



Issue LXXXIV

APRIL 2026



SPECIAL ISSUE: TRIBUTE TO FERMO

[This issue dedicated to the memory of our FERMO. It deals with issues that pertain to the passing of a loved one, grief and dealing with loss.]

TRIBUTE TO FERMO: In memory

MEMORIES OF FERMO: In photos

HEIR TO THE THRONE: A mini Schnauzer coming

NAME THE NEW 'GUY': The list of names keeps changing

COMMUNITY DESK: Personal safety, Rabies Vax, Spotlight Series

POLITICAL DESK: Messages from political officials

RICHARD'S DESK: Grief and coping with loss

OPINIONS & COMMENTS: Another reason your taxes are high

HEALTH: Support systems for those is grief

BOOKS: Reviews of what we read

TECHNOLOGY: Consolation by distraction

LAST WORD: Thank you everyone!

TRIBUTE TO FERMO



FERMO

Mar. 2012 - Mar. 2026

Fermo passed away this spring, a part of our family for 14 years. Wonderful years, filling our home with joy, love, and his special joie de vivre spirit.

He was much handsomer than his photos show...a debonair, handsome guy, the Cary Grant of the dog world.

He lived a full life, filling our home with his special, spirited heart and soul. His passing has affected us deeply, very deeply.

So many snippets to remember...

His coming to our home 14 years ago

He travelled in my arms on a soft towel and was very calm the whole trip to his new family and home.

Puppy school

His attendance in a training school for puppies, amazing. He was the youngest in the class but was valedictorian winning the prize as the best puppy in the class...a real smartie and he proved it.

Housebreaking/training

This guy was a natural. A bark, his signal...to go out or to come in, while travelling as a backseat passenger, in the house, in the bedroom. Those single barks were his notification: "I gotta go" or "Hey, I'm done." Incredible..., very few accidents his whole life....absolutely amazing.

Traveling

An absolutely amazing passenger, quiet, calm, snoozing on the back seat until he needed a bathroom break. Then, a single bark. Never ever an accident in the car. The best passenger.

Hotels and travel accommodation

He was amazing in any travel accommodation. Never barking in the room. Even when we left him for a while, as long as he had a radio going, he was calm and quiet. The only time he was anxious was on an elevator. He trembled there until it stopped...never liked them ever.

Winters, rainy days

We shoveled a long, curved path in the backyard, and he'd go out and roam around for a while, duration dictated by the weather, but he always chose a few minutes stay even in the coldest, snowiest days. But he was dressed in a woolen coat especially made for him by Nadia. She also made a water-proof one for him for those rainy days.

Walks

He really enjoyed his walks, sniffing and smelling the shrubs and grass along the walk. He would go forever until his last month or so, when he would sit down as

if to say, “Sorry, I can’t go much further,” but he still made it home. We made the walks very short for him.

At home

He watched TV with us in the family room. Never on the couch or in a lap, as he preferred his soft cushion mats on the floor in front of the TV.

In the office

He also enjoyed being in my home office on his mat, though he occasionally jumped up on the couch and snoozed while I worked at the computer. A bark, jumping down signalled bathroom-break time. Otherwise, he snoozed there on the couch till I was done.

Eating

From his first day, he recognized where his bowls were. Each day fresh food and water, kibble mixed with doggy dinners like Caesar or with roasted or poached chicken. When we ate, he hung around for table bits nibbling on almost everything except veggies. Pasta was a favourite or anything with a bit of tomato sauce; after all his name was “Fermo, ” Italian (for stop.)

His name

For years, Nadia hesitated about getting a dog. Finally

relenting, she said, a small one, please. I hunted for the biggest small dog I could find, a Scottish Terrier. I asked her for a name for the dog. She walked along further, imagining the Scottie with us and said aloud, “Fermo, Fermo” as if she were asking him to stop. The name stuck.

Everywhere, everybody

And everybody knew him. From neighbourhood to City Hall, Fermo was known by everyone because he went everywhere. Councillors, the Mayor, the neighbourhood association presidents, neighbourhood kids, even the kids in the neighbourhood elementary schoolyard. Everybody knew Fermo, and Fermo acknowledged everyone.

Gone and we hurt

He’s gone, and our hearts are broken. We miss him badly.

Rest in peace Fermo

May you rest in peace and bring your joy to the angels with whom you now walk.

Ciao bello...see you again someday.

REMEMBERING...











HEIR TO THE THRONE:

The mini Schnauzer - A Small Dog with a Big Job

Born to Work, Not Just Look Cute

In the late 1800s, German farmers wanted a smaller version of the Standard Schnauzer—a dog tough enough to hunt rats, but small enough to live comfortably in the home.

They crossed the Standard Schnauzer with smaller breeds like the Affenpinscher to create a compact, energetic ratter.

These dogs could:

- Hunt vermin
- Guard property
- Alert owners to danger

They were essentially a farm's built-in security system.

From Rat Catcher to Watchdog

Miniature Schnauzers still carry these instincts today. Their alert personality—and tendency to bark—comes directly from their working past. They were bred to notice everything.

A Breed with Deep Roots

Schnauzer-type dogs date back to the 1500s in Germany. Originally called 'Pinschers', they worked as stable dogs, ratters, and farm helpers.

The name 'Schnauzer' comes from the German word for 'snout' or 'moustache'—a nod to their iconic beard.

Crossing the Ocean

Miniature Schnauzers arrived in North America in the 1920s and quickly became popular.

They were officially recognized by the American Kennel Club (AKC) in 1926.

Why People Love them

Miniature Schnauzers became beloved companions because they are:

- Intelligent
- Loyal
- Protective
- Small but confident

They combine the best traits of a working dog and a family pet.

The Bottom Line

The Miniature Schnauzer is more than just a cute dog—it's a hardworking breed with a bold personality.

That famous beard isn't just for looks—it belongs to a dog that once took its job very seriously.

NAME THE NEW 'GUY'

Briefly:

- **Name the new pup;** The new pup needs a name. It's a painful search.

Naming the new guy is proving to be a challenge...

First of all, replacing Fermo has been heart rendering. We ache over his passing and replacing him just like that seems cold and insensitive. It isn't. We miss him terribly. Every part of our home feels empty without him but we can't bring him back. So we feel, giving a new pup a home may be honouring Fermo, a kind of 'thanks Fermo, you were fantastic and we miss you terribly.'

Another Scottie was too much but we loved our Scottie so much, we needed to stay with the same group. A mini Schnauzer is much like a Scottie, a terrier and terriers are the best. Intelligent, independent, lively but reasonably so. They require some exercise, though again within reasonable limits. After all, Nadia and I seniors. So long walks, a lot of energetic activity is out of the cards.

Why Schnauzers?

Research and exploration eliminated many appealing breeds, many because they are too big, too energetic or require too much exercise. Schnauzer look like a good fit, personalities much like Scotties and the face that only an Scottie lover can love, a full beard and bushy eyebrows.

Naming him is the challenge

"Fermo" was such a unique name. Everyone, once they heard the story behind his naming, never forgot the name. But calling the next guy 'Fermo' just doesn't sit comfortably. Maybe it's nostalgia, maybe a painful reminder of the loss. Likely something along that line but we need to find a new name.

We are open to suggestions and have a list of names started, a list that gets additions, deletions and modifications regularly.

Here are some names on our fluctuating list:

Cisco

Nico

Fermo 2

Niko

Guermo

Pancho

Will you suggest a name for us to consider and send it to
zippyonego@gmail.com

Community Board

Briefly:

- **News, events:** Notable events to put on your calendar for April

Join Us for a Special Community Information Session

Presented by the South Pickering Seniors' Club
for Pickering residents 55+

Situational Awareness & Community Safety Best Practices

Guest Speaker: Brian Gonyou, 25 year Veteran,
Canadian Armed Forces, Human Performance Officer



Ward 1 Regional Councillor
Maurice Brenner



Ward 2 Regional Councillor
Linda Cook



Ward 2 City Councillor
Mara Nagy



Thursday, April 2, 2026

Doors Open: 5:30 pm Presentation: 6:00 pm. Light refreshments provided
East Shore Community Centre: South Pickering Seniors' Club
Main Hall: 910 Liverpool Road South, Pickering




Take Charge of Your Health: The Power of Your Health History

Presented by Silver Scribe, Seneca Polytechnic

This is an empowering session explaining the importance of maintaining up-to-date health records. This is information that becomes crucial in case of an emergency, on vacations or if a health issue arises at home and medical professionals need current health information.

George Ashe Library, April 2, 6:30pm



Rabies Vaccination and Microchip Clinic
Saturday, April 18, 2026
11:00 am to 4:00 pm
(cats from 11 am - 12 pm)

View the [event poster](#), and visit our [Rabies Prevention web page](#) for more information about this important initiative.

Cost:
\$30 per service (cash preferred)

Location:
Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex
O'Brien Room
1867 Valley Farm Road, Pickering, ON

- Park in the back near the arena entrance (east side of building).
- Please arrive with pets on a leash or in a carrier.
- This event is first come first serve (no registration is required).

To reduce stress for cats, 11 am - 12 pm is **reserved for cats only**. From 12 pm to 4 pm, both cats and dogs will be seen.

Dogs must be leashed and cats must be in carriers.

Special thanks to our partners Durham Region Health Department and Millennium City Veterinary Hospital.

For questions or concerns, please email animalservices@pickering.ca or call 905.427.0093

Please note that all dogs entering any City event must comply with the City's [Responsible Pet Ownership By-law \(6811/07\)](#) and Ontario's [Dog Owners Liability Act](#), which state that dogs who have characteristics similar to a Pit Bull must wear a muzzle.

Animal Services is responsible for reuniting lost pets with their owners, pet licensing, pet adoptions, enforcing municipal animal related by-laws, and educating the public on the importance of being a responsible pet owner.

Visit pickering.ca/animals or call 905.683.7575 for more information.

POLITICAL Desk:

News from councillors, elected reps and community associations

Briefly:

- **Monthly:** Each month elected officials and neighbourhood associations are invited to submit messages to The Szpinner.

From the Pickering City Council





Mayor Ashe with his buddy, “Hobbes”

Message from the Mayor

Like so many dog owners, I know how deeply our canine companions become part of our lives. My dog Hobbes is a constant source of joy, balance, and perspective, whether we’re out for a walk or simply spending quiet time together. Dogs have an incredible way of reminding us to slow down, stay present, and appreciate the simple moments.

I also want to extend my heartfelt condolences to Richard and his family on the loss of their beloved Scottie, Fermo. Anyone who has loved a dog understands the depth of that bond and how hard their absence can be. My thoughts are with you during this difficult time.

I hope you’ll also consider joining me for Pickering’s first **Telephone Town Hall of 2026** on **Thursday, April 9 at 7:00 p.m.** It’s an easy way to stay informed, ask questions, and share your ideas about our city’s future, just answer the call and be part of the conversation.

Register here: <https://mayorashetownhall.eventbrite.com>

I look forward to connecting with you.



Mayor

Kevin Ashe



Phil Warne
President



Peggy Bowie
President
Ph 416.903.3284



Scott Loyst
President

RICHARD's Desk:

Briefly:

- **Grief:** We are grieving the loss of our Fermo. In that grief, we found articles that may help others struggling with grief

Understanding grief: What older adults and families need to know

McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

Grief in later life is often layered—shaped by personal loss, changing roles, and sometimes the responsibility of supporting younger family members through loss as well. Older adults may be coping with the death of a partner, sibling, friend, or other loved one such as a pet, while also helping children, grandchildren, or others in the family navigate grief.

Understanding how grief works, and how it may show up differently across ages and relationships, can help you make sense of your own experience and better support others. Family physician **Dr. Erin Gallagher** explains grief as a natural but complex response to loss and highlights when additional support may be helpful.

Read Dr. Gallagher's full text at [transcript](#).

Key Takeaways

- Grief is a **natural, non-linear process** that changes over time
- Everyone **experiences grief differently**, shaped by factors such as culture, age, personality, supports, and the nature of the loss
- Older adults may face **layered losses** while also supporting family members across generations
- Children and teens **express grief differently** and need tailored support
- Around **1 in 10 bereaved people experience prolonged grief** and may benefit from professional support
- Adults can play an important role in **modelling healthy coping** for children and

teens

What is grief? (and how it changes over time)

Grief is not a disease to be cured, **but a natural emotional, physical, and psychological response** to losing someone or something important. It does not follow a predictable timeline and is experienced differently by each person.

While *the pain of loss may never entirely disappear*—because the love for the person remains—the way we carry grief often changes over time. **For many people, it becomes lighter, allowing space for adaptation, meaning, and joy again.**

How grief affects your body, mind, and emotions

Grief is a "whole-body" experience. It impacts us across several dimensions:

- ❑ **Physical:** You may experience fatigue, headaches, stomach upset, or *changes in sleep* and appetite.
- ❑ **Cognitive:** It can affect concentration, mental energy, and the ability to manage everyday demands.
- ❑ **Emotional:** Common feelings include shock, irritability, *anger, anxiety*, and guilt.
- ❑ **Spiritual:** Grief can shake your sense of security, faith, and how you make sense of the world.

How adults can support grieving *children and teens*

Adults in a caregiving or supportive role may find themselves helping children and teens through loss while managing their own grief. Understanding that younger people often grieve differently from adults can make that support more helpful.

Children and grief

Children often experience "**bursts**" of grief. They may show intense emotion or behavioural regression one moment and be playing happily the next. To support them, Dr. Gallagher suggests focusing on the "**Three Cs**":

1. **Cared for:** Ensure they know they will continue to be looked after.
2. **Contagious:** Clarify that death is not something they can "catch."
3. **Cause:** Reassure them that they did not cause the death of their loved one.

Teenagers and young adults

Teens often experience intense and shifting emotions and may feel more comfortable opening up to peers than to family members. They may also worry about how a loss will affect their future. Adults can help by keeping the door open—letting teens know they are

available to listen whenever the young person is ready.

Normal grief vs. prolonged grief: When to seek help

For many bereaved people, the most intense pain of grief gradually softens over time as they begin to reconnect with daily life. However, around **1 in 10 bereaved people experience prolonged grief**, in which grief remains especially intense, persistent, and difficult to integrate into everyday life.

Signs of prolonged grief (*persisting for a year or more* in adults) include:

- A constant yearning or preoccupation with the deceased.
- Feeling that life has lost its meaning or purpose.
- Avoiding all reminders of the loss or feeling emotionally numb.
- Difficulty performing normal routines or re-engaging with social activities.

Professional support

If you or someone you love feels overwhelmed by grief for a prolonged period, or is having difficulty functioning or finding meaning again, reaching out to a healthcare professional is a positive step. Professional support may include grief-focused counselling or other evidence-based therapies, depending on the person's needs and situation.

Learn more about this topic with [Supporting Bereavement in Later Life: What Older Adults Need to Know](#).

Practical ways to cope and support others

While grief unfolds differently for everyone, some practical strategies may help people cope, feel supported, and make space for remembrance and adjustment over time:

- Create Memory Rituals:** Writing letters, lighting candles, or creating a memory box can provide a meaningful space for expressing emotions and remembering the person who died.
- Stay Active:** Physical activity, such as walking, stretching, yoga, or cycling, may support well-being, reduce stress, and help re-establish routine.
- Lean on Community:** Reaching out to friends, family, faith communities, or support groups can reduce the sense of isolation that often accompanies grief.
- Maintain Routine:** Especially for children, maintaining a sense of normalcy provides a foundational sense of security.

Children often learn how to respond to loss by watching the adults around them. When adults express emotions openly, maintain routines, and seek support when needed, they

model healthy coping and resilience.

Helpful resources

For age-appropriate resources, consider visiting [KidsGrief.ca](https://www.kidsgrief.ca), [YouthGrief.ca](https://www.youthgrief.ca), or [MyGrief.ca](https://www.mygrief.ca) for support tailored to different ages, situations, and types of loss. These resources may be helpful whether you are grieving yourself or supporting someone else through grief.

Commentary

Opinion



Briefly:

- **Hight taxes:** A contributing factor to your high property tax.

Commentary

Opinion



His Royal Highness Kevin Ashe makes the princely salary of \$319,890.95 which is almost \$100,000 more than Olivia Chow, Mayor of Toronto. She earns \$235,850.94.

Could this possibly a contributing factor in making taxes in Pickering so high?

Read the full story -> [SALARIES](#)

HEALTH:

Briefly:

- **Coping with grief:** Therapeutic rituals to deal with grief



The Bottom Line

- Grief is the emotional pain associated with the death of a loved one.
- Rituals play an important role in the treatment of grief in all cultures. They must be taken into account to alleviate the distress of the survivors and enable them to cope with their grief.
- However, when death occurs in violent, unnatural, or traumatic situations, some people may not be able to cope with their grief.
- Rituals, other than funerals, are also used in therapeutic interventions to reduce the negative effects of prolonged or traumatic bereavement. They take place in a symbolic reality that allows you to take a certain emotional distance and create a space to feel and express your emotions.

If you have lost a loved one during the COVID-19 pandemic or any other traumatic event, you may still be struggling to grieve. From one country to another, from one community to another, and from one historical period to another, funeral rites help to overcome the death of a loved one by allowing mourning to begin, and this, while being surrounded by those close to them.

Families bereaved during pandemics or violent events have more difficulty in grieving because the rites are disrupted or sometimes impossible to perform, which disrupts the grief and bereavement process. Without being able to count on the support of the community and without being able to pay homage to the deceased, these people are at risk of prolonged and complicated grief, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other mental health problems.

Can rituals used in a therapeutic setting help people overcome prolonged and complicated grief?

What research tells us

A systematic review of 22 studies examined rituals and symbolic interventions aimed at reducing the symptoms of prolonged and traumatic grief in different populations.(1) These people experienced the death of a loved one in various circumstances: the death of a loved one by homicide or following a disappearance, a perinatal death, a genocide, elderly individuals who lose their life partner, professionals

who are close to death (for example, police officers or personnel in palliative-care settings).

Rituals used in therapy for prolonged grief are sensory acts performed in a structured way and using symbols. Whether conducted in groups or alone, under the benevolent guidance of a therapist or independently, at home or in public places, ritual experiences create an alternate symbolic reality that allows one to express one's emotions in a controlled and safe environment.

Different interventions are used in therapeutic rituals: meditating, communicating symbolically with the deceased or an imaginary friend, writing a letter, reading religious texts or poems, keeping objects and images to remember the deceased, lighting up candles, or holding a farewell ceremony.

The social aspect of the rituals, whether funerals or done as part of a therapeutic intervention, and the feeling of belonging to a community are one of the key functions of rituals in our society. Sharing grief is comforting and promotes cohesion and solidarity.

Almost all studies show significant positive effects of following a therapy for prolonged grief, including rituals to decrease symptoms associated with prolonged grief, such as depression, post-traumatic distress, hopelessness and panic behaviours, intrusive thoughts and loneliness. Additionally, some studies have reported improved memory, positive mood, personal growth, and integration of meaning.

The review also reveals that some immigrants and members of ethnic minority groups often exhibit persistent symptoms of grief. One possible explanation is the lack of rituals, whether because of the inability to perform culturally appropriate rituals or the disconnect between the cultural customs of the host country and their own cultural traditions.

Overcoming grief together

In the first few months after the loss of a loved one, the normal symptoms of grief gradually begin to subside. However, if these symptoms persist or worsen, you may be experiencing prolonged and complicated grief.

Signs and symptoms of prolonged and complicated grief can include:(2)

- Intense grief and persistent pain
- Difficulty focusing on anything other than the death of your loved one
- Difficulty accepting death or lingering bitterness
- A feeling of numbness or detachment
- A feeling that life has no meaning or purpose
- A lack of trust in others
- Inability to enjoy life or remember positive experiences
- Having trouble performing normal routines
- Isolating yourself from others and withdrawing from social activities
- Experiencing depression, deep sadness, or guilt

If you have these symptoms, or if you know someone who is going through prolonged and complicated grief, get help. Programs and services exist to support those experiencing grief. [Crisis Services Canada](#) provides a list of crisis and counselling centres across the country (including local bereavement support groups). These centres are there to help you.

Featured Resources

- **Blog Post:** [Grieving experiences in the context of a pandemic: how to support individual and collective grief](#)
- **Blog Post:** [Do not go through the ordeal alone: Grief in times of pandemics](#)
- **Web Resource Rating:** [Grief and COVID-19: Saying goodbye in the age of physical distancing](#)
- **Web Resource Rating:** [Complicated grief](#)
- **Web Resource Rating:** [Broken heart syndrome](#)
- **Evidence Summary:** [Pandemics like COVID-19 can negatively impact grief and bereavement](#)

Books Shelf...

Briefly:

- **Books:** mental escapism, tools for learning, cerebral alternatives to TV

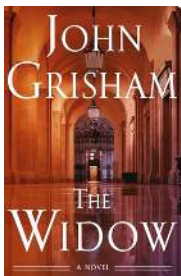


Richard keeps plowing, not shoveling, plowing away at his many books. You can read the **full list** of the books Richard has read and reviewed at his website the link -> [R_Reads](#)

Richard's recent reads:

My bedtime routine includes half an hour or so of reading before I call it a day, my way of winding down from the day.

My two most recent:

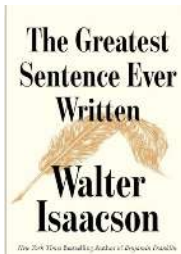


The Widow

John Grisham

A struggling small-town lawyer hits his pot of gold with an 80+ year old widow whose wealth may top millions. He becomes her executor and she is murdered while in the hospital. The story takes off from there.

Click -> [WIDOW](#)



The Greatest Sentence Ever Written

Water Isaacson

Every AmeriKan kid learns it off by heart and author Walter Isaacson dissects it in its full glory. There are many famous people responsible for its development and creation from Benjamin Franklik to Thomas Hobbes. It's a historical piece that more than just a cursory read.

Click -> [SENTENCE](#)

Technology Desk:

Briefly:

- **Scam based on grief:** - The Internet and web surfing can be useful ways to deal with grief as they provide distraction and information regarding loss.

Scammers exploit grief situations



Businesses are trying to cash in on grief, grab money from grieving families.

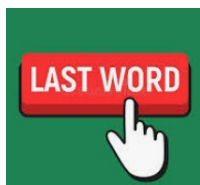
A Barrie family had family members receive obit notices relating to the death of their 44 year old nephew. The notices, a surprise, were from an unknown source.

It seems this company was in the business of mining funeral home obits and then posting their company written obits and then sending links to family members trying to generate sales of virtual candles or funeral floral arrangements. The company had absolutely no ties with the funeral home or with any of the deceased nephew's family.

Though not actually a scam or fraud as actual service was being

provided, this whole story does border scamming or fraud. It is an incredible attempted exploitation story.

Read the details at [GRIEF](#)



I hate winter, this one especially. Mounds of the white crappola on the porch, on the porch stairs, on the walkway, in the driveway...everywhere; no sooner it's shoveled, it's back with a vengeance, taunting me, laughing at our futile efforts to rid our walkways and driveway of the white 'garbage.' I have never complained about the other winters as much as I have the "Winter of 2025-26." It may be a factor of age. It may be muscle fatigue. No matter, I am fed up with it. The only redeemable aspect of this lament...we're into April finally. I can only hope the worst is over.

"March, in like a lamb, out like a lion." Oh how we hope. And vacationing somewhere has its own set of complaints. USA, fingerprinting and electronic invasion of privacy. Heaven help you if you have any anti-T**** stuff on your devices...Alligator Alcatraz.

Puerto Vallarta once was our southern getaway destination...now? Only if you want to get shot on the Malecon and love the smell of burning tires. The Mexican drug cartels may be worse than the Mafia. The Mafia guys are old, more laid back, less energetic and more into rest and relaxation while the Mexican boys...young, dynamic, energetic and "*machismo'd*" up to the eyeballs. No government troops or state police are going to tell them what to do. Oh my, it really is the winter of discontent in Mexico.

April showers finally!

Thank you every one...



It's gratifying to receive so many condolence messages regarding Fermo. Thank you everyone.



Richard
(with support from **Nadia**
and occasionally from **Fermo** too)



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