

# TORONTO LIFE

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**MOST RECENT:** Christopher Plummer will try to fake interest during Sound of Music reunion on Oprah (6 hours ago)

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**BEST OF THE CITY**

## Service

### RACCOON REMOVAL SERVICE

**AAA Gates Wildlife Control**

416-750-9453

AAA Gates Wildlife Control bills itself as “the Animal’s Choice,” and while many a critter might disagree, the company is a pioneer in humane wildlife removal: its urban animal control techniques were admired in a recent National Geographic doc. Fearless staff force varmints to move into a new den, then deodorize your attic and seal up the entry hole permanently. Removal starts at \$395.



### CAR DETAILER

**One-a-Minit Car Wash**

822 Church St., 416-961-2555

The steady stream of Escalades is a good indicator of the esteemed reputation of One-a-Minit Car Wash. (The framed photo of regular patron Tie Domi inside is another.) Individual detailing—leather shampooing, salt and scratch removal, trim cleaning—starts at \$50, with full service (three to four hours of precision handwashing, waxing and vacuuming) running \$150.



### HELICOPTER SERVICE TO COTTAGE COUNTRY

**National Helicopters**

905-893-2727



Bypass the 400 entirely in the comfort of a chartered chopper. National Helicopters flies to Muskoka Jack Bauer style—and in only an hour. Flights can be booked according to your schedule (from either the Island Airport, Buttonville or the company’s private heliport in Bolton). At 1,000 feet, every seat has a great view. Price starts at \$2,280 for a four-passenger whirlybird, and a six-passenger ride goes for \$2,680. Flights for golfers (Sergio Garcia is a fan of the service) carry four duffers and their clubs.

### IPOD SAVIOUR

**iRepair**

494 College St., 416-324-2764

Apple’s extortionate repair charges make it seem cheaper to simply buy the newest iPod model. For about a third of the price, local outfit iRepair will decode error messages, fix power problems and even undo water damage (replacing corroded circuit boards does the trick) on everything from Nanos to iPhones. Most same-day repairs run about \$40 to \$60, though staff say that some problems are solved at the diagnostic stage—entirely for free.

### BOOT CAMP

**Balance Fitness**

52 St. Clair Ave. E., 416-225-2623

Balance Fitness takes a four-pillar approach to well-being: health, knowledge, strength, joy. What they fail to mention is the accompanying excruciating pain. Thankfully, the facility’s soothing decor—kitted out with luxe furniture by Nienkämper—and small class size (membership is capped) take some of the sting away. The on-site RMT’s help, too. Day pass \$20.

### GREEN DRY CLEANER

**Dove Cleaners**

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- Druu and Alcohol Treatment

Hazelton Lanes, 87 Avenue Rd., 416-962-3900

At least one company really does get clothes cleaner without making the environment dirtier. Dove Cleaners has 19 outlets in the GTA and uses a toxin-free liquefied sand process called Green Earth Cleaning for all laundering and dry cleaning. (Bags, cardboard backing and hangers can be returned for recycling.) A new service removes spots from leather and suede—saviour of Uggs across the city. Dress shirt laundering starts at \$5.95.



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## **BIKE REPAIR**

### **Cycle Solutions**

444 Parliament St., 416-972-6948



Staffed as they are with cranky individualists, bike shops aren't necessarily known for their smooth customer service. Cycle Solutions is the exception, with a cadre of youthful experts who are surprisingly patient with the mechanically inept. They fix and primp mountain and road bikes (basic tune-ups start at \$30) and even offer call-ahead appointments for a \$5 deposit (so you'll be without your ride for only a day rather than a week).

## **24-HOUR PLUMBER**

### **Drain Works**

416-486-0000

Bad plumbers are as common as leaky faucets—which is why Drain Works' consummate professionalism and guaranteed work is such a relief. A crack team of specialists maintains two separate fleets of fully stocked trucks (one for plumbing, one for drains, so there's no running out to "get a part") and will beat any quote by 10 per cent. Most calls are answered in under an hour. Best of all, they clean up after themselves.



## **TATTOO ARTIST**

### **David Glantz**

1528 Dundas St. W., 647-342-8494

You'll have to get on a six-month waiting list, but it's worth it. David Glantz is the go-to tat guy for everyone from New York Ranger Nik Antropov to Billy Talent's Ben Kowalewicz (Glantz gave him a full sleeve, the theme of which is "transcending our immediate world"). Known for his use of vivid colour and vegan-friendly pigment, Glantz went solo last fall, opening the Archive Tattoo Studio just north of Trinity-Bellwoods. From \$80.

## **PET SPA**

### **Tire Biter**

104A and B Scollard St., 416-920-9663

Every pooch enjoys a good pampering. Since 1992, Tire Biter has been offering a full complement of Rover-revitalizing services, from a salon (expert stylists can do all breeds) to slumber parties (dogs are taken home by staffers) to a very discerning daycare (because no kennels or cages are used, animals are strictly screened for compatibility). And if you miss your furry friend, you can check in via a Doggy Cam.

## **PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR**

### **Investigators Group**

2061 McCowan Rd., 416-955-9450



Convinced your spouse is getting too chummy with the Grocery Gateway guy? Or some Bernie Madoff manqué's playing fast and loose with your retirement savings? The Investigators Group's crack team of gumshoes (some ex-cops, others ex-accountants) will dig up the dirt with discretion. PIs provide comprehensive service, from undercover corporate surveillance to 24-hour bodyguard protection. Free consultations are available; fees generally run \$75 an hour.

## **DIVORCE LAWYER**

### **Harold Niman**

1235 Bay St., 416-921-1700

Each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way, Tolstoy said, and litigator Harold Niman makes sure that when things go splitsville, the unhappiest members get their rightful spoils. Niman has made headlines before, scoring record settlements for Cheryl Lebovic (\$75,000 a month) and Peter Nygård's ex, Kaarina Pakka. More recently, he represented a father in a high-profile landmark case of "parental alienation" that equated the syndrome with child abuse. \$690 per hour.



## **LANDSCAPER**

## Plant Architect

101 Spadina Ave., 416-979-2012

The three principals at Plant Architect have a knack for turning homes inside-out. For horticultural doyenne Marjorie Harris, they built a Christo-style canopy and an addition that extends her dining room into the garden. For video artist Richard Fung's garden, a fence with sliding slats transforms a tiny backyard into a living sculpture of light and vegetation. Bigger commissions—the green roof of the ROM (you can see it, but unless you're a bird you can't touch it) and the soon-to-be-revamped Nathan Phillips Square—are no less whimsical.

## ANTIQUE RUG CLEANING

### Turco-Persian Rug Co.

452 Richmond St. E., 416-366-0707

One of the most trusted names in the business—even insurance companies call them to verify claims—the century-old Turco-Persian Rug Co. remains the city's preferred place to restore rugs to their original lustre. Each carpet is handwashed with water and biodegradable detergent, then air-dried (never dry cleaned). Trucks will pick up anywhere in the GTA, but customers save 20 per cent on cleaning charges by hauling carpets in themselves.

## MASSAGE THERAPIST

### Johnny Vos

246 King St. E., 416-703-4878



Johnny Vos may be built like a Maple Leafs enforcer, but his fingers are as magical as David Blaine's. Over the past decade, he has built an empire of three tasteful, well-appointed clinics with a wide range of services, from deep tissue to pregnancy massage. He's usually busy with movie stars and bank execs, but Vos also gives first-time clients a free half-hour massage, no strings attached. An average one-hour goes for \$85.

## FINANCIAL REHABILITATION

### Robert Shier

45 St. Clair Ave. W., 416-967-6772

Bankruptcies in Canada are up 50 per cent over last year. Those staring down the gun barrel of insolvency would be wise to give Robert Shier a call. Downturn-dazed entrepreneurs are flocking to the affable bankruptcy trustee (and taekwon do black belt). Shier, who takes on a mix of corporate and personal work, combines a lawyer's bluntness with the consoling manner of a shrink.

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Illustrations by James Braithwaite

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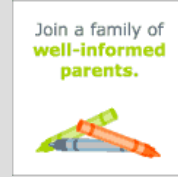
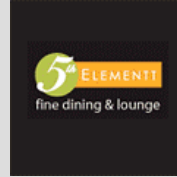
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