

Pefferlaw THE POST

February 10, 2012
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Serving the Greater Pefferlaw Area and all Georgina Communities

Town pulls plug on law suit but taxpayers still pay legal costs

In a closed meeting of Georgina council on Thursday, February 2, town council unanimously resolved to discontinue a defamation law suit against former Leisure Services Director John McLean. "Today Town Council decided to discontinue our law suit as the Town's intent has been clouded by some misunderstandings," Mayor Grossi said. He said the lawsuit was never a personal suit between himself and Mr. McLean but was a unanimous council initiative. "The Town's legal counsel advised that the suit be in the Mayor's name as the most senior elected official," he said.

A by-law which was enacted by council to pay the legal costs of the suit by taxpayers, was not rescinded during the February 2 meeting. As a result, taxpayers will assume all legal costs until the claim is officially settled.

In his statement to the public after announcing the decision

to drop the suit, Mr. Grossi said many constituents had questioned the potential expense of the suit.

"We listened to your concerns and we agreed to move on," he said.

The defendant in the case, Mr. McLean, said he was pleased with the outcome of the meeting on Thursday.

"I am very pleased that the public rose up and fought for what was right. They weren't necessarily fighting for me, but what was right," he said. "And I appreciate it."

He said he wasn't happy about the last paragraph in the Mayor's statement which suggested that Mr. McLean should have made his feeling known at the appropriate time when he was the Director of Leisure Services.

"Anyone who knows me knows that if I disagree with something, I would have said something," he said.

Margaret Jordan, a councillor
Continued on page 11.

Ted Petkoff—oldest person in world to undergo hip replacement surgery

Two weeks before his 108th birthday on January 31, Sutton's own "amazing" Ted Petkoff underwent total hip replacement surgery and is now believed to be the oldest person in the world to have done so.

At 108 years old, Mr. Petkoff is currently recuperating at South Lake Hospital where he is preparing for rehabilitation exercises to help him start walking on his own.

"He is walking with a walker and eating well," said his niece Vesela Petkovski. "The doctor said he is amazing."

Lily Wauters, a 101-year-old British woman, is recorded by the Guinness Book of World Records as the oldest person to have a total hip replacement in 2007. And an internet search reveals that a 107 year-old New Delhi woman had a partial hip replace-

ment in 2011.

Ted has lived in Georgina for more than 30 years. Up to the time of his surgery, he was still

driving his own car and is a passionate golfer.

He moved from Macedonia in 1930 and worked during the depression at odd jobs such as shining shoes, washing dishes and working on the railroad. He later started his own business in the food service industry and became the proprietor of "Amazing Ted's" restaurant in Toronto. In the past Ted has shared his secret to longevity.

"Live right, take care of yourself, lots of

love and stay active."

Last year, Ted was given the honour of raising the Macedonian flag at an anniversary celebration honouring Macedonia's independence from Yugoslavia. "It was the best day of my life," he said.



Ted celebrates his 108th birthday with Councilor Ken Hackenbrook after receiving a signed photo of astronaut and South Lake Hospital president, Dave Williams.



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Letter to the Editor

Many of you have read in this publication or been told that I had filed a personal lawsuit funded by the Town of Georgina against an employee of the Town John McLean the one time Director of our Leisure Services Department who is on a long term leave of absence. You need to know that the information that you received is incorrect.

The lawsuit was never a personal lawsuit between Mr. McLean and myself. As the highest ranking elected official in the Town of Georgina and the CEO of the Corporation, your Town Council was advised that the proper way of filing a lawsuit on behalf of the Corporation was to have it filed in my name and it was decided unanimously to use that advice in filing the lawsuit.

The issue that was in question was whether a Town employee (Mr. McLean) The Director of the Leisure Services Department lied when he wrote letters to the editor that stated he was required to write reports that were contrary to what he believed because he was directed to do so by either myself or another elected member of Georgina Town Council.

The Council of the Town of Georgina along with discussions with members of our senior management team agreed that Mr. McLean had lied about his responsibilities and that was not the way Town business was handled.

In order to protect the integrity of our business and the employees of the Town of Georgina who write reports as part of their regular duties we sought advice from the Town's solicitors. We were told that we should formally ask for a retraction of Mr. McLean's comments. We did so and Mr. McLean refused to retract his false comments.

We were then advised that the only other way to seek a retraction was to launch a lawsuit and our solicitors' advice was that it should be in the Mayor's name as he is the CEO.

Town Council voted unanimously to do so. Once the suit was launched and there was no initial response from Mr.

McLean and we reviewed the possibility for extended delays by Mr. McLean and the potential for excessive costs we decided to withdraw the suit. Perhaps we got poor advice or the Administration at the Town should have disciplined Mr. McLean in some other way. We listened to our constituents and we responded immediately. However the fact remains that Mr. McLean lied about his responsibilities and he should be held accountable for his statements.

As an elected official I know I am subject to scrutiny and criticism and I have never shied away from either.

The public has a right to that dialogue and I welcome it. If the ROC or any other project is a failure or a success I as always will take full responsibility for my involvement.

However I will never accept and I should never accept on behalf of every resident of this Town, a Head of a Department paid with your tax dollars who is involved in millions of dollars of projects blatantly lying about his involvement.

Robert Grossi, Mayor.

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No complacency in Georgina...

First and foremost... congratulations to the residents of Georgina for speaking out and taking action. Pierre Elliott Trudeau wrote me a letter once and said, "there is no other alternative but to have faith in the people." Boy, was he right in Georgina's case. Way to go! In my opinion, apathy and complacency are the harbingers of deceit in a democracy. And I was so delighted to see so many people stand up and fight for what they believed in.

The official reason given for discontinuing the defamation lawsuit between "plaintiff" Rob Grossi and "defendant" John McLean was "the Town's intent has been clouded by some misunderstandings." I wonder what that means. Does it mean that the people of Georgina got things wrong when they stampeded en masse as digital ambassadors on Facebook and various other internet blogs?

In addition to that question, I have some other overriding queries about this entire fiasco. First, Mr. Grossi said in his statement that this "was never a personal suit" but one endorsed unanimously by council. I stumbled across this quote which suggests that the courts will not allow governments to sue for defamation:

Corbett of the Superior Court of Justice for Ontario wrote that: "no government may bring an action in defamation... Everyone should be free to criticize democratically elected governments, be they federal, provincial or local,

without risking a defamation action...

Second, if council tied this suit up in a bow with Mr. Grossi's name on it so they could use public funds to sue for defamation, doesn't that contravene the statement above?

Third, if it was never a private suit, then why was it necessary for Mr. Grossi to declare a conflict of interest in two closed meetings?

Fourth, in the statement Mr. Grossi read after council decided to drop the suit, he said: "we listened to your concerns and we agreed to move on".

If they were listening, then why wasn't the by-law rescinded? It seems to me that is what most people were upset about.

Fifth, if John McLean is still an "employee" of the town as Mr. Grossi stated in his statement, then why wouldn't his legal bills be paid for from the town's insurance policy which covers employees who are being sued?

Now, although the suit has been dropped, it doesn't sound like the matter is quite over. I've heard that a Keswick woman will make a deposition at the February 13 council meeting where she will demand an investigation and ask council to rescind the indemnification by-law. Now that should be interesting especially if Georgina taxpayers turn out en masse for that one. I think I'm going to start calling this mess "Georginagate".

Karen Wolfe, Editor.





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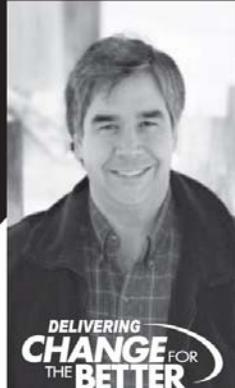
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Library Lego fun in Pefferlaw

And...a good time was had by all! Local kids and their parents spent a lovely Sunday afternoon at the Pefferlaw Library on February 5 attending Family Lego Build. This free, one hour program gave parents and their children an opportunity to work together to build the next Lego super-structure.



Top Left: Bryce Rogers, 5. Top Right: Aevan McLeod, 6.
Bottom Left: Dallas Arsenault, 5. Bottom Right: Callum McLeod, 3.



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Tennyson Tidbits



Congratulations to Bethany Jamieson on the occasion of her 80th Birthday. Family and friends attended a celebration on Sat. Feb. 4 at the Church of the Nazarene in Pefferlaw. Above, Bethany holds a certificate from the Town and poses with her son Jim & daughters Brenda and Sherrill.

Congratulations to Donald Knights of Sutton-by-the-Lake upon winning a \$200 gift certificate during Home Hardware's Groundhog Day party.

Cheers to Karen Freels at South Paw for raising \$327 in support of the Georgina Animal Shelter over the holidays. And, congrats to Linda Sutherland who won the gift basket raffle.

I heard from Nancy Shepherd in Pefferlaw that a flock of red-breasted robins spent a couple of days rooting around for food on her lawn during the last week of January. WOW!!!

And it seems those aren't the only birds being viewed by residents these days. Paul Harpley was joined by a number of bird

watchers who have been touring south Lake Simcoe to photograph bald eagles, greater white-fronted geese, American coot and merlins. Mr. Harpley reported that 56 species of birds were identified during the Sutton Christmas Bird Count.



Cheers to the staff at Cedarvale Lodge in Keswick who were recognized by Specialty Care president Lois Cormak for qualifying as the highest rated crew within the company.

Grandma and Grandpa want to send out Happy Birthday greetings to Coulton MacRae who will celebrate on Feb. 12. Their best wishes are also extended to Hunter MacRae whose birthday is on Feb. 16.

Ruth Reid reports everyone had a wonderful time at the Robbie Burns roast beef dinner at the Sutton Legion on January 28. On top of all the pomp and ceremony, attendees were entertained by singers, Scottish dancers and the York Region Police Concert Band. If you missed, plan for next year.

Happy Birthday to Brook Marchand who turned 13 on February 6. Cheers, Brook.

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Second annual Perchin for MS event

Avid outdoorsman and advocate for multiple sclerosis sufferers Doug Poirier will host the second annual Perchin for MS ice fishing event at Sibbald Point Provincial Park on Saturday, March 3, 2012.

Mr. Poirier is not only an advocate trying to raise awareness and money to help find a cure for this debilitating disease, he was diagnosed with MS in 2009.

"This year's event will be the place to be," Mr. Poirier said. "Local dignitaries, pro fishermen and many families and friends from all over Ontario and the U.S will be in attendance trying to win some of the thousands of dollars in cash and prizes."

New additions to the event will include the support of ARGO amphibious vehicles, which will be on hand to assist those with physical disabilities to get

out on the ice.

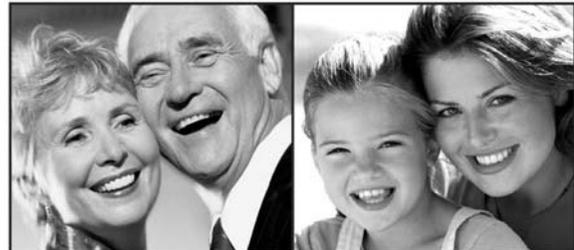
"We will be doing everything we can to make sure that mobility doesn't restrict anyone from being a part of this event," he said.

A \$23,000 ARGO is also up for grabs for the angler who can catch a perch that beats the provincial record of 2.42 lbs. Other prizes include a Hummingbird fish finder to the winner of a "Hummingbird Mystery Weight Contest" and a one-week fishing trip to Timmins will go to the winner of the Early Bird Draw.

Tickets are available at DW & Son's Bait and Tackle, Southpaw Trading Post, D.C. Marine and the Pefferlaw Post.

Tickets cost \$40 for a team, family or single angler and the event runs from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. when the weigh-in, charity BBQ and auction will follow.

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Town negotiating with SSCBB to transfer assets

The Town of Georgina is negotiating with South Shore Community Broadband (SSCBB) to transfer over \$1 million worth of their assets to the town's balance sheet.

Since SSCBB began erecting towers to offer Georgina residents and businesses a wireless broadband connection to the internet in 2005, they have incurred approximately \$1 million of debt—much of which is currently held by the Town of Georgina.

According to SSCBB board member Andrew Sibbald, the company which is now known as GeorginaConnects, currently supplies internet connections to over 300 Georgina customers. "We don't really know what will transpire here because we have only had two meetings with the town," Mr. Sibbald said.

As a not-for-profit venture, SSCBB (GeorginaConnects) has erected close to nine 140 ft. towers throughout Georgina. To fi-

Town of Georgina's SSCBB Exposure	Amount
Capital Loans	\$701,401.66
Rural connections ineligible claims	76,525.25
Interest on Letter of Credit for Rural Connections	17,079.52
Cash Receipt—SSCBB Repayment	(29,000.00)
Unpaid Interest on Loans	20,315.30
Operating Loans and Cash Advances	199,675.79
TOTAL DUE TO THE TOWN OF GEORGINA	\$985,997.52

nance this infrastructure, the company has repeatedly gone before council to request and receive funding. The Town of Georgina is a major customer of the technology with 16 user locations throughout the town and is the company's largest creditor with \$986,000 outstanding. Should the town acquire the assets of SSCBB, they would indirectly become the service provider to customers although Internet Lake Simcoe (ILS) provides the services as a reseller and has a contract to do so with SSCBB.

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Haircuts for Hospice

For the third year in a row, Amy Moskalyk and her employees at Allure Hair Creations in Keswick donated their time to open the salon on Sunday, February 5 and cut hair for Hospice Georgina.

"Hospice Georgina is a great cause and they help out the community. There are so many people in the community who use Hospice," she said. Ms. Moskalyk and her staff served a host of customers during six hours and raised over 780.00. The salon has raised more than \$2,600 in three years.



Allure Hair Creations proprietor Amy Moskalyk (right) gives Hospice Georgina board member Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux (left) a new do during a fundraising event to raise money for Hospice Georgina.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY...The Pefferlaw & District Lioness Club is so proud of our community for the great support received for the **CHRISTMAS ANGELS PROJECT** in December. We wish to thank the following for their generosity:

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Judy Butler	Pefferlaw & District Lions Club
Club 55, Pefferlaw	Pefferlaw Post—Karen Wolfe
Debbie & Rick Crook	Port Bolster Community Hall
Garnet Machine Inc. (Robert Card)	Marilyn & Ron Reid
Giant Tiger, Sutton	Paul Rothfels & Margaret Almack
Diane Golding, Pefferlaw Chiropractic	Mary Scott
Georgina Auto Parts	Terry & Denise Sheedy—Living
Joanne Grozdanovski & Scholastic Books	Landscapes
Nancy & Albert Henderson	Allan & Edna Slater
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Paul and Sandra James	Shepherd's Equipment Sales
John and Carole Kennedy	Valhalla Travel & Tours
Sid Lamb Limited	Dave & Debbie Van den Brink
John Leinster & Lynn Fairweather	Nancy Walker
Leinster	Joan Wehby, The Paws Spa
Lloyd's Refrigeration Services	Faye Wilkinson
725561 Ontario Ltd. (Maxi Mart)	Dawn Zimmerman

ALSO A THANK YOU to Jane Clyde for her assistance, to Glen & Howard at Giant Tiger, Sutton, to Steve Askew of Steve's No Frills for his donations and for co-ordinating and assembling food boxes and to Barb Scott and the Port Bolster Community Hall Board for their generous use of the hall.

Ground Hog Day in Georgina



Well, it looks like the ro-
dent vote is in from across
Georgina...four more weeks
of winter—and that’s not
bad considering the winter
we haven’t had yet.
“Sutton Sammy”, “Keswick
Buck” and “Jackson’s Point
Jack” all predicted an early
spring on Ground Hog Day.
*Photos: (left) Sutton Home
Hardware celebrated Sut-
ton Sammy’s prediction and
customers Bob Morris (left)
and Bob Swain (right)
(photo bottom left) sample
some cake at the store.
(Bottom right) Kelly Brown
(left) from Cedarvale Lodge
serves Bonnie and Helmut
Keberer during a free
Ground Hog Day breakfast.*



Trail conditions cancel dog sled races

Although poor trail conditions
forced the cancellation of the
actual dog sled races at Can-
nington this year, the Winter
Festival portion of the event
went on as planned.
Over the three-day event from
January 27 to 29 attendees
enjoyed a concert by
WhosArmy, sleigh rides, ice
sculpting, games for the kid-
dies and a slew of vendors
offering a variety of crafts and
refreshments.

(Photos) (Above Left): Two-
year-old Kailyn Stanway from
Bowmanville has her own
team of sled dogs. (Above
Right) Emma Alneida, 12
from Cannington dives into
the Pancake Breakfast.
(Bottom) Dave Thirgood (left)
and Adam Thirgood (right) put
the finishing touches on their
ice sculpting entries.



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Citizens want Black River dredged

Frank Sebo, a business owner and home owner along the Black River in Sutton, addressed the Committee of the Whole on Monday, February 6 to ask council to consider spending \$50,000 from the 2012 budget to dredge the mouth of the Black River in Sutton.

"The Black River is a key waterway in Georgina," he told council. "However, due to sand build-up at the mouth of the river, it has become virtually impassable to watercraft. Re-dredging at the mouth of the Black River is urgently required to restore lake access and navigability."

Armed with a host of letters from business leaders and the Georgina Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Sebo discussed the positive impact the river would have on the local economy if it were safe to navigate in the summer.

Mary Kay of the Downtown Sutton Merchants Association wrote: "We have always been noted as a tourist area and if boats could come up the river to our town it would promote the many businesses in Sutton and the surrounding areas."

Mr. Sebo told council that the Town of Georgina paid to have

the river dredged 10 years ago and asked them to take the lead again to ensure lake access and safe passage.

"If the roads are blocked with snow, the Town plows them. When the grass grows too long in our parks, the Town cuts it. Likewise, when navigation is inhibited on one of our key waterways, the town should act," he said.

In an interview with Mr. Sebo after the meeting, he said the dredging of the Black River should be as economically viable as spending \$150,000 every year to clear weeds from Cook's Bay and buy signs for the ROC.

"How can they afford \$130,000 for signage for the ROC, but they can't afford \$50,000 to do this?," he asked.

Although the town has dredged the mouth of the river in the past, council questioned their jurisdiction and responsibility to do so and asked the CAO to investigate how similar issues were being handled by other municipalities around the lake. Her report is to be tabled prior to 2012 budget negotiations.

"You can bet if the town of Orillia had a problem like this they would be looking after it themselves," said Mr. Sebo.

Lioness sponsor Special Olympians



Benjamin Harding (left) and brother Jonathan (right) accept a \$1,000 donation from Pefferlaw Lioness president Terry Windsor. The money will help Benjamin and Jonathan, who are Ontario floor hockey gold medalists, bring home some hardware from the Special Olympics in St. Albert, Alberta. The boys fly out on Feb. 27 and will leave after the closing ceremony on Mar 3. Benjamin is a goalie and Jonathan plays forward.

Taxpayers still pay legal costs even though lawsuit dropped

Continued from page 1.

who was on town council at the time the tube and terrain park was being discussed said she remembers Mr. McLean speaking out at that time.

"He did raise the fact that there were other priorities, other than the tube and terrain park, that his department wanted to focus on at budget meetings," Ms. Jordan said. "With one of them being the YMCA."

Communication vehicles which residents used to voice their objections and mobilize against the decision to pay the legal costs with tax dollars were the internet and social media sites. Within days of traditional media outlets announcing the indemnification by-law, an electronic petition and a citizens' website were established. The digital petition spread like wildfire garnering over 400 signatures within days and constituents began mobilizing for a door-to-door campaign gathering hard copy signatures to quash the indemnification by-law. Mr. William McClure, a Keswick resident, created a Facebook page called Georgina Forum where hundreds of residents posted comments reflecting their feelings about the lawsuit and council's decision to use

tax dollars to pay for it. And, volunteers were lining up to lend their support—support which Mr. McClure says had an impact on council's decision to drop the suit.

"I am doing this because I believe that everything should be have been done above board."

Kristina Toomey, Keswick

"It think it had a huge impact because it validated how unpopular the decision was. Hundreds of people were coming together to talk about this and it was gaining momentum everyday," he said. Although the law suit against Mr. McLean has been dropped, citizens' groups are still demanding the by-law to pay legal costs be rescinded.

Kristina Toomey from Keswick is on the agenda for the council meeting on Monday, February 13 at 7:00 p.m. when she will make a deputation before council and ask them to rescind the indemnification by-law.

"We feel the mayor himself should be the one incurring those costs," she said. "He can try and hide it however he wants, but it is quite evident that this is a personal matter between he and John McLean. And, he has thrown everybody else under the bus with him."

Ms. Toomey also questioned why the Mayor did not declare a conflict of interest in closed sessions when the matter was being discussed.

"We are also going to ask for an investigation into those closed meetings," Ms. Toomey said.

"I am doing this because I believe that everything should be have been done above board. It should have been brought to the people first before they made a decision on anything."

In a statement from the Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Georgina Wianne Grant, she said, "While I can't speak for the Mayor's opinion, I can clearly say that it was council's position and continues to be council's position that the lawsuit was justifiably funded by the town as it was the integrity of the town council and staff that was being challenged."

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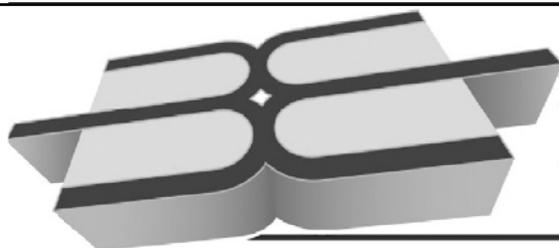
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Coming Events & Announcements

Don't forget to check out **SnoFest** at De La Salle Park on Saturday, February 11 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. This is a free, fun-filled day with many activities for the entire family. Snow or no snow—it will be fun.

The Sutton Legion is hosting a **Spring Fling** 50s-60s Dance on Sat. Feb. 11. Fun, food and music. Call (905) 722-3967.

The **Georgina Arts Centre** is hosting an opening reception on Sunday, February 12 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm to welcome an exhibit and show of work by local artists.

The **Georgina Arts Centre** is also hosting a Reel Gems movie night at the Gem Theatre in Keswick on

Thursday, February 23 where they will show the film "My Week With Marilyn". Call (905) 722-9587 for tickets.

The **York Regional Police Male Chorus**, a volunteer group representing the York Regional Police as a public relations vehicle since 1971, has started hosting a "new members" evening as part of their rehearsal every Monday until June 11. All interested men are invited to look for them in the "Seminar Room" located in the York Region Administrative Centre in Newmarket. They start at 7:30 pm and go until 9:30 pm. For information call (905) 727-9676.

Club 55 in Pefferlaw reminds all seniors of the Tuesday lunches on the first and

third Tuesday of the month. And don't forget their Bid Euchre tournament on Sat. Mar. 3.

Udora News and Events

The Annual General Meeting of the Udora Hall board is being held on Thursday, February 16, 7:00 pm at the Hall. Everyone is invited and new members are welcome from both York and Durham. If you are interested in becoming involved in the community and have fresh ideas for activities and events, this is the best place to be.

To address speculation regarding The Udora United Church, it is closed for the winter but will re-open in the spring on Easter Sunday at 11:00 am and everyone is invited to attend.

The Udora Leaskdale Lions have provided an ice pad at the hall and the outside lights are on until 9:00 pm.

IN MEMORIAM

Earl Leslie Heardman February 12, 2009

Look around your garden Lord
He won't be too hard to find
He has a heart that's full of love
And a face that's sweet and kind

Tell him that I love him
And when he turns and smiles
Put your arms around him
And hold him for awhile.

In loving memory
Your wife
Yvonne



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