

We have our eye on Laura Reinsborough

by Elaine O'Connor



Growing up in Sackville, New Brunswick, Laura Reinsborough was used to fresh vegetables from her father's garden. When she moved to Toronto to pursue environmental studies at York University, she lost that access to agriculture. But volunteering at the Spadina Museum's heritage orchard planted an idea. "I realized there were so many fruit trees tucked away in neighbourhoods," says the 27-year-old. She found apples, pears, apricots and plums rotting on homeowners' lawns. So she vowed to rescue the city's forgotten fruit.

In 2008 she launched Not Far From The Tree, a non-profit that harvests fruit for free in three downtown areas. Volunteer pickers receive a third of the bounty, homeowners keep a third, and the rest of the crop is distributed (by bicycle or cart, of course) to six shelters and charities. In their first year, they gleaned 3,000 pounds of fruit from city trees, and this time around they picked nearly 5,000 more by the end of the season. "These trees have become an asset to the whole community," Reinsborough explains.

The group also supports the local-food movement by teaching others how to care for trees and preserve fruit. She says the project has given her far more than a pantry full of produce: "It's helped me put down roots in my own neighbourhood."

Yes, your
butt looks
GREAT
in those jeans!

HAVE YOU HEARD?

by Anna-Kaisa Walker

The anonymous do-gooders of Operation Beautiful are on a mission to change our body images. Armed with sticky notes and Sharpies, these grassroots gals have tagged clothing-store changing stalls with messages like, "Yes, your butt looks GREAT in those jeans!" Here's to stopping the fat talk, one mirror at a time.

From the headlines BBC.com, "Cambodia to cancel land mine pageant" by Siri Agrell

At first, the Cambodian government's decision to ban a beauty pageant for female land mine victims seemed sensible. The idea of women with missing limbs sashaying down the runway in pursuit of a sparkly crown is decidedly cringeworthy. But visit the website for the Miss Landmine organization and it's hard not to be won over. With the motto "Everybody has the right to be beautiful," the event strives to boost victims' self-esteem while bringing attention to the estimated four to six million unexploded land mines that affect nearly half of all Cambodian villages. That's a worthy cause — so is the government really trying to protect its female citizens, or do they just want to keep their troubled history away from centre stage?

It's time to... by Tralee Pearce

START

zoning out. A joint research team from Stanford University and the University of British Columbia recently examined the brain activity of people who confessed they were zoning out. They discovered that the active areas were ones associated with meditative self-reflection and goal-oriented thought. This suggests that mind wandering can help us work through crucial, long-term thinking and also lead to creative flashes, which is why we tend to solve the mystery of the lost keys out of the blue.

STOP

impersonating celebrities on Twitter. First Christopher Walken, then Margaret Atwood, then the president of Lithuania: Is no one safe from the barrage of fake celebrity accounts? Twitter isn't about to take this lying down, slapping verification badges on some profiles and deleting known impersonations. For now, authentication is limited to celebs and major organizations; no word on any plans to shut down Canadian transgressors like the fake (yet hilarious) Peter Mansbridge. He would be missed.

Crush
of the
month

by Siri Agrell



Alexander Skarsgård

Normally we like our men a little younger than 1,000 years old. And human. But Alexander Skarsgård, the Swedish actor (and son of Stellan) who plays vampire sheriff Eric Northman in *True Blood*, has managed to imbue his sunlight-fearing character with a smoldering appeal. The sexy Scandinavian has been famous since childhood in his home country and had bit parts in *Zoolander* and *Generation Kill*, but he didn't break through in North America until HBO's steamy vamp drama. Could it be the fangs?