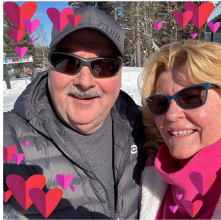


# The Great North Arrow



Written by Our People...For Our People....est. 2010

## Writers Bio: Debbie Ireland



Hi, I write the Coach's Corner column for the Great North Arrow.

I was born and raised in Toronto's east end. I lost my Mom when I was 15, so I had to grow up quickly, to help raise my sisters who were 6 and 7.

My first place of employment was Dominion Stores Ltd. when I was 15 and going to school. After that I was a front desk clerk at a high end hotel in Toronto. Then I worked as a ground hostess for a privately owned corporate jet company at Toronto airport. I became employed by the Toronto Transit Commission as an operator of streetcars, buses, the now torn down LRT and the longest time spent in the subway, until I retired in 2007.

I met my incredible husband Brad, a co-worker at the TTC, 32 years ago. We spent many years driving the same train together, which everyone referred to us as the "Dream Team". We'll be married 30 wonderful years in April 2025. We bought our home outside South River in the 90's while we were still working, visiting every weekend for 10 years until retirement.

We love the peace of the north, the opposite of our childhoods in Toronto. I've been coming north since I was born. My Great-Grandparent's lived in Sprucedale and I have extended family scattered all the way up Highway 11 to Smooth Rock Falls.

Some of the things I enjoy are golfing, ATVing, kayaking, gardening and the enjoyment of wildlife. Nothing beats having a moose look in your window!

Brad and I became involved in the Almaguin Special Olympics in 2011. We became coaches for bowling. It truly is one of the greatest joys in our life. The athletes are all now our extended family. There's nothing comparable to our time spent with the athletes. I was thrilled when Cyndi asked me to write a column for Special Olympics. I love the joy it brings when the athletes see their names or photos in the paper! I'm by no means a writer, but I do my best for the athletes.

Brad and I love our fur babies and we've had many, mostly rescues. They are our kids and they complete our wonderful, fulfilling life in the north. I hope you enjoy my column.