bred.

While Billy is now based in Toronto and Peter lives in Nashville, Jody is still proud to call Leamington home. He can trace his robust heritage all the way back to the tiny village of Tourza, Lebanon (population 400).

“I’ve traveled extensively but for me, Leamington is the place to be: the life-style, melting pot culture, the waterfront and the genuine, down-to-earth people. After the first Lebanese people settled here, they sponsored thousands of others to join them,” Jody shares.

36 Windsor Life

During the summer months, the Raffoul family toiled under the stifling hot sun picking tomatoes; during fall and winter, they laboured in local canning factories. They instilled a vigorous work ethic in young Jody (which became entrenched).

When asked what set him on a musical path, Jody remembers, “...sitting beside my Uncle Morris on his porch, listening to him play the first guitar I’d ever laid eyes on.”

Demonstrating early evidence of his characteristic drive and determination, 15-year-old Jody bought his own guitar and taught himself to play it. Then, “after being shown the Exit door from school in grade 11”, he landed a few odd jobs.

“But music was my calling; I got my first gig at the Village Inn Hotel when I was 17.”

Armed with the vocal versatility to cover the likes of Robert Plant, Roger Daltrey, Paul Rodgers and Paul McCartney, Raffoul secured a solid local following. In the late ‘80’s and early ‘90’s, clubs competed to book his band The Bad Apples.

Above: Billy, Jody and Peter Raffoul backstage at Caesar’s Colosseum. Left: Performing live; Justin Zuccato on bass, Billy Raffoul on guitar/vocals and Peter Raffoul on keys/vocals.



Then Raffoul released his debut self-titled CD of original songs, peddling it straight from the trunk of his car at gigs.

The song 'Hamburg' evoked a raw, gritty, in-your-face working man power; 'Dreamer' and 'Colour of Tears' revealed a more soulful side.

In 1999, Raffoul's stripped-down, soul-baring LP Simple Life debuted; the title track became a fan favourite. Five years later, Raffoul wrote and recorded 2004's Like a Star, securing international attention for 'Light of Day.'

A fan secretly submitted 'Light of Day' to Bon Jovi's "Have a Nice Gig" contest. From more than 17,000 entrants, Bon Jovi himself personally selected Raffoul for National Winner. As a result, Raffoul and his band opened for the megastar before a sold-out crowd at New Jersey's Giants Stadium.

Raffoul's 5th LP, '9 Wigle Street', features heartfelt songs about family, love, loss, trials and triumphs. With proof positive that the passage of time has only enriched Raffoul's vocal prowess, his voice struts confidently across each track, backed by raunchy guitars and killer basslines. "I'm So in Love with You" (about rebuilding family relationships after divorce), was written for second eldest son Peter.

For Jody, 2025 marks his 40th year of performing. Through the years, along with his many musical milestones, Raffoul has found love again with second wife Bridget (a talented actress) and fathered two more sons and a cherished daughter.

Recalling the first time Billy and Peter joined him onstage, Jody beams.

"Having Billy and Peter singing beside me, performing songs I'd written myself, was hands-down the most incredible moment. My younger sons Cadin, Judah and my daughter Balokia were shaking the tambourines right along with us! I've opened for legends like the Allman Brothers, John Entwistle, Paul Rogers and Bon Jovi, but my most monumental moment was performing with Billy, Peter and the rest of my kids, right here at home! Truly one of the highlights of my career."

#1 Son Billy was just nine years old the first time he set foot onstage with his father.

While performing before more than 1,000 at Kingsville's Migration Hall, Jody recalls, "During my encore, someone hoisted Billy onstage. I'll always remember him hanging on to my leg with all his might!" ▶



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By the time he turned 16, Billy was performing professionally.

While tagging along with Jody to a Kid Rock studio session in 2013, producers heard Billy sing and invited him to perform too.

By 2017, Billy had released several EP's and performed on Avicii's "You Be Love"; his full-length debut LP 'International Hotel' was released in 2020.

Billy won the 2021 SOCAN Songwriting Prize for his song 'Western Skies'; in 2023, he participated in Serena Ryder's all-star recording "What I Wouldn't Do".

Proud of his musical pedigree, Billy shares, "When I found out I was opening for Jeff Beck, Dad was the first person I called. During the Cincinnati gig, I was introducing myself to the crowd between songs when all of a sudden this guy on his feet in the front row yells, 'You're Jody's tot!' How cool was that?"

For second eldest son Peter Raffoul, growing up immersed in the iconic music of the '60's and '70's soon inspired him to start writing songs. Spending countless hours in the family's backyard shed, Peter also taught himself to play piano and guitar.

"That shed was my sanctuary, a world where I could marry melodies with lyrics and tease out tunes," he recalls.

Mindful of the trails father Jody and brother Billy blazed before him, Peter explains, "I wanted to be sure I was good and ready before putting the Raffoul name out there...again."

"One night in Leamington I watched as Dad called other people on stage, including my brother Billy. I remember thinking 'maybe tonight is the night for me, too'. So, I went and stood beside Dad behind the mic. I thought, 'no going back now!,' he laughs.

So how did Peter come to call Nashville 'home'?

A record label liked his young, raw sound and invited him to garner more songwriting experience.

When "Canada's Best Export", the high-energy Juno award winning rockers Glorious Sons came to Caesars Colosseum on February 28, it only seems fitting that they invited Jody (who has been called "Canada's Best Kept Secret"), Billy and Peter to open as their special guests. Performing together as 'The Raffouls' for the first time, the enthusiastic audience was delighted to sing and sway along to their heavenly harmonies!

To find out more, visit jodyraffoul.com, billyraffoul.com and peterraffoul.com **WLM**

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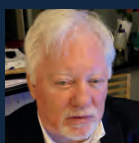
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The Bourbon Tap & Grill - Home of live music 3-6 nights a week. Signature thin crust wood-fired pizza, burgers, wraps, sandwiches, wings and more. Open for lunch, family friendly. Big screens to watch the game. 1199 Ottawa St., 12049 Tecumseh Rd. East, and in Belle River at 405 Notre Dame.

Cramdon's Tap and Eatery - South Windsor's friendly gathering place. Offering great food at affordable prices. Satellite sports and billiards in a pub-like setting. www.cramdons.com
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Erie St GastroPub - Located in the heart of Little Italy, this hidden gem offers elevated pub fare and a scrumptious Asian-fusion menu. The bar features local Ontario wines, a constantly rotating craft beer menu, handcrafted cocktails as well as alcohol infused ice cream. ErieStGastroPub.com
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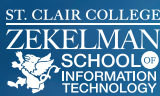


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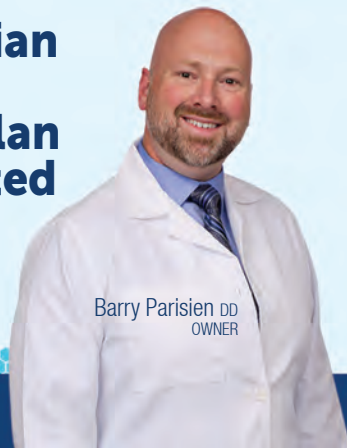


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THE NEW FRONTIER

Dwight Duncan Becomes University of Windsor's Next Chancellor

STORY BY MICHAEL SEGUIN / PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

WHEN PRESSED, the University of Windsor's new Chancellor—Dwight Duncan—sums up his professional experiences with characteristic mildness: “I keep myself pretty busy.”

Windsor has always been an extraordinarily service-oriented community. From nonprofits to charities, it seems one cannot turn a corner without running into a person or an organization trying to improve the lives of others.

And now, one of Windsor's most dedicated public servants, Dwight Duncan, will be taking his skills to the University of Windsor as the new Chancellor.

A native Windsorite, Dwight has a long and illustrious career that has perfectly primed him for this new role.

“I was born and raised in Windsor,” Dwight explains. “Although I've briefly lived elsewhere for school or work for extended periods of time, I've always made this town my home and principal residence. Early in my career, I was the Administrator at the

Brentwood Recovery Home for about eight years. At the same time, I also served on the City Council for six years.”

Although Dwight has worn a variety of hats throughout his life, he is perhaps best known for his time as a Windsor area Member of Provincial Parliament. Throughout his 18 years in the Ontario Legislature, he served a number of roles, including: Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance, Minister of Energy, Chair of Management Board, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader and House Leader of the Official Opposition.

“I've delivered six Provincial budgets,” Dwight recalls. “I've participated in an active way in both our province and our country.”

As well, in January 2016, Duncan was appointed to be the Interim Chair of the Board of the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (Gordie Howe International Bridge). Later that year, he was appointed to a five-year term as the Board's Permanent Chair.

And despite this hefty workload, Dwight remains tireless ►



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when it comes to service. "I've always been active in charitable work here in Windsor and across Ontario," Dwight states. "I'm currently the Governor for the MS Society of Canada, a Senior Fellow at the C.D. Howe Institute and a Member of the Board of the Global Risk Institute in Financial Services. I've also been a part of the Rotary Club and other organizations."

Since leaving the public office, Dwight has dedicated most of his time to the corporate sector. He is currently working as a Senior Advisor for Canadian Investor Relations with the New York based law firm Bernstein, Litowitz, Berger, and Grossmann.

And now, this spring, Dwight will be installed as the University of Windsor's ninth Chancellor.

"These positions go back more than a thousand years, particularly in the United Kingdom," Dwight explains. "Most universities have Chancellors. The role can vary, from institution-to-institution. But in general, you are not an Executive and you're not a decision-maker. The best way I can describe my role is that I hope to be a trusted advisor to the university and the university community."

Dwight likens his new role to a helmsman rather than a captain. Rather than steering the ship, he provides key insights and valued wisdom to ensure that the vessel reaches safe harbor.

"I am here to serve," Dwight states. "The entire university community can turn to me and take in whatever wisdom I might have on whatever matters require my insights."

Dwight's unique range of experiences give him a perspective that few can hope to match.

"When most universities are looking for a Chancellor, they're looking for someone with a broad range of experiences," Dwight explains. "Of course, here in Canada, our universities are provincially government-financed. And I've spent six years serving as a Minister of Finance here in Ontario. So, I've dealt with all of Ontario's major universities—including the University of Windsor."

Dwight plans to use this intimate knowledge to help bolster his alma mater with fundraising.

"Our postsecondary system is experiencing some really difficult times right now," Dwight states. "We're having to make some really complicated decisions. And yet, universities and colleges are critical for our

future economic performances. They're key to Canada's productivity."

Dwight was first appointed to this position last fall. He has spent months preparing for his upcoming term of office—which will begin this spring.

"I've been in a number of meetings about the challenges, but also the opportunities facing the University of Windsor," Dwight explains. "Again, I hope I can be a trusted voice for the senior leadership team, the Board of Governors, the Senate and most importantly—to the student body. I hope that when my term concludes in four years, everyone will agree that I was a good choice. That I was able to offer valuable assistance. Because ultimately, that's my true end goal: offering assistance."

As Chancellor, Dwight hopes to continue bolstering what he considers an exemplary postsecondary institution.

"I've witnessed a number of great developments in the university over the years," Dwight states. "When I was a Member of Parliament, I'd always felt that the university would benefit from a medical school. And we have been able to do that in the last 20 years! We've also seen some great strides in the sciences, engineering and the Liberal Arts."

While Dwight has nothing but praise for all the schools within the University of Windsor, he singles out the Law program for particular accolades.

"Our Law school has a unique position within Canada in terms of its approach to teaching," Dwight explains. "It offers a wide range of areas of specialization."

Even still, while Dwight maintains that the road ahead might not necessarily be the smoothest, he remains optimistic that the school can reach even greater heights.

"There are going to be a lot of challenges," Dwight states. "None of which are easily resolved. I plan to help the university deal with the ordeals that lie ahead. As well, I plan to help our school determine what their future priorities are."

But whatever challenges might be waiting, Dwight is looking forward to confronting them.

"The university and I are getting to know one another again!" Dwight states. "I'm spending a great deal of time there already, just getting myself prepared for the job. I hope to bring all the experiences I've accumulated over the years to this new frontier. Windsor has always been my home. And it's an honour and a privilege to lend a helping hand in any way I can."

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50 YEARS KEEPING WINDSOR ON THE ROAD

In April 1975, twenty-one-year-old Paul Winkler purchased J&B Auto.

Fifty years later, Paul's son Max runs the show, though on any given day Paul can be found in the office fielding requests for car parts on the telephone or otherwise sharing his half-century of experience.

"That was back when you went through your mental inventory when somebody called about a part," Max Winkler says. "Every time we acquired another vehicle, it went into a Rolodex of cards. Then there was a book that highlighted every part in that vehicle. Tracking down parts for customers was a very manual process!"

Today, J&B Auto Recyclers has instant access to inventories of similar outfits across North America. Sometimes even the most obscure car part can be located without a single phone call.

"Back in the old days, Dad sent a truck to Chicago a few times a week," Max continues. "The truck would stop at a number of yards between here and there, dropping off parts, taking on parts we needed. The truck was never empty."

Although Windsor is a "car town," some years at J&B Auto were better than others. And there were even some lean times in the last fifty years. In the early days, the J&B Auto yard stretched from its current location at 1637 Provincial Rd. all the way to Sixth Concession.

"Dad had to sell some of the property to keep the place going," Max says.

Today, J&B Auto operates from three locations: two store fronts on Provincial Road and a ten-acre storage property in Harrow.

The need for car parts never diminishes. J&B Auto has more than 1,200 vehicles and over 100,000 car parts in its inventory. And still, they struggle to keep pace with demand.



Max and his team are always on top of the current needs of customers, staying informed about issues arising in various vehicle models.

"Every car has its problems," Max says. "We ensure that we have those parts for people looking for them. For instance, some sport utility vehicle models suffer sub-frame rot. We're bringing in sub-frames from Texas because they are southern rust-free."

Paul Winkler is a particular expert on the Cadillac Allanté, a vehicle produced from 1987 to 1993.

"He has personally owned four of them!" Max points out. "When somebody calls about an Allanté, Dad takes the call. He knows every single part of that vehicle right down to the last nut and bolt. We recently shipped an Allanté window switch to Germany."

The reason for J&B Auto's longevity is no secret: "We can source anything from remanufactured motors, transmissions, to aftermarket body panels, mirrors, headlights, taillights, many mechanical and drive-train parts," Max says. "Many of our car parts come with a sixty day parts-only warranty. Depending on the item, extended warranties are available for purchase."

It is worth noting that auto recycling is among the most environmentally friendly industries. Everything that can be salvaged from a vehicle is removed. Those few items—such as fluids—that cannot be sold are handled according to all current environmental standards and regulations.

Reflecting on J&B Auto's half-century in business, Max says: "I am proud to be working along side my dad. Maybe one day my kids will take over here. We stay in business because we treat customers like family."

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DREAMCRUSHER

Filmmaker Gavin Michael Booth Tells the Story of a Pop Star Achieving Her Greatest Dream and Seeing it Torn Away From Her The Very Next Day

STORY BY MATTHEW ST. AMAND / PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF MIMETIC ENTERTAINMENT

WHO MURDERED POP SINGER GWYN? This is the mystery at the center of Dreamcrusher, season one of “Reward,” a new mystery television series from the free streaming platform Reveal.

Windsor filmmaker, Gavin Michael Booth was tapped as showrunner, developing the Dreamcrusher project with William Cheverie and producer Christopher Splaine.



“I have developed other projects for William over the past three or four years,” Gavin explains. “He saw the interactive horror movie, Fifteen, that I made for Blumhouse, so he knew I could handle an unconventional project.”

Fifteen was made in 2015, and was marketed as the world’s first livestreamed film: a serial killer who goes by the handle “Truman” uses the Periscope video streaming app to capture a series of grisly murders. He taunts police and his online audience, saying they have only fifteen minutes to recognize where he is and who his victims are. The film, performed live on Periscope, was ultimately taken down because too many viewers believed what they were seeing was real.

Another unique cinematic challenge Gavin took up was his harrowing 2019 drama, Last Call, which tells the story of a desperate man, in the throes of severe alcoholism, calling a suicide hotline. The man misdials, however, and finds himself speaking instead to the night janitor at a community college who offers him a sympathetic ear. The film is a seventy-seven-minute split screen single-take that occurs in real-time, no cuts. Not only did Gavin and his talented cast and crew pull off this feat, but the film has been hailed for its technical prowess and its handling of a highly sensitive subject.

So, it only made sense that William Cheverie brought Gavin onto the Reward project.

Clockwise from above: Writer/Director Booth works with actors Kimberly Fogelgren and Jeff Ararat; Booth with star Brittany Charlotte Smith; Actor Brittany Charlotte Smith recording a single for her character “Gwyn”; Gwyn prepares for another take of her music video.



“William had an idea for an interactive show, where each season is a contained anthology story,” Gavin says. “Clues are revealed during each episode—which the audience tracks down on the Web and in social media. At the season’s end, a viewer who solves the mystery wins a prize.”

As an artist who frequently has multiple projects on the go, and ideas for others waiting in the wings, Gavin was perfectly positioned to pitch ideas for this interactive show. Dreamcrusher was one of those ideas, a story centering on up-and-coming pop singer, Gwyn, played by Brittany Charlotte Smith.

The result is a seven-episode interactive murder mystery where viewers at home can either sit back and enjoy the show, or they can register online to become an amateur detective. The extra twist in this experimental concept is that it prompts viewers to be part of the action, hunting for clues off-screen and competing for a \$100,000 cash prize.

“I have collaborated a few times in the past with Brittany, and really enjoyed working with her,” Gavin says.

Gavin worked previously with Brittany on a few short film projects, such as *Artifice*, a compilation of five stories portraying a dystopian future, as well as *Profiles of Remarkable Neophytes*, which appeared at the Windsor International Film Festival in 2024.

“For the character, Gwyn, a pop singer, we didn’t want the actress to lip sync,” Gavin says. “I knew Brittany could sing, she’s a good actress, and I love working with her. She has all the right attributes for this project.”

Dreamcrusher was filmed primarily in Worcester, Massachusetts, and Los Angeles, with pick up shots done around Windsor.

The story for Dreamcrusher presented a unique challenge: to create a story that was compelling in its own right, while weaving clues into the plot that are sufficiently clear—and accessible online—for the amateur detectives following along to identify and track down.

“I had the title ‘Dreamcrusher’ from another idea I was considering about the music industry,” Gavin says. “That was around 2020. In the end, financing didn’t come through, but I still had the idea when this project came up. In this series, ‘Dreamcrusher’ is the name of Gwyn’s album. I liked the irony of giving the main character’s biggest dream that title... taking this ironic turn.” ▶


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He says that, personally, he loves stories about the entertainment industry.

"Most of us have an idea about what happens behind the scenes in the lives of actors and pop stars," Gavin continues. "I've witnessed it, myself, while touring with bands and have seen similarities in the film industry. Anything involving money and ego has intrigue and the potential for corruption. That's when you start to see that it has a dark side."

There is, unfortunately, tragic historical precedent for the Dreamcrusher storyline. Whether one looks back to the 1980 murder of John Lennon or the 1995 killing of up-and-coming pop star, Selena, the dark side of fame has played out in many ugly forms in the real world.

The first episode of Dreamcrusher finds Gwyn on the cusp of her big break-out. As she prepares for a concert in her dressing room at the Palladium in Worcester, one of the realities of rising fame gives the audience a look at a few potential suspects in her approaching demise: a line of people wanting a few minutes of her time before the show.

It is the big night. Gwyn's album release concert. Episode One opens with Gwyn standing on the stage in the empty concert hall hours before her performance, singing the single from her album, "I Beat U 2 It," composed by songwriters Bleu and Brooke Tomlinson. The camera angle on her as she sings her hit song acapella is distant, amid the balcony seats. Could this be the killer watching her?

The scene cuts to the chaos backstage preceding the big show. Gwyn is interrupted by her manager/handler as she readies for her performance. There are numerous people waiting to see her before showtime. Could one of the people who comes in to see Gwyn, each of whom appears to have some kind of grievance, be her killer.

"I am the only one who knows who the killer is," Gavin says. "Not even the cast and crew know."

The secrets will be revealed one episode at a time beginning on March 28, when Dreamcrusher first appears on Reveel. The show is also available through iOS devices, Android devices, Roku, Apple TV, and Fire TV. For those interested in competing for the \$100,000 prize for solving the murder, visit www.rewardseries.tv/ and sign up to become an investigator.

Asked if there was anything else he can reveal about the Reward series without divulging any spoilers, Gavin says: "Season two will be filmed in Windsor." **WLM**

A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

The Story of one Woman's
Relentless Lust for Life

STORY BY KAREN TINSLEY / PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF JOHN COSTA

IF YOU OR SOMEONE you love has been diagnosed with cancer, you already know how many questions haunt your mind at all hours of the day and night. Some people think nothing of asking questions, telling stories and spreading well-meaning (but often inaccurate) information. Scrolling the internet can also send someone plunging down a disturbing rabbit hole.

But here's a book that doesn't sugarcoat or pull any punches. Fighting cancer really is a battle, and "Teacup Half Full" paints a truthful, acute portrait of thousands of hours spent driving from Windsor to London to Toronto and back again (usually all on the same day), for consultations, diagnostic tests, grueling treatments and clinical trials.

Keeping loved ones in the loop can often fall to the bottom of a long and complex To Do list.

The day that 52-year-old Lisa Costa was diagnosed with aggressive Stage 4 cancer, her husband John began a blog.

The primary purpose of the blog was to share, with a robust posse of caring friends and family, the most current information about Lisa's medical merry-go-round: how she was feeling, what was happening next plus happy, intimate details about all the fun John and his 'Diva' (his pet nickname for Lisa) had along the way: from long drives in the country to thrift store expeditions; from camping trips all over the Golden Horseshoe in Lisa's 'snail' (her affectionate term for their fully tricked out camper) to their beloved waterfront summer retreat on the French River; to the occasional trips to Dairy Queen for a Peanut Buster Parfait, Lisa's most coveted treat after a tough day of chemotherapy.

Teacup Half Full is a compilation of John's blog posts chronicling the four-year journey from Lisa's initial cancer diagnosis until her death in 2022. Written in John's candid, persistent and positive prose, the book is beautifully bound and chock-full of love, devotion, details and images that will make you smile. By the time you finish reading, you will feel like you too, are part of Lisa's large posse.



Lisa Costa



Married and madly in love for more than 30 years, John and Lisa built a wonderful life in LaSalle, raising their three children. Their cherished home included a verdant garden full of leafy trees, vibrant flowers, exotic plants and a swimming pool (which Lisa loved more than anything). Lisa was an ardent gardener born with two green thumbs; every spring she transformed the big Costa backyard into a magazine-worthy oasis. May was one of Lisa's favourite months to plan, plot and plant with passion.

Lisa lived life with an abundance of passion for almost everything, but thrifting was one of her most passion-filled pastimes. Discovering fine china (teacups in particular) thoroughly delighted her. Throughout the book, John is fond of saying that Lisa always 'viewed her life with the cup half full', which not only inspired him and many others to look at things from her positive perspective but also inspired the book's title.

In his introduction, John shares that he never intended to publish his blog posts. He is also frank about the self-described 'long and redundant' narrative; he never dreamed that one day, the blog would blossom into a book.

"I'm not a writer," John confides, "but it was imperative for me to manage all communication between Lisa and her posse" during her illness. Creating the blog was one of the first things John did to fulfill his mandate as Lisa's 'loyal tour manager'.

Just as every individual's cancer journey is unique, so are the ways in which families move forward. For the Costas, Lisa's only job was to focus all her energies on getting better. John's considerably ►

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more expansive job was to focus on 'everything else'. In their full and busy lives, that really did mean everything else; while John and Lisa's children, family and friends helped out whenever they were needed, the couple, by their own choice, managed the lion's share of their journey all on their own, just the two of them, without one word of complaint. Whether it was trekking up the 401 in the wee hours of the morning and back in bad weather, or waiting, worrying, wondering or crying over disappointing developments, John and Lisa had each other's backs.

John felt strongly that Lisa had to fully focus on her recovery; for Lisa to do that, it meant not talking about her cancer in any way, shape or form. "She simply did not want to talk about it; the blog ensured that people stayed informed, while Lisa was free to expound about any and every other subject under the sun. The blog kept those who needed to know fully informed without having to 'go there' with Lisa directly.

"Everyone is different of course," John explains, "but I was a real 'Papa Bear' with our friends and loved ones about not talking to Lisa about her cancer, no matter what. Throughout the book, you will find my constant pleas imploring readers not to bother Lisa with any of the details I so openly shared. I also offered to answer any questions anyone had about anything, anytime. The blog really helped to keep the topic off the table, which is what Lisa wanted, and what helped me fulfill my mandate as her loyal 'tour manager'."

When asked why he did decide to publish after all, John responds, "So many people encouraged me to do it. Many believed publishing it would help others navigate their own cancer journeys. And the more I thought about it, the more I realized that publishing would not only mean keeping Lisa's memory alive and leaving a lasting legacy for our family; it would also mean that anyone who read the book would fall in love with Lisa just like I did all those years ago."

At more than 500 pages, Teacup Half Full is overflowing with love, courage, determination and hope. Enduring more than 80 rounds of chemo in four short years, Lisa faced her illness with fearless, brute force. She fought with all her might to squeeze every last drop out of life. Her story will inspire anyone who reads it.

Teacup Half Full is available for purchase on Amazon.ca. The book is priced with zero profit.

WLM

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