



Summer 2019

AFTERWORDS
Newsletter of Active Retired
Members
Chapter 11



AfterWords is the official publication of the Active Retired Members of OSSTF, Chapter 11 Thames Valley (ARM C11). Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ARM C11 or OSSTF.

In this summer issue - we can almost breathe a sigh of relief that our Ontario government has decided to take a five-month holiday. We advise you to remain vigilant, however, by continuing to read any e-mails sent to you by Prez Mary Lou to keep informed of assaults on our profession.

Meanwhile...

- News of the world comes at us from all directions. Read an evaluation of the best sources of credible news today. Which Canadian sources could YOU suggest of equal trustworthiness?
- Retired teachers are sought-after volunteers. Consider the proven benefits for YOU of volunteering
- Childcan offers tutoring support to children battling cancer. Please read the letter to our Prez from Jackie Kinder, Volunteer Co-coordinator- and then contact her any of three ways to get started donating your valuable skills and time
- If your travels this summer- or in the "off season" -require renting a car, we offer tips for safe, economic car rental
- Speaking of travel, few people do it with more enthusiasm (and better pictures!) than our Joe Wilson. This month he recommends Point Pelee, a treasure close to home
- From our insurers at OTIP - practical suggestions on how even retirees can contribute to saving the planet.

Retired from the Job but not from the Fight

First, let me thank the many of you who were able to attend one of the spring rallies. The last one, June 7th in St. Thomas, saw a very large contingent of labour attendees!

There will undoubtedly be more rallies this fall that will need your support as we face devastating cuts to education and health care. As we face a government that is worse than the Harris government, we must continue to generate public support from the parents of our students and pressure the government despite their almost 5 month hiatus! Rallies accomplish that as MPPs hate the attention!

In TVDSB, the cuts translate into 300 fewer secondary teachers. Multiply that by the 6 sections that each represents and you have 1800 fewer sections and choices for students. For this year only, the Board will fund over 50 additional unfunded teachers at a cost of almost \$5 million. Next year, the cuts will be even deeper if the mandatory e-learning courses are implemented for each student. The proposed salary cap limit of 1% has interfered and created a sham with our collective bargaining rights and OSSTF will actively pursue a defense of our rights; however, that will take months of time in the courts. Our active colleagues need our continued support in defending our public education system.

As events unfold, I will keep you informed. In the meantime, whatever your plans for the summer months, travel safely, stay healthy and enjoy your retirement activities.

Our **FALL LUNCHEON** is scheduled for **WED. SEPT.25**. MARK your calendars!!

All the best until then from your CH 11 ARM Executive.



Shutterstock

10 Journalism Brands Where You Find Real Facts Rather Than Alternative Facts

By Paul Glader (Glader is a professor of journalism at The King's College in New York)

Where do we most often find real truth, real facts in a new era of Internet hoaxes, fake news stories and new political administrations that tout their own "alternative facts"?

Many citizens appear confused and worried. News stories from the [BBC](#) and the [New York Times](#) and [Money](#) magazine are reporting (with proof) that dystopian novels such as *1984* by George Orwell and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley are seeing a noticeable boost in sales. After [Meryl Streep's anti-Trump and pro-journalism speech](#) at the Golden Globe awards in January, donations picked up to the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#). Subscriptions to the *New York Times* and other newspapers have picked up dramatically since Donald Trump was elected president according to the [Columbia Journalism Review](#) and other sources.

Meanwhile, I've been hearing from several well-educated friends, who are wondering if their own reading habits are leading them toward facts or fiction. "Hey man. Got a question for you on this 'fake news' thing," wrote one friend from my high school years. "What's your advice and do you have an opinion on where to find some form of truth in our media today?"

The key question for any publication is this: If a reporter gets facts in a story wrong, will the news outlet investigate a complaint and publish a correction? Does the publication have its own code of ethics? Or does it subscribe to and endorse the [Society of Professional Journalist's code of ethics](#)? And if a reporter or editor seriously violates ethical codes - such as being a blatant or serial plagiarizer, fabulist or exaggerator - will they be fired at a given news outlet? While some may criticize mainstream media outlets for a variety of sins, top outlets such as the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *NBC News* and the *New Republic* have fired journalists for such ethics violations. That is remarkable in a world where some celebrities, politicians and other realms of media (other than news... such as Hollywood films "based on a true story") can spread falsehood with impunity.

Another friend writes, "Trump's attacks on the free media has me spooked and I want to support the media somehow. At the same time, I am aware of my liberal bias and would welcome a different point of view as long as it isn't 'alternative facts.' Any suggestions for good publications to subscribe to? I already have subscriptions to the [*Washington*] *Post*, [*New York*] *Times* and [*Wall Street*] *Journal*." I am heartened by questions like these. A major shift in political and cultural life in our country means it is a good time for people to improve their own reading and learning habits.

[The Poynter Institute](#) - an enlightened non-profit in St. Petersburg, Fla., that has an ownership role in the *Tampa Bay Times* and provides research, training and educational resources on journalism - provides many excellent online modules to help citizens improve their news media literacy.

In the post-post truth age (that is, an age where one has to work hard to be media literate and find the truthful sources of information), citizens should support local and regional publications that hew to ethical journalism standards and cover local government entities. In my corner of Long Island, that means I read (and sometimes write for) the [Great Neck News](#) and the chain of local newspapers to which it belongs.

This year, I also plan to subscribe to [Newsday](#), which is the largest paper that covers Long Island. I would urge citizens to subscribe to their local newspapers as well. This action helps these organizations employ journalists who attend city hall meetings, school board meetings and police precincts to report on how your tax-dollars are being spent, how your constitutional rights are being safeguarded, and to serve as watch dogs on how well your elected officials are serving you.

Realizing that millions more people are scratching their heads, wondering what to read and where to spend their subscription dollars, here are my top 10 large journalistic brands where I believe you can most often find real, reported facts:

1. The New York Times

This is the most influential newspaper in the U.S. in my view. Its editorial page and some of its news coverage take a left-leaning, progressive view of the world. But the *NYT* also hews to ethical standards of reporting and the classic [elements of journalism](#) in America. That's what helps the *NYT* remain, arguably, the agenda-setting news organization in America. It is a leader in business, politics and culture coverage. *

2. The Wall Street Journal

The largest circulation newspaper in the U.S., the *WSJ* made its bones as a business newspaper and pioneered new types of feature writing in American journalism (for example, its quirky middle-column feature called the "Ahed" and longer form, in-depth reports called "leders"). As the company was purchased by Australian media mogul Rupert Murdoch in 2007, the *WSJ* pivoted to cover more general news in addition to business news. The *WSJ* is still brand X among daily business publications in the world. Its editorial page is a bastion of American free-market conservatism, using the motto, "free markets, free people." With former Republican speechwriters and strategists such as Karl Rove, Peggy Noonan and Bill McGurn writing columns, the *WSJ* editorial page is often a must-read for Republicans in Washington. And left-leaning readers should not dismiss the *WSJ* edit page just because they may disagree with its positions. It has won several Pulitzer Prizes for editorials and columns that feature a clear thesis, backed up by thorough fact-based reporting and bold arguments. *

3. The Washington Post

The newspaper that [brought down President Richard Nixon with its reporting on the Watergate scandal in the early 1970s](#) maintains its intellectually robust tradition under the new ownership of Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos. The *Post* has, for decades, been part of the big three national papers - a peer of the *NYT* and *WSJ* - in terms of winning Pulitzer Prizes, hiring the best and brightest reporters and producing big scoops. Of the big three, the *Post* is arguably the most forward-thinking right now in [trying new digital strategies that have boosted readership](#). And with Bezos' backing, the *Post* is on a [hiring binge](#) for talented reporters while the *NYT* and *WSJ* have been pruning their reporting staffs in recent months. Most people think the *Post* editorial page leans left but [is often regarded as more center left](#) than the *NYT*. *

ARM Chapter 11
Executive 2018-19
 President: Mary Lou Cunningham
 Vice President and
 Newsletter Editor: Daina Janitis
 Secretary/Treasurer: Kae Ackland
 PAC Representative: Bryan Smith
 Facebook Administrator: Wendy Anes Hirschegger
 Member-at-Large: Joe Wilson

<http://caj.ca/content.php?page=ethics-guidelines>

Is the website which carries the Canadian journalism Code of Ethics.

We'd be delighted to hear from ARM readers about sources they trust for Canadian news.

.4. BBC

The BBC is the global standard bearer for excellence in broadcast radio and TV journalism. If only U.S. cable news outlets could follow BBC's recipe. And while PBS produces some great entertainment, documentary and news programs, its news programs have often seemed to lack the creative energy of the BBC. While NPR produces some fantastic journalism, a bulk of its news coverage seem to come from re-reporting news from the *New York Times* and the *Associated Press*. And the [American public perceives NPR](#) to be more left-leaning than the BBC.

5. The Economist

Another British export, the *Economist* magazine is staffed with excellent economists and journalists who produce a tightly-edited, factually rigorous account of what's happening in the world each week. One oddity is that the *Economist* doesn't publish bylines of their writers so you never know who exactly wrote a given piece.

6. The New Yorker

This American treasure publishes sophisticated narrative non-fiction pieces from top writers and reporters each week in a print magazine and, increasingly, on other platforms. The *New Yorker* is smartly expanding its audience on the web, offering to the masses content that used to be open only to its print subscribers. The magazine itself runs a piece of fiction each week (identifies it as such). The long-form non-fiction reports on politics, culture, business and other topics often take months to report, write and fact check. The result is deep reporting and analysis each week that is hard to find elsewhere. And the narrative structures and techniques the writers use make for enjoyable reading. Similar to the *Times*, the *New Yorker* presents a progressive view of the world. Conservative readers should recognize that but not let it detract from them enjoying some of the best reporting and writing happening in the world. *

7. Wire Services: [The Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Bloomberg News](#)

You can't exactly "subscribe" to these wire services. But you can trust reports from these organizations to be factual. They provide a backbone of news and information flows about politics and the economy. And their member organizations that surface their reports benefit from this reporting. You can follow these organizations on social media and can also follow certain reporters for these organizations who report on topics of interest to you. These wire services also do have web sites and mobile apps you can use to stay abreast the news. *

8. Foreign Affairs

This bi-monthly magazine is published by the [Council on Foreign Relations](#). It's a serious magazine for people who want intelligence on global affairs. The magazine and its many digital platforms benefits from submissions, dialogue, differing views and analysis from the many top minds on international relations.

9. The Atlantic

This is another national treasure, a monthly magazine that presents a view of the nation and world from Washington D.C. It is informed by many top journalists who write long-form features and also write some analysis. The *Atlantic* web site sometimes hews to clickable headlines. But the magazine and its parent company also subscribe to American journalism principles of fact-based reporting.

10. Politico

Founded by reporters who left the *Washington Post* in 2006, *Politico* has built itself into a crucial player in politics reporting in the U.S. (and with expansions to Europe). It does publish some products in print, but *Politico* is easily accessible on the Internet and mobile devices. Keep an eye on [Axios](#), a news startup launched this year by two founders of *Politico*.



8 Long-Term Health Benefits of Volunteering

Posted by [Claire Shinn](#) | Apr 14, 2017 | [Featured](#), [Volunteer Recruiting](#)

The impact of volunteerism can be felt in communities of all shapes and sizes. No matter the size of the community, though, the impact of volunteerism is always huge. Wherever it occurs, volunteering exists to help others. But volunteerism's best-kept secret is this: ***it's good for you, too.*** We did some digging to find out all the reasons why volunteering rocks.

1. Boosts self esteem

Volunteering helps build [a strong safety net](#) for when you're experiencing trying times. With those strong social ties, you're always surrounded by a community that's willing to help you out when times get tough. When you volunteer, you become a part of someone else's safety net, too. By helping others, you'll build a greater sense of trust and self esteem.

2. Expands your connections

The relationships you can create while volunteering are endless. You connect to others through volunteering, and if you do it regularly, you can maintain those valuable social networks into the future. You can make new friends and keep the old by engaging in a common activity like volunteering. With a larger social network, you'll have more resources at your fingertips, which leads to better physical, mental and emotional health.

3. Makes you feel good

If you've ever volunteered before, you've probably experienced this: volunteering makes you happy! [Researchers at the London School of Economics](#) found that people become happier by volunteering more. When you give your time to others, you attain a personal sense of accomplishment, which accounts for some of the positive effects that volunteering has on your mood.

[There's a threshold](#) to reaping the full benefits of volunteering, though. In order to soak up all the positive effects of community service, you need to set aside some time for it. Volunteers who commit at least one or two hours every week reap the fullest benefits from their service.

4. Contributes to a longer life

Volunteering does more than boost your mood—it also has [effects on your physical well-being](#). Volunteers encounter greater longevity and less frequency of heart disease. Volunteers may be at a lower risk for memory loss, too. The social interaction can significantly [reduce the progress of Alzheimer's](#) and other types of dementia. Happier and healthier life? Count me in.

5. Gives purpose

As people get older, they experience a higher risk for isolation. Volunteering combats that statistic by adding a sense of purpose to your life. The same goes for people with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental illnesses. No matter who you are, there are plenty of ways to give your life new meaning by helping others.

6. Combats stress

Volunteering goes beyond just being something fun to do; it decreases stress, too. Studies on the [“Happiness Effect”](#) of volunteering show that you become happier the more you volunteer. When you assist others, your body releases dopamine in the brain, which has a positive effect on how you feel. Volunteers also experience lower levels of depression.

7. Gives a good example

Volunteering as a family is a great way to teach important lessons to your children. Kids are always learning from the example you set for them, so make sure it’s a good one! You can show the impact of volunteering through your actions. By giving back to the community, you can lay the foundation for service in the years to come.

Volunteering doesn’t just have to inspire kids, either! You can share your experiences through programs like [Reward Volunteers](#), which lets you connect with other volunteers, find new opportunities and win prizes for your community service. Through sharing your service, you can inspire others. Bringing smiles to other volunteers will bring one to you, too.

8. Teaches new skills

Live a little! Volunteering gives you the opportunity to explore new skills and interests that you might not get to enjoy otherwise. You can broaden your horizons while helping others at the same time. If you’re looking to change things up a little, you can also try out a new job or role without having to commit to something long-term. Volunteering gives you the inside scoop on how some organizations operate, and it can hook you up with some helpful references if you’re serious about making a job switch.

From improving your physical well-being to boosting your mindset, volunteering does a world of good. Most times, you can see the impact of giving your time right off the bat.

If you haven’t gotten your start in volunteerism, there’s no time like the present. Don’t know where to begin? The Reward Volunteers Program can help with that. You can connect with others and find volunteer opportunities in your area, making your first step in to volunteering as easy as pie.

With all the health perks associated with volunteering, there’s really no reason why you shouldn’t give it a shot. By helping improve your community, you’re also helping yourself. It’s a win-win! Once you get in the swing of things, you’ll be a happy and healthy volunteer in no time.



This letter arrived in our president's inbox recently- and the and the executive decided to share it because of the opportunity to use your professional skills that are so highly valued. Please contact Jackie Kinder to receive your application form and any information you require.



Hi Mary Lou, I am delighted to e-meet you. As Andrea (Mandy) has mentioned, I coordinate the Childcan VTP and EYP (Early Years Program). I'm sure that Andrea has told you that Childcan is a wonderful organization that supports the families of childhood cancer children who have been diagnosed at the London Children's Hospital.

I am a retired elementary school teacher/principal from TVDSB and I started this volunteer program 4 years ago. We now help children from pre-school to grade 10 across southwestern Ontario, who have been referred by the hospital. Basically, the child and tutor meet once a week, for an hour or so, usually after school and usually in the family home. The family and tutor set up a schedule that is meant to be flexible for all. Some of our tutors offer some extra help over the summer months, and some tutors go away for part of the winter...it all works.

Our tutors are all teachers--retired, occasional or students from the Faculties of Ed, or ECEs or EAs for our younger ones. Some of our kids just need some extra help catching up with what they have missed during treatment, while others have very specialized needs as a result of their cancer and treatment and require ongoing support.

The biggest challenge of the program is finding volunteer tutors. I have reached out to RTO and RWTO organizations, the Faculties of Ed and the colleges, and to Optimist organizations when the need arises. I have occasionally had a tutor for a gr. 9 or 10 student who is a 3rd or 4th year Western math and sciences student to help with math and organizational skills, because I was unable to find a teacher. I have advertised in local papers with some success. (this is costly!)

Although the VTP and EYP are volunteer-driven, Childcan can reimburse for resources and pay for mileage where applicable. It always amazes me the many wonderful volunteers who volunteer their time.

Mary Lou, I would appreciate any help or suggestions in finding more tutors for our kids. At any given time I may have 20-30 kids receiving some extra help and I never know when I will receive a new referral. I often have a waiting list, particularly in London. I have attached more info and an application form FYI, and I would be happy to come and speak to your organization and/or provide pamphlets for a group.

Jackie Kinder

519 680 7182

E-mail: info@childcan.com

www.childcan.com

Volunteers don't necessarily have the time they just have the heart.

Things Not to Do When Renting a Car

Renting a car is such a common part of the travel experience that you'd think the process would be straightforward and transparent—yet somehow it is anything but. Many travelers aren't sure how to rent a car without making a few common mistakes. Do I need to buy additional insurance? What about paying to refuel the car? I hear horror stories about phony damage claims; should I be worried? No one is around to inspect the car with me; is that OK? Can I drive into another country? Do I need all the extras they offer me at the rental counter? These questions come up pretty much every time someone rents a car. Again, anything but straightforward.

Among all your options, there are some things you don't need to do, or even should not do, when renting a car. Below are a few of them.

Prepaying for Gasoline

Prepaid gasoline charges appeal to the desire for simplicity while traveling, and also to concerns about being late for flights, as every few minutes added to the trip to the airport create more risk for arriving too late to board. As airport security has added considerable time to this process, rental companies have come up with new options for car refueling, and are giving them the hard sell at the rental desk.

Unless you are completely sure you will return the tank empty, or you have a pre-dawn flight that would make it worth the money not to have to refuel yourself, don't fall for this one. Even the option where the company charges you only for fuel you actually use is tipped aggressively in the rental agency's favor because the cost of having them refuel your car is almost always higher than the cost of doing it yourself. To beat the rap on this one, don't make the next mistake:

Failing to Check on Your Way Out for a Place to Refuel on Your Way Back

The best time to find a place to refuel your vehicle is immediately after you pick it up. As you are driving away from the airport or rental agency, take note of the local gas stations, and make a plan to return to the most easily accessible or best-priced of them at the end of your rental. The neighborhoods around airports can be confusing and unfamiliar, so you don't want to be driving in circles looking for a gas station as your flight time approaches. Figure this out on your way out, when you are not pressed for time.

Purchasing Insurance, Reason No. 1: Your Own Auto Insurance Covers You

Before accepting this one at face value, it should be emphasized that auto insurance policies can vary considerably, so you will want to check with your own insurer directly. If you have the minimum legally permissible coverage, it may not include coverage for rental cars—whereas if you have what companies call “full coverage,” it almost certainly does, at least in your home country. Call or email your insurer to find out.

In general, the rule of thumb is that the coverage you have for your main vehicle extends to your rental vehicle, because the rental is considered a replacement vehicle under the policy. So if you have comprehensive coverage on your own car, your policy would also give you comprehensive coverage for the rental vehicle.

Most policies will cover you even if the rental car is a “better” or more valuable car than your own car, so you don't have to worry if you get an upgrade or rent a much better car than the one you insure at home. Note, however, that an accident in a rental car will typically raise your rates if you have to make a claim on your own insurance policy.

Purchasing Insurance, Reason No. 2: Your Credit Card Covers the Rest

Anything your own car insurance does not cover, it is likely that your [credit card](#) will. In some cases the credit card coverage is as good as or better than your auto insurance; in others it is intended to be secondary insurance to help cover anything your auto insurance does not.

Of course, you will need to pay for your car rental using that card; just having a qualifying credit card does not give you any protection.

Ignoring One Possible Caveat: “Loss of Use” Insurance

When a rental car is damaged, “loss of use” charges are applied to cover the potential revenue lost when the vehicle is off the road for repairs. This is typically charged in the amount of a day’s rental for that vehicle, and most auto insurance companies do not cover this fee. Many credit cards do, however; American Express, MasterCard, and Visa all offer “loss of use” coverage with rentals paid for with some of their cards. Check the terms and conditions in advance to make sure.

Ignoring Potential Offers for Upgrades

In the past, I’ve recommended reserving a low-priced car and then inquiring about upgrades at the rental desk. This works best at busy times when the garage is running low on its cheapest vehicles, and may offer you free or very affordable upgrades to a larger car class due to inventory management issues. In most cases, the desk agent has considerable discretion in setting upgrade rates, so if he or she asks if you are interested in a larger car, respond that it depends on the price; you might find yourself in a bigger and better car at minimal additional cost.

Failing to check for AAA, AARP, Reward Program, or Other Discounts

Many membership programs establish relationships with car rental companies as a member perk. These include travel organizations like AAA, airline frequent flyer programs, age-specific organizations like the AARP, and even some sports- or hobby-focused groups. Rental car discounts are typically listed on the organization’s website; you are already paying membership dues, so have a look before booking, and you could find a great deal.

Making Too cursory an inspection upon departure

When you pick up your car, check it inside and out for anything that could potentially be considered damage before you drive away. Look for scratches, scuffs, loose parts, and working power windows and mirrors.

Keep an eye out for problems both small and big; the tendency is to take a quick walk around the car looking for scratches and blemishes, thinking that big problems would have already been noticed, but this is not always the case. I once rented a car with a loose back bumper that the car rental company had not noticed previously. If I hadn’t caught this before we left the garage and an inspector had seen it later, I would have been held completely responsible.

Your best protection here: Take photos or a video of a slow walk around the car, and “kick the tires,” so to speak.

Leaving Final Inspection to Chance

Recently, the procedure of returning cars has come to resemble checking out of a hotel, where you leave your keycard on the night table and head out the lobby door with only a wave to the front desk. Car rental returns have taken on a similar feel; as often as not, you follow signs to the back of a row of recently returned cars, take out your stuff, leave the key in the car, and walk away without speaking to anyone directly. If it feels unsettling just to leave the car without an agent checking it over, it should; the most serious complaints about car rental companies in recent years have been disputes over damage claims. If no attendant is present at dropoff (and sometimes even when there is), the dispute later becomes your word against theirs.

Again, your best protection here is to take photos or a video of a slow walk around the car.

This article appeared in “Smarter Travel”, a newsletter that carries terrific ideas about travel safety, costs, and destination ideas. Its author is Ed Hewett.

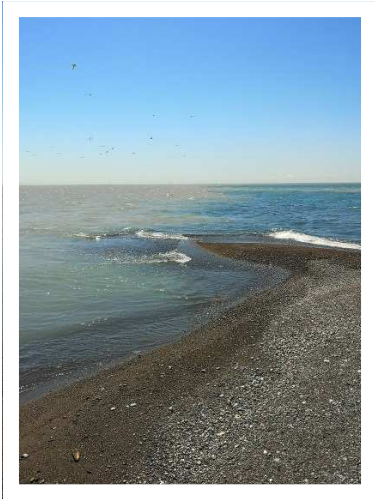
Two more hints from your newsletter editor:

1. Milk those memberships. This spring I got free second driver option just because of my Costco membership
2. A beau of my daughter’s worked for one of the largest North American car rental companies. He assured me that the real profits made by these companies were in selling the cars after minimal use. He encouraged me to bargain like crazy for upgrades, perks, and additions- the company can afford it!



Point Pelee

By joe Wilson



My wife and I love to travel, but have kept it domestic, making a point of visiting as much of our beautiful and richly varied country as possible: so far, all ten provinces plus the wonderful North-West Territories. We used to travel a bit to the US, mostly to visit relatives, but will not set foot there with the current government in place.

Next month we will visit Iceland for three weeks, my first foray off the North American continent in 52 years, and my wife's first ever – more on that trip in future newsletters.

We also try not to miss the many intriguing places to visit closer to home, such as the wonderful Point Pelee National Park, one of our country's great treasures. This May we visited there for the third time, at the height of the birding season, when the park is full of chirping birds and chirping retired people toting amazingly long-lensed cameras.

Birders are an interesting group. They are fanatically dedicated to their hobby (calling? obsession?). Like all fanatics, they are incredibly focused and committed. They are also very positive and selfless in their pursuit of avian transcendence. They co-operate with each other, are fully respectful and supportive of our natural environment, are models of positive citizenry. I'll never join their ranks, but I respect them, and, in my decidedly amateur way, really do like being surrounded by birds.

Although Point Pelee was established as a national park in 1918, it remained for decades a place of farming, commercial fishing, cottage life and permanent residency. Parks Canada bought up land, instituted conservation programs and gradually worked to return the area to its original state. The last cottagers were bought out in the 1970's, and by then the Caldwell First Nation had been forcibly removed from the park. Although there was some compensation for its displaced inhabitants, this still remains a controversial aspect of creating National Parks: to create a natural resource for all Canadians, the inhabitants, through no fault of their own, must be evicted.

Now, there are no permanent residents in Point Pelee. The only structures are Parks Canada buildings, including a wonderfully informative Visitors Centre. The area is being brought as close as possible to its original state.

There is one group camping site, but no individual camping sites. Recently Parks Canada has built 24 Otentiks, a hybrid of a large tent and an a-frame cabin. They can be rented for \$120 per night, year round. This is the only way, other than the group camping area, to stay in the park itself, though there are hotels in nearby Leamington.

My wife and I used to camp a lot, enjoying the opportunity to live in nature in a low-key, self-sufficient way. But

now, the seven decades old bones have rebelled. Our last tent camping was a few years ago at Florillon National Park in New Brunswick. We had set up our tent and dining shelter in our usual diligent and secure way. But, the region suffered its largest ever one day rainfall during our visit. Soaked and discouraged, we had to flee the deluge and sleep overnight on the floor of the open-to-the-public recreation building. The next day we demanded an upgrade to an Otentik. They are typically heated, supplied with electricity, tables and chairs, a gas barbecue and all necessary kitchen ware. They sleep up to six on comfortable foam mattresses. They have no water, but comfort centres with flush toilets, dish-washing facilities and showers are close by. For detail about the Point Pelee otentiks:

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/on/pelee/activ/otentik>.





So, our camping now is glamping: gl(amorous c)amping: Otentiks, cabins, yurts – whatever. Much more comfortable (and dry!) – but still set in our great Canadian outdoors. At Point Pelee we have our electric cooler (with food and beer), sufficient wine, all the comforts. We set up our satellite radio, and are warm, cosy AND in the middle of the quiet natural wonders the park offers.

There's much more than birds at Pelee. There are many groomed and accessible hiking trails of varying lengths, including a boardwalk out into the large central marsh. There are lakes in the marsh offering wonderful canoeing, though this time the water level was so high we had no sloping beach

from which we could safely launch. Getting in to a canoe from a dock is only for the young and coordinated. For people of my vintage it is really just a way to lose all dignity by taking an unplanned plunge.

The point itself is fascinating. The most southerly place in mainland Canada, it is constantly changing its shape from year to year. There are dangerous currents, as attested to by a sign detailing the unfortunate death a few years ago of an overly intrepid sixteen year old. You can see Pelee Island (also worth a visit) and the United States. At the right time, you can find yourself surrounded by waves of migrating monarch butterflies. It's quite magical! We haven't yet visited in the winter, but the otentiks are warm and comfortable...

Visiting a place like Point Pelee provides a much-needed respite from our hectic, screwed up world. But even here there are political realities. A lot of money could be made out of a place like Point Pelee. Think of what private profit and unrestricted development have done to irretrievably cheapen Niagara Falls. Only a government, working for the good of all its citizens, and not to make profit or to restrict the beauties of the country to the wealthy, privileged few, would ever create a national park. The careful restoration at Pelee, the unending devotion to conservation, the appreciation and support of our natural wildlife are contrary to the profit motives of corporations and the privileged elitism of the 1%.

Our Ontario provincial parks and conservation areas are also a precious resource. Do you trust the Ford government, and the moneyed interests they serve, to protect them? How soon will the FordCons announce cuts to our provincial parks, and open them to development and privatization? Will the next federal government protect and enhance our National Parks?

So, please do visit Point Pelee, and our other national and provincial parks, and enjoy the wonders of outdoors Canada. But while you're there, put some thought to how to make sure our grandchildren have the same blessed, wonderful opportunity.





10 Sustainability Tips to Help Save the Planet and Save You Money

If you've been paying attention to recent news headlines about the state of our environment, it's clear that our planet needs help. Yet, for many of us, the concept of sustainable living can seem daunting and costly. It's easy to get caught up in thinking of 'living green' as being a luxury, but this isn't always the case. In fact, there are many eco-friendly changes that you can easily make to your lifestyle that will actually save you money in the long run – a win-win for the planet and your bank account! Here are 10 ways that you can live more sustainably, while also saving money:

Unplug electronics. Did you know that even when your electronics are turned off they are still using energy? Unplug all electronics when not in use to conserve power and save on your energy bills.

Wash clothes in cold water and hang to dry. Washing your clothes in cold water will not only help you to reduce your energy use, but it will also help to extend the life of your clothing. By making the simple switch to cold-water washing and air-drying, you'll reduce your carbon footprint and see the difference on your next utility bill.

Avoid running a half-full dishwasher. Doing your part to help the environment can really be a change as easy as this. Try to run your dishwasher only when full. Also, avoid using disposable dishes when possible.

Seal drafty windows and doors. Use weather stripping or caulk around windows and doors to prevent energy loss and better manage your home's temperature. Not only will this reduce your energy consumption (and the cost of your energy bill), but a sustainability-focused home renovation like this could also be eligible for a provincial energy efficient tax credit.

Turn up the temperature in your fridge. Many Canadians have their refrigerators set to a temperature much lower than it needs to be. This results in an unnecessary use of electricity and can also cause food to spoil sooner. To avoid excessive electrical use, your refrigerator's temperature should be around 1.6 °C. Turning your fridge up to the recommended temperature not only helps to lower your electrical bill, it could also help reduce food waste.

Bring your own bag. Many grocery stores charge for the purchase of plastic grocery bags, which can add up after a while. Save money and cut down on your plastic waste by bringing your own reusable bags. To make it even easier to follow through on this sustainability tip, keep a reusable bag in your car, briefcase, backpack or handbag so you're never without one.

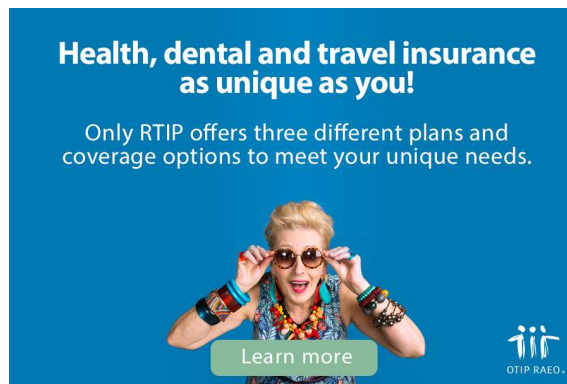
Purchase second-hand when possible. Before making a purchase, ask yourself, "Is this something I need to purchase new?" If not, try to find a gently used alternative at a second-hand store, garage sale or online marketplace. You'll cut down on unnecessary waste while saving yourself a few dollars in the process.

Make a meal plan. 'Meal planning' has recently become a buzzworthy topic in the health and food industries, and for good reason. Taking the time at the beginning of each week to plan your meals results in less food waste, less temptation to buy unnecessary items and less excuses to purchase expensive take-out. Meal planning will save you time, save money on your grocery bill and reduce your food and plastic waste.

Drive less. Start by looking for other transportation options to replace your morning commute. Organizing a car pool with colleagues, planning a public transportation route and walking or biking are all environmentally-friendly options that will help you avoid gas-wasting rush hour traffic.

Conserve fuel when driving. If you do have to drive, there are simple steps you can follow to reduce your carbon footprint and save on fuel costs. Gently accelerating, coasting to decelerate, maintaining proper tire pressure, turning off your engine when parked and avoiding idling are all things you can do to reduce your fuel emissions and be a more sustainable driver. If you're in the market for a new vehicle, consider a fuel-efficient car that will save you money on gas and could qualify you for an insurance discount. Be sure to talk to your insurance broker.

We all have the power to make small changes today that help to ensure a sustainable future for the leaders of tomorrow. If you'd like to inquire about insurance discounts for hybrid vehicles, contact your OTIP broker today at [1-833-615-9326](tel:1-833-615-9326) to discuss your insurance options.



**Health, dental and travel insurance
as unique as you!**

Only RTIP offers three different plans and coverage options to meet your unique needs.

Learn more

OTIP RAEQ

Choice of three health plans, with different drug coverage limits and the flexibility to change plans as your needs change.

One easy online application, and no extra fees.

Option of having two single plans if spousal coverage needs are different.

95 days of deluxe travel coverage.

60 days to join without medical or retroactive premiums. Don't pay for a gap in coverage.