

I'm thrilled to be here and I'm really eager to get on with it.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE

At Queen's Park the morning after her majority election victory.

The things my father said ...

Folksy humour and favourite sayings sound in my memory



LOUISE-ANN CARAVAGGIO

As Father's Day is upon us, it is a time of reflection for me. It is a happy day for my husband, however, for me missing my Dad, it is veiled in sadness. Although my late dad, Roger, would be the first to say get past it, be happy and move on, this particular holiday stirs up old feelings and vivid memories. My father was a wonderful husband, Dad and Papa. Being an only child, I had a close, loving relationship with him and he certainly helped form my outlook on life. It has been five years since we lost this remarkable man.

Dad arrived in Canada in 1956 via ship from Italy and loved this country. He was a child during the Second World War and saw and remembered many things, some of which he could never speak of. My father was outgoing, positive even under the most trying circumstances and possessed a great sense of humour. He was very hard working. Dad believed in God and attended Canadian Martyrs Church in Hamilton regularly for 50 years. He was always ready to lend a helping hand and was generous with his time and talents. Dad was a strict Italian father, however, he had a warm and generous heart. As I go through life, memories of the little things that he used to say pop up in my mind. These sage gems continue to make me smile.

Dad's old sayings included the well-known "you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." He knew that he could win friends and influence people simply by being a nice guy. To this day family, friends and neighbours still speak of him fondly and call and send cards on the anniversary date of his passing on May 3.

"Never spit in the air" is certainly an interesting saying that my Dad used to make an important point. How's that for vivid imagery? He meant that if one were to do or say something bad, it would amply return to the sender. This saying made me think about the results of my actions.

When it was raining, but the sun was shining, Dad would say that "the devil was combing his hair." When the sun shines through a rain shower, I still think of my father. This remains a symbol for me of happiness coming through tears of sadness. As I stepped outside Canadian Martyrs Church this past May 3, after a Mass in which Dad was remembered, I looked up and smiled as there was a shower with the sun shining above me.

Dad used to say that "to catch a bird, you must put salt on its tail." A formidable task indeed. This hopeful action kept me as a little girl running around the back yard for hours with a salt shaker chasing various non-compliant birds.

"Pick up your feet" my father said to me whenever I would shuffle my feet. It would drive him crazy. He tried to make me walk tall and proudly. To this day, when someone walks past me and shuffles along noisily, I find myself thinking the same thoughts as my Dad. Go figure.

When Dad really didn't want to do something, he used to say "you go ahead and I'll catch up to you." NOT. I learned the result of that one fast.

Dad was a huge Disney fan. He loved the cartoons and movies. He laughed so hard at the characters and their crazy capers. Mom was so embarrassed at the movie theatres when he would let out his loud, funny and infectious laugh. He made the other moviegoers laugh, too. He also did hysterical impressions of Donald Duck and Bugs Bunny. Dad loved the Pinocchio story and probably in part for the Italian theme. He always said "if you tell a lie, your nose will grow." I totally believed this old saying as a kid and often checked myself in the mirror. All this was just not worth the benefits of lying.

"Learn to cook and you'll never starve" was another of Dad's favourite sayings. No truer words were ever spoken. Dad loved to cook and instilled in me the joy of preparing and enjoying Italian cuisine. He made awesome homemade pasta and meatballs, polenta, risotto, soups and cream-filled cakes. Dad worked in an Italian bakery back home in northern Italy when he was young. He also instilled a love of cooking in his granddaughters.

"I will never forget my own" was an old hymn lyric my Dad loved. He missed his family in Italy even though he made a happy home in Canada. This lyric moved him deeply. When I still hear it, the words remind me just how important family was, is and will always be. That hymn played at his funeral.

Even though my Dad is no longer with us physically, his sayings and wisdom remain ever powerful in my memory. Every now and again, when a specific situation presents itself, his influence is still with me. For a moment, I don't miss him quite so much.

Happy Father's Day in heaven, Dad, as I too "will never forget my own."

Louise-Ann (Pretto) Caravaggio is a busy wife, mother, daughter, employee, volunteer and writer from Dundas.

No parade, but Pride is there

Events celebrating LGBTQ people have been going on all week



DEIRDRE PIKE

Happy Pride Hamilton! What do you mean you didn't know it was the most wonderful time of the year again? Don we now our gay apparel!

Ever since the Stonewall Riots that started on June 28, 1969, LGBTQ people (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) have been taking their politics and their parties to the streets in June to mark that first famous night in New York when drag queens and other trans and queer folk stood up to the police who were regularly arresting patrons at the reputed "gay bar" and said, "We're not going to take it!"

In Canada, just the day before that first night of protests in Greenwich Village, the Supreme Court took sodomy off the books as a criminalized act. The times, they were a changin' and even though there was no Twitter back then, I'm sure the message and energy from Canada's groundbreaking act was known and felt on the streets outside Stonewalls that night, characterizing the beginning of what became popularly known as "the gay rights movement."

So here we are more than 40 years later and Pride is celebrated in cities, towns and rural communities, by individuals and organizations, around the world. Next week in Toronto is World Pride, nine days of celebrating LGBTQ people from around the globe. (Except Ugandan queers to whom Canada is refusing entry because they might apply for refugee status. Imagine! But that's another column.)

So with all that other commotion you might have missed the fact that Hamilton Pride has been on all week already! Let me catch you up a bit.

A few years ago, Hamilton Pride Festival Inc., was a not-for-profit group that co-ordinated the local festival, usually starting with a flag raising at City Hall and culminating with a rally, march/pa-

This year is one of the most robust schedules of events I've ever seen.

rade, and festival with a beer tent, drag shows and a display of local organizations showing support for LGBTQ people on the third Saturday of June. But then funding ran out, people lost energy after operational tension and the co-ordinating body was gone.

So for each of the past three years or so, various collections of people and organizations have come together to determine activities for Hamilton Pride. This year is one of the most robust schedules of events I've ever seen. With dynamic co-chairs, Poe Liberato from The Well, and Paul Hawkins, president of Prime Timers Hamilton, Hamilton has had a week of Pride like no other and all on a budget of zero dollars!

We've had more than 40 events representing some of the unique communities within the LGBTQ community; A Queer Disabilities Workshop; an LGBTQ swim at the YWCA particularly responding to trans people; a Pride board game night; a Positive Parenting session for LGBTQ parents; a Queer People of Colour and Newcomers' Dinner; and many more opportunities for music, dancing and performing.

Many organizations marked Hamilton Pride outside the official schedule. Hamilton Health Sciences raised the rainbow flag at five of its six locations. (The Juravinski site doesn't have a flagpole yet but by next year they should be 6 for 6!) Interval House had a staff session of Positive Space training complete with rainbow streamers that entangled me, and Mohawk College held numerous educational sessions for staff and students on a variety of topics.

And yet, I still fielded questions from people wanting to know when the "real Pride" is — the march and beer tent. I used to think the same way and, the fact is, I'd love to have another Pride Parade in Hamilton. However, the reality is these are the two most intensive parts of a Pride festival requiring finances and worker bees. While we may have the people power, we need some funding toward these efforts.

Have a look at hamiltonpride.ca for information about how to enjoy the last few events of this year's Hamilton Pride like the Queer Slow Dance tonight or the Queer Cabaret tomorrow! But if you want to help rejuvenate a Hamilton Pride Parade, please start saving and planning now.

Deirdre Pike is a freelance columnist and loves a parade! Wish her a Happy Pride at dpiketheatthespec@gmail.com or @deirdrepik on Twitter.

It's a privilege to be a father

We live in a painful time when men are suffering an identity crisis



THOMAS FROESE

The sad truth is that the world is full of Charlie Gray sort of people who have listened to all the wrong voices and spent entire swaths of the only life they have doing things that haven't mattered to them in the least, and, in the grand scheme of things, have mattered little to others also.

They're people like those in John Marquand's novel Point of No Return, where Charlie Gray, after years of apple-polishing, is finally named vice-president of that fancy little New York bank, the promotion that finally gives him and his family the security they need.

You get the feeling, though, that what Charlie really needed was to give his life to something where he'd be more fulfilled and alive, where he could then be his family's support in another way, through simply himself. Man, after all, cannot live on salary and status alone.

These thoughts, from writer Frederick Buechner, are so very worthwhile and especially now, this Father's Day, in this strange and painful time when so many fathers are everywhere but with their children, a time when plenty of men, apparently, are also suffering a wholesale crisis in identity.

My own thoughts on being a dad started when I was just three, according to my own father, when I'd occasionally announce, "When I grow up, I want to be a farmer and a father." But farming never came within a country mile and even after I married, well into my 30s, fatherhood was not a station I pursued with any impassioned energy.

Like most men, I found myself wired more as an achiever, an accumulator of accomplishments, a professional writer immersed, in my case, in the vocation of news gathering. Children? I suppose. As long as the little Lilliputians don't rope down my other goals.

But now well into family-life with three remarkable children, something has happened. Something has changed.

While my wife's profession anchors our home financially — a dynamic that's feasible for more families these days — I've been able to leave the Charlie Grayness of cultural expectations, that fog that says male accomplishment can only be measured in a certain way.

I've adjusted my definition of success so I can identify myself without embarrassment as a dad who works from home and with the children.

No, the "Do I 'work' or be with the kids?" question is no longer just for women. As another male author put it: "My books are popular now. In 20 years, I don't know if anyone will remember them. But I know I'll have a relationship with my kids in 20 years."

That's not to say that having a business card that says "The Daily Dad" doesn't have some unusualness, if not humour.

Even so, it's a privilege to be a father, and to embrace fatherhood even more as a vocation, to point to the sky and show the children great and marvelous things, to take them to the beach of life and, together with their mom, say, "This is how much you're each loved, as much as these grains of sand on the seashore."

This is the truth of it, says Buechner, that we must be careful with our lives because we only get one. The world can't live it for us. Our decisions are ours only. We don't need to tell each other this. But, then, maybe some days we do. Because the temptation is to think we have all the time in the world, when, in fact, nobody does.

He's right.

One decision leads to the narrowing of another to another. And then, yes, there often is a point of no return with certain things, important things, like relationships with our children.

My aging father largely raised two kids as a single dad after he, unheard of at that time, literally crossed the Atlantic to win custody of us. He wryly put it to me this way, recently: "We're all getting older. But you don't know yet what it means to live in your pine-box years."

Yes, time is short for anyone. And the children wait and wonder. And, too often, hurt.

Thomas Froese is a husband and father who writes about family life at www.dailydad.net. Father's Day Sunday, at 9 and 11 a.m., he speaks about fatherhood and forgiveness at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterdown.

THE SPEC

BRIEFLY

Short and excerpted comments sent to letters@thespec.com

Ontario stays with 'the devil it knew'

I am distressed that the electorate of Ontario would give a majority government to a party that, for 11 years, has been mired in issues of misstatement, mismanagement and out-and-out waste of taxpayers' hard-earned money, for, as Kathleen Wynne called it, "a political decision."

Faced with a choice that offered nothing of real substance, the electorate avoided the closet liberal Andrea Horwath, rebuked a flawed Conservative program put forward by Tim Hudak, and stuck with the "devil it knew." It will remain to be seen if Wynne's rhetoric on sound fiscal action, transparent governance and "honesty" are mere words or fact. Oh well, it is only four years until we can do this again. Maybe something in a dismal political landscape will change by then. Something to wish for!

DAN WELSH,
MOUNT HOPE

Spec's front page missed election story

Frankly, I am appalled by your Friday front page. Kathleen Wynne defeated a mean-spirited, mathematically inept campaign, led by the joyless Tim Hudak. Yet we find the loser featured on your front page and are forced to wade through two more pictures of him and go all the way back to page 10 for a picture of the winner. To my mind this is not giving credit where it is due.

KEITH MOODY,
BINBROOK

A satanic election result

I have to assume that the majority of Ontarians are too lazy to vote, have the memory of a goldfish, are too forgiving or are so afraid of change that they adhere to the adage of "better the devil you know." Hail Satan.

BRUCE MCMICKING,
DUNDAS

Too bad NDP lost minority sway

I have often thought that the most powerful position for the NDP is to nip at the heels of a Liberal government and nudge it toward greater people accountability. It is too bad that the NDP has lost that role ... at least for the time being.

RENATE MANTHEI,
HAMILTON