Those lazy days of never-ending summer are here. The kids are psyched, the parents are panicked. Relax! Here's how everyone can have the...

By Naomi Buck, Jackie Davis, Anita Lahey, and Christine Sismondo

BEST SUMMER EVER!

Photography Daniel Ehrenworth

Is there a better place to spend summer than at the lake?

Having been blessed to grow up with family cottages, I take great pleasure in introducing the cottage experience to friends who did not. So I was delighted when a German friend of mine, Beate, who had no experience of cottages whatsoever, announced that she and her husband and daughter would be alighting upon our island for a visit.

On our first morning together, as we three adults sat overlooking a tranquil swath of islands and water, my two sons (three and five years old) and my friends' daughter (four) played on an outcrop of granite beneath us. Beate's husband, a successful software entrepreneur, drank deeply of the fresh air (and a beer) and pronounced that he had a business idea: an app that would chart children's whereabouts at a cottage and beep parents' cellphones if a child were approaching water or other hazards.

I didn't say what I was thinking—not on day one of a 10-day visit—but had I, it would have been "*Quatsch!*" (German for "nonsense"). If there's one thing that children should experience at a cottage, it's freedom—from school, schedules, and the overbearing supervision of parents and caregivers.

Middle-class urban children lead pretty intense lives. Gone are the days of climbing over backyard fences to play with neighbours; gone the amble to school under the protection of an older sibling (pretending not to know you); gone those loose after-school hours spent exploring ravines or the cavernous corners of someone else's basement. Today we have play dates blocked into

HALL OF FAME

We love technology. (A smartphone is just straight-up better than a box of crayons on a long car ride.) But the lake is the place for classics, like these time-tested toys and activities.
—Jackie Davis

USE POOL NOODLES!

An enthusiastic fist bump to whoever invented this multi-purpose floating wonder. What else can kids—and, c'mon now, adults—use for hours of waterlogged hilarity? Plus, noodle. Heh.

PUCKER UP YOUR TOES!

EAT HOT DOGS!

Kid friendly? Kid intended. Cookable over a campfire, hand-held, and completely appropriate drowned in ketchup. Don't get too bothered about what, exactly, is in them. (But it's mainly small cuts of meat, plus spices, water, and some curing agents. No lips. No eyeballs.)

SKIP STONES!

Whether or not you achieve multiple bounces, or even one, doesn't really matter. The fun is in searching for and finding those perfectly smooth, beautiful, flat disks—and then chucking them into the lake!

PROP STYLING: CATHERINE DOHERTY

cluttered family calendars, nanny vans and after-school bike-riding academies, French tutors and creative-movement classes. According to recent research from the University of Toronto and Ryerson University, one-fifth of grade five and six students in Toronto spend less than half an hour playing outside on weekdays. This shift in children's lives has broad implications. With doctors and scientists pointing to increases in childhood obesity, diabetes, and behavioural disorders, the structure of contemporary childhood has become a public policy concern.

There's no small irony in the fact that while we love our kids to death, we're depriving them of one of the richest aspects of our own childhoods: freedom. It's a function of the times. As people have fewer children, have them later in life, and then scramble to combine parenthood with careers, they have increasingly outsourced child care to third parties that operate under the banners of structure and safety. That's at parents' behest. If our kids are not with us, we at least need to know that they are safe, a concern that looms especially large if we don't have a whole slew of little ones. It's understandable. But left unchecked, the structured and safe regime casts a shadow that obscures, among other things, the precious commodity of free time and the essential state of being that's doing sweet nothing.

And this is where the cottage comes in. After all, it's the doing nothing aspect of summer that makes it so special. My fondest memories of childhood cottage summers are truly unspectacular. Lying belly down on the dock, one eye wedged between boards, inhaling wet cedar, and counting fish swimming below. Spending entire afternoons scouring bushes for 12 wild blueberries. Watching a thunderstorm approach from miles away. Scratching lichen off rocks and scabs off knees. Feeling the soles of my feet gradually transition to leather.

At the cottage, we could read deep into the night and sleep deep into the day. We could also play for hours on end. There were indoor games—cards, Monopoly, and hair salon—and outdoor sports galore. There were beauty pageants and diving contests and a whole catalogue of unsanctioned activities, from spying on skinny-dipping {*Continued on page 116*}

If you used to tie your infant to yourself with a length of rope every time you came within sight of water, hey, no judgment. What else were parents supposed to do? Regular PFDs just do not work on a human that weighs nine pounds and has no neck. Now there's Salus Marine's award-winning Bijoux vest.

BUST OUT THE BABY LIFEJACKET!

A place to learn the basics

Bestow upon youth your wisdom! Or at least a few standard cottage skills. This gives your offspring independence, and it gives *you* a break (fewer chores). Teach your kids how to:

Build a fire

"I don't think there are any skills that are too outlandish for kids to learn," says David Masters of Luna Adventures outfitters. Building a fire is especially kid-propriate because there's a payoff come nightfall: s'mores! Spider dogs! Acoustic guitar! Kids of all ages can help with this multi-step task by gathering kindling and balling up newspaper. They only need arms and the ability to walk. Teaching proper fire-building is also a chance to impart know-how—use dry logs with crisp bark; don't burn garbage—and proper fire safety. As Masters points out, "It's not just, 'Here's your Zippo lighter, go for it.' "

Paddle a canoe

Paddle Canada instructor Becky Mason was canoeing solo by age five or six. Dad Bill taught her by attaching a long line to the boat and letting her play around while safely connected to the dock. Kids don't even need a paddle; have them propel their craft with their hands or a bailer. You want your kids to get comfortable on the water. "There are lots of things you can do in a canoe," says Mason, who regularly plays Scrabble in hers. Combining canoeing and board games? Can't get more cottagey than that! (BTW, you can buy replacement Scrabble tiles through *hasbrotoyshop.com*.)

Maintain the boat

Don't dump the knowledge on them all at once. "You take a 12-year-old and say 'Today, you're going to learn about outboards,' and they'll just stare at you," says Brendan Keys, a cottager, the father of three, and the general manager at GA Checkpoint, a motorsport and marine dealer in Vancouver. But *do* involve them with maintenance right from the beginning, bit by bit: have them check the oil level, read the fuel gauge, or, heck, even squeeze the primer bulb. Everything counts. The point, says Keys, is to teach kids that, "if you want to play, you need to be involved in the maintenance. Or else it's 'Oh, that's somebody else's job.' "

Read a map, for crying out loud

Who taught the ancient geographer Ptolemy to make maps? Probably his parents. At the cottage. To school Luna Adventures' seven- and eight-year-olds in the art of navigation and map-reading, David Masters first takes them on a tour of the property and then has them draw a diagram of their surroundings. "They learn to pay attention to the landscape and trust their instincts." These skills will be incredibly handy when your GPS fails—or goes rogue in the robot apocalypse that the *Terminator* franchise keeps warning us about.

Bait a hook

When you're fishing with soft bait, you can't get around the ick factor. And then there's that hook. Maybe Junior's not ready to thread a wriggling critter onto a sharp instrument (or even cut the bait into bits beforehand—a smart strategy for baiting small hooks for small fish). You can at least pull out the rubber boots and the flashlight and teach him or her Worm-Finding 101. Go at night, after it rains, and look in soft, rich soil.—J.D.

Teach kids to plant a tree! Blipp the dock spider opposite to learn how


EVINRUDE
START YOUR
ENGINES!

You'll need a good stick. Keep the business end away from your hair and wash it every so often. (Ants.)

TOAST MARSH-MALLOWS!

READ, YOU KNOW, BOOKS!

Remember books? Or Archie comics? Or any words printed on paper?

A place to wonder at nature

Kids have a way of asking the big questions about the world around them. And parents don't always know the answers themselves. Until now!

Why do bats hang upside down?

If we tried hanging upside down in a bat cave or from a tree branch, our legs would get tired pretty fast. But bats are built somewhat in reverse from humans. While we typically use our five fingers to grab things, bats have five claws on each foot for grasping and just one claw on their thumbs. "It is much more secure for them to grab on with their toes," explains Robert Barclay, the head of biological sciences at the University of Calgary. There's another reason bats like to hang out so much. "Bat wings are attached all the way down to the ankle, so flying is much easier for them than walking or standing," says Barclay, meaning that most bats can't take off from the ground like a bird does. Rather, they fall into flight—which is way more efficient when you are hanging upside down. —*Christine Sismondo*

Why can you sometimes see the moon during the day?

Although we think of the moon as a nighttime thing, it actually spends roughly 12 hours a day *above* the horizon. The moon has no light of its own; it's only visible when reflecting sunlight. Here's where things get tricky. The moon orbits Earth about once a month, while Earth takes a year to orbit the sun. But our planet also rotates daily. Place two balls on the ground, one small (the moon), the other larger (Earth). Aim a flashlight at Earth while moving the smaller ball around it. When does light reach the moon, and where would you need to be on the Earth ball to see it? Next time you see a partial moon in the sky—look for it in the afternoon the week before it's full or in the morning the week after—know that the sunlight is like those flashlight rays, zipping past Earth to bounce off its little sister.—*Anita Lahey*

Why do my fingers and toes pucker after I go swimming?

Your skin is dehydrated. Or waterlogged. Too much time in the water. That's what your parents told you as a kid about wrinkled fingers and toes. Turns out those common explanations weren't even close. The real culprit? Evolution.

Have your child try picking up both dry and wet marbles before swimming, then after a half hour's frolic in the lake. Are the wet marbles and water-puckered fingers the most successful combination? If so, you've replicated recent research that suggests that wrinkly-digits-in-water is evolutionary. "Our body does it so we can pick things up in the water," says Julie Fisowich, the programming manager at the Saskatchewan Science Centre. The puckering—caused by blood vessels contracting—acts like a tread on your skin. When water runs down between the wrinkles, it allows for a better grip, useful for gathering food in a stream, for instance, or gaining footing on wet rocks. The process is involuntary, like sweating or getting goosebumps.— A.L.

Why is the sky blue?

To tackle this time-honoured query, first explain how sunlight contains all the colours of the rainbow, which flow through the atmosphere in waves. The red waves are the longest; the blue waves are the shortest. Try a simple experiment: fill a clear jug with water and shine a flashlight through one side. Slowly add drops of milk one at a time until you see a bluish tint emerge—that's the blue light, the shortest waves on the colour spectrum, scattering more.

The sky is just like that jug. When white light from the sun enters the atmosphere, the shorter waves of blue light interact with minute particles and scatter all over the sky, colouring it blue.—A.L.

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USE YOUR
NOGGIN!

A place to play all day long

Once you've exhausted all the go-to cottage pastimes, try one of these games, culled from the hive-brain of Cottage Life fans.

Challenge accepted

We love family-challenge weekends when even our teens get into the games. One that is always a hit is cheese heads. One participant dons a shower cap, and someone covers it completely with shaving cream. Then the kids line up and try to throw a Cheezie in the shaving cream.—Robin Holmes

Hide and go freak (out)

We play leprechaun in the dark outside. The game consists of the kids hiding and my husband looking for them, finding them, and then chasing them around with a flashlight held under his chin, all the while laughing like a maniac.—Pamela Ann Monk Renaud

Glow on

We play tag in the dark wearing coloured glow sticks as necklaces.—Kim Bechard

This is hot

We build homemade steam baths. We start by getting the kids to collect about 40 fist-sized rocks and pile them in a ring about two to three deep. Then we build a fire in the centre and let it burn for at least 45 minutes—long enough so that the stones are nice and hot. After dousing the fire, being careful not to wet the stones, we wait for the smoke to clear before kicking the stones into a pile. We erect a big tarp around the stones, supported by canoe paddles or 2x4s, making sure to get a good seal at the edges by weighing it down with more rocks, to create a steam room. We make it big enough so about six of us fit in. Last, we splash water onto the rocks and enjoy the heat! You can't even see your hand in front of your face from the steam. Then we all run into the lake to cool off.—Simon Foster

Spin classic

We made a "what-to-do-matron" spinning wheel (like on *Wheel of Fortune*) out of old plywood with typical cottage activities in each section: archery, canoeing, hiking, camp out, rock hunting, forest-house building, etc. We spin it when we hear "I'm bored!"—Michelle Caddey Maclean

Star power

On late August nights we do a midnight dip then lie on the dock to watch for shooting stars.—Jackie A. Francis

Bowl of fun

Use glow sticks and old water or pop bottles to make a nighttime bowling set. Fill each bottle about two-thirds with water, add the Sticks, cap the bottles, and line 'em up. Use a basketball to knock them over.—Anonymous

Jump around

We put two chairs at the end of the dock and place a pool noodle between them. My son takes a running leap and has to launch himself over the noodle into the water. Hours of laughs!—Katy Durdan Kelly

Water winner

We always have paint stir sticks, balloons, and oversized sponges on hand. Shove the stick inside the bottom of the sponge to make a racquet with which to swat around the balloons. The sponges also make for an ideal tool in a water fight (the balloons too), or you could even use them for painting.—Christina Ko

{*Continued on page 116*}

Disregarding the potential for pain—smokin' hot black rubber vs. leg flesh—the inner tube was a classic water toy for every cottager, and it's still awesome. (But seriously: don't leave these things out in the sun.)

GRAB THE INNER TUBE!

Some footwear—um, the wedge running shoe?—is weird. But anything that goes from rocky shoreline to slimy lake bottom to snacks on the dock is always a yes.

EMBRACE WATER SHOES!

Blipp the sunglasses for video from our shoot and to share kooky kid games

A PLACE TO PLAY ALL DAY
{*Continued from page 95*}

Use your noodle

Once our pool noodles get old and start to rot in the middle, we cut them in half to make bats and play baseball using a Nerf ball. We also use them for pool noodle races, running or swimming with the noodle between our legs.—*Pat Bauder*

Rainbow connection

We make pattern-dyed T-shirts using colours made from plant material that the kids find around the cottage.
—*Nancy Anderson*

Night moves

My kids play flashlight tag at night with all the neighbouring kids. Sometimes parents drop their kids off via boat so they can play too.—*Erin Bridgeford-Zeppetell*

Light idea

We put fireflies in a jar to make lanterns.
—*Frank Merfort*

Going buggy

Build a simple bug hotel so that your kids can learn about bugs at the cottage and hopefully get over feeling squeamish about them. All you need is a plastic bottle and some twine. Lop the top and bottom off the bottle so you have a plastic tube that's open at both ends. Cut the tube in two. Stuff each tube with nature debris from around the cottage: sticks, pine cones, pine needles. Use twine to hang each tube on a tree or leave them on the ground and see what kind of bugs check in.—*Anonymous*

Eggscellent trick

Fill a balloon about halfway with water and stuff a small plastic toy inside—those mini-dinosaurs from the dollar store are ideal. Then put the balloon in the freezer. Once frozen, cut and peel off the balloon and present your kids with their very own ice egg with a surprise inside. The eggs are neat in themselves, but the best part is smashing the egg to get the toy out.—*Anonymous*

Grow op

Plant a simple and low-maintenance herb garden at the cottage with your kids. It will give them a super-easy way to help out with preparing a meal (they can run out to the garden to gather "secret" ingredients). An herb garden will help them to become interested in cooking and kitchen activities too.
—*Richard Thompson*

A PLACE TO WONDER AT NATURE
{*Continued from page 93*}

Do plants have feelings?

Since plants don't have brains and nervous systems like humans do, picking a flower probably doesn't hurt the plant the same way it stings when we get a paper cut or a bug bite. But Clarence Swanton of the department of Plant Agriculture at the University of Guelph tells us that, even though they don't have pain, plants sometimes do experience "stress," and, when they're feeling stressed out, they sometimes try to "talk" to each other. "When plants are attacked by insects, some species will emit a special hormone to warn other nearby plants," explains Swanton. "So we now know plants can communicate with each other." He goes on to say that plants are more active than we think; they send messages through their roots and learn about their environment through light patterns. "Recent research even shows that plants might be able to tell their siblings apart from other plants and help to protect them, which is super-cool."—C.S.

Do fish sleep?

It's hard to get a little shut-eye when you literally can't shut your eyes. That's the problem that fish appear to have—largely because they don't have eyelids. But even though fish don't sleep exactly the same way humans and other mammals do, research suggests most fish manage to find a way to catch a few zzzs, so to speak.

Mike Friday, who works as a fisheries assessment biologist for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, explains: "Fish slow down their metabolism and decrease their movement. So if they were in a river, they might find a backwater area where they could "nap," or, if they were in a lake, they might find a quiet, rocky area. Once they find a safe spot, they go into something like a suspended animation state in which they're still aware of what's going on around them, but they can rest."—C.S.

Enough said.

BEST SUMMER EVER
{*Continued from page 89*}

elderlies to stealing cookies from elevated cookie jars. The only rule I remember, and it had the heft of a Biblical commandment, was that an adult always needed to be told if we were going down to the water.

Our activities overlapped regularly with those of the adults, but their lives ran parallel to and not on top of ours. I remember one summer joining forces with a senior cousin to chart the vast territory of our property. We kept the map hidden, convinced that adults had no idea what fern jungles and collapsed outhouses existed in the outer reaches of our kingdom. These were good times and important times as well. Evolutionary psychologist Peter Gray argues that unstructured play is more important to children's development than formal education. Why else, from an evolutionary standpoint, would all young mammals spend so much time wasting energy and risking injury to play? They do it to practise survival skills and to learn social competence. Play requires negotiation, compromise, and empathy—tough lessons and invaluable life skills. The more kids practise, the more skilled they are, and the more skilled they are, the less they need their parents—which ultimately is our mandate. There will be splinters, whether we are there or not. But it's as important that children have their own time as it is that we have ours.

At the cottage, parents should be able to kick back—have a beer, a snooze, or a real conversation. And that pretty much describes the holiday we had with my German friends. Having lost his cellphone to the lake, Beate's husband settled in to a more natural existence of brush-clearing, fishing, and pontificating. Beate did a lot of sunning and sleeping with a book propped next to her. And the kids, well, the kids fired cannons made of driftwood, learned how to dump a canoe (not entirely on purpose), built forts out of blankets and towels, found a deer skull, fought over Lego, and reconciled over ice cream. In other words, they had a summer.

Naomi Buck grew up with two cottages, on Stony Lake and Lake Muskoka. Lucky kid.

By Philip Preville
Photography Daniel Ehrenworth

BEST ADVICE

IT'S A HARD KNOCK LIFE

For millennia, a nearly impenetrable shell was enough to keep turtles out of trouble. No longer

ROAD KILL.

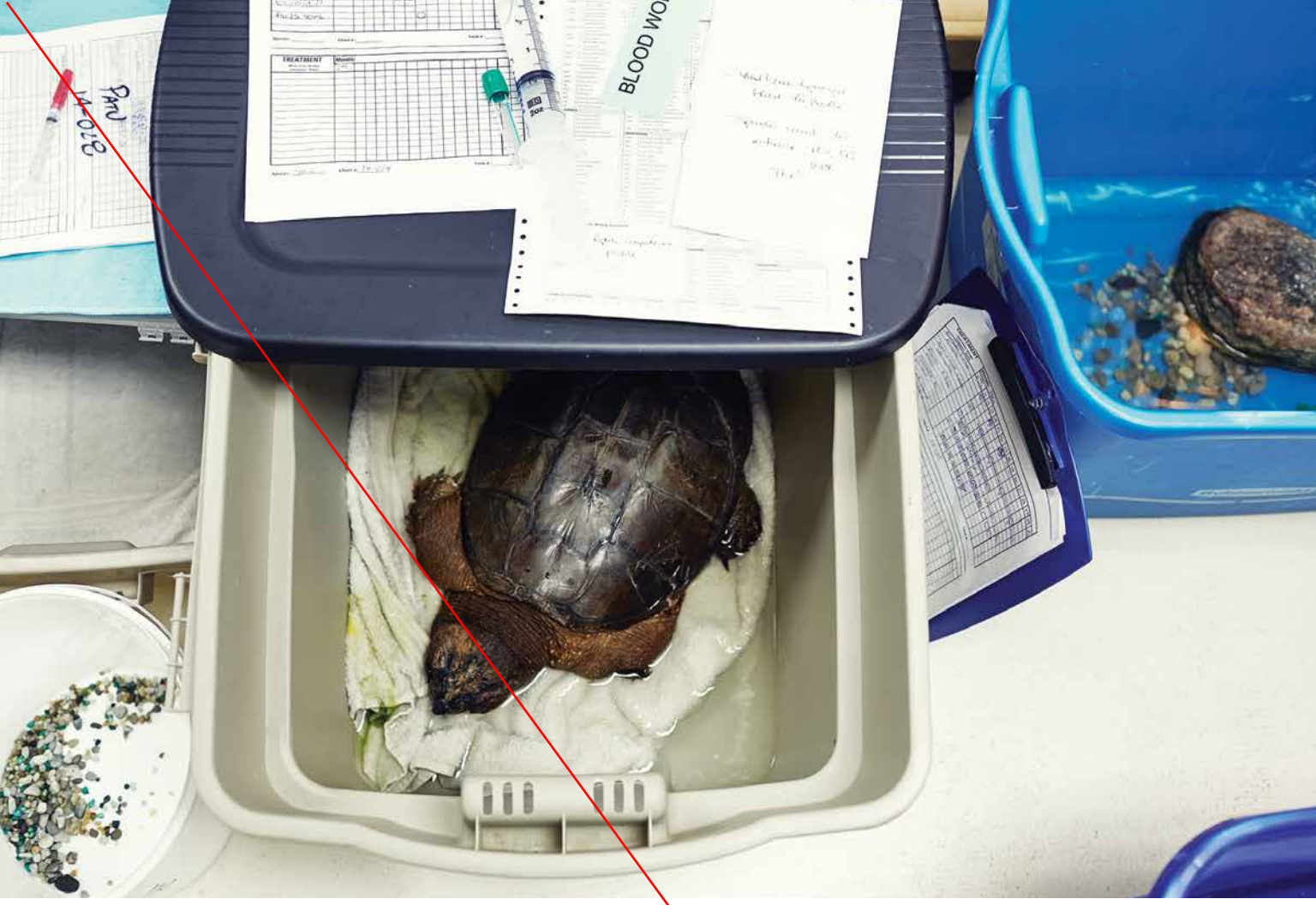
That's what first crossed Bill Mallett's mind in the early hours of Friday, May 10, 2013, on a drive from his family's cottage in Port Franks, Ont., on the shores of Lake Huron. Mallett was on his way to meet a friend for breakfast when he spotted a turtle on the shoulder of Northville Road, not far from the skinny, reedy, elbow-jointed pond known as L Lake. The area is known to locals for its well-travelled turtle crossings, and Mallett had good reason to assume the worst. "I've seen 14 dead turtles around here in the last three years," he says.

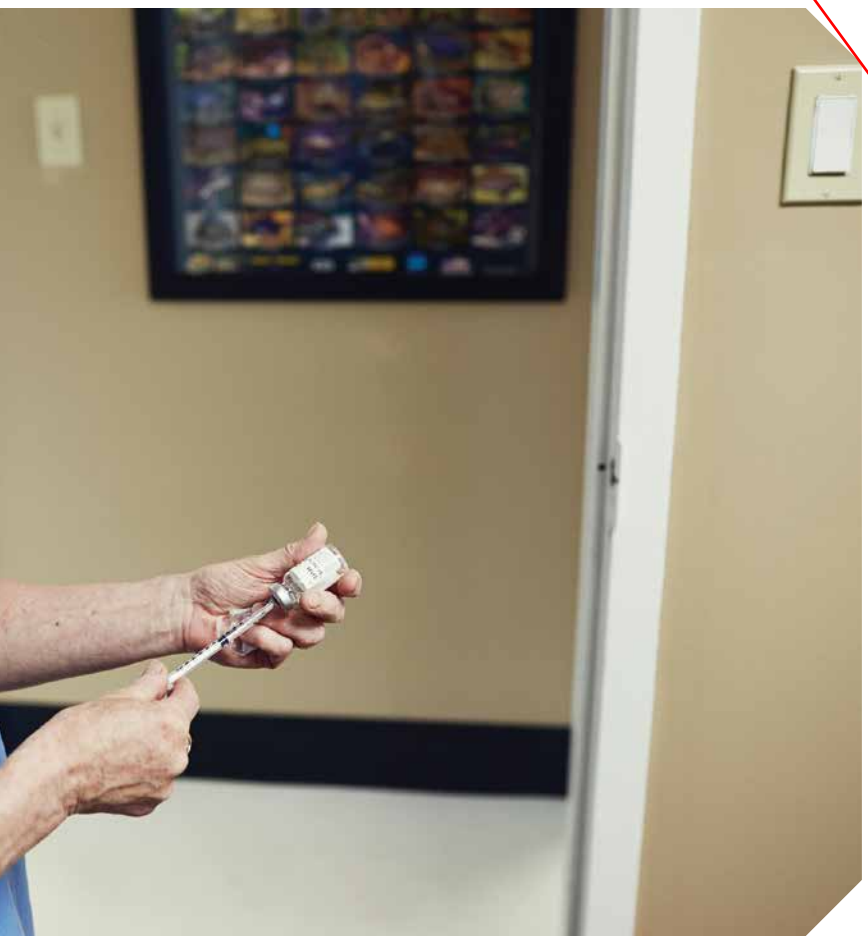
But when he got out of his car, he discovered something worse: an adult snapping turtle, two feet long from head to tail, still alive despite grotesque injuries. The top of its carapace had a hole in it the size of Mallett's thumb, not punctured but sheared, as though sliced across the top with a knife. Worse still, the turtle had suffered multiple fractures to its upper and lower jaws. Mallett didn't imagine it could survive long. "I was going to put him out of his misery," he recalls. But when he walked around and tried to approach the turtle from behind, "that's when he turned and looked me straight in the eye."

Mallett, a 70-year-old retired electrician from London, Ont., who's spent his life's summers on Lake Huron, is a tough-skinned, gentle-souled kind of guy, a bit of a turtle himself. When he and the turtle locked gazes, the world went momentarily still. That's when he knew he had to try to save the animal instead, even though he had no idea how. He called 911, which put him through to the Ontario Provincial Police, who simply said, "Call the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre."

If any place could help his turtle, Mallett guessed, this would be it. The problem was that it was about 400 km away in Peterborough, Ont. He started calling the number the OPP had given him. What Mallett didn't know was that the trauma centre, despite its impressive clinical name, was actually a not-for-profit wildlife shelter operating on a shoestring budget. The lone person on staff that morning was too busy looking after injured turtles to answer the phone. Mallett left a message and waited by the side of the road. He feared the snapper would not survive long.

Turtle shells may be the Triassic era's greatest work of engineering. The first turtles evolved some 220 million years ago, long before most dinosaur species, at a time when the earth's continents were still part of a single land mass known as Pangaea. Their signature mutations included an extension of their spinal vertebrae into an arched carapace over their backs, an extension of their ribs to





Veterinarian Sue Carstairs prepares a dose of antibiotic. Turtles waiting for assessment, or with open wounds, rest on a comfy towel (opposite), rather than in water. Assessment can include a swab (below) to test for infection and an X-ray to check for fish hooks, fractures, internal injuries, and eggs. Above, turtles (visible or hiding), with their records and any drugs and fluids needed.

The trauma centre uses plastic bins; each can house a rescued turtle or a clutch of hatchlings. The lamps provide UV light and let turtles moderate their temperatures. Opposite, Mallett's turtle.

IF HE DIED, IT WOULD TAKE 1,500 EGGS AND 20 YEARS TO REPLACE HIM

create a flat plastron underneath their bellies, and the fusion of the bones around the edges—moving everything else, including shoulder blades and collarbones, from the outside to the inside of their rib cages in the process.

When an evolutionary adaptation works, it sticks. The fossil record shows that the turtle shell has changed surprisingly little since its emergence. It hasn't had to. In 2013 a photographer captured an American alligator, a species whose bites can exert pressure of up to 2,900 pounds per square inch, trying to crack a live turtle in its jaws for 15 minutes before giving up.

Thanks to that shell, turtles have survived every competitor, predator, trap, continental rift, and mass-extinction event since Mesozoic times. Turtles predate *Tyrannosaurus rex* by about 135 million years, and they're still around. Slow and steady really does win the race. They are among the hardiest reptiles that have ever lived.

Bill Mallett didn't know any of that. He was standing on the side of the road, hovering over an injured snapper with which he'd made a silent pact, waiting for help. The turtle trauma centre couldn't call him back fast enough.

It happened to be Lindsay Maxim, one of the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre's few paid staff members, who retrieved Mallett's message that Friday morning. Maxim brought the news to Kate Siena, the trauma centre's executive coordinator, as soon as Siena came in. "It was obvious that Bill was very concerned," Siena says. "To be honest, we weren't looking forward to calling him back."

There is a stereotype that's often applied to wildlife conservationists: they are raccoon-hugging recluses who, in their tiny, smelly shelters, get along better with animals than people. Siena, 44, does not fit this description. A happily married mother of two, she is gregarious with friends and strangers alike. Though she's worked her whole career in wildlife conservation and has a special rapport with animals, she remains a committed scientist. Wildlife conservation, for her, is about ecology and biodiversity. Maxim, a 28-year-old Trent University graduate who studied biology, is cut from the same cloth. They don't give names to any of the animals they treat. They assign numbers instead, because it keeps them, and their volunteers, from getting emotionally attached. "They are wild animals, and the whole point is for them to stay wild animals," Siena says. "They are not pets."

Since Siena took over as coordinator of the centre in 2010, it's gone from treating about 50 turtles a year to admitting more than 800 turtles annually for treatment and rehabilitation. That's a lot of turtle trauma. Siena, having seen the worst the species can bear, has developed a very clinical, cutthroat sense of judgment. Her first question is always: can we help this turtle? If the answer is yes, she'll move heaven and earth for it. But if the answer is no, it's no—which can be devastating to roadside rescuers like Bill Mallett, who often develop an emotional bond with the injured animal.

Maxim drew the assignment of calling Mallett back. When she did, she learned that his snapper was still alive. Yes, they could help this turtle—in fact, they were the only wildlife centre in Ontario that could—but they had to move fast. "We usually give ourselves a 24-hour window to get an injured turtle to the centre," Siena says, so they'd already lost precious time. "If the turtle is still alive, then it's not the injuries that will kill it," she says. "What'll kill it is infection, the shock of the pain, and the fact that it can't drink."

In recent years, the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre has trained staff at other Ontario wildlife centres—including the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Ottawa, the Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre in Napanee, and the soon-to-be-opened Georgian Bay Turtle Hospital just south of Orillia—to stabilize injured turtles for safe transport to Peterborough. Maxim recommended that Mallett bring the snapper to Heaven's Wildlife Rescue in

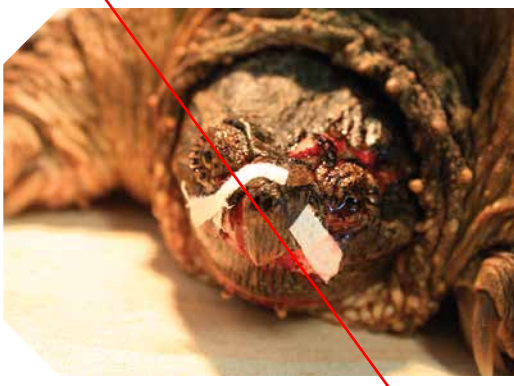


PHOTO THIS PAGE COURTESY THE KAWARTHA TURTLE TRAUMA CENTRE

Oil Springs, whose staff also knows the injured-turtle drill, and which was just an hour's drive south from Port Franks.

Siena, meanwhile, fired off a mass email to her turtle taxi list—about 100 volunteers scattered across southern Ontario who shuttle injured turtles. But she and Maxim suspected that no single driver would be prepared to make the 400 km drive. It would have to be a relay.

Mallett brought the turtle to Oil Springs, where the male snapper received pain medication and fluids, as well as a name: Porter. The medicine extended the time frame for saving him: Siena and Maxim now had until around noon on Saturday. The name raised the emotional stakes. For the next two hours, they worked the phones and the email lines frantically, barking at each other without missing a beat, trying to set up a series of hand-offs that would bring Porter from Oil Springs to Peterborough. When they realized their regular volunteers wouldn't be able to complete the relay, they started branching out. "I've had my boyfriend drive hundreds of kilometres to pick up turtles," admits Maxim. But in this case he wasn't available. They could get Porter from Oil Springs to Guelph, but no farther.

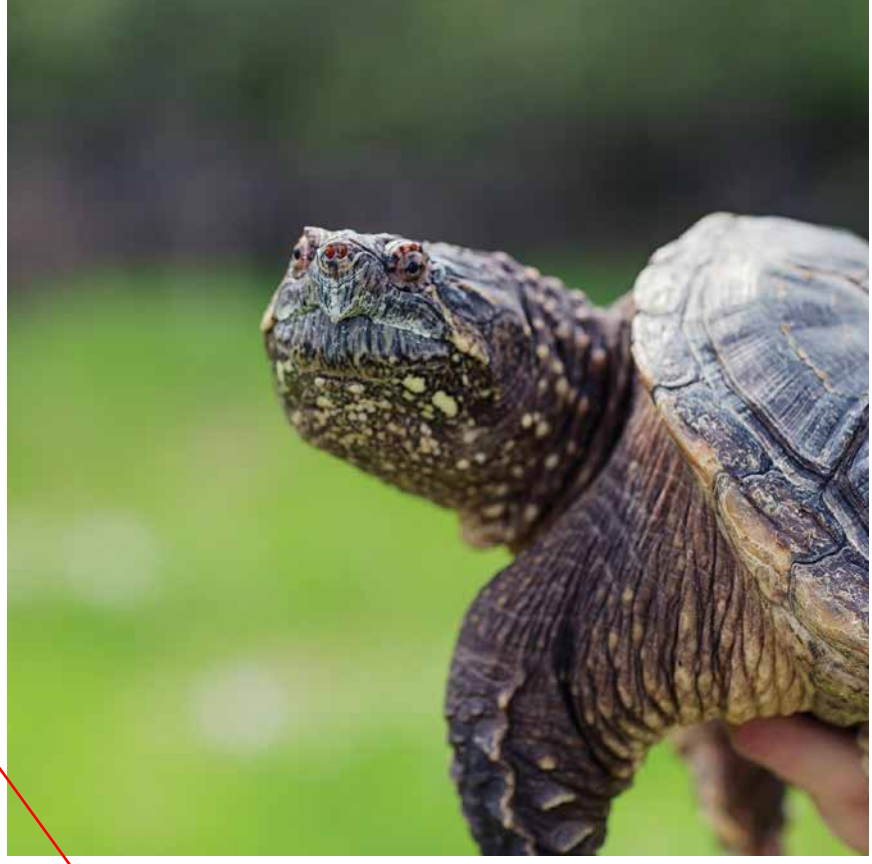
That's when Bill Mallett, who hadn't come this far just to see Porter buried, stood up in the middle of Heaven's Wildlife Rescue and said aloud in desperation, "There must be a pilot who'll fly him!" It turned out there was. Pilots N Paws Canada, a volunteer organization that usually airlifts cats and dogs in need of rescue or medical attention, made an exception for Porter and hooked him up with Rick Woodall, a 46-year-old Windsor financial advisor and hobby pilot with his own single-engine, two-seater airplane. On Saturday morning, Woodall picked Porter up at the Sarnia airport and airlifted him to Peterborough, arriving just after noon. The relay had met its deadline. Now all Porter had to do was survive reconstructive surgery.

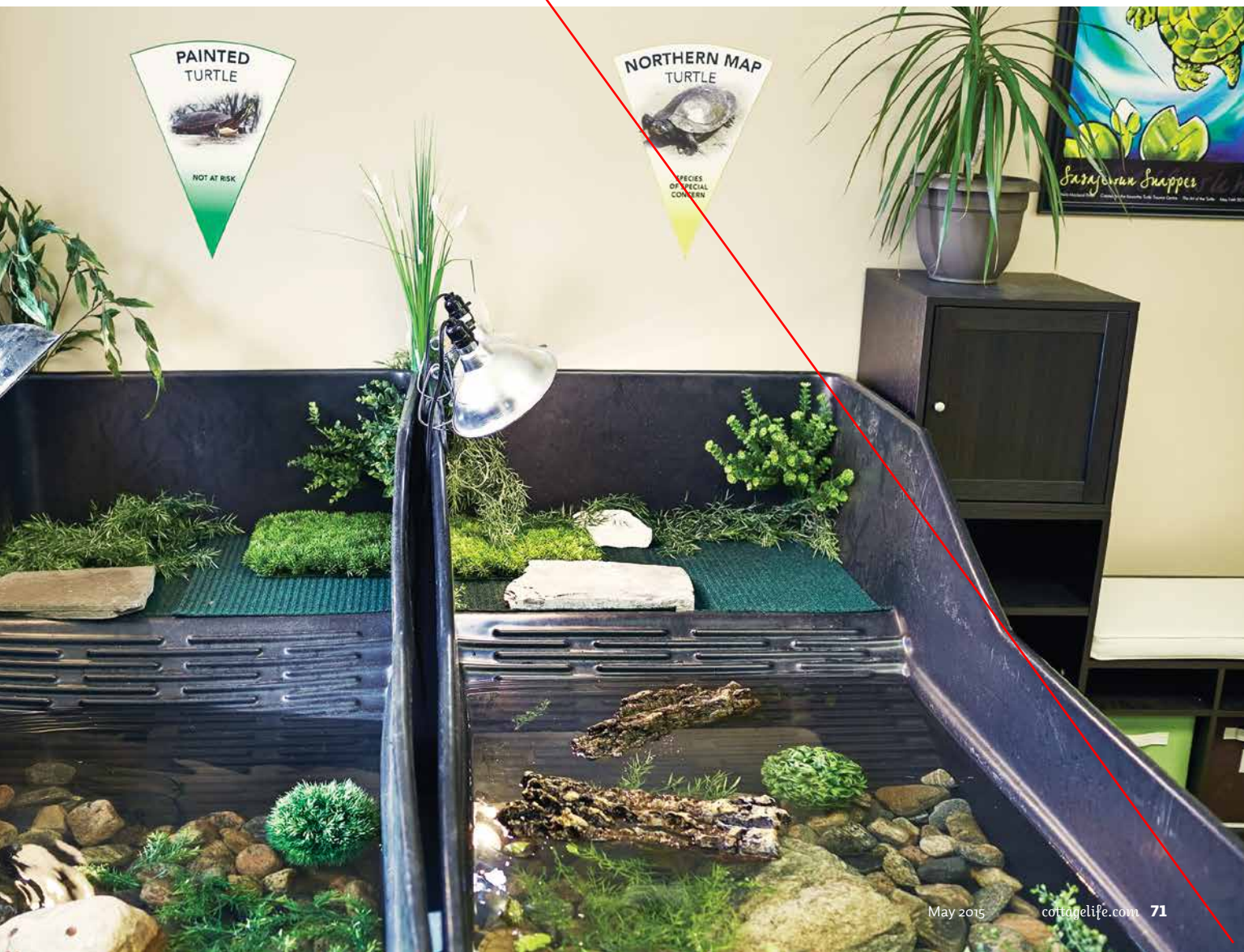
Bill Mallett can remember a time when turtles were everywhere around Port Franks. "Back when I was young, it wasn't uncommon for me to see 25 painteds and 10 stinkpots down here in the evening," he says. "That never happens anymore."

There are seven species of hard-shell turtles in Ontario, including painted turtles, identifiable by the red lines on their extremities, and musk turtles, which release a {*Continued on page 107*}

Blipp Kate Siena and Porter, above, to watch the centre in action

Watch for turtles on roads, especially in spring, when females nest. If you see an injured turtle, call the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre and they'll find a nearby clinic for urgent care. Transport an injured turtle in a dry, ventilated plastic box with a lid. Use a shovel or board to lift a snapper so it doesn't bite you. Always ensure your own safety (and that of other drivers) before stopping to help a turtle.





IT'S A HARD KNOCK LIFE

{*Continued from page 70*}

foul-smelling goo when under threat—hence the "stinkpot" nickname. Of the seven, every species but the painteds (the most common) ranks somewhere on the conservation barometer: some are endangered, one is threatened, and some, such as the snapper, are "species of special concern." And Ontario isn't unique. After 220 million years without having to adapt anew, turtles everywhere have fallen on hard times.

Their shells have kept them alive this long, but they haven't been fun to lug around. They constrain their every move, making them slow on land. Young turtles survive by stealth. They are the shrinking violets of the animal kingdom, always hiding among the reeds and the lily pads, and in other messy nooks of the Ontario wilds. Once a turtle gets big enough, and its shell hard enough, it no longer has predators in the water, and could live past the age of 100. In Algonquin Park in the 1970s, wildlife scientists tagged a giant female snapper, B7. Forty years later, she is still laying nests of 40 eggs every year.

Still, turtles can't hide in the water forever. They move from pond to pond in search of food and mates, and they have to nest to lay eggs. And it's on land where they're vulnerable. Across southern Ontario, you are rarely more than two kilometres away from a road. Some studies show that the most active turtle species will amble across roads 20 times in a season. And that's where turtles encounter the mechanized predator that natural selection has yet to counteract: the car.

Road mortality is every freshwater turtle's biggest population threat. A 2010 study by students at Laurentian University along a 388 km stretch of Hwy. 69/400 from Barrie to Sudbury found that, during late spring and early summer, about 22 turtles are struck by cars per day. Sometimes turtles startle drivers with their sloth: they move so slowly that, by the time drivers realize that it's a live turtle in the middle of the road, it's often too late. Just as often, though, it's no accident. In 2007, scientists placed decoys in the middle of the road on the Long Point causeway near Lake Erie. They found that roughly half of all turtle road strikes were deliberate—the driver swerved, not to avoid the decoy, but to intentionally run over it.

No matter the motivations of the killers, turtles cannot survive this increase in their mortality. Scientists estimate only one in 1,500 snapping turtle eggs makes it through to adulthood. Old B7 in Algonquin Park is a case in point: over her past 40 years laying eggs, scientists report only one survivor, now about 35 years old—and that turtle came from an incubated egg.

"There are lots of baby turtles every spring, but nature did not intend for most of them to survive," says Siena. They are like canapés for predators: small and served frequently. "Nature did, however, intend for the adults to live a long, long time in order to keep the reproduction cycle robust. The adults aren't supposed to die at this rate, and the species can't afford to lose them."

Snappers take 20 years to reach sexual maturity, about seven years longer than humans. If Porter died, it would take 1,500 eggs and 20 years to replace him in the breeding-adult snapper population—a steep uphill battle for a species in decline. If you were trying to protect the human race from extinction, you'd save the children. With turtles it's the opposite: save the adults.

As grim as the statistics are, there was some reason for optimism with Porter. The moment that Sue Carstairs, the resident veterinarian and turtle surgeon at the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre, laid eyes on him, she knew that she could help. For one thing, she'd seen turtles survive much worse. In addition, she says, "His injuries fit a pattern unique to snappers. I'd seen this hundreds of times."

When most turtles face imminent danger, they duck and cover, but snappers actually cannot fully retract into their shells, so their heads are left exposed (which is why they snap). When drivers try to avoid hitting a snapper by straddling it, in the hopes of passing over it, the collision often results in a sheared carapace and facial trauma. These were Porter's injuries, which convinced Carstairs that he hadn't been run over on purpose. She looked the turtle in the eye just as Mallett had, but with the clinical

IT'S A HARD KNOCK LIFE

{*Continued from page 107*}

detachment of a seasoned vet; she stabilized him, administered anaesthetic, and went to work. "The shell is essentially bone," she explains. "It'll heal just like a broken leg would. It just needs to be secured and kept clean."

Carstairs is self-effacing about it, but she is probably among the world's most experienced turtle veterinarians. A graduate of the University of Guelph, she knew from the start that she'd rather work with wild species than with pets. She regularly borrows techniques from other medical disciplines, and gear as necessary from non-medical ones, to get the job done. She keeps her surgical supplies in a four-foot-tall, black-and-silver steel tool case donated by Home Depot. To bore holes in turtle shell pieces, she uses a dental drill, then loops orthopaedic stainless steel wire through them to hold the pieces in place. She sometimes wires other body parts back together too, but Porter's jaws were fractured in so many places that wire wasn't feasible, so Carstairs taped them back together and changed his dressings regularly.

The next 12 months were surely Porter's loneliest. All animals carry bacteria and parasites unique to their home ecosystem. To keep those organisms from spreading, Ontario law stipulates that a captured animal must be released within one kilometre of where it was found. Because the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre receives turtles from all around the province, it isolates every turtle that arrives. As a result, the majority of the centre consists of dark rooms filled with giant, black Rubbermaid tubs, each containing a single turtle in recovery, each with its own small UV lamp, like a turtle tanning salon.

The happiest room in the centre is the hatchery. The tubs are transparent, the lighting is bright and fluorescent, and the sound of bubbling water fills the room with glee. There's plenty to eat—lettuce, earthworms, smelt—and thumb-sized turtles are everywhere. The staff can harvest the eggs of a recently deceased female turtle from her oviduct, hatch them, and nurse the hatchlings to strength for a full year. In 2014 the centre released more than 700 hatchlings—about 60 per cent of them snappers—into the wild, almost double the number of the previous year. If it takes 1,500 eggs in the wild to replace one adult snapper, the hatchery is helping the odds.

Shortly after Porter's surgery, Kate Siena has to undergo surgery of her own, for cancer. Her recovery requires her to relinquish her duties at the turtle trauma centre—Lindsay Maxim ably takes over—but she's still active as a volunteer. And on a misty, overcast morning in May 2014, she makes the drive from Peterborough to Port Franks to meet up with Bill Mallett, reintroduce him to Porter, and then return the turtle to the reedy waters of L Lake. Seeing "his" turtle for the first time in almost a year, Mallett is impressed with the results of the surgery. Porter has visible scars on his shell and some nasty-looking ones on his jaws, but even if his good looks are now flawed, his potentially fatal wounds have functionally healed. He is, it is safe to say, one tough turtle.

When Siena takes Porter out of his Rubbermaid container, it's his first look at the outside world since Bill Mallett scooped him off the shoulder and put him in his trunk. He is alert and searching, as if recognizing the smells of home. Siena and Mallett are enchanted by him. Science has saved Porter, but science cannot explain the mystical power of his ilk. An adult turtle can hush a room simply by its presence. Turtle shells are also uncanny numerological artifacts. Their shells—not just snappers' but all hard-backed species—all have a total of 41 sections, or scutes: 28 around the edges and 13 in the middle. These numbers, Siena points out, correspond perfectly to the lunar calendar: 28 days to a cycle, 13 cycles a year. She has no idea why. No one does, she says. Turtles know something about the universe that science has yet to divine. It remains their secret.

Porter is eager for the water. As Siena holds him over the edge of the dock, he paddles his feet through the air, already swimming. She drops him gently into the lake. He makes straight for the tall reeds, and like magic he's gone.

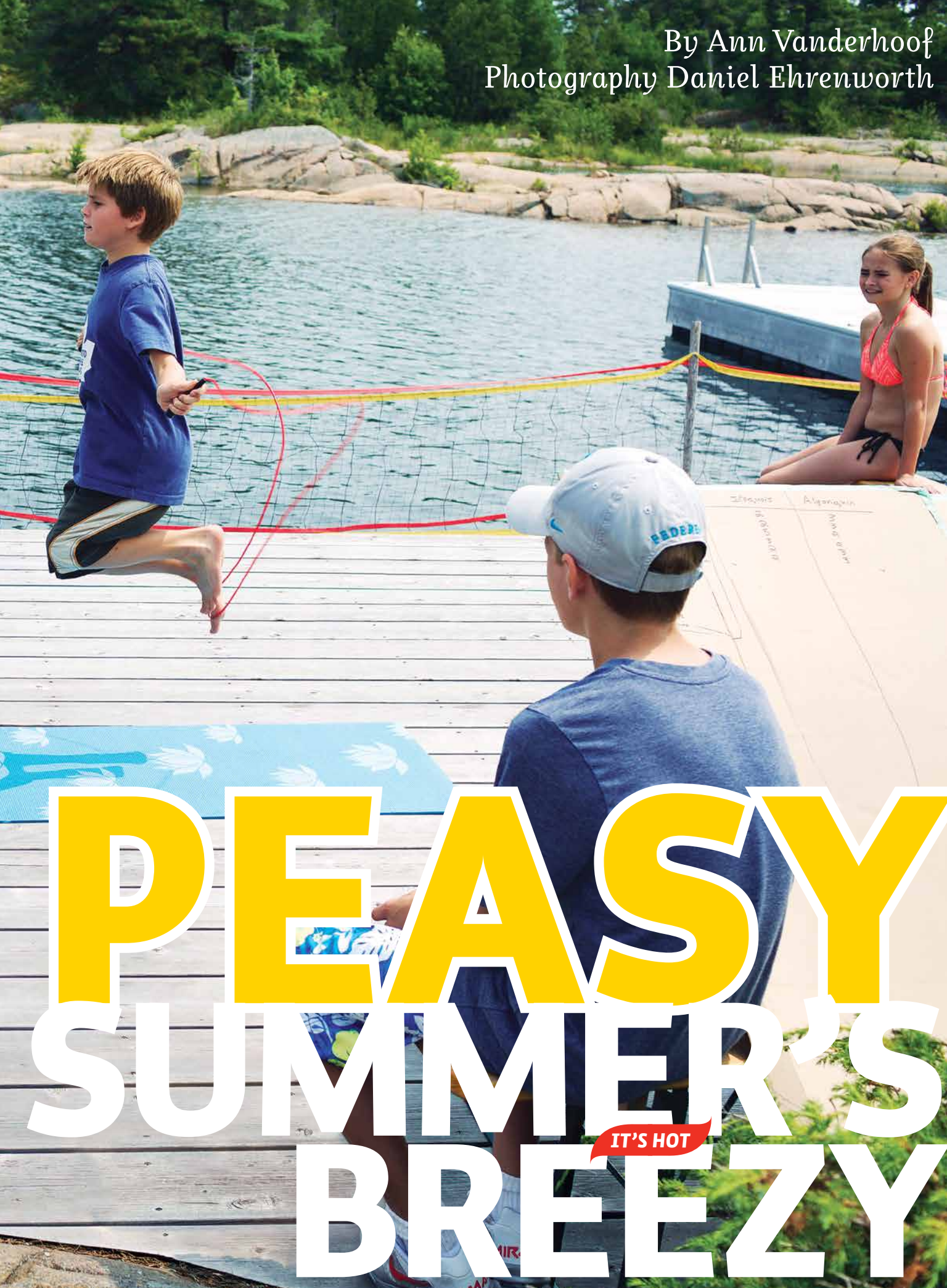
Philip Preville is a National Magazine Award recipient. He lives in Peterborough with his wife and three kids. He brakes for turtles.

EASY

HOT! STUFF

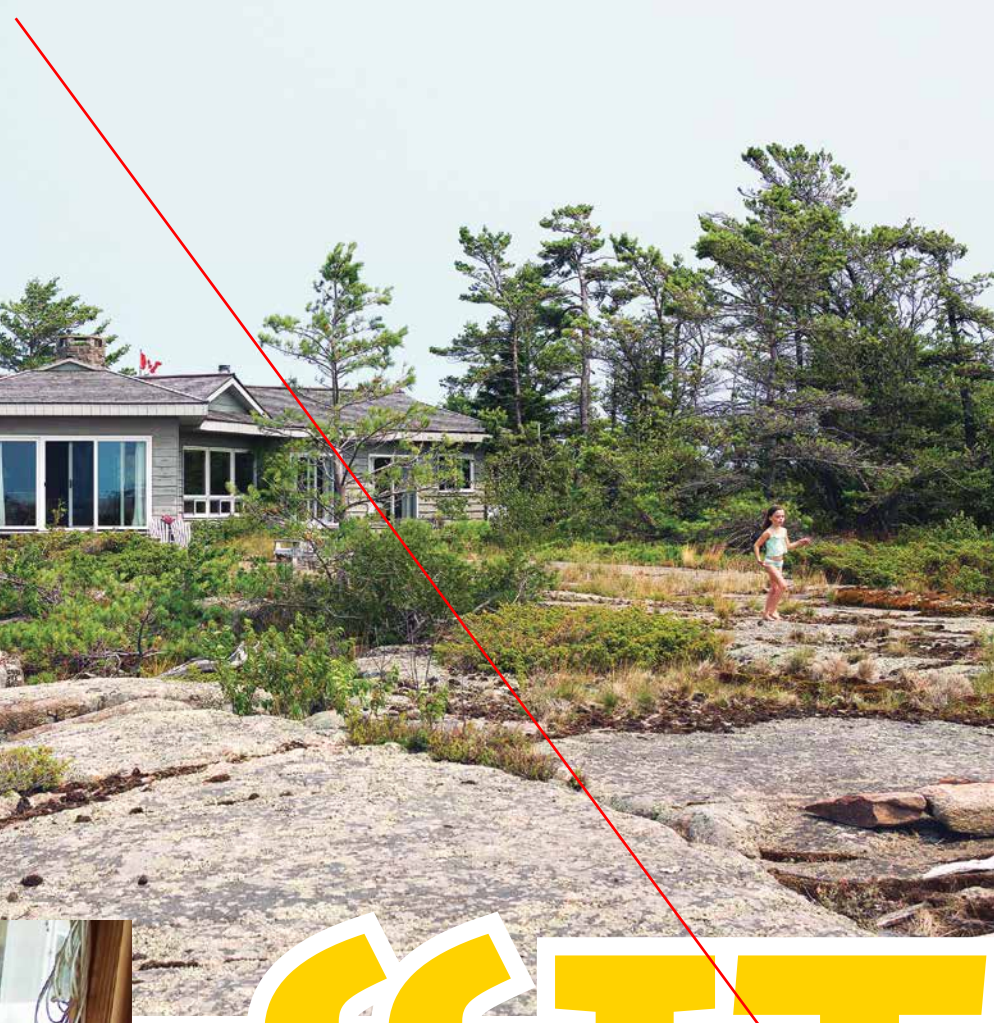
Trish Magwood's got the recipe for hot fun in the summertime

By Ann Vanderhoof
Photography Daniel Ehrenworth



PEASY SUMMER'S BREEZY

IT'S HOT



Trish's tomato and bread salad (above, opposite) is a cottage go-to. "It's the ode to summer salad," says Trish (left), because it lets tomatoes shine. The bonus? "It feeds a crowd and uses up leftovers." Eating grab-and-go meals outside means no table to set and keeps it casual, which the ever-active kids, including Trish's niece Sophie, daughter Olivia, and nephew Ryan, all appreciate (following pages).

"IT doesn't freak me out," Trish Magwood says. "I enjoy a big group. As long as there's food in the cottage, I'll figure it out." Good thing: it's almost 5 p.m., the head count for dinner is 23—and Trish is still off in the family runabout. She says she hasn't even thought about snacks to go with pre-dinner drinks for the adults and to stave off hunger in the dozen ravenous kids.

Frankly, it sounds like a recipe for cottage stress. Big time. But Trish exudes breezy confidence and a relaxed vibe. She has the cred to pull it off: trained chef; author of two cookbooks; founder of Dish, a cooking school, catering company, and café; and creator and host of the show *Party Dish*, which aired on the Food Network. And she has a new TV show and cookbook in development. "Dinner will be totally simple," she says. "I don't do fancy at the cottage."

Even when she was a private chef to Martin Short, Tom Hanks, and other celebs spending time in cottage country, Trish didn't swerve from her no-fuss modus operandi. "I defy you to find someone who doesn't want simple, casual food at the cottage. Burgers. Barbecue. Salads. It's summer living."

The Magwood cottage, on Zephyr Island near Pointe au Baril on Georgian Bay, is very used to crowds. The immediate family alone numbers more than 20 and spans three generations. Chuck and Lee, Trish's parents, bought the island more than 30 years ago: three acres of pink-tinged granite, scrubby blueberry bushes, and wind-whipped pines. To fit four kids—Trish and brothers Tim, Jeff, and Robbie—they immediately added wings to the modest hexagonal cottage and, eventually, three small cabins. "Each of us has three kids," Trish explains. When the full complement of Magwoods can't get there, those who can go happily keep up the numbers with friends. "People who know me know what to expect. It's not like we're taking care of them. Everyone pitches in."

Rewind to late morning. Zephyr's long dock is lined with a fleet of paddlecraft and kids, and Trish is just arriving home from tennis at the Ojibway Club, a nearby gathering spot. Barefoot and "insistently casual" in look as well as food, she heads to the kitchen to put together lunch. For a mere 13. But Mom has beaten her to the prep. "She couldn't resist," Trish says. "She couldn't believe I wasn't going to start until I got back."

A trim, young 71, Lee nods in agreement. "I'm not so relaxed. But Trish knows in her mind what she's doing."

In fact, beneath the laid-back exterior, her daughter has it all totally together. "I'm superorganized," Trish admits, grabbing a scrap of paper to demonstrate a system she learned from her mom. Feeding a crowd here starts with a list, arranged by day, number of people, what the menu is, and how many times to multiply a recipe (two? three? *four*?). Then she builds the grocery list from that. "And I always arrange it by aisle and section—produce, dairy, etc. That makes it so fast to shop." When {*Continued on page 51*}

Blipp the salad to get Trish's recipe

IT'S A PICNIC FOR LUNCH

GEORGIAN BAY BLUEBERRY BOY BAIT

Trish adapted this recipe from *The Cottage Cookbook*, a collection compiled by Pointe au Baril cottagers in 1983. The Zephyr Island copy is dog-eared and falling apart. "We use it all the time," she says. (It's also where the chocolate-chip cookie competition recipe comes from.) This version appears in Trish's book *In My Mother's Kitchen*.

Guaranteed to attract kids of all ages (and genders), the cake is said to have risen to fame in 1954 when a 15-year-old girl won second prize in a baking contest with her version—named, she said, for its effect on boys. It comes together quickly. Hide the pan; leftovers (sans ice cream) are great the next morning.

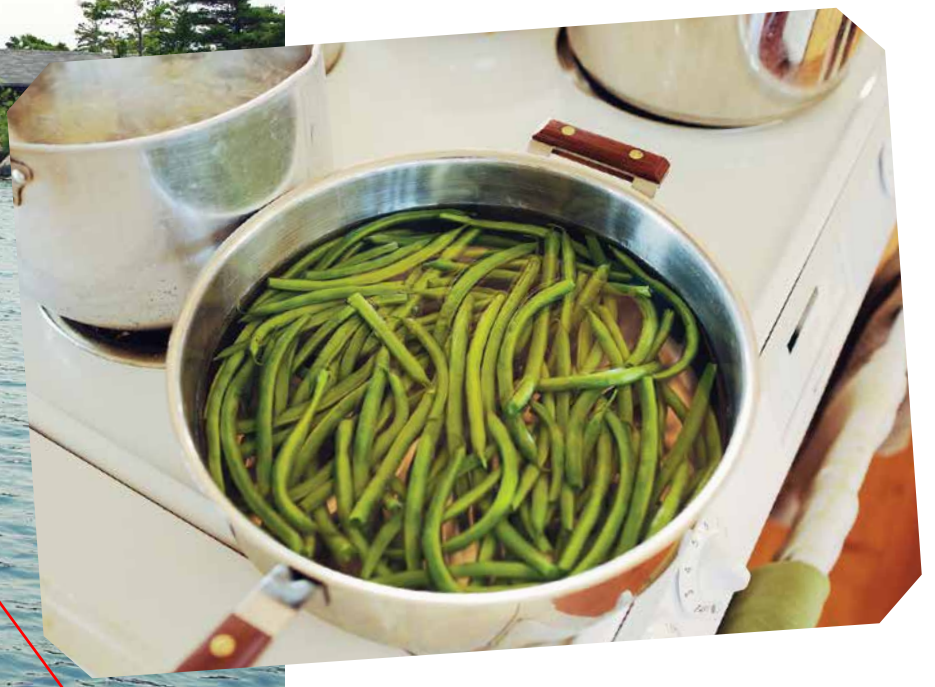
Cake
⅔ cup butter, room temperature (150 ml)
1½ cups sugar (375 ml)
2 eggs
1 cup milk (250 ml)
2 cups all-purpose flour (500 ml)
2 tsp baking powder (10 ml)
1 tsp salt (5 ml)
1 cup fresh blueberries (250 ml) (see Tip, below)

Topping
¼ cup sugar (60 ml)
½ tsp cinnamon (2 ml)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. Butter and flour a 9" x 13" (23 cm x 33 cm) baking pan. In a large bowl, beat butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs and beat until light and fluffy. Beat in milk, flour, baking powder, and salt.
3. Spread batter evenly in prepared pan. Sprinkle blueberries on top.
4. Combine sugar and cinnamon for topping. Sprinkle over berries.
5. Bake in preheated oven for 40 minutes, or until centre of cake springs back when pressed. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream. Makes 10 servings.

TIP To substitute frozen blueberries, thaw and drain before adding to cake.

Find more of Trish's recipes in her books, *Dish Entertains* and *In My Mother's Kitchen*, or download one of her apps, Trish's Kitchen or In My Mother's Kitchen for further tips and videos.



"If a vegetable grows underground, start it in cold water and bring to a boil. If it grows above the ground, boil the water before adding the vegetable," says Trish, sharing a tip from chefs' school. Beans go into an ice bath (above) before serving. Trish's family, including mom, Lee, and daughter Charlotte (left), embrace the simple life on the Bay and have taken to one of the latest no-motor trends: stand-up paddleboarding.

her sisters-in-law are at the cottage, they're in on the action. "They're all good cooks. We usually take meals and divide and conquer." But generally, Trish says, Lee runs the show.

Today, however, it's Trish who's in charge. She's got a picnic planned for lunch, and substantial salads are her favourite way to go…at least for the grown-ups. For the kids, it will be bagels with meat and cheese. "I'll give you a loonie if you'll try a bite of salad," she tells them. But she has no takers for either the Italian tomato-and-bread one or the orzo with feta and baby spinach. No matter: she's still doubling the recipes. "Now I don't have to make lunch tomorrow."

Though the family sometimes piles into boats and heads to a deserted island, today the picnic is right out the door. The Magwoods have just about the farthest cottage from Pointe au Baril in the archipelago, and relaxing outside on their own expanse of rock, with a view of big sky and open water, creates the feeling of being in the middle of nowhere. "We *are* the picnic island," Trish says.

"But if we were going in the boat, I would just tie each salad bowl up in a tea towel. Or use the ugly Tupperware. Sometimes we bring hot dogs to cook for the kids. Our picnic thing isn't glamorous, by any stretch." Still, her lidded wicker basket is a vintage beauty that once belonged to her grandmother; her soft-sided cooler bags and roll-up picnic blankets are bright and stylish (she sells these and others of her favourite discoveries at pop-up stores that she occasionally organizes); and the reusable plastic picnic plates and glasses—some of them came with the cottage when her parents bought it—have retro charm. "We just pack them up and bring them back to the cottage to wash afterwards." (Yes, they do have a dishwasher. "It was a big philosophical debate," Lee says. "But a friend of one of the boys did an analysis—it was his field—and he said for us a dishwasher was more water- and septic-system efficient.")

When hungry kids start to appear, Trish presses them into service. "Charlie," she says to her youngest daughter, Charlotte, "you're on lemonade duty." The five-year-old retrieves her stepstool and sets to work stirring. Eight-year-old Olivia and her 12-year-old cousin Sophie lay out the sandwich stuff. "Other parents do crafts with their kids," Trish says. "When we're on holiday in the summer, we cook and bake." A few years ago, she began assigning her eldest, 11-year-old

TRISH'S TOP 10 TIPS FOR FEEDING A CROWD

1. Keep it simple and casual. "Don't fuss. Start with good-quality ingredients that are local and seasonal—then you don't have to do much to them."

2. Divide and conquer. "You know who's good at what: who's the best salad maker, baker, barbecuer. Enlist them to help."

3. Act like a caterer. "Make a list, organized by meal." Have columns for the number of people expected, what you're serving, how much you'll need to make, and who's taking care of what. "That way you won't end up with five kilos of meat for burgers—and only have five people to eat them."

4. Go self-serve. "Put the food out family style and let people help themselves to it. The visual is important, so make it look good." Tip: wooden boards are her go-to serving-platters.

5. Keep the drinks self-serve too. Even for the kids. "I put out a stack of plastic glasses and a pitcher of lemonade, so they can get their own."

6. Make sure everyone has ID. "We write our names on glasses with an erasable acrylic pen or a permanent marker. Cuts down on dishes."

7. Have pantry staples you can count on. Trish's include fresh-roasted coffee beans, her dad's maple syrup, top-drawer Italian olive oil and balsamic vinegar, and her mom's condiments, such as red pepper jam and tangy-sweet tomato butter (great on burgers). "If I didn't have my mom's, I'd go to the farmers' market and buy the least commercial I could find."

8. Make ahead and double up. Marinate meats and freeze them. Double recipes so you have enough for another meal. "We love to cook, but we don't want to spend all day in the kitchen."

9. Have two seatings. Feed the younger generation first, and make it a simpler, kid-friendly variation of the adults' meal. "One dinner, two ways."

10. Get the kids to help. And not just by setting and clearing the table. "Give them peelers and zesters. Show them how to make pancakes and smoothies. Don't sweat the mess."

"I DON'T DO FANCY AT THE

"The barbecue is so Barney Rubble, so archaic, but he'll never change it," Trish says about her dad and his love of the cottage's rustic grill. It's the only one on the island and, for the boys in particular, learning how to use it is a rite of passage, "like driving the boat." Another rite of passage: competing with each other in everything, including jump rope.

COTTAGE"

Fin, and his similarly aged cousins the job of making pancakes. "I don't care if it's a box mix. And, even though I'm a total neat freak, I don't care if there's stuff all over the counter. I put 'em to work and I don't sweat it."

Rewind again. Don't think for a moment life here revolves around the kitchen. Today is the Zephyr Island Olympics, and it's all hands on dock. "New rule—no coming to the net," says Chuck, 71, the one-man organizing committee, as well as referee, keeper of the stopwatch, cheerleader, and (in some events) participant. At least once a summer, he divvies the crowd into teams to compete in swimming, kayaking, fishing, and more obscure sports, such as jump rope, "competitive yoga," and dockball. "It's a smerge of tennis and Ping-Pong," Trish explains. "Copyright Zephyr Island." The kids use tennis racquets to whip a large plastic ball over a "net"—the bench from a picnic table—while a ball boy or girl floats on a paddleboard offshore to retrieve errant shots. "We're very competitive," says Chuck.

He's not exaggerating. An all-in Ping- Pong ladder dominated a recent long weekend; the island is big enough for Frisbee-golf tourneys; and, of course, they can't resist competing with food. "We have salad competitions, picnic competitions, and an ongoing competition for who makes the best chocolate-chip cookies," says Trish. (According to the kids, it's either Trish or her sister-in-law Amanda.) Before you start thinking you'd be a shoo-in, be advised: the Magwoods all start with the same recipe, so the small strokes—oven temperature, baking time, cookie thickness—determine the best.

However, Trish just scrubbed the cookies from tonight's menu: she thinks a cake would be faster—three, actually, given the crowd. Lee jumps in. "Charlotte," she calls to her granddaughter, "do you think we could pick blueberries and make Blueberry Boy Bait?"

The word quickly spreads among the kids, making it {*Continued on page 114*}

EASY, PEASY, SUMMER'S BREEZY

{*Continued from page 53*}

immediately clear that the cake—a favourite in this part of Georgian Bay—deserves its curious name. "Awesome." "We're having Blueberry Boy Bait!" "Oh, YEAH." Lee says vanilla ice cream on the side is *de rigueur*. (See recipe, p. 50.)

"It would never in a million years pick through the berries for stems," Trish says, as Lee and Charlotte do exactly that. Meanwhile, she's at the sink trimming green beans and washing potatoes—which, with Lee handling the cakes, seems to be the only dinner prep required. "I marinated the lamb"—three boneless, butterflied legs—"at home and froze it, so I didn't have to do it up here."

Unlike at lunch, everyone will have the same meal—but with a couple of twists. "One dinner, two ways," Trish calls it. For the adults, she'll top the beans with toasted pine nuts, and the potatoes with butter and fresh chives from the tiny herb garden off the screened porch. The kids get both plain. "Mom would scrub these potatoes perfectly clean, but I think they look fine," Trish says. "I do what's the least amount of effort with the greatest payback. I don't want to be in here cooking all day."

Lee eyes the potatoes. "Is that enough?"

"It's what we've got."

And what Trish has is chutzpah. "Balls," her mother says. Without any professional training—that came later, at chefs' school in New York—she started catering during her university summers: parties and weddings for as many as 200 people on Georgian Bay and in Muskoka. "I had Mom and Dad and Bo," her grandmother, who died last summer at 99. "She had awesome taste buds and was a great cook. I'd call her and she'd talk me down from the ledge." And not just with cooking advice. "When I was catering for Prince and Princess Michael of Kent, I asked Bo how to greet them. Then I was ready with my curtsey."

Zephyr's kitchen is, like Trish, decidedly unchef-like. No professional range, two ordinary freezer-on-top fridges, mismatched pots and pans, but a case of maple syrup behind the counter. "Dad makes it," Trish explains. Chuck and Lee have a farm with a sugar bush and an apple orchard. "You'll see. He freaks out if anyone leaves any on their plate."

And with that warning, she heads back down to the dock. It's time to herd Fin and his cousins into the runabout and head to the Ojibway Club, where they'll work off more energy at a kids' tennis clinic.

It's 5 p.m., back at the cottage. The rest of the dinner crowd is arriving in half an hour: four more adults, six more kids. Time to address those before-dinner snacks. But first: "I'm trying to be chillax, but I'm not happy with the table," Trish says. "Girls, are you open to feedback?" Olivia and Sophie have set it while Trish was off with the boys. Three small metal pails—yellow, green, and red—are arranged down its middle, each with colour-coordinated checked napkins rolled up inside. Trish approves the look. The coloured acrylic wineglass to the left of each place setting? Not so much. "Why don't you switch them to the glass ones?" she suggests. "They're nicer for drinking. And they go on the right."

Trish pulls out jars from the fridge and bags from the cupboards. The only made-from-scratch snack is Lee's red pepper jam, paired with a wedge of cheese. The antipasto is store-bought (her favourite brand: Catherine's); as are the guacamole and the salsa. Easy-peasy. But, somehow, by the time she has it all artfully arranged in baskets, on boards, in Mason jars, and in '70s-vintage bowls, the snacks look special. Fussed over.

"Kara is bringing what we're missing—the salad and the ice cream," says Trish.

But Lee is worried. "What if it's not vanilla?"

"It is what it is. Let it go," sings Trish.

The boat arrives, and kids fly out—"Guess what we're having?" Fin announces to one of the new arrivals. "Blueberry Boy Bait!" Dinner, as usual, will feature two seatings. "It's like a diner. We feed the kids first, then reset the table, sweep the floor, and the adults eat," Trish explains. Tonight, though, the "kid seating" is at the picnic table outside. Chuck heads off to start the fire.

On Zephyr Island, the only barbecue is a stone one, which Chuck and a friend built decades ago. To adjust the heat, you move the grates up and down, and the "cover" is an enormous long-handled

EASY, PEASY, SUMMER'S BREEZY
{*Continued from page 114*}

frying pan, the type old-school Georgian Bayers use for a shore lunch. "If you can cook on this, you can cook on anything," he says. He grills one leg of lamb for the kids, then lets the fire build up again while they eat, before putting on "the adult meat." It arrives perfectly medium-rare, and Trish serves it right from the thick board her dad sliced it on. The side dishes have come together quickly—and everything, the adults agree, tastes wonderful. Good ingredients, simply prepared. With good friends and family around the table, Trish is right: what more could a cottager want?

Well, Blueberry Boy Bait. With ice cream. (Yes, vanilla.) "No upgrading or trading pieces," warns Chuck.

"We need a Blueberry Boy Repellent," says Kara, as the kids scour crumbs out of the first pan and eye the second.

The morning after the night before: texts have already started between Trish and sister-in-law Nancy, who will be arriving after lunch. "Bring more milk." "What time for pickup at marina?" "Need cranberry juice."

Cereal, homemade granola, yogurt, milk, and raspberries (from Chuck and Lee's farm) are laid out on the counter to provide sustenance for the early risers until the rest of breakfast is ready. "Making pancakes is the boys' thing," Trish says—but Fin and his cousins are still fast asleep in the bunkie. So Charlotte has subbed in, whisking with five-year-old style. No one seems concerned about the mess—or the outcome.

"You can't go wrong with any mix, especially if you throw in some fresh blueberries," her mother says.

"I don't want blueberries in them," says Charlotte. They compromise—some with, some without. Miraculously, the boys arrive in the kitchen just as breakfast is ready. The pancakes disappear with remarkable speed, and Chuck has no reason to be upset: no one leaves even a smidgen of maple syrup on a plate.

"Only 17 for dinner tonight," says Trish. "It's totally simple."

Thankfully, writer and former Cottage Life *editor Ann Vanderhoof loves maple syrup.*