

OceanFront NAVIGATOR

Winter 2020

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*It's never too late - never too late to start over,
never too late to be happy.*

- Jane Fonda

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Let's Catch Up

There are 10 days until Christmas, and only 16 days left in the tumultuous first year of this decade. This year has been challenging for all, and our team is no exception. Though we are lucky enough to have had a healthy year, we are still focused on minimizing the risk to our team, our loved ones, our clients and our office guests. As we look forward to all that 2021 has to offer, our team has taken some time to reflect on the holiday season, and the things that make this time of year so special in so many different ways.

In a normal year, our team celebrates in many different ways. Michelle looks forward each year to an entire day – sometimes two – dedicated to baking up a storm with her mother-in-law. Chewy gingerbread cookies, super sweet jam cookies, and chocolate snowballs (a cherished family recipe) are among the recurring items to make an appearance every year.

Adam's family is Ukrainian, so food is naturally a very important part of the holidays for them. Christmas dinner involves a mouth-watering twelve course meal with traditional Ukrainian dishes served to his extended family of up to thirty people around one really long table. In Matt's home, stocking stuffers are a key piece of a typical family Christmas with each person contributing a small gift to one another's stockings. His brothers have been re-gifting the same package of ping-pong balls to each other's stockings every other year over the course of fifteen years.

Sadia ensures a visit to the [Stanley Park Christmas Train](#) is always part of the days leading up to Christmas. On Christmas Eve, Cassidy enjoys a huge Polish feast with her family. She expects this year will be the first time her oldest daughter, Scout, tries pickled herring...Good luck Scout! Kris celebrates Christmas day by getting on the slopes with his mom and brother while Brendan spends Christmas Eve and Christmas Day surrounded by family.

This year everyone's plans will look a bit different. Though we may be missing out on some of our most cherished and joyful traditions, we are all taking stock in the most important parts of our lives and finding joy in the little things. Coming together while staying apart is top of mind for all, and this year there is bound to be many new traditions born.

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Michelle & her mother-in-law, Trish, during their annual Christmas baking day in December 2019.

New Normal

Featuring Bonnie Hamson

It has been 457 days since Bonnie Hamson lost the love of her life. 36 years in the same home, 3 children, 8 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren and countless memories together. Bonnie and Bill shared more than a life together, they shared a love that will last long past their final days together.

Snowbirds at heart, they joined their friends for several months every year in Palm Springs where they lived a quiet, go-with-the-flow lifestyle of golf, playing cards with friends, and other social activities. Home was Deep Cove, where Bill played even more golf while Bonnie volunteered, nurtured home grown vegetables and flowers in their garden, and together they enjoyed as much family time as possible.

“*It’s going to be okay,
I believe it’s going to be okay.*”
- Bonnie Hamson

As many have experienced, the first year of losing a loved one is described as the hardest year. In the beginning, you are surrounded by loved ones to care for you, friends to talk to, and kind neighbours dropping off warm meals to your doorstep. Bonnie experienced all of this love in the months after Bill passed, but the most difficult part came in the quiet moments.

“Having dinners by myself – eating alone at the kitchen table. Every night we watched the news, sports – we both loved sports – and every night we had a series on Netflix on the go.”

Bonnie found this part of her day to be a surprisingly difficult obstacle in the beginning. Eventually, she found that the best remedy was not to forget those moments she shared with Bill, but to find a new normal. Her dinner routine now takes place in the warm family den next to her kitchen, in front of the fire where she can read, watch TV or crochet. The biggest challenge though, she says, was navigating the complex and never-ending pile of paperwork that follows when a loved one passes away.

“Shane was a big help, but it was dragging me down. I couldn’t stop thinking about it...Now I just feel freedom.”

Since the beginning of the year, with even more time on her hands due to the pandemic, Bonnie decided to take up an old habit of crocheting. In fact, all four of her ‘grand-dogs’ will have handmade blankets under the tree this year, and her two great-granddaughters will be cozy in their new sweaters for the holidays.

On top of losing Bill last year, Bonnie had to navigate the unique challenges that come with a global health crisis.

“This [pandemic] has made such a big difference in our lives, let alone so soon after losing somebody. Once that’s behind me, I will get back to my routine and maybe even join new things. I’m not one to sit around and think ‘what am I going to do now.’ And I’m certainly not going to vacuum again.”

Bonnie realized this year that finding a way to spend more time with her kids and grandchildren was key to her happiness. After selling their vacation home in Palm Springs this fall, she purchased a lot on Nicola Lake, a place her family has camped over the years. They will be breaking ground in the spring on a cabin designed around the most important part of her life: family.

Though 2020 was nothing like she expected it would be, Bonnie has found a new way to enjoy this phase of her life. From planning a family vacation to a new adventure where her family will make many memories for years to come, to simply enjoying a good book in front of the fire. There is a strong sense of hope, peace and happiness in Bonnie’s new normal.

Wishing you a warm, joyful holiday and a fresh start next year.



Bonnie & Bill (pictured centre-right) with their family at a past event.



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