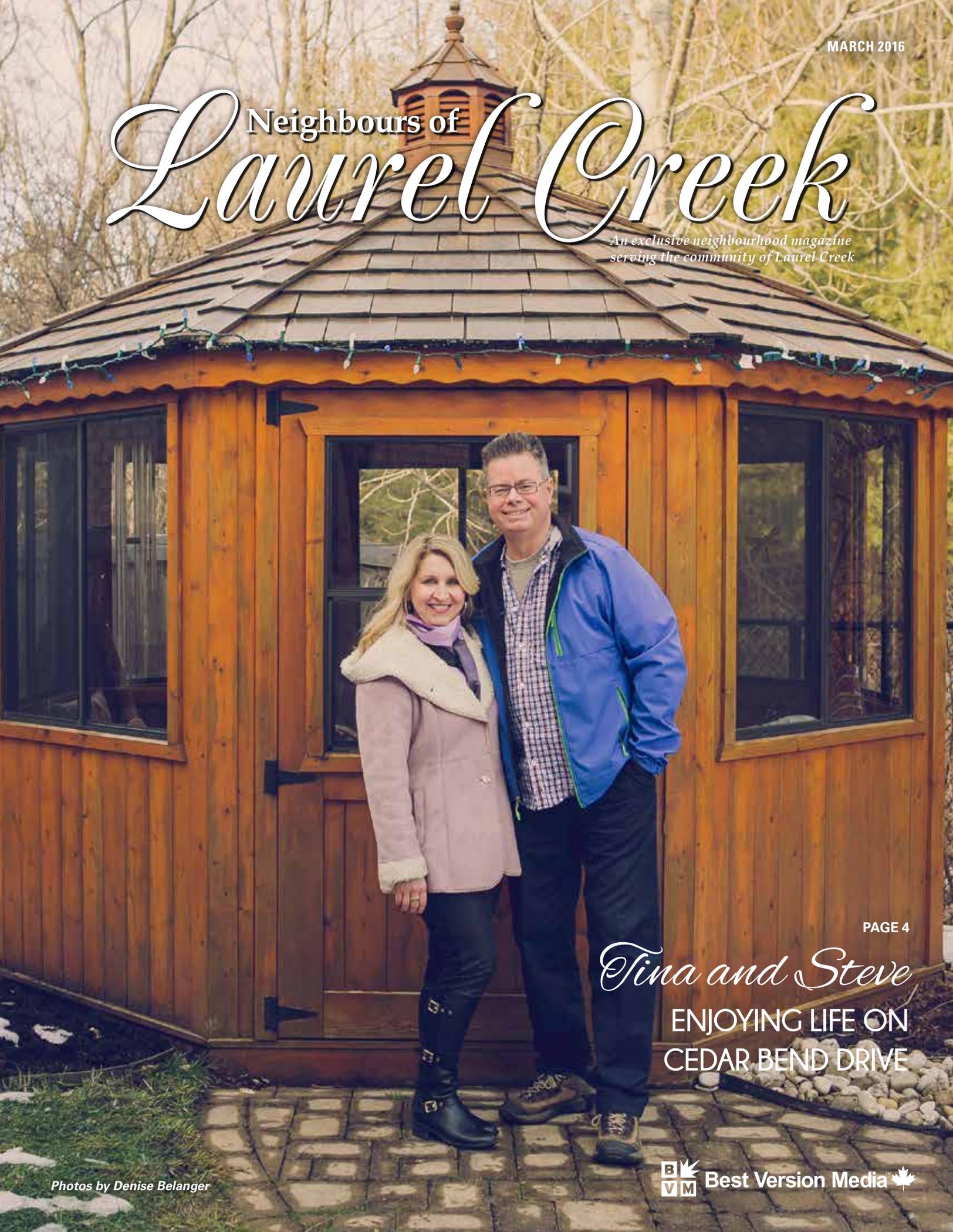


Neighbours of *Laurel Creek*

An exclusive neighbourhood magazine
serving the community of Laurel Creek



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Tina and Steve

ENJOYING LIFE ON
CEDAR BEND DRIVE

Furry family friend FOUND TO BE INSPIRING



By Dave Pink

TINA PLETT HAD ALWAYS WANTED A DOG. WHAT SHE COULDN'T KNOW IS THAT GETTING A DOG WOULD INSPIRE A WHOLE NEW APPROACH TO HER WORK AS AN EVENT PLANNER.

Tina and her husband, Steve Wiffen, acquired Bailee just a little over a year ago. Bailee is a whoodle – a cross between a Wheaton terrier and a poodle.

“Before now the timing just wasn’t right,” she reflects. “But I thought now that the kids are grown I would like a companion.”

Then, looking down at the newest member of the family, it occurred to her – there must be plenty of other people who also love their pets. So, she set out to organize the first ever K-W Pet Expo, to be held at the Kitchener Auditorium May 7 and 8.

“If everybody loves their pet as much as I do there should be a lot of interest in the show,” she says.

Tina is originally from Elliot Lake in northern Ontario. She has earned a psychology degree from the University of Waterloo and obtained a diploma in human resources from Conestoga College. For 12 years she was a law clerk in Toronto then set out in a new direction to launch the first-ever corporate concierge service in Waterloo Region, helping company owners with everyday errands.

“I love the professionalism of this area, and the opportunity for educational growth,” she says.

Steve grew up in Scarborough and came to the University of Waterloo to earn a degree in environmental science. For 31 years he’s been in the insurance and estate planning business, but life has not always been as routine as it might seem. For four hockey seasons – 1987 to 1991 – Steve wore the striped jersey and made the calls as a referee in the Ontario Hockey League, the top junior league in the province and the nurturing ground for those players who would rise to the professional ranks.

“I wore contact lenses so people wouldn’t see how blind I really was,” he now jokes.

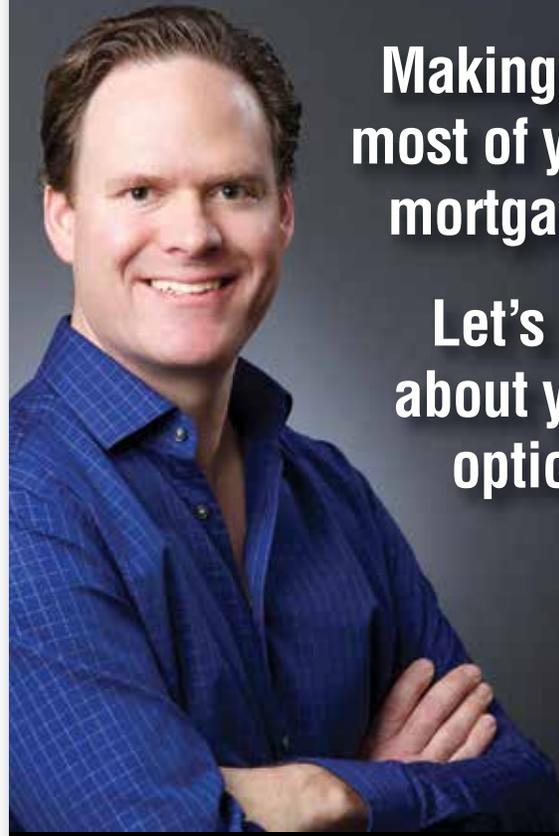
Still, he has some fond memories as the whistle-blower on some of the most notable rinks in Ontario – including, from time to time, the Kitchener Auditorium where he would referee Rangers games. He remembers plenty of games involving Eric Lindros, when he played for the Oshawa Generals, and vividly recalls a triple-overtime playoff game in 1990 between the Ottawa 67’s and the Peterborough Petes. But he’s most proud of the friendships and respect he earned from some of the game’s best coaches, including the legendary Brian Kilrea in Ottawa.

But, Steve says, a life on the road is not the best for a commission salesman, so he had to leave hockey behind to focus on his full-time job.

Tina and Steve moved from Baden into their home on Cedar Bend Drive



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seven years ago. "I felt at home here two weeks after we moved," says Steve.

The couple had originally wanted a lot big enough for a pool, but the proximity of the Laurel Creek Conservation Area led them to change their plans. So Tina and Steve decided instead to install a gazebo, to simulate the cottage experience.

Their summers are spent doing lengthy bicycle rides on the area's back roads, and in the winter they are frequently off skiing at some of the most challenging mountains in North America, including recent visits to Lake Placid, in New York, and Killington, Vermont.

The couple attends nearby Creekside Church.

Tina and Steve are not quite empty-nesters. James Simpson, Tina's son, shares the house and is in the co-op marketing program at Conestoga College. Others in the family include David Simpson, in a trades program; Steve's daughter Meghan Bradley, who's taking English at UW; and Brad Wiffen, a lawyer in Toronto.

Then there's Bailee. "We love the neighbourhood, and we got to know it a lot better since we got our dog," says Steve.

The pet expo will feature entertainment, displays and presentations from pet professionals including veterinarians, groomers and trainers. For more information see www.kwpetexpo.com