

WHAT'S MY FAVOURITE STORY TO WRITE THIS YEAR?

RAHUL GUPTA REFLECTS ON HIS PROFILE OF NEW HORIZONS OF TORONTO



RAHUL GUPTA Column

In a busy newsroom like ours, once you're done with a story it's on to the next. There's little time in this job for reflection, not when the next deadline or scoop could be moments away.

So sitting down to look over my work in an effort to choose my favourite story of 2018 was a nice change in pace and an opportunity to be reminded of the dozens of people whose compelling tales I had a chance to share over the past year.

There are so many examples I could choose as

my favourite, but the one piece that comes to mind is my September profile of the New Horizons players.

New Horizons of Toronto is the local offshoot of an international music program seeking to reunite lapsed or long-aspiring musicians with their musical instrument of choice. It gives many of the participants a chance to rekindle a lost love for music and become part of a close-knit community in the process.

As frustrating as this job can be sometimes, I could never imagine myself going years, maybe decades, and not practising at least some sort of journalism. In the case of the New Horizons players I interviewed back in late summer, they for many reasons had to put away their instruments to focus on other aspects of their lives. But the idea of one day playing music again was something they just couldn't shake.

Ellie Meit, for example,



Band president Randy Kligerman (left) jams with Bill Whitbread and Gary Christie in the Salvation Army church where they are a part of The New Horizons band, which is made up of older adults who have never played music before but always wanted to.

hadn't played flute since her high school graduation. Nearly four decades later, through New Horizons, she's a regular player, cheerfully ignoring the chronic arthritis in her fin-

gers just so she can indulge her passion.

Sometimes music can help us get over a loss. When my mother passed away several years ago, I probably listened to six or

seven albums a day for weeks to process my pain.

For Sue MacLellan, joining New Horizons allowed her to leave the cocoon she'd sealed herself in following the passing of her

wife, and reclaim her life. Now MacLellan plays the trumpet with joy, stealing any second she can to practise.

I have to talk about the amazing photos my colleague Justin Greaves took for the story. Justin is a singular talent and I am lucky to work alongside him and get the opportunity to watch him at work. His portraits perfectly capture the pride the musicians have not only for their talents, but for each other.

So that's my favourite story of the year, and a reminder that no matter how long it's been, no matter for how many years, there will always be a chance to reclaim something you've lost.

Read the full story, go to bit.ly/newhorizon-slayers.

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