

LIVING LIFE NEWSLETTER

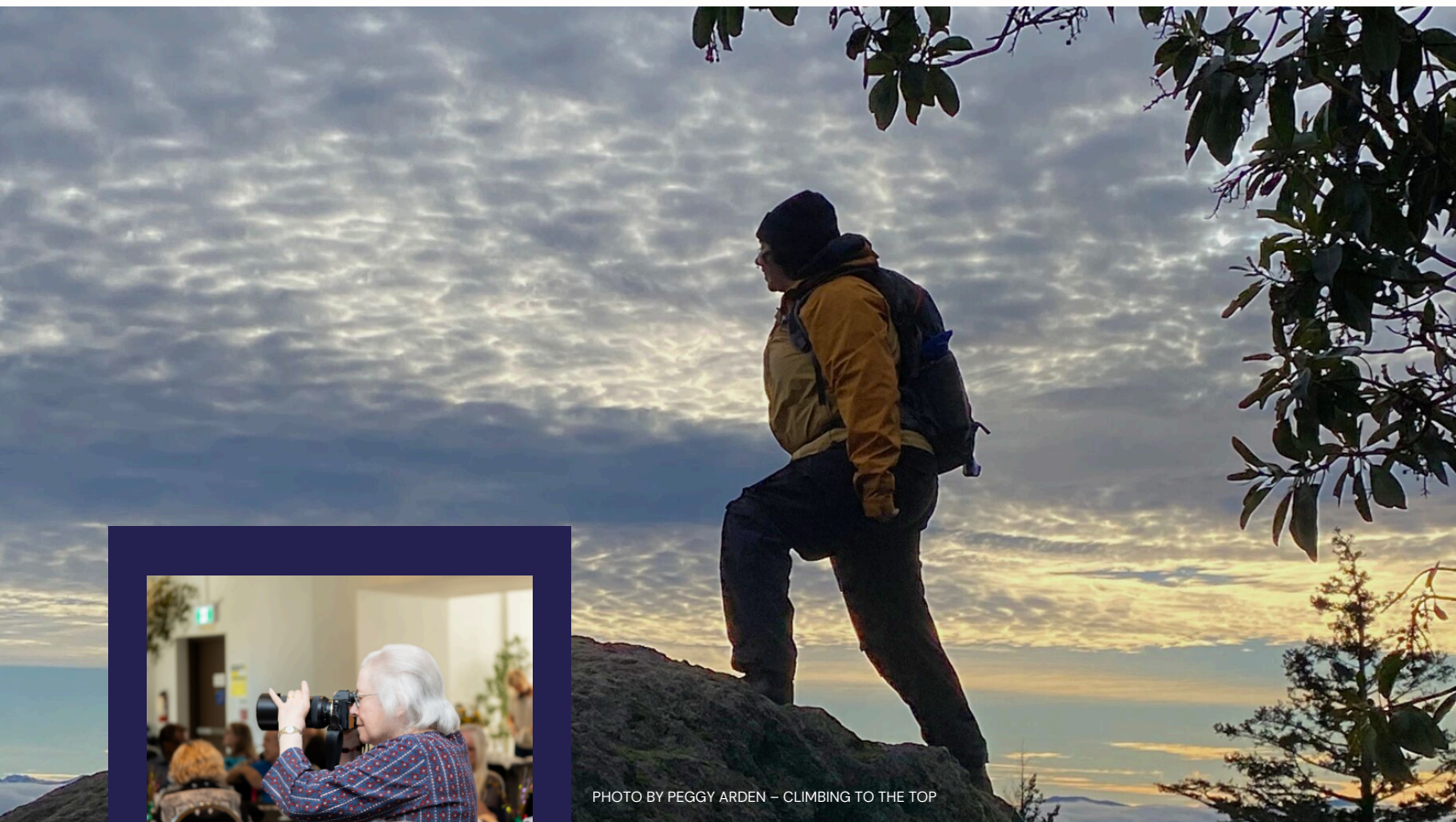


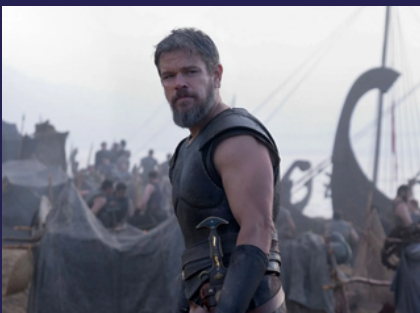
PHOTO BY PEGGY ARDEN – CLIMBING TO THE TOP



CAROL DORMAN IN ACTION



PHOTO BY SUE CANTAN – WALKING ON THE DUNES



HOMER VS. NOLAN

IMPORTANT DATES

- **SEPTEMBER 26** – FALL COURSES START
- **OCTOBER 12** – THANKSGIVING
- **OCTOBER TBA** – NEW MEMBERS RECEPTION
- **NOVEMBER 26** – ANNUAL GENERAL MEEINTG
- **DECEMBER 3**, WINTERFEST

PHOTO CREDITS

- PHOTOS FROM THE WELCOME BACK DAY: CAROL DORMAN AND SOJUNG KIM
- COVER PHOTOS FROM PHOTO CLUB MEMBERS
- WALK PHOTOS FROM TUESDAY WALKERS

IN THIS ISSUE!

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STAFF UPDATES

I am pleased to announce that **Dolores Petritaj's** title has been changed from Program Manager to Director of Operations effective July 2026.

As Director of Operations, Dolores works closely with members, lecturers, volunteers, staff from The Chang School of Continuing Education, and the Board and plays an important role in ensuring that our programs and services are delivered efficiently, professionally, and to a high standard.

This change in title better reflects the scope, level of responsibility, and organizational importance of the position and recognizes the valued contribution that Dolores makes to the continued success of The LIFE Institute.

Please join me in congratulating Dolores (pictured here) on her new title.

Dolores is assisted in the office by **Heydon Stewart**. Congratulations to Heydon (also pictured here) who is celebrating his one-year anniversary with LIFE on September 15.

Peter Drumm
Board Chair



DOLORES PETRITAJ



HEYDON STEWART

WHAT'S HAPPENED: WELCOME DAY SEPTEMBER 10, 2026



LIFE's Welcome Day this year was a sellout with speaker Bob Clapperton's address on the burning issue du jour—Artificial Intelligence—a big attraction.

This popular event takes place every September before the LIFE courses begin to give members a chance to get together with lots of time throughout the morning for conversation, greeting old friends and meeting new people. So, on September 10th, over 80 LIFE members gathered at Oakham House for updates on what's going on at LIFE, Bob's talk, and a delicious lunch.

Over opening coffee, some spectacular photographs from the LIFE Camera Club were displayed. Then Board Chair Peter Drumm outlined the financial status of LIFE; Neema Lakin-Dainow presented the panoply of clubs that LIFE members can enjoy; Milvi Ester revealed the new branding and discussed the website improvements coming soon; and the start of a drive to raise \$10,000 to support LIFE was announced.

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WHAT'S HAPPENED

CONTINUES FROM PAGE 2

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MILVI ESTER



PETER DRUMM



ROBERT CLAPPERTON

With LIFE business out of the way, speaker Professor Bob Clapperton opened the latest Pandora's Box, discussing the breathtaking speed of the remarkable advances in artificial intelligence technology. In recent weeks, the tech industry's warnings about AI have increased dramatically, with one executive giving a 10 percent chance of the end of civilization. Bob leaned to the optimistic side of the argument. While he sounded alarm bells on the possibilities of the destructive use of these tools or human mismanagement and error, he stressed the positive gains, especially in medicine, that may result. After lots of pointed questions which suggested more fear than hope, many of us continued the tech talk informally over lunch. All agreed the day was a great start to the new LIFE term.

If you didn't make it this year, be sure to register early in fall 2027!



WHAT'S COMING NEXT: WINTERFEST

Be sure and mark your calendars for the next LIFE social event – the annual Winterfest on December 3 – and register early to guarantee a place. Held at the Hot House Café at the corner of Church and Wellington Streets, it's always a wonderful fun and festive lunch with the emphasis on food, drink, and socializing together. And a little music to add to the merriment.

See you there!

HAVE YOUR SAY!

We welcome articles and stories from our members.

What we'd love to have are slice-of-life stories, personal experiences – a great trip, a new cultural discovery, a memorable moment, an unusual occasion, meeting an interesting person, an amusing moment – adventures big and small that you'd like to share with other LIFE members.

The newsletter committee will decide whether to accept a submission. We will edit if desirable or necessary, checking grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Narrative flow, length, and titles may be altered. Any changes will be sent to you for approval.

AND THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON...VOLUNTEER DENNIS BOCKUS!

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LIFE'S TECH EXPERT

I retired in 2015 from my job at IBM, where I had filled a number of roles, most recently as a technical writer and an information architect for a huge documentation website. My friends seemed to think I was addicted to stress, so they were concerned that my plan to spend my remaining years reading Nero Wolfe mysteries and camping out for weekly films at the Fox Theatre might not work out too well. They were determined to find activities for me. One neighbour introduced me to lawn bowling at the Balmy Beach Club. I was already doing tai chi regularly with a group of seniors. And my friend Leigh said I should take courses at The LIFE Institute. I had enjoyed my years at university, so the idea of going back to classes appealed to me. In those days, all LIFE Institute classes were in person, so every class had a limited enrolment. Registration opened at 7 a.m. The really popular courses might be full by 7:20. When I tried to register for my first courses, I couldn't get into the site to register. I suspected that the web server just didn't have the capacity to handle the volume when a couple thousand people all tried to get in at once. I used the Contact Us link to report my problem and explain what I assumed to be the cause. The next day, I received a call – would I come in and talk to the Board about the problem and what they could do to fix it? One thing led to another. I met with representatives of the company that provided the web hosting for The LIFE Institute.

We tried some solutions, but they didn't work. The site kept crashing on registration days. We split registration across five days to ease the load on the server. That worked most of the time, but most of the time isn't really good enough. Finally, LIFE went to a new service provider. By this time, I was also a member of the LIFE board, and I worked with the executive director and the office staff to implement the new site. Implementing the new system was challenging and energizing. Some days it was even fun! It certainly eased the transition to retirement. I was learning by doing with people whose company I enjoyed and on a schedule that I set myself. And I was keeping up a skill set that I had developed through years of work and still valued.

The LIFE office is a friendly environment. We have been lucky over the years in having a board and staff that really care about providing good personal service for members. In my three years on the board, I made friends whose company I have enjoyed in and beyond the LIFE environment. I can't overstress the value of volunteering. It is in those shared activities that I have really had a chance to get to know people. And such interesting people! Along the way, I was taking courses; I have lost track of how many.



For a couple of years, I traded opinions with an interesting variety of people in Jay Waterman's and Lloyd Cadsby's course on Politics, People, and Other Issues. When we met in person, that course would fill up each term in fewer than 10 minutes. Discussions were informative and civil, despite a variety of backgrounds and political affiliations. I learned about political and military history from Olivier Courteaux and social, cultural, and economic history from Sudharshan Durayappah. I have taken courses on art, astronomy, geology, and literature. I joined a club. I meet friends every December at Winterfest and every fall at the Welcome Back Event. LIFE has become a hub of my social life.

I have never given up my love of learning. When I used to think about retirement, I pictured myself in a chair with a pile of books beside me. Instead, I am active, involved, making new friends, and doing something useful. The LIFE Institute is a big part of that.

MEET LIFE INSTRUCTOR AMANDA CUPIDO

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AMANDA CUPIDO

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE TECH WORLD, FROM SOCIAL MEDIA TO ONLINE SAFETY, HER CLASSES ARE YOUR BEST BET. AND HERE'S WHAT SHE'LL BE EXPLORING THIS TERM.

While my friends were busy making mixtapes with their favourite songs, I was making mixtapes of people talking. Perhaps it was a foreshadowing of my podcasting career; I've now made more than 55 different podcasts (and counting).

One of the reasons why I like podcasting is that it gives anyone a chance to have their story amplified, with little to no limitations. I have a background in broadcast journalism, which means I used to interview fascinating people every day, but I could only share small snippets in the stories I was filing. As a radio reporter, my stories were between 30 seconds and 2 minutes in length, and I often wished I could give more airtime to the people I had spoken to. With podcasting, there is no time limit. When people ask, "How long should my podcast be?" I always respond with, "As long as the story deserves."

The medium is perfect for lifelong learners – there is always something you can share and something you can learn. Therefore, both creating and listening to podcasts bodes well for this group.

While I like making podcasts, I also spend a lot of time listening. I liken listening to podcasts to reading and traveling (all of which I greatly enjoy). These things are endless: you will never be able to listen to every show, read every book or see every corner of every country. But I find there is something about chipping away at it all that is deeply fulfilling.

As I look ahead to the upcoming term, I'm excited to connect with the folks who signed up for the new podcasting class. Whether or not you are in the course, I hope your term will be filled with meaningful learning and stories!

This fall I will be teaching a new course: **Exploring Podcasting: Discover, Listen and Share Your Story** with the LIFE Institute. But before I speak about my love of podcasts, let me give you a teaser from the course and explain what they are.

Podcast is the combination of the words iPod and broadcast. The original definition says that podcasts are audio files that could be streamed or downloaded from the Internet. Essentially, radio on demand. These audio files may include conversations, journalistic investigations or even audio dramas. In the class we'll cover the history of the medium, the top shows and how you can capture your life story as a podcast.

Although this is the first time this class is being offered, I've been teaching podcasting since 2017 – it's hard to believe I've spent nearly a decade introducing people to the medium. I've seen the industry grow and evolve rapidly, which means every time I teach a course about it, the content is slightly different. I love it; it keeps me on my toes!

But my passion for podcasting is actually rooted in my appreciation for audio storytelling. I grew up obsessed with the radio – as a kid, I would call into local Toronto stations to request songs and enter contests. I would then wait for my segment to air and record it on a cassette.



PHOTO BY CAROL DORMAN – AURORA APPROXIMATION

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE CLUBS

JOIN A LIFE CLUB – YOU’LL BE GLAD YOU DID!

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CLUBS: BUILDING COMMUNITY, CONNECTION AND PURPOSE AT THE LIFE INSTITUTE

By Neema Lakin-Dainow, LIFE Clubs Coordinator:
ndainow@gmail.com

Learning does not end when we retire! At the LIFE Institute, learning becomes even more meaningful when it is combined with friendship, shared interests, and opportunities to contribute. **And clubs are an important part of that experience.** They allow members to move beyond the classroom, develop relationships, and be part of a unique community. As we grow older, maintaining an active social life is an important part of healthy and satisfying aging.

Research on healthy aging emphasizes the importance of **social connection and meaningful engagement** to support emotional well-being, cognitive health and a sense of purpose. **The LIFE Institute clubs provide a practical and enjoyable way to achieve those goals,** bringing people together around common interests and allowing members to learn from one another in a way that is different from a classroom or seminar setting.

Many LIFE members say that the friendships and contacts they have formed through clubs are the most important part of their LIFE experience. Join one and see for yourself!

There are currently several active clubs at LIFE.

The Climate Action Club demonstrates how learning can lead to active citizenship. Members learn about climate issues, while those who wish to take action can write to government representatives and participate in demonstrations supporting climate initiatives. The club therefore provides both education and an opportunity to contribute to the wider community.

The LIFE Photo Club gives photography enthusiasts an opportunity to share photographs, discuss techniques

and develop their creativity together. Club photo walks also provide another setting in which learning and friendships can grow.

The Classic Book Club. Like to read and discuss books with others? We meet to explore and enjoy the time-honoured classics in lively discussion with a club member leading each session. Our choices have ranged from earlier works such as *Tom Jones* and *Crime and Punishment* to more recent gems like *The Great Gatsby* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*.

The Widowed Learning Club provides an opportunity for widows and widowers to meet others who have experienced a significant life change. Through learning, discussion and companionship, members can develop new connections and find support in a welcoming environment.

The Triple E Investment Club brings members together to share information and ideas about investing and financial matters. It combines learning with social interaction and the opportunity to learn from one another.

These clubs illustrate an important strength of the LIFE Institute: **members themselves can create and sustain communities around their interests.** Because clubs are volunteer-led, members have opportunities not only to participate but also to organize, lead, teach and share their experience.

Clubs are therefore much more than an enjoyable addition to courses. They help create a stronger Life Institute community in which people can **find friendship, intellectual stimulation, creativity, purpose and meaningful participation.**

For further information about current LIFE clubs as well as starting your own club please contact The LIFE Office at: info@thelifeinstitute.ca

A CALL TO ACTION: LIFE’S CLIMATE ACTION CLUB BY SHARON ZEILER

The Climate Action Club is for LIFE members who want to learn more about climate change and its impacts and are eager to meet to discuss the issues and solutions. The Club’s goal is to help us learn about climate change and biodiversity loss, so that we move from curiosity and concern to knowledge and action.

LIFE’s Climate Action Club (CAC) began as a way for participants who were taking two LIFE classes about the environment to continue meeting and learning about the climate. The club was founded just as the lockdown for Covid began in March 2020. Word about the group and its meetings, which were designed for learning and sharing, soon spread.

As we were all confined at home, having meetings on Zoom was a good way to connect with others who wanted to learn more about climate change. Our numbers kept growing, but some people who wanted to join us were not LIFE members, so the CAC expanded into Climate Action for Lifelong Learners (CALL), an independent non-profit group of which the CAC is an important part.

CALL’s purpose is to learn together, support one another, and advocate for solutions that make the world a safer, more affordable, and healthier place to live. We have several learning meetings each year, featuring speakers such as Bob McDonald and Bill McKibben. You can find out more about CALL by visiting the website: www.climatelearners.ca, as well as tap into the resources and recordings of previous speakers.

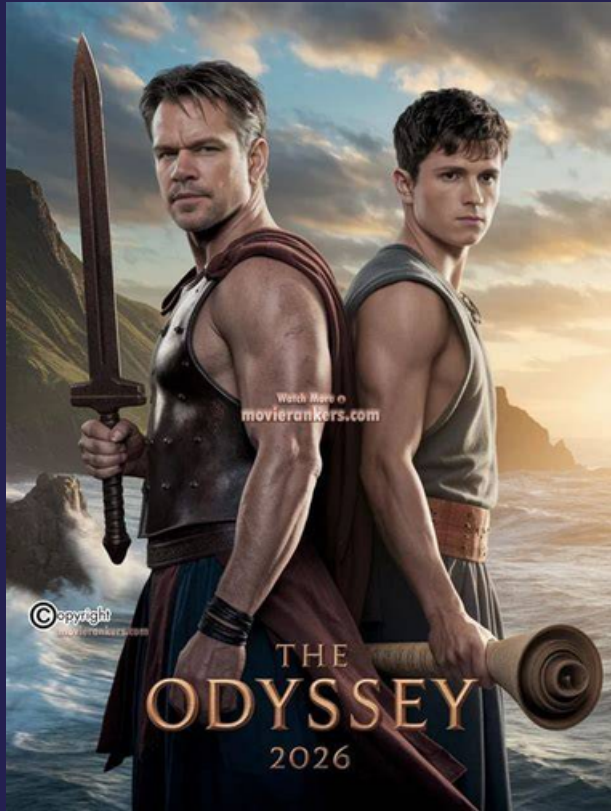
CALL is one of the founding members of Seniors for Climate, www.seniorsforclimate.org, whose purpose is to build a Canada-wide network of seniors to create a livable future. As seniors we have the skills, time, and commitment to devote to achieving this goal.

The CAC welcomes LIFE members who are interested in making a difference and improving our world for future generations.

HOMER VS. NOLAN

BY MARTHA WALL

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Here's an example of what another club is up to. This fall as the Classic Book Club gets ready to explore Homer's *The Odyssey*, one member shares her personal reaction to Christopher Nolan's latest hit—and what she thinks is the most surprising contrast between page and screen.

This fall I am responsible for leading the discussion of Homer's The Odyssey in the LIFE Classic Book Club. As this text is considerably more weighty than the novels we usually present, imagine my trepidation at attempting to present one of the greatest works in Western literature to a group of avid readers who seem to have read everything! That Christopher Nolan's film released this summer was completely serendipitous—I had no idea when I chose the work some time ago. Like so many others, I am fascinated by the difference between the film and the poem, and here's my purely personal take.

THE ODYSSEY

When one of the world's most famous pieces of literature is transferred to film – watch out! Who will dominate—the poet or the filmmaker? Or will a magical collaboration be the result?

The long line-ups at crowded theatres and the endless reviews and reactions attest to the astonishing interest in Christopher Nolan's attempt to present an *Odyssey* for our age. And for many, he has succeeded. The excitement of the story, the acting of the star-filled cast, the sensational camerawork, the spectacular locations all make for a thrilling film experience. Even many of those who have read the poem or studied it or teach it, forgive what they consider to be some important differences between text and film.

Sometimes, however, the verdict from the classicists is not quite so positive. Translator Emily Wilson summed up her reaction this way, “visually stunning but emotionally empty” and “abysmal” in its writing, while the latest translator and professor Daniel Mendolsohn, has a gentler response. “The most authentic thing about Christopher Nolan's *Odyssey* is its densely braided narrative, but its tormented hero sounds like the heroes of Christopher Nolan movies.” And, “This tormented, guilt-ridden Odysseus, stripped of humor and wit, seductiveness and cleverness, is a sibling of *Memento's* anguished amnesiac, of *Batman*, of *Oppenheimer*, men tormented by pasts they wrestle with in different ways.”

And that seems to be a special problem for many readers – for some of us, including me, Nolan's *Odysseus* is not Homer's. Nolan's *Odysseus* is guilt-ridden, remorseful at the famous Trojan Horse subterfuge that led to the razing of Troy, and ready to abandon his kingdom to go into exile in penance. Homer's *Odysseus* is an unrepentant warrior and trickster who cuts down the foe at Troy and on his way home and slaughters the aristocrats trying to take over his kingdom with not a shred of remorse. He is regaining his rightful place, restoring order out of chaos, and inflicting punishment on those who have broken sacred bonds and norms. In ancient late Bronze Age Greece, these are the actions of a hero to be celebrated.

No doubt when the Classic Book Club meets to discuss *The Odyssey*, reactions will vary and discussion will be lively!

LIFE LOVES WALKING

HERE IS ONE MEMBER'S RECOMMENDATION. DOES SOUND HEAVENLY!

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A PATCH OF HEAVEN BY SUDHA SHELAT

A place to escape. An oasis. A refuge. Welcome to the **East Don Trail**.

Winding through the Don River ravine, the East Don Trail connects the Lower Don Trail near the mouth of the Taylor-Massey Creek and extends north and east through the ravine to Bermondsey Road, providing an important connection for us **walkers** and all who seek a quieter path through the city.

Below the trail, the East Don River gurgles – a haven for mallard ducks, and the occasional beaver. The best view is from the bridge looking down at the water flowing swiftly. If it were deeper, you could raft down. The water and mixed greenery are home to many different species. See the sparrows, woodpeckers, warblers, and blackbirds – they are busy building nests and singing. Listen. You can hear a cardinal calling to its mate. Pause. Almost missed seeing the pale-yellow butterflies flitting. Their wings – delicate like gossamer.

Patches of marshland hide insects. Almost invisible. Listen to their crescendo. The squirrels noisily rustle through leaves; the rabbits disappear into the bushes. Sometimes coyotes saunter scaring visitors.

Silver birches, pines, casuarinas are in contrasting green colour in the wooded part. The weeping willows are swaying. A gentle breeze caresses the exposed skin. It carries subtle fragrances of lilacs, lily of the woods, maple flowers and many more. This mixes with the smell of moist earth – it's special.

All over, evergreen trees mix with dead ones. Mushrooms grow in the shady areas of the dead trees. The brown stark leafless trees – stand tall, not fallen. The aim is to preserve the natural forest canopy – a home for local flora and fauna.

This patch of heaven is a place to re-charge and re-connect with nature whatever the season.



AND HERE'S A NEW CHANCE TO GET OUT AND ABOUT WITH LIFE

TUESDAYS WALKS: SHARE YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

LIFE members love walks, especially those that offer a chance to learn about our city. That is why a new walking group has been formed. We offer walks every Tuesday which will provide a guided tour to a part of Toronto, with gentle to moderate exercise, and lots of social interaction. We would welcome your help.

Do you live in a neighbourhood you love, or know of one you would be excited to share with others?

Our Tuesday Walks group is looking for volunteers to lead walks and introduce others to some of the great neighbourhoods and green spaces in our community.

If you would like to learn more or are interested in leading a walk, please contact Carmie Drumm at: carmie.drumm@sympatico.ca.

We would love to hear from you!

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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WE REMEMBER

- **DAVID WILLIAM BEIRNES:**
1953 – JULY 2026
- **SCOTT GRAHAM:**
JANUARY, 1938 – JANUARY, 2026

LIVINGLIFE NEWSLETTER

WE REALLY WANT THE NEWSLETTER TO BE RELEVANT TO YOU AND SINCERELY WELCOME COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, AND STORY IDEAS. BE A PART OF THE NEWSLETTER AND HAVE YOUR SAY! PLEASE SEND THEM TO **MARTHA WALL** AT WALL@WALLBOOKS.COM

CONTACT US:

THE LIFE INSTITUTE:

TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
285 VICTORIA STREET; TORONTO ON M5B1W1

- E: INFO@THELIFEINSTITUTE.CA
- P: 416-979-5000 X556989

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*Learning Is
ForEver*