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FREE Thursday, December 23, 2021 Volume 41, Issue 50



CHRISTMAS FUN ON THE FARM – From November 20 through December 23, Downey's Farm has been celebrating the holidays with their Christmas at the Farm event. Each year Santa makes the trip down to Downey's Farm to meet with families and give out gifts. There's also been the opportunity to see the elves' workshop, take pictures, enjoy wagon rides and hot chocolate, and visit farm animals. **PHOTOS BY ROB PAUL**

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Mayor Thompson reflects on the highlights and challenges of 2021

BY ROB PAUL

Despite another year defined by the COVID-19 pandemic, Mayor Allan Thompson says he is proud of what his Council was able to achieve for the Town of Caledon in 2021.

As the year comes to an end, Thompson spoke with the Caledon Citizen about some of the highlights of 2021, the challenges, and what he and Council are focused on for 2022.

"I've got to say that we wouldn't have been able to get what we did done without the commitment of Council," he said. "I've

got an awesome Council that has done a terrific job, and everyone rolled up their sleeves. Again, in another COVID year and it looks like we'll be entering 2022 the same way, and we've just got to constantly pivot, but through that, we pretty much honoured and delivered everything that we wanted to on the budget."

Though the pandemic has been tough, and he says the impacts and effects of it continue to draw on municipal resources, he says he is thrilled over the resilience of the community with Peel Region going from a hotspot in

Canada to a model of effective and efficient vaccine distribution and uptake.

Thompson pointed towards several accomplishments for the Town over the last year, including securing the land for a future Caledon GO Station, launching Have Your Say platform to increase public engagement, and launching a rebrand tourism website (visitcaledon.ca). But being able to keep the Town engaged and connect through different avenues has been the most important achievement in his eyes.

Continued on Page A5

Caledon youth share their stories for fundraising calendar

BY ROB PAUL

When a family or parent has a child diagnosed with cancer, it can often become a lonely experience for them with few people in their lives who understand what they're going through on a daily basis.

That's why OPACC (Ontario Parents Advocating for Children with Cancer) has made it their crusade to be the support system for parents across the province handling the difficulties and unknowns that come with having a child fighting the disease.

Founded in 1995, OPACC is a registered charity whose mission, since its establishment, has been to be the parent voice for families with children diagnosed with cancer.

The organization leans on three pillars of support: in-hospital support through their parent liaison program; community support through community-based parent support groups; and advocacy efforts to enable parents to advocate for themselves and to advocate for all families on a wider Provincial level.

Continued on Page A5

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Ontario tightens COVID-19 restrictions as Omicron variant continues to spread

BY ROB PAUL

As of this past Sunday, new COVID-19 restrictions were put in place by the Government of Ontario as a result of the Omicron variant.

There is now a 50 per cent capacity limit in gyms, restaurants, concert venues, and theatres as well as a limit of 10 for indoor social gathers and 20 for outdoors.

“Throughout this entire pandemic, we’ve never faced an enemy like Omicron given how quickly it spreads,” said Premier Doug Ford. “We need to do everything we can to slow its

spread as we continue to dramatically ramp up capacity to get as many booster shots into arms as possible. Doing so is the best way to safeguard our hospital and intensive care units.”

Along with the capacity limits, there are specific protective measures being put in at restaurants, sporting events, theatres, and venues. There will be a 10-person limit at tables restaurants; people must remain seated at venues and theatres; restaurants and bars will be required to close by 11 p.m.; food and beverages will be prohibited at indoor sporting events, concerts, and theatres; and

the sale of alcohol will be restricted after 10 p.m.

“As the rapidly spreading Omicron variant becomes the dominant strain of COVID-19 in Ontario, it is necessary to apply additional public health and workplace safety measures to reduce transmission, protect our health system and save lives,” said Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health. “We all have a role to play in keeping ourselves, friends, families, neighbours and communities safe this holiday season. Please follow all public measures and get vaccinated with your first, second or booster dose if you have not done so already. Omicron will not take a holiday.”

As residents in Peel prepare for the holidays, there were 2,367 new COVID cases this week—nearly four times the number of new cases in the Region as last week—to bring the overall case count to 122,803. There were also three more deaths to bring the total to 1,036.

In Caledon, there were 124 new cases—there were 53 new cases the previous week—to bring the Town’s cumulative total to 5,184. There were no new deaths with the number remaining at 22.

The Region continues to emphasize the im-

portance of vaccine coverage as the new variant spreads and has now administered 2,745,242 doses of the vaccine. 1,363,249 individuals have one dose, 1,225,672 have both doses, and 156,321 residents have received a third dose booster.

Of all residents in Peel, 82.2 per cent have one dose and 77.1 per cent have two with those 12 and older at 91.8 per cent single dose coverage and 88.4 per cent two dose coverage. When factoring in the newly eligible five to 11-year-old residents, Peel has 86.7 per cent single dose coverage and 81.4 per cent two dose coverage.

To book a vaccine in the Region of Peel, visit www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment/. To schedule a third dose booster, visit covid19.ontariohealth.ca/.

To download or print a copy of your proof of vaccination, visit covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccine-booking-support#proof-of-vaccination.

To learn more about the official QR code system Ontario has implemented and to access yours, visit covid-19.ontario.ca/get-proof/.

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COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for designated care partners at Headwaters

BY SAM ODROWSKI

COVID-19 vaccinations are now mandatory for all designated care partners entering Headwaters Health Care Centre.

The new rule came into effect on Tuesday, December 21.

“To keep everyone that works and receives care here safe, effective December 21, 2021 all designated care partners coming to our hospital will need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (received both doses 14 days prior to coming to the hospital), or have a documented medical exemption for not being vaccinated, or be ineligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine,” said Headwaters in a recent press release.

Screeners located at the hospital’s Emergency Department or Ambulatory Care Entrance will ask to see proof of vaccination or medical exemption as well as government issued ID (such

as a Driver’s License) to gain entry.

They will also screen for symptoms of COVID-19 before designated care partners will be able to enter Headwaters Health Care Centre.

In light of the new Omicron variant, the hospital has implemented restrictive visitation.

This includes permitting only one designated care partner for when patients are at the end of their life (deemed as within two weeks), has a life altering or critical illness (such as trauma), in active labour, a mental health crisis or for pediatric care of a child under 18.

“We will not be permitting designated care partners to accompany outpatients for appointments except in special circumstances where a support person is necessary,” the hospital stated.

“We will not be permitting designated care partners in our Emergency Department, unless in exceptional circumstances where a support person is necessary for a minor, persons with disabilities or cognitive challenges or those requiring special assistance, such as language translation.”

Qualifying designated care partners are asked to wear a medical grade mask and practice physical distancing and hand hygiene.

The visits must be pre-scheduled by calling the inpatient unit at Headwaters no later than 4:30 p.m. the day before the visit. A full list of the hospital’s infection prevention and control measures as well as eligibility criteria for visiting can be found at headwatershealth.ca/Resources under the Coronavirus (COVID-19) tab.

“We appreciate each of our visitors and the critical role they play in supporting those we serve. We are committed to reopening our doors to our families and caregivers once it is safe to do so. We also have virtual options to help keep people connected including an e-card, that can be delivered directly to the patient by a member of our team,” said Headwaters. “Thank you for your patience and understanding.”

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Winterfest programs pivot to “at home” as rising cases lead to in-person cancellation

BY ROB PAUL

With the COVID-19 pandemic slowing winter activities for children over the holiday break, the Town of Caledon will provide fun take-home activities and treats for children to enjoy in their own homes.

All in-person activities for Winterfest have been cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The “Winterfest@home kits” will be packed into a reusable



able package and will include crafts, activities, treats, and more. When you reserve to

pick up your kit, you will also receive a free one-time entry to one of the recreation drop-

in activities—this will be added to your recreation account. Winterfest@

home kits are free to Caledon residents; however due to limited quantities online pre-registration is required (one kit per child).

Kits can be picked up Sunday, January 2, between 1 to 4

p.m. at the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness and Mayfield Recreation Complex.

To reserve a Winterfest@home kit, visit www.caledon.ca/en/living-here/winterfest.aspx.

On top of the Winterfest@home kits, Caledon will running a variety of public skates and swims across the Town over the holidays. Additionally, registration is now open for the Town’s January pro-

gramming. For information about public access time, to book online and to learn about January programming, visit www.caledon.ca/en/living-here/recreation-programs.aspx.

Town replaces Fire Chief Darryl Bailey effective immediately, Dave Forfar takes over in interim role

BY ROB PAUL

The Town of Caledon has announced that effective immediately Darryl Bailey is no longer the Chief of Town of Caledon Fire and Emergency Services.

In a statement, the Town thanked Bailey for his years of dedicated service in Caledon and wished him all the best in his future endeavours.

Dave Forfar will be stepping in as the interim Chief of Fire and Emergency Services starting January 4, 2022. Forfar was previously the Chief of Caledon Fire and Emergency Services from 2013 to 2016 when he retired after 35 years of service.

Prior to working with the Town of Caledon, he was Deputy Fire Chief for Barrie Fire and Emergency Services where he was responsible for Training, Fire Prevention and Communication divisions, and with Markham Fire and Emergency Services as an Acting Platoon Chief and District Chief.

In addition to Forfar taking over as interim Chief of Fire and Emergency Services, two new Deputy Chief positions have been appointed.

Dave Pelayo will be stepping up as a Deputy Chief, Support Services for the Town. Pelayo has been with the Town since 2008 in Fire Prevention and in 2013 he was promoted to Chief Fire Prevention Officer.

Dan Rowland will be joining Pelayo as Deputy Chief, Operations. Currently at Humber College leading their Preservice Firefighting program, Rowland has 29 years of fire service with Brampton Fire and Emergency Services and is a former member of Caledon Fire and Emergency Services.

“On behalf of Council, I want to welcome Dave Forfar back to Caledon’s Fire Service to lead our dedicated team of firefighters while we recruit for a permanent chief,” said Mayor Allan Thompson. “We also want to welcome Dan back and congratulate Dave Pelayo on his well-deserved promotion. As our community grows and the demands increase, we are confident all three will bring progressive leadership and ensure we continue to deliver high-quality fire protection and emergency response to our residents.”

The Town of Caledon declined to comment on the circumstances that led to Bailey being replaced by Forfar effective immediately.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Passing of By-law 2021-93 Heritage Designation

The Town of Caledon has passed By-law 2021-93 to designate 18030 Centreville Creek Road as being of cultural heritage value or interest under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The property is legally described as PIN: 14345-0274 (LT) – Part of Lot 31, Concession 2 (Albion), designated as Parts 1, 2 & 3 on 43R-32891; Subject-to AL15769; Town of Caledon; Regional Municipality of Peel.

Any person who objects to the by-law may appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) by giving the OLT and the Clerk of the Town of Caledon, within 30 days after the date of publication of this notice of passing, a notice of appeal setting out the objection to the by-law and the reasons in support of the objection, accompanied by the fee charged by the OLT.



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INDECENT ACT INVESTIGATED

Members of the Nottawasaga Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are seeking the public's assistance to identify a male who allegedly exposed himself at a local Alliston business.

"On November 20, 2021, at approximately 6:30 p.m., an unknown male entered a local Alliston business and approached a young male employee for assistance," say Police. "During the interaction the male loosened his own pants, exposing his genitals to the employee. The male left and was observed driving a late model, dark coloured Ram pickup truck."

Suspect Description:

- Approximately 5'10"
- Caucasian
- Medium build
- Approximately 50 years of age

Police are looking to speak with the male involved in this incident.

Anyone with information regarding the male,

is asked to contact the Nottawasaga OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

When you contact Crime Stoppers you remain anonymous, you will never have to testify and you may be eligible to receive a cash reward of up to \$2,000.

Tips may also be provided through the Crime Stopper's website by visiting ontariocrimestoppers.ca.



INCREASE IN FRAUD CLAIMS

Members of the Nottawasaga Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are reminding the public to be aware of online scams.

"A number of fraud complaints have come in recently, leaving people without their hard-earned funds," say Police. "An estimated combined loss exceeding \$500,000 has been reported. The Nottawasaga OPP Major Crime Unit have spoken to complainants that say it all started with the click of an ad on Facebook. Many of these scams involve crypto-assets."

Crypto Investments: Fraudsters are using social media and fraudulent websites to scam people.

Prior to investing, ask for information on the investment. Research the team behind the offering and analyze the feasibility of the project. Verify if the company is registered by using the National Registration Tool (www.aretheyregistered.ca).

Things to be mindful of:

- Be aware of where you are investing your hard-earned money
- Do your research
- If you don't understand something, ask questions
- If it seems too good to be true, it probably is

Police are encouraging the public to learn about internet safety by visiting some useful websites:

- opp.ca
- cybertip.ca
- getcybersafe.gc.ca
- www.aretheyregistered.ca

Anyone who suspects they have been the victim of cybercrime or fraud should report it to their local police and to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre's online reporting system or by phone at 1-888-495-8501

R.I.D.E. CHARGES

Officers from the Caledon OPP RIDE Unit conducted RIDE checkstops and responded to collision resulting in numerous charges over the weekend.

"Over the weekend period of December 17 to December 19, 2021, officers from the OPP Caledon Detachment RIDE unit set up at numerous locations throughout the Town of Caledon conducting RIDE checkstops," said Police. "As result of these stops, the following charges were laid:

- 1 - 7 day Warn Suspension (Result of already having a 3 day warn suspension on recent record)
- 6 - 3 day Warn Suspensions
- 4 - Drive with Cannabis Available
- 2 - Drive with Open Liquor
- 3 - Drive while Under Suspension

One driver, a 30-year-old from Brampton, was found to have an outstanding warrant

from Peel Police and arrested.

Charges have not been proven.

"On December 18, 2021 at approximately 12:37 a.m., RIDE officers assisted other detachment officers by responding to the report of a multi-vehicle collision on Highway 10 between Valleywood Boulevard and Old School Road, in the Town of Caledon," say Police. "When officers arrived, one of the involved drivers showed signs of impairment and was arrested."

Daniel Wrobel, 23, from Mississauga, has been charged with:

- Impaired Operation of a Motor Vehicle
- Operate a Motor Vehicle with Over 80 mgs of Alcohol

The accused is scheduled to appear in Oranville Provincial Court in March 2022.

The charges have not been proven.

"The Caledon OPP Detachment encourages drivers to plan ahead if they choose to consume alcohol or drugs. Use a designated driver, cab, rideshare, public transit or stay overnight. Any amount of alcohol or drugs can impact your ability to make sound judgements. There is no excuse for impaired driving."

NOVICE DRIVER CHARGED

Officers from the Caledon OPP RIDE Unit stopped and charged two drivers with alcohol related offences after they were stopped at RIDE checks in the Town of Caledon.

"On December 15, 2021 at approximately 7:00 p.m. officers were conducting RIDE in the area of King Street and Kennedy Road when they stopped a vehicle and conducted a roadside test," say Police. "As a result of the test, the driver was arrested and brought back to the Caledon Detachment for further investigation."

As a result of the investigation, Darryl Caines, 52, from Caledon, has been charged with:

- Operate a Motor Vehicle with Over 80mgs of Alcohol

The accused received a 90-day drivers' license suspension and 7-day vehicle impoundment. The charge has not been proven.

"Later in the evening, at approximately 12:55 a.m. officer were conducting RIDE in the area of Humber Lea Road and Sherin Court when they stopped a motor vehicle and investigated the driver for alcohol consumption. The driver, a novice driver, is not allowed to have any alcohol in their body."

As a result of the investigation, a 20-year-old from Caledon was charged with:

- Novice Driver - Blood Alcohol Concentration above Zero

The driver received a 3-day drivers' license suspension.

The charge has not been proven.

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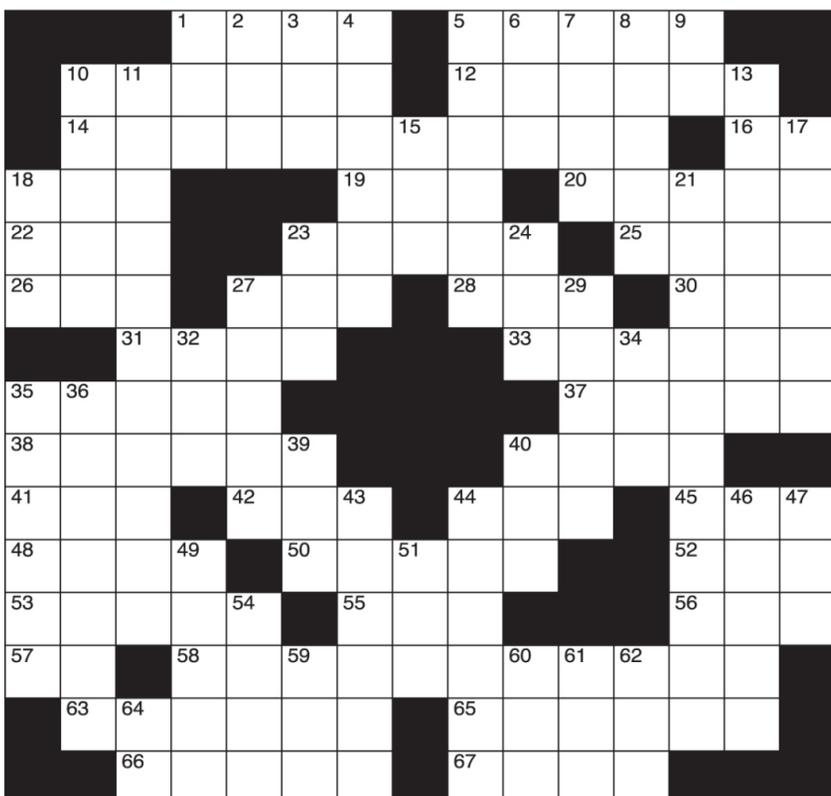
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 - from affliction
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 - Mineral
 - Cools your home

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OPACC calendar helps raise funds to support families

Continued from FRONT

OPACC has helped over 1,000 families in Ontario and currently supports over 120 in the Region of Peel alone, but fundraising support is imperative for it to function at its highest level.

To help raise funds to support childhood cancer families, OPACC has released a new 2022 wall calendar.

The calendar contains each child's photo and story (submitted by their parents), as well as a childhood cancer awareness fact each month. The calendar also includes two Caledon children: Ava (Ewing Sarcoma, a cancer of the bone or soft tissue) and Eric (neuroblastoma, cancer that develops in nerve cells).

"A few months ago, OPACC posted about their yearly calendar and so I submitted Ava's story and she was chosen to be part of the calendar," said Nancy Margetts, Ava's mother. "Part of the reason I wanted to do it was because last year around this time, there was a story in the Caledon Citizen about the support from the community for Ava. This was a way for us to, number one, help OPACC raise money and awareness for their charity because there are so many charities out there, but not one specifically for the parents like OPACC—it's not even so much the financial, it's the overall support. Then, also because we're a part of the community and not many people have followed her story since last year, this was a nice way to do a follow up for her in the calendar. We've shared the story to our Facebook page and Instagram so people who have been following her story got to see she would be in the calendar as well."

When Nancy and her family found out about Ava's diagnosis, they were in uncharted territories that made them feel alone, but when OPACC came into the picture, it changed everything for them.

"Ava was diagnosed with Ewing Sarcoma a year ago this week, so it was fairly recently," she said. "She went through chemo and radiation and finished in August, but right from the beginning, other mothers who had children who had gone through the same type of treatment had mentioned OPACC. Even though we never met them in person, and still haven't because of COVID, they actually left us packages at the hospital—binders with all kinds of information and little gifts for Ava—and they've offered so much support.

"They've offered support through one-on-one conversations and weekly drop-ins where



OPACC, which recently released a fundraising calendar, provided invaluable support to the family of Ava as they navigated the Caledon girl's cancer journey.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



parents can log onto a Zoom call on Tuesdays and ask questions and meet other parents to see what other people are going through. That helped us a lot, especially at the beginning with COVID because we weren't able to interact with other parents in the hospital or anything."

Given the circumstances surrounding COVID throughout Ava's battle, it made it very difficult for Nancy and her family to connect with other people going through similar things, but when they found OPACC they were finally able to reach out and here from others who have gone through similar situations.

"With COVID it was extremely important to have OPACC to lean on," she said. "You feel extremely isolated those first few weeks after a diagnosis. You feel like you're the only one in the world going through what you go through and it's very isolating. These other parents—because there are parents on there who aren't necessarily on the committee, but they do sign up for Zoom calls—offer support, guidance, and answer any questions no matter how small and take the time to give you whatever you need.

"In the beginning when we thought we had nobody to turn to other than our doctors and our team, they were there for us. Karen (Szukalova, Parent Liaison) reached out so quickly once I had sent in my letter telling them our situa-

tion and she always made herself available as well as the other members of the organization. On the Zoom calls they all gave their opinions and helped connect us with other families who either had the same type of diagnosis or were at the same stage of treatment so we could ask those questions."

The constant support from OPACC truly made a difference for Nancy as Ava went through 14 rounds of chemo and 35 rounds of proton radiation, and they continue to be there for the family whenever they need it.

"I can't speak to what it was like before COVID, but to my understanding they were in the hospital all the time supporting parents, but they've been there for us at any time virtually," she said. "We can Zoom or message them whenever we need them and it is important because we see the big charities—Sick Kids, the Canadian Cancer Society—and those help support funding for cancer, but there's nothing in terms of the actual mental support that parents need. It's especially important because we have to be our children's support and so much is put into adult cancers, but so much impacts children's cancer—the parents, families, friends—and being able to connect to people who know exactly what you feel makes a world of difference. It's made a massive impact on my life and having

them answer the questions I had or having situations that didn't feel normal to me at the time, knowing other parents had gone through them gave me such relief. Everything helps when you're going through something like that."

Nancy says she hopes that more families who feel alone in their child's battle with cancer can learn about OPACC and reach out to get what they need during trying times and can feel the community behind them as they push forward.

"I didn't know they were there until someone mentioned it to me," she said. "And now, they're a godsend to me. There's not a lot geared towards child cancer and there's not a lot of other places that support the parents and families as much as OPACC does. They've done so much for us."

Calendars can be purchased at www.opacc.org/shop for \$15 each (\$10 each for orders of three or more). All proceeds of sales go towards supporting the charity's free programs and services for childhood cancer families in Ontario, including in-hospital support through its Parent Liaison program, community-based childhood cancer parent support groups throughout Ontario, hospital parking reimbursements, distribution of gift cards for gas and food, and advocacy on issues of importance to childhood cancer families.



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Construction of new elementary school in Caledon completed, government provided \$16.1 million in funding

BY ROB PAUL

With the Government of Ontario's ongoing effort to build and improve schools, the province has approved Peel District School Board's request to build the new Private Buckam Singh Elementary School in the amount of \$16.1 million.

Construction of the project is now complete and is open for the 2021-22 school year. Private Buckam Singh Elementary School is located at 12175 Bramalea Road in Caledon.

This will provide a new, quality learning environment for the children of Caledon, as well as four new childcare rooms and an EarlyON Child and Family Centre to the school. This project is part of the province's capital investment program to support students with better learning spaces.

"Our government is proud to support the children of Caledon by providing updated classrooms with modern ventilation and

their parents with safe and affordable childcare opportunities," said Minister of Education Stephen Lecce. "By building the new Private Buckam Singh Elementary School, our government is ensuring that local children have access to modern learning environments and quality childcare options."

Highlights from the project include 662 elementary student spaces, 73 new licensed childcare spaces, four new childcare rooms, and one EarlyON Child and Family Centre room.

"I'm elated that parents and caregivers with young children can now participate in the free activities offered through the school's EarlyON Child and Family Centre," said Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education for Peel District School Board. "This is such a welcomed benefit for the community. As a result of this investment, parents, caregivers, and their young children can connect with others and learn together for years to come."

In November, Lecce announced that the

Ontario government is making major investments to build and improve schools and create more licensed childcare spaces across the province to create the foundation for a modern learning environment for hundreds of students across the province through 78 school and childcare related projects.

Capital Priorities Program projects will create 19,700 new student spaces, and 1,525 new licensed childcare spaces in schools. These new spaces will be supported by an investment of \$565 million, which will see 26 new schools and 20 permanent additions and renovations built.

The Ontario government has allocated more than \$600 million to support ventilation improvements in schools across Ontario as part of its plans for a safer return to school.

The Peel District School Board has benefited from an investment of \$31.2 million for ventilation improvements and has almost 2,500 HEPA filter units in place.

The Ontario Government is working with school board partners to invest in capital projects that advance safe and accessible learning opportunities for students. To create new opportunities for Ontario's families, the government is investing up to \$1 billion to create up to 30,000 new childcare spaces in schools over five years.

Over the next ten years, the Ontario government is investing \$14 billion in capital grants, including allocating \$550 million in 2020-21 for new schools, additions and major renovations. This investment will build new schools and help existing schools after a decade of closures and maintenance backlog.

Ontario has announced additional funding of \$25 million to further improve ventilation in schools as students return for in-person learning this fall. This additional funding brings the net new investments in school ventilation to \$600 million.

The province is also providing school boards with a historic \$1.4 billion in funding to renew and maintain existing schools. This funding could be used to replace aging heating or air conditioning systems, repair roofs and windows, and install important accessibility features like elevators and ramps.

"In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have made safer schools a priority, which is why we continue to invest in modern and accessible learning spaces with improved ventilation," said Minister Lecce. "This investment is part of our multiyear plan to build, expand, and update schools and childcare spaces across our province. It will leave a lasting legacy that benefits working families for years to come."



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20 acres of Caledon land donated to Region for healthcare use

BY ROB PAUL

The Region of Peel has approved and received a land donation from Bryon and Catherine Wilson.

The Wilsons decided to donate 20 acres of land from their property, located at the intersection of Humber Station Road and Healey Road in the Town of Caledon, for the purpose of building a future healthcare facility for the residents of The Region of Peel.

Regional Council accepted and approved the land donation on October 8, 2020.

The land donation process is now complete, and the lands were transferred to The Region of Peel.

"The lands have been donated for the primary purpose of building a future healthcare facility," said a representative for the Region of Peel. "There are no immediate plans for development at this time. A decision as to the type of healthcare facility will be made in the future to address the ongoing needs of the community."

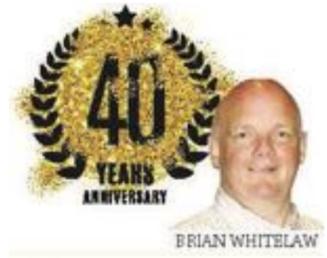
The Region of Peel thanked the Wilsons for their donation and contribution to the community.

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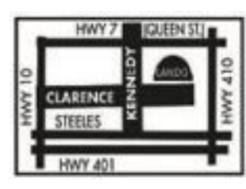
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COVID recovery an important community goal for Mayor in 2022

Continued from FRONT

“One of the biggest things has been the recreation facility taking place in Caledon East; we’ve got that underway despite COVID and, like always, we’ve always been under-budget and on time. We’ve also been able to reduce our carbon footprint because we’re putting new chillers in the arena and using the pool as a cooling mechanism. So, it will heat the pool but cool the chillers as well, and to me, I think that’s a big win for us. We’ve definitely come through with another budget here for next year while filling the community’s needs. The community didn’t get everything it wanted, but we’ve come up with a budget that’s under the inflation rate (the blended rate with the Region and Town) and it’s a responsible budget.”

“We’ve been able to add a few chillers to our outdoor rinks and I think that’s going to be really important this year, especially with COVID because we don’t know what January will look like for us. Another big thing is the Senior Centre with the big expansion at Rotary Place—it’s been something they’ve been asking for and we’ve been able to deliver. We’ve developed a great ability to work with the library to be able to service our community too because the library is part of the municipality, but it’s a separate entity. To be able to build that collaboration and ensure community is first has been very well done. Being able to keep our community connected whether it’s through the Town, the library, or recreation has always been what’s important.”

One of the most important goals of the year was to continue to work towards bringing high-speed internet to every home in Caledon, and Thompson couldn’t be happier to see it’s going to happen in the near future.

“Getting broadband well underway has been huge too. The Caledon Trailway is having a fibre put in it and will be able to connect our communities this coming year (it will service the spine that will branch out into the different neighbourhoods across Caledon, that being done will then allow for branching out into the communities to get them connected). We have communities being lit up now as we speak, but by February all our SWIFT projects will be completed on that first phase. What’s really

good through the ICON Program, the federal programs, and provincial programs, all of Caledon has been pretty much covered. Our biggest frustration right now is the federal government wanting to get something out before the election, but the bureaucrats never followed through, so it’s really up to our MP to make sure we get the funding projects publicized so the other proponents know what to bid on through the provincial program to get the rest of Caledon connected by 2025. To me, that’s a big win for us, what seemed like an impossibility was made possible.”

Transparency is key in government and that starts with following through on what constituents want accomplished with their money, that’s why Thompson and Council have made a point to improve infrastructure while keeping in mind the importance of the climate crisis.

“We’ve been able to get a lot of road projects done this past year, and some of them are being carried over—Old School Road will be finished next spring and the second layer of tarmac down on McLaughlin Road in 2022. These road infrastructure projects are huge for getting things done across Caledon. Our road networks and connections have been key with a lot of residents asking for that and we have bridge projects coming next year. We’ve got all our streetlights completed and we’re getting all of our facility lights all changed to LEDs, and we’ve been able to drop our energy consumption—something that’s important for us to do as a Town. We want the public to know we’re being responsible with our tax dollars.”

One previous challenge that turned into a positive as a result of the pandemic was the Town pivoting to virtual that, in turn, made everything accessible for residents from their own homes, including Council meetings. Thompson thinks this will allow the community to be more connected to what’s going on and what decisions are being made for the future.

“We’ve finally got our Town Hall technology upgraded so we can stream Council meetings, I think that is something we hadn’t been able to do, and we had always talked about,” said Thompson. “We’ve got provincial funding to do it and we’re more accountable and accessible to the public with this—they don’t have to physically



Mayor Allan Thompson says Caledon’s continuing collaboration with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation is something he is “excited” to continue in 2022. Thompson is pictured above right this past fall with Chief Stacey LaForme.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF CALEDON

come to Council to see what’s going on, they can live stream us. It’s a huge plus and overall, our meetings are all virtual and on-line and before we’d always be told why we couldn’t do this, but it had to happen, and we made it happen over the last two years. We’ve streamlined Town Hall to for the needs of what the public needs to get out of it. Is there room for improvement? There always is, but we’ve made huge strides. It’s really made our ability to connect with the community far more effective.”

Something that began in 2021 that Thompson is excited to continue into 2022 and beyond, is the collaboration with Council’s Indigenous counterparts to ensure things are being done the right way in the community.

“We renewed our Wampum Belt with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation,” he said. “We held our first council-to-council meeting in October and we’re hoping to continue. They just elected a new council and Chief (Stacey) LaForme has been re-elected and we’re looking forward to working with them again in the upcoming year. They’ll be hosting a meeting for us to continue to work together. We didn’t just

do that to have a meeting, what we really did was identify what they need and how we can help and what we need and how they can help us. That’s what we’ve really done; we’ve set up a future of collaboration which is extremely important. We’re the first municipality to do this and I hope it starts a trend for others to do it as well.”

As 2022, gets underway, there are two main priorities for Thompson and Council to kick off the year, community outreach through supporting groups and businesses as they deal with COVID and getting feedback from residents and continuing to work on the Future Caledon Official Plan.

“We need to try to get as much community outreach as we possibly can for everybody and that’s something that’s extremely important,” he said. “To me, that’s what we want to hit the ground running with.”

“We also need to try and find ways coming out of COVID to get the community connected again because people are frustrated having been cooped up and community wellbeing needs to be a focus. Also, the Official Plan is really important and it’s priority number one. It’s a prerequisite that we need to do with the province and some-

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Brock's Banter

Finding the "Calm and Bright" this holiday season

BY BROCK WEIR

I feels strange to sit down this Monday evening and write my final column of 2021.

In some respects, it feels as though this year has gone by in a flash.

It hardly feels like 12 months ago when we put the finishing touches on whatever our holiday plans were – well, as much as 2020 would allow – before we settled in comfortably, albeit slightly claustrophobically staring down the face of a fresh lockdown, to dream of the positive days that could come with the fresh year ahead.

With declining case numbers roughly corresponding to the more temperate weather of March and April, the warmer days of the spring and summer went by with equally alarming speed, as did our respective autumn days, with memories made along the way almost captured in amber.

By the same token, some of the things that happened over the last twelve months seemed like they happened in a different age.

Despite our neighbours to the south still feeling like a bit of a tinderbox, the Capital Insurrection on January 6 feels like an age ago, rather than something that happened little more than eleven months in the past. The swearing in of Joe Biden, ushering out one area and ringing in another, also feels like something more deeply rooted than a "simple" transition that happened in the second half of January.

We endured the veritable Hunger Games – and, yes, I'm still going to lean on this literary and film comparison until that blessed day when it is no longer apt – of finding, securing, receiving and, in some cases, weathering, our first and second doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine. We've endured the frustration and anger that some of us felt when vaccines other than Pfizer or Moderna were suddenly found to offer less-than-desired protection with more-than-desired side effects.

We saw a significant change in our public life upon the death of The Duke of Edinburgh.

We went through another event which could have significantly changed our public landscape even further with the call of a Federal Election – but, for better or worse, that significant change ultimately failed to transpire.

We're once again enduring the frustration of finding, securing, receiving and, in some cases, weathering, our booster shots as new cases of COVID-19 once again ramp up; and, once again, we're putting the finishing touches on whatever our holiday plans are, hoping, yes, again, that we can dream of the positive days that will surely come with a fresh day ahead.

As short as 2021 appeared to be, we have packed a lot into the last 12 months.

We did what we could to make it as bright as possible, were heartened when that light at the end of the tunnel began shining ever-brighter before more recent setbacks somewhat cooled the glow – and, to that end, we have every right to be sick and tired of either being sick and tired or going above and beyond to avoid getting sick and tired.

Now, as COVID-19 rages, our goalposts, be it to fatigue or simple logic, are now as close as: "Let's just try to get through December 25 without catching Omicron."

I completely understand it. I feel it. But we have to keep plugging away.

Having suddenly become eligible for a booster along with all other Ontarians aged

18+ who had their second dose more than three months ago, my personal quest began like many others, scouring the length and breadth across all reasonable distances to secure mine.

While I'm thankful to have been successful fairly early on in the process, the frustration and tension I walked into almost instantly upon opening up the door to one particular pharmacy was palpable. Like so many drug stores who booked appointments according to their expected supply, yet received significantly less than was expected on the morning of, they were undersupplied – and, truth be told, understaffed – leading to many frustrated patients and customers.

But this frustration was also shared by the staff who were on site who went above and beyond to administer what they had while trying to allay the fears and, indeed, anger of those who were unable to get boosted.

In my observation, most were understanding, recognizing that despite the fact that while it has fallen out of our once-common parlance, we are still all in this together and these frontline workers are trying to make the very best out of a bad situation. It must also be remembered it is a situation they hadn't necessarily anticipated before the Province opened the floodgates of eligibility on Wednesday afternoon.

And the same goes for doctors, nurses and other primary care providers who are trying to grapple with the onslaught of both Omicron and those who are doing their damndest to try to avoid it, business owners who are having to deal with a reintroduction of capacity limits during what was anticipated to be their busiest season, not to mention dealing with customers with whom patience already runs a bit thin during the holiday season, and restaurant owners who were so hoping that they would be able to get back on their feet by the time 2022 rolled around.

After a spring and summer that gave us a welcome taste of a return to normalcy, having it snatched away from us in relatively short order is not the ideal situation for any of us, but we have to make the best of it.

What choice do we have?

We can complain to the people we see every day, but they have complaints of their own – and chances are, they are the same as yours. We can cast blame around on how we got to where we are, but the rest of the world is already crowding our collective boat. We can wallow without paying any heed to the many blessings we enjoy and often take for granted.

Well, we can do just about anything, but before doing, let's do some thinking.

We're all going through a difficult time, one which might make it difficult to put on the merry face we all like to put on at this time of year, but while I think we can all be forgiven for our merry being spread just a little bit thin at this point, we need to find patience within ourselves and others to get over this speedbump.

Speaking as someone whose patience is admittedly usually in pretty short supply, COVID has forced me to uncover some extra patience in my system just ready to be tapped; necessity, of course, being the mother of invention. Fostering further patience sounds like a good New Year's resolution for me, and for us.

Until then, I wish you a wonderful, warm and safe holiday and a joyful and healthy 2022!



Don't forget the past; it's vitally important to the present

by Mark Pavilons



Our family members, and our DNA, are our only link to the past.

Many believe what's past is past, and just leave it alone.

But how can we? The past represents so much, not just for each of our family histories, but for all of humankind. It's so damn interesting.

A lot of people, perhaps more so the Boomers, feel proud of where they came from and the hard work it took to get here. That's part of who we are, and we sure can't forget that.

It seems the older we get, the more we reminisce about the past. I'm not sure why this happens, but I think we're all guilty of it. Maybe the stress brought on by the pandemic has turned our thoughts to simpler times, when our lives were less complicated.

Growing up in rural Caledon in the 1970s and '80s was pretty quiet. Duffy's Lane (formerly the 6th Line Albion) was a dirt road with little traffic. We lived on a four-acre parcel so it was really our small slice of paradise. We had gardens, expansive lawns, tree stands and the Humber River flowed through our back yard.

I had chores and there was always plenty of grass to cut. But at times, it was like a scene from one of those movies about the American mid-west – tall, waving grass, and laying on your back looking at the clouds.

As a kid, there was nothing like sticking your feet in the river and watching the minnows stop by to stay hello and greet you with some quick nibbles on your toes. There were frogs and skunks and groundhogs.

Sitting on my dad's home-made bench in front of our house is where Kim and I bonded, talked and dreamed. It's where we fell in love.

Mattie Stepanek urged us to "keep all special thoughts and memories for lifetimes to come" and to share these keepsakes with others to "inspire hope and build from the past."

Paul Scott once wrote that the past is a "texture, an ambiance to our present."

If you think about it, aren't we all a culmination of our past? Wouldn't there be a huge, gaping hole in our guts without our own personal history?

Humans are definitely fickle. So many tell us to ignore the past and set our sights on the future.

But we keep breathing new life in things from the past. We have once again embraced "retro" designs. We devour old books and old movies. We wonder what it would be like to live in the Wild West, and we lose ourselves in stories of medieval knights, kings and fair maidens.

Who doesn't love vinyl and record players? What about jukeboxes and the Walkman? Who hasn't spent a week's allowance in an arcade?

I would love an evening of sitting around the table, with kids "washing up" without being told; with plenty of "please" and "thank you's" being uttered, and a heartfelt grace. There's a lot to be said for such a "Little House on the Prairie" scenario.

And the food! Who doesn't remember a great family meal, or one of mom's favourite recipes?

We frequently eat the stuffing passed along by Kim's mom. The Christmas day breakfasts at my in-laws are legendary. We still have my mom's gravy boat, a cherished little dish that emerges during special occasions.

My mom enjoyed the holidays and my dad always went to the back 40 to pick the perfect spruce for our Christmas trees. I can still see it in my mind, in its place of honour in the corner of our living room. And yes, there were plenty of times when dad I shovelled snow that was up to our waist!

My mom would always tell us of her childhood Christmases. They were never allowed to see the tree until Christmas Eve, and were awestruck by its beauty when the parlour doors opened.

Candles adorned the branches and each child had to recite a poem or sing a carol to mark the occasion. They received only one gift, typically something practical. They went to church.

They genuinely loved their neighbours and their community. There was an air of optimism, even during some very tumultuous times in Europe in the 1930s and '40s.

These were my mom's memories, and so, they are part of me. I can't, and won't let them go. I embrace them.

Leave the past behind? Are you nuts?

As we celebrate this time of year, I'm sure a large part of our gatherings involve traditions that go back a very long time. We just couldn't celebrate without them!

You would think the younger generation would find such tales boring and "old school." But the times we have shared our memories with our children, their eyes grew to the size of saucers and they hung on every sentence. They really are like sponges.

I think it's vitally important to share our family stories with our kids, grandkids and great-grandkids.

The past is where it all began. It's the very definition of "perspective."

They say you are given a brief mental tour of your life when the end is near. Do you think it will be filled with images of Facebook, that new car smell, or purchases on Amazon? No, it will likely contain visions of childhood birthdays, family dinners, honeymoons, our kids' school plays and good night kisses. We will relive first dates, drive-ins and school dances.

Forget the past, indeed. I'll have none of that.

Nor should any of us. I say keep the past burning bright, smile about it, and let it fuel your present.

May your holidays be filled with untold memories and traditions that are merry and bright!

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It's Time for a More Compassionate Society - Bill C-211

The loss of a child is unimaginable for a parent under any circumstance. Parents who've experienced a stillbirth, a miscarriage, or the death of a child confront many complex and excruciatingly painful emotions, ranging from tremendous guilt to inconsolable grief.

It takes time for parents to process this tragic loss and begin the very long and difficult road of healing. Parents need support while they work through the stages of grief. This must change. It's time for a more compassionate society and with the recent passing of Bill C-211, a considerable step forward has been taken for bereaved parents enduring the loss of a child.

On December 14, 2021, my Conservative colleague, Tom Kmiec, Member of Parliament for Calgary Shepard, introduced Bill C-211, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (bereavement leave). This bill expands bereavement leave to eight weeks of unpaid leave for parents who have experienced a stillbirth, the death of a child under the age of 18, or the death of a disabled child in the parent's care.

The legislation is a significant step forward in demonstrating our shared support for the bereaved parent community and letting them know they're not alone in their overwhelming grief.

Bill C-211 acknowledges the unbearable pain asso-

ciated with this type of loss while expanding bereavement leave to provide five days of leave for parents who experience a miscarriage. This is an important advancement in the rights of Canadian workers because the current bereavement system, as defined in the Canada Labour Code, only provides for a generic three days of paid leave and two days of unpaid leave for parents who experience the death of a child. The current system is clearly failing parents with its unfairness, lack of sympathy, and has an unrealistic view of the extent of the grief parents experience and for them to make the necessary arrangements.

My other Conservative colleague, Blake Richards, Member of Parliament for Banff-Airdrie, passed non-partisan Motion M-110 in the House of Commons in June 2018, which called on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills, and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA) to initiate a study on the impacts of the loss of an infant child. The resulting study underscored the shocking failure of government programming to support grieving parents. Later in 2018, both MP Kmiec and MP Richards presented a motion at the Finance Committee that would've expanded bereavement leave in Budget 2018. Sadly, every Liberal member of the

Committee voted against it at that time.

Three years have passed and a considerable gap has remained for grieving parents. I understand the pressing need for more compassion to be extended to bereaved parents, as I've personally experienced this type of loss.

On January 23, 2012, I lost my son, Elijah, during childbirth. There are no words to describe this loss and the trauma that parents suffer on top of the immensely difficult and long healing process. This is something MP Kmiec also knows all too well, as he lost his daughter, Lucy-Rose, in August 2018, after only living for 39 days. Bill C-211 is a bill, rooted in compassion, giving support to grieving parents when they need it the most.

I'm pleased Bill C-211 was quickly adopted by the government and passed on December 16, 2021, just days after MP Kmiec introduced it in the House of Commons. This shows there's wide recognition of the urgent need for this legislation to support bereaved families. I'm proud of the cross-party co-operation to quickly pass this bill, which has been long overdue.

I sincerely hope Bill C-211 will help to relieve at least some of the enormous burden on the shoulders of bereaved parents across Canada. I also believe Bill

C-211 represents progress on the much-needed work towards building a more compassionate and understanding society for bereaved families. I encourage you to write me to share your thoughts on other steps that could be taken to support bereaved families.

I also invite you to share any questions or concerns you may have about any bills before the House of Commons. It's critically important that I know what my constituents are thinking. You can send me an e-mail at Kyle.Seeback@parl.gc.ca or write me at my parliamentary office at:

Kyle Seeback, M.P.
House of Commons
Room 209, Justice Building
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Christmas is quickly approaching, making us especially grateful for our families and friends. From my family to yours, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and healthy 2022!



KYLE SEEBACK, MP
DUFFERIN-CALEDON

Hope

I watched a Christmas movie the other night, the first one I've seen all season and one that I had never heard of. No matter as the overall theme of positivity; of the Christmas spirit and of hope, were each as well represented in this film as they have been consistently, in every other Christmas classic ever produced.

It was timely "intervention" for me. The steady and relentless progression of the Omicron variant, its impact on our community, our country and on my own friends and family - has become overwhelming and the reminder to have hope was a necessary one.

Hope is what keeps us going. I would venture to claim that it is indeed part of our core essence as human beings to have hope. As the movie (based on the book, "A Boy Called Christmas" by Matt Haig) exclaims, "We all need hope. A spark of magic to keep us going." Without hope there would be nothing to look forward to, potentially leading to a downward negative spiral from which some folks find it difficult to emerge.

Without hope, those of us who have already lived through one holiday season without family and friends, and perhaps even without enough food, clothing or shelter, would never willingly have embraced

another entire year of challenge and change, knowing the outcome was a SECOND holiday alone and/or possibly worse off than we were this time last year. Hope is a religion of sorts. Like faith, hope requires us to believe in "an impossibility", one that the book and the movie claim "is only a possibility that you don't understand yet." So humans cling to hope, much as they might cling to a particular faith tradition, to provide them with solace that there are better things to come - whether in this world or the next.

Right now, a little dose of hope would go a long way. I hope the leaders of the world, our country and our province will "wise up" and help to bring an end to this relentless global pandemic. I hope that they will do so by enacting restrictions that make sense, not restrictions that suit big business. I hope they will rapidly expand the ability to TEST for COVID with fast and free access to both PCR and Rapid Antigen testing and that they will continue to expand our ability to vaccinate and boost our way out of this crisis by utilizing reliable, stable and fully-functioning web portals, 1-800 numbers and by driving GO-VAX buses to seniors buildings and retirement residences and long-term care homes where folks won't need tech-

nological wizardry simply to book a booster. I cling to hope that the world will wake up to the realization that this nightmare will never end unless we make vaccines available to everyone, in every corner of the globe and I remain steadfastly hopeful that education and science will one day wield more influence than Facebook and Twitter comments from tin foil hat wearing conspiracy theorists do.

Without hope, we face the prospect of a third holiday season without friends and family; those who matter, or who should matter, most to us. Without hope, we will continue to flounder under a Ford government that's floundering in its attempts to provide consistent, coherent advice on vaccines, rapid tests, capacity limits or indeed, on almost anything at all.

Without hope - the poor WILL get poorer, those experiencing homelessness will likely increase, domestic violence will remain hidden behind Covid sealed front doors and small businesses, once considered the backbone of any small-town economy, will be shuttered - quite possibly forever.

I for one cannot face a world without hope. Call me the eternal optimist but I have to hope the human spirit cannot be so easily broken by a tiny spike protein only

visible under a microscope. I remain hopeful that the good people who donate, volunteer, follow protocols and public health advice, who show up for work every day in our overburdened health care systems, that each of these things will somehow eventually vanquish this invisible foe. I have to have hope that the seemingly increasing impossibility of this being true "is only a possibility that (we) don't understand yet."

In the meantime, if you need me I'll be doing some other things A Boy Called Christmas references. That is, in the spirit of hope I'll: "eat more gingerbread, chocolate, jam and cake... Give someone a present. Like a toy or a book, or a kind word or a big hug. Laugh, even if there is nothing to laugh about... (and) think of a happy memory. Or a happy future."

*Quotes from the movie, A Boy Called Christmas with Matt Haig and ** and the book, A Boy Called Christmas by Matt Haig. Also, an extract from How to Be Jolly: The Father Christmas Guide to Happiness.*



SHERALYN ROMAN
TALK CALEDON

Always on my mind Christmas

The Christmas season is here.

It's a time of lights, gifts, seeing those relatives you haven't seen since last Christmas, and maybe most important of all, a time for making memories that will last you a life time.

Most of us have a least one memory of a special Christmas that stands out more than any other.

Maybe that really special Christmas hasn't happened for you yet - this might be the one.

My best Christmas memories come from events that happened around or leading up to the holidays, not necessarily Christmas day itself.

I do remember sitting, rather terrified, on Santa Claus' knee, probably in a mall somewhere when I was about five years old, and him asking what I wanted for Christmas.

I nervously said I wanted a G.I. Joe action doll. Yes, miraculously on Christmas morning, there was G.I. Joe, in his green fatigues and army issued cap.

I recall one Christmas when a group of college friends all went to downtown Toronto for a Christmas lunch together before we parted for the holidays.

When we came out of that restaurant it was just cold enough to snow, and it was. They were huge snowflakes, the kind you rarely see, and there was no wind, it was very calm and still.

Those huge flakes fell straight down from the sky turning Yonge Street into a giant, but very calm snow globe.

We all stood on a street corner to say out good-byes as each of us were off to our hometowns at various places around the province. The guys shaking hands, the girls hugging everyone.

I don't know why, but the memory of those giant flakes and that group of friends has always stuck with me as a special memory.

There is an old saying, "You can't go home again."

I guess it means there are times in your life that are special, but you will never recapture that magic in the same way.

It may be a summer at a lakeside cottage, or just a period of time you spent with special friends and had some great experiences. For me, a couple of seasons at summer camp fit that bill.

You may have a great memory of that time, but if you tried to recapture that same feeling in time and space, you just won't be able to recreate the past quite the same way.

Some Christmases are like that.

A few years ago, I spent Christmas Eve in Niagara Falls. After dinner I decided to take a cruise through town just to see what was going on.

Even on Christmas Eve, that city is busy around the casino area.

It was around 9:30 p.m., when I stopped at a red light next to a local pizza place.

I was surprised to see that not only was it open, there were patrons inside ordering pizza.

One guy was sitting alone in the corner of the restaurant. Two other guys were ordering at the counter.

I guess not everyone celebrates Christmas, but I thought how sad it was, that on Christmas Eve, this one guy was sitting alone eating a slice of pizza. Was there no one who reached out to him over the holidays?

Country singer Willie Nelson has released a lot of well-known songs over the years.

One song called "Always on My Mind" - it was actually written by someone else - is about a musician who is on the road a lot. He laments the fact that he is losing his wife because he is away so much, but he tells her she is "always on my mind."

Sometimes just thinking about someone isn't enough.

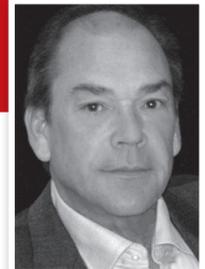
Maybe this Christmas you can make someone's life a little brighter just by making a phone call.

While someone may have been on your mind, if you don't let them know, just thinking about them really doesn't matter - at least to them.

Even better, make the effort to visit them. You might be surprised at how many people will be spending Christmas alone because no one has reached out to them.

I hope you enjoy your holidays and look forward to a happy and prosperous new year.

Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!



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Government helping to bring high-speed internet to Town of Caledon

BY ROB PAUL

As part of the Government of Ontario's plan to connect every community to high-speed internet by 2025, more than 950 homes, farms, and businesses in the Town of Caledon and Dufferin County are now receiving high-speed internet service, thanks to two newly completed broadband infrastructure networks in the Region.

The completion of these projects, totaling \$5 million, is helping to ensure that farms and businesses in Albion, Humber Grove, Garafraxa Woods, and between the villages of Blackhorse and Coventry, have the ability to attract new customers, grow their business, create new jobs, and stay competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace.

With the added context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's also helping people in these communities work, access services like health care or renewing their driver's licenses, shop online, and stay in touch with family and friends in faster ways than be-

fore.

"Our government is proud to partner with Ontario to improve internet connectivity in rural communities across Southwestern Ontario," said Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure, and Communities. "Broadband infrastructure connects Canadians to essential services and learning and business opportunities that enable them to succeed."

The expanded fibre-optic service is supported by the governments of Canada and Ontario, each committing up to \$1.3 million. The contract to expand broadband services were awarded by Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) Inc., a not-for-profit corporation, initiated by local municipalities to address connectivity in Southwestern Ontario.

"Our government made access to high-speed internet a major priority for rural Ontario and we are delivering on that commitment," said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Af-

fairs. "The pandemic really showed us the importance of being connected to high-speed broadband. Families and businesses in these communities and throughout rural Ontario need these services to do their work—whether its schoolwork or running a business. This is the type of critical infrastructure that benefits the entire community."

In addition, construction is underway to further expand broadband access in the two regions. The governments of Canada and Ontario are each committing \$1.79 million to support a new infrastructure network that will connect nearly 1,000 homes, farms, and businesses in the communities of the Grange, Laurel, and Camilla to reliable high-speed internet services starting in February 2022.

"At a time when more families and businesses are depending on access to the internet, I am pleased to see SWIFT projects being completed and other projects getting started in Dufferin," said Sylvia Jones, MPP Dufferin-Caledon. "It's essential that

we support families and businesses who rely on the internet by ensuring they have access to reliable broadband."

More than \$255 million has been invested by the government of Canada and Ontario and the private sector, to bring high-speed internet to more than 58,000 households and businesses in Southwestern Ontario through SWIFT.

"Increasing access to fast, reliable high-speed internet service throughout our small and rural underserved communities is key to driving social and economic growth throughout Southwestern Ontario," said Gary McNamara, SWIFT Board Chair. "In partnership with the government of Ontario and Canada we are pleased to be working together to expand broadband services throughout Dufferin County and within the Town of Caledon to provide many more residents with equal opportunities to connect, work from home, study and participate in today's ever growing digital society."

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Helen Meisner of Bolton is celebrating after winning \$100,000 with Instant Bingo Doubler. (Game #2234). The winning ticket was purchased at Pioneer Snack Express on Browns Line in Etobicoke.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Environmental activist says smart building won't change irreversible impacts of Highway 413

BY ROB PAUL

With the Government of Ontario pushing towards building Highway 413 and reaffirming its commitment to expanding and building highways in the Fall Economic Statement, there has been an increased dialogue from those in the communities that will be affected about the concept of “smart building” and “smart growth” as urban sprawl will likely accompany the highway.

After Premier Doug Ford made an announcement in Caledon Village last month with Mayor Allan Thompson, Minister of Transportation Caroline Mulroney, and Minister of Finance Peter Bethlenfalvy, that there would be \$145 billion in investments in infrastructure projects from the provincial government to build and expand highways and also create jobs, it seems increasingly likely that Highway 413 will be coming to Caledon.

“There’s no other place anyone would rather start a business, work, or raise a family and that’s why our government is continuing to build Ontario and will be delivering the much needed 413 highway,” Ford said at the announcement. “Right now, our 400-series highways are clogged with gridlock, ask anyone who drives on them, and you’ll hear the same thing. They’re not suitable for the current needs of Ontarians, let alone to handle the influx of new residents who are expected to arrive in Ontario over the next five years.”

Smart building or smart growth are ways of developing land and augmenting infrastructure in an environmentally-friendly way that will reduce long-term impacts both on the climate crisis and on communities as a whole.

With the complexities of modern building and the climate crisis hanging over all development, there has been an increased awareness of what goes on outside of the walls of the building environmentally. Now, with smart building, there’s more drive to ensure the lowest cost and environmental impact over the building lifecycle in an integrated, dynamic, and functional way with an emphasis on promoting positive environmental impacts (rooftop gardens to reduce energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions).

Environmental Defence—an agency dedicated to defending clean water, safe climate, and healthy communities who have long opposed Highway 413—define smart growth

as a “an alternative vision to sprawling low density living and recognizes that we need to make smart choices as our cities grow.”

“As our population increases and more people move to cities, we need to grow smarter. Smart growth is a way of planning our communities that addresses challenges such as where to live, how to move around, and how to protect the resources that sustains us. Smart, complete communities have services and shops nearby to reduce gridlock.”

Some of the recommendation of smart growth from Environmental Defence include fewer single-use buildings, with a mix of retail shops, housing and businesses together to make better use of land and infrastructure; options for people to move around via cycling, walking and public transit; a variety of places where people can live and work, with more housing choices (rental, basement apartments, condos and co-op housing and single family homes) to accommodate people of different incomes, needs, and ages; and better decision-making that is fair and transparent. Planning decisions should include public involvement and the disclosure of the cost of pipes, roads, and services.

Though Jenni Le Forestier, 2021 Dufferin-Caledon Green federal candidate and one of the lead environmental activists in Caledon against Highway 413, believes smart growth is important, she just doesn’t see how it can work with a government project like this that will invite urban sprawl.

“Are we talking about putting gardens on buildings? I think the square footage of a building is still the square footage and if you’re putting it on the best prime farmland, it’s not a good use of land and not smart planning,” she said. “Justifying building in order to put through a highway or putting through a highway in order to justify building, whichever way you look at it, the highway is driving sprawl, e-commerce is driving the highway, and the combined amount of acreage that is going to be lost for this sprawl scheme is massive.”

“No matter how many rooftop gardens you put in, you’re still never going to get that prime soil back, which is a finite non-renewable resource. You will never get the streams and woodlands back, you will have lost the biodiversity and replacing it on a rooftop is called astroturfing, greenwashing, or offsetting. If

you’re removing nature from one spot and trying to recreate it in another, you will not succeed in replicating these fragile ecosystems. If you believe in the climate emergency, and I think we all do, then why would you degrade the Greenbelt for another highway that is 10 minutes away from one that exists already that is underused (Highway 407).”

An expert panel has already projected that Highway 413 will only save commuters approximately 30 to 60 seconds per trip and will have minimal impact on gridlock as the population in the area grows.

If the highway won’t actually make much difference for people in the community, then Le Forestier wants to know why it would go forward, especially with the other negative impacts—not only environmental—that will be come through developing it.

“The question is who is this highway for? when you look at who this highway is for, it’s not for commuters, it’s a highway for developers to expropriate land, build on land, and enrich themselves,” she said. “This will not save time on people’s work commute, so there’s no justification there. It will fill in over the next five to 10 years, if not sooner and so, what’s the point? Then also, when you look at the north and south side of where the routes proposed, that land will be made potentially available for pits and quarries, the gravel material that needs to be excavated to build the highway has to be within 50 kilometres of the route. If you live in Orangeville, you’re going to see an increase in truck traffic, dust, noise, and traffic accidents. We’re seeing it already with the amount of trucks that are on the road, this is not going to make your drive any better because those trucks have to take that material to the site to build the highway.”

“Any way you look at it, whether the highway itself or the land needed for the highway, or the material needed to build the highway, it will have a hugely massive impact. It’s really not the direction we should be going in if we’re truly talking about land and needs, we have a housing crisis and this isn’t solving the housing crisis, and we have a health crisis, this isn’t addressing the health crisis. This is clearly a project that is for a very small number of people and it’s being forced on the rest of Ontario though a very undemocratic process, and its impacts will be devastating.”

When asked about communities opposing

the highway last month, Ford explained that those who are opposed aren’t the ones in the areas being impacted, but Le Forestier says the Premier isn’t listening to the people in place like Caledon that are against it.

“I think he’s (Ford) listening to the politicians in the communities he’s visiting, and I don’t think he’s listening to the people who actually live here that are faced with the huge impacts of pits and quarries every single day,” she said. “I think the opposition to the highway is across the entire GTA and the more people that know about the highway, the less they like it. The message is clear, it’s not just the people who live in the city that opposite it, it’s actually the people who live along the route who are going to be impacted by it. Whether it’s their land being expropriated, or whether it’s the impact of pits and quarries, or whether it’s a threat to their farmland or food security, or even just the environmental impacts they’re worried about, there are many different types of people who are opposed to this. I think Doug Ford is looking at it through the lens of the people he’s talking to around the breakfast table, as opposed to looking at it through the lens of the people who are going to be paying for the highway.”

Le Forestier encourages people to continue to look at Highway 413 from a critical point of view and to not look past the potential impacts it will have on Caledon and other communities because of statements about commute times or the concept of smart building.

“If you look at the MZOs that are being approved and who’s behind those MZOs—Amazon—huge warehouse distribution companies, we know e-commerce has taken off during the pandemic, but it’s because we’ve been in lockdown. People are stuck in their homes and that will hopefully not be the case forever, and if we’re supposed to be looking at local businesses and supporting local, then e-commerce isn’t the way forward. I really object to local politicians supporting international corporations above local business. I think this highway is being driven by this interest in warehouses, and those warehouses aren’t supplying an infinite amount of jobs. This isn’t for the people, it’s for corporations and as we come out of the pandemic, we should be looking at our own sustainability. Politicians are supposed to represent public interest, and public interest is not a highway.”



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Caledon seniors represented C3 at Ironman Arizona



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BY ROBERT BELARDI

Sometimes one of the best things in life is not knowing where you are going to end up next.

Peggy and Jim Reid have been long-time citizens in Caledon, living on Rockwood Side Road located off of Old Baseline.

When their son Taylor was just 12-years of age, he wanted to improve his ability to run. The Reids came across C3 Canadian Cross Training Club and met up with Olympic coach Barrie Shepley.

Within the year, both Peggy and Jim saw their son flourish firsthand. Taylor was winning races and wanted to take this further. He

began triathlon training.

Taking him to swimming practice early in the mornings, the Reids witnessed Taylor become a National Junior Triathlon Champion and a cross country runner at Mayfield High School and McMaster University.

After watching their son for so many years, the couple thought it was time to get involved with the club themselves. They began with easy jogs and found a new purpose as they got older.

Now, Peggy, 63, and Jim, 67, were part of the 45 Caledon C3 club athletes who travelled to Ironman Arizona in Phoenix a couple weeks back.

The couple completed the Ironman which consists of a 2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike ride and 26.2 mile run. Speaking to the Citizen, Jim said he said only one to two per

cent of people can finish this.

“To have two sixty-plus athletes from the same family hit the finishing line on a very tough race day is truly incredible” Shepley said.

This Ironman Arizona was to honour the late Patricia Lopez.

Lopez passed away in a car accident in August 2020. Her husband Luis and coach at C3 was part of this past event.

“It’s been a tough last two years with the pandemic and Patricia’s passing, so having the C3 club together celebrating together was a big milestone for all of us,” Shepley said.

No matter your age, both Jim and Peggy have shown that anything is possible. Even for a painter (Jim) and a photographer (Peggy) in which they are more formally known for.

GOJHL penalized five teams due to violation of vaccination policy

BY ROBERT BELARDI

The Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League released a statement on December 17, penalizing five clubs in the Golden Horseshoe Conference in violation of the league’s vaccination policy.

The GOJHL, had permitted each individual team to be responsible for ensuring the vaccination status of players and club personnel. In the league’s latest findings, 30 GOJHL regular season games have been impacted.

Due to ineligible participants in these games, the statement said all games will be dubbed a 5-0 loss and if both teams were in violation no points were given.

On the list, the Hamilton Kilty B’s were forced to forfeit two victories due to ineligible players against the Thorold Blackhawks on October 2 and against the Niagara Falls Canucks on October 4.

The St. Catharines Falcons forfeited one victory against the Fort Erie Meteors on September 25 and the Welland Jr. Canadiens forfeited one game against the Pelham Panthers on September 26.

The second most games forfeited on the list saw the Thorold Blackhawks lose out on six games this year all against Niagara Falls, Hamilton, the Caledonia Pro-Fit Corvairs, Pelham and St. Catharines.

The most penalized team was the Niagara Falls Canucks as the club lost out on 24 games this year due to ineligible players. The GOJHL has also announced a member of the organization has been suspended indefinitely.

With these forfeits coming into play, the Canucks now sit at the bottom of the division with only five points on the year. The Blackhawks sit in second last with 14 points.

The league has surely sent out a clear-cut message to the rest of the GOJHL that everyone is being investigated to ensure that the vaccination policy has been met.

If an ineligible player or member of staff is discovered, teams could be paying a hefty price that could ruin their season and their playoff hopes.

Merry Christmas

During this holiday season, we wish you all the best.



Rob Payne
Financial Advisor

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Bombers earn win and a loss, Golden Hawks games postponed



BY ROBERT BELARDI

There's a lot to talk about in hockey circles. For the first time since the start of all junior hockey seasons, all three Caledon clubs were not in action last week.

The Caledon Golden Hawks saw both of their games against the Midland Flyers and the Pen-tang Kings postponed over the weekend.

In the PJHL, there have been COVID-19 concerns. The Golden Hawks were two of 11 games in total postponed over the last week. Barring no setbacks, the Hawks will host the Kings at Mayfield Arena on Sunday, January, 2 at 6:30 p.m.

Skipping over to the GOJHL, the Caledon Bombers suffered a tough shoot-out loss to the Brantford Bandits on the road and earned a hard-fought 2-1 over-time win on the road against the Listowel Cyclones.

In the first period up against the Bandits, the Bombers found themselves one goal down just over a minute in the game. Devon Butler scored his first goal of the season from Gianlui Amato and Kurtis Heggie.

Coming out hot in the second period and outshooting the Bandits 18-14 in the frame, the Bombers finally solved Vyacheslav Gordeichuk to get a goal on the board. Tyler Bortkiewicz scored his sixth goal of the season from Andrew Reynolds and Ben McChesney.

After Devin Coran gave the Bandits the lead at 1:49 in the third period, Myles Yearwood answered the call at 3:29 to tie it right up.

Skipping over to the shootout Coran scored the only goal to give the Bandits the win last Saturday.

Last Sunday, the Bombers travelled to Listowel for a back-to-back game.

In this defensive showdown, Jack Clancy scored his first goal of the season just over four minutes in.

With momentum on their side the Bombers couldn't find another goal in them and in the second period, red-hot Jaden Goldie scored his 18 goal of the season to tie it up.

Into overtime, Wyatt Kerr netted home the game-winner. Owen Porter earned his second

win of the campaign.

The Bombers next game is up against the Stratford Warriors at home at Mayfield Arena on Thursday, December 30. Puck drop is at 8:00 p.m. EST.

Over in the OJHL, the Brampton Admirals' struggles continue as the boys fell 7-4 against the North York Rangers and 7-3 against the Missis-sauga Chargers.

On a sidenote of positivity despite these losses, the Admirals went 1-3 on the power play against the Rangers and 2-4 on the man advantage against the Chargers.

Their power play ranks 14 in the league with a 14.41 per cent success rate.

The Admirals took on the St. Michaels Buzz-ers this Thursday, December 23, at 8:00 p.m. at Mayfield Arena.

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HONDA

Dealer order may be required. Anticipated delivery date of December 2021/early 2022. ⁹Limited time lease offers available through Honda Financial Services Inc. (HFS), to qualified retail customers on approved credit. Weekly payments include freight and PDI (ranges from \$1,700 to \$1,870 depending on model), tire & environmental fee (\$21) (This fee covers the cost to Honda Canada of collecting and recycling tires), A/C charge (\$100), and O/M/C fee (\$10). Taxes, licence, insurance and registration are extra. Representative weekly lease example: 2022 CIVIC LX SEDAN (Model FE2F2NE) // 2022 CIVIC SPORT SEDAN (Model FE2F5NJ) // 2022 CR-V LX 2WD (Model RW1H2NES) // 2022 Pilot Black Edition (Model YF6H0KNK) on a 60 // 60 // 24-month term with 260 // 260 // 260 // 104 weekly payments at 3.99% // 3.99% // 3.99% // 2.99% lease APR. Weekly payment is \$65.99 // \$76.92 // \$82.41 // \$235.67 with \$1,515 // \$1,515 // \$1,995 // \$0 down or equivalent trade-in and \$0 total lease incentive included. Down payments, \$0 security deposit and first weekly payment due at lease inception. Total lease obligation is \$17,158.42 // \$19,997.96 // \$21,426.74 // \$24,510.09. 100,000 // 100,000 // 100,000 // 40,000 kilometre allowance; charge of \$0.12/km for excess kilometres. PPSA lien registration fee of \$40.00 // \$40.00 // \$40.00 // \$16.00 and lien registering agent's fee of \$6.50, due at time of delivery are not included. 2022 Civic Sport Sedan shown in Rallye Red // 2022 CR-V LX 2WD shown in Platinum White Pearl. Additional charge of \$300.00 applies for premium paint colour. *None of the features we describe are intended to replace the driver's responsibility to exercise due care while driving. Drivers should not use handheld devices or operate certain vehicle features unless it is safe and legal to do so. Some features have technological limitations. For additional feature information, limitations and restrictions, please visit www.honda.ca/disclaimers and refer to the vehicle's Owner's Manual. For all offers: licence, insurance, PPSA, other taxes (including HST) and excess wear and tear are extra. Taxes payable on full amount of purchase price. Offers only valid for Ontario residents at participating Ontario Honda Dealers from November 02, 2021 until January 04, 2022. Dealer may lease for less. Dealer order/trade may be necessary (but may not be available in all cases). Colour availability may vary by Dealer. Vehicles and accessories are for illustration purposes only. Offers, prices and features subject to change without notice. See your Ontario Honda Dealer or visit HondaOntario.com for full details.

Minor hockey player tips: Stay engaged while on the bench

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

While there are only five skaters and goalie on the ice at a time during a hockey game, everyone takes a turn in contributing to a team's success.

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association is offering some advice to minor hockey players on how to stay engaged and support your team when it's not your turn on the ice:

- Always be ready – When it's your turn to hit the ice, make sure you are prepared. Stay focused on the flow of the game and be ready for instructions from your coach. You should know what you are supposed to be doing before you hop over the boards and hit the ice.

- Encourage your teammates – While your teammates are on the ice you should be encouraging them from the bench. A fist bump or a pat on the back after a hard-working shift are easy gestures to show your teammates that you appreciate their effort.

- Keep your ears open – Pay attention to what your coaches are saying. They could be sharing important messages about strategy, line changes, or what's happening on the ice. Communicate with your coaches if you pick up on a trend from the opposing team.

- Study the flow of the game – When you're on the bench you should still be paying attention to what's happening on the ice. Watching the game from outside of the action can be a great learning tool and you can see the other team's tendencies that you may not have otherwise noticed.

- Speak up and be an effective communicator – Talk to your line mates after your shift and go over what went well and what you can improve on together. Keep the talking go game-related topics and save non-game chatter for the locker room.

- Keep the bench organized – Put water bottles back in their proper place. Don't leave a mess on the bench. Be aware of your surroundings and remember there are coaches behind you.

- By remembering these tips, you will stay engaged with your team and game on the ice and you will contribute to your team's success.

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The Lord Dufferin Chapter IOE holds their meetings at the Lord Dufferin Centre on the 4th Tuesday of every month. We are looking for women who would like to help in the Community. Call 519-941-1865.

IF YOU WANT to keep drinking, that's your business. **IF YOU WANT** to stop drinking, that's our business. Call **Alcoholics Anonymous Hot Line, 1-866-715-0005.** www.aanorthaltoneir.org.

DRUG PROBLEM? We've been there, we can help! Narcotics Anonymous meets over Zoom, via video call. The Zoom meeting information is: Meeting # 245 323 6271. Password: 1234. The meetings are hosted on Fridays & Sundays at 7:30 pm. Call anytime 519-215-0761. Shelburne is meeting at 7:30.

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B.G. THOMAS

It is with heavy hearts and sadness we announce the passing of B.G. Thomas (Bernard, Richard, Taffy) of Boston Mills on December 13, 2021 at the age of 99.

Richard was predeceased by his wife Paddy in 2012 and step daughter Lynne Torode in 1992. Richard will be remembered by his stepson Frazer Torode (Wendy), grandchildren Christopher Mullen (Shannon Stirling, great grandchild Isaac StirlingMullen), Scott Mullen and many friends.

Now, this won't surprise those who knew him, but Richard composed his own obituary. It follows:

Born in 1922, July 26, of an English mother and Welsh father.

Educated at Bishop's Stortford College, Herts. England.

Served as a tank crew member in World War Two (49th and 44th Royal Tank Regiments, British Army).

Earned Engineering Degree University of London, London England.

After working in heavy construction in England and West Africa, Richard immigrated to Canada with his wife and step children in 1954.

He toiled, not altogether happily, in the land development industry in and around Toronto.

In 1994, he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A. (Hons.)) from York University, Toronto.

Further education resulted in a Law degree from Queen's University in 1998 and following articling and the Bar Admission Course, he was admitted to the Ontario Bar in February 2000 in his 78th year.

He had a very wide range of interests including Latin, ancient Greek, history, antiques, nature study, vintage fire arms, hand tools and cameras as well as dinghy sailing and motorcycles.

Richard will be mourned by some but soon forgotten, as no doubt it should be."

We need to thank Comfort Keepers for their excellent service, which allowed Richard to stay at home till the end.

We thank our Paramedics and St. Elizabeth Healthcare, Richard's family doctor, Mike Mori of Orangeville and his staff.

And a big thank you to Richard's friends for their tireless visits and support.

A Celebration of his life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please donate to a charity of your choice. To view or leave condolences for the family please visit www.wardfuneralhome.com



IN MEMORIAM



Dana Roxanne Googh
December 21, 2005

In loving memory of a beloved wife.

*Do you know how much I miss you?
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Do you see the emptiness in my heart
From your world way up there?*

*I miss your arms around me
Your blue eyes and that smile
Are memories that stir my soul
And keep my heart alive.*

*I remember how good life use to be
Your warm and gentle hand in mine
The simple ways you cared for me
And memories that become
more precious with time.*

**Always loved
John Flannery**





What goes "Oh, Oh, Oh"?

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MAR 11TH.....KIDD FAMILY AUCTIONS ANNIVERSARY SALE.

MAR 25TH.....ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES AND HOUSEHOLD TREASURES (again).

APR 8TH.....THE VIP FIREARMS EVENT.

APR 15TH.....OUTDOORS EQUIPMENT AUCTION.

APR 29TH.....BADJEROS FARM SALE.

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Achill Choral Society invites those with a passion for singing to join them – virtually

BY ROB PAUL

When the COVID-19 hit, it put a lot of community organizations in precarious positions with no sure way to move forward and no clear end in sight. Fast forward more than 20 months, and many organizations have had to adapt to a new way of living.

Few things are as communal as music, but without the ability to meet in person and perform, the pandemic left musicians and singers in uncharted waters. For a group like the Achill Choral Society, which in normal circumstances meets throughout the year to sing and prepare for concerts, it's a world they never expected.

Moving from singing in a room full of energy to a virtual setting was almost unfathomable and it took plenty of attempts to figure out what would work best for a choir unable to meet in person, but Achill Choral Society Artistic Director Shawn Grenke and President John Lemke agree that doing something was always better than doing nothing.

"We've been on Zoom... keeping our community and our choir engaged and together," Grenke said. "We've been doing bi-weekly rehearsals on Wednesday evenings through Zoom where we work on musicianship, sight singing, warmups, and breakout rooms where all of the sopranos can be together and all of the altos, tenors, and basses. We teach in a very unnormal way with everyone on mute while the pianist and I play through the songs and tell the choir where to breathe and where not to breathe and what note to sing and what to do and what not to do."

"When we first started, it was very interesting because it's so different than a regular choir re-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

hearsal to try and involve people in a similar way," said Lemke. "After trying a number of different things, we did come to what we're currently doing with the pianist walking through a song. It wasn't easy getting to where we are right now."

To galvanize the choir in a situation no singer expects to find themselves in, Grenke ensured that despite the peculiar position, they had something they were working towards to stay motivated.

"We needed a project and our project for last fall was to produce a virtual Christmas concert," Grenke said. "We were fortunate enough to have archive video and audio files in our library, so, we went through the last five years of music and picked the pieces that sounded the best. We worked on a couple virtual choir pieces where all the singers of the Achill Choir would record their own parts at home and then we had a video and audio editor merging those together so that we could make it sound like the choir was singing together in the same room, when in fact they weren't."

"We put together the virtual choir at Christmas and selected six or seven members to introduce the pieces and give a little

history about it. For the spring we did something similar because we didn't really know what COVID would or wouldn't allow us to do and we ended up doing a virtual spring concert as well."

If not for having the archives as a resource throughout these trying times, the Achill Choral Society may have ended up in a hole they wouldn't have been able to climb out of if they had to take time away from meeting.

"We're so fortunate that one key member of the tenor section over the past five or six years has been recording our concerts and we do two big concerts a year," Lemke said. "He's archived all these digital recordings of concerts we've done. He's able to go back into his files and bring these back for us to use. It allows us to supplement the new things we're doing with those for our virtual concerts."

"I think in many ways having the archives have saved the choir," Grenke said. "The fear is that if the choir takes a hiatus, it will be so much more difficult to get everyone back together and you'd lose so much momentum. In many ways it would be like starting a new group over again and that's desperately what we're trying not to do."

Having a committed choir group and community support have helped Grenke and Lemke navigate through an unprecedented time, and it helps that for many members this has become their getaway from the tough times.

"The choir and community have really rallied and pulled together, and we've been fundraising to keep the artistic staff paid, and all things considered, we're doing okay," said Grenke.

"I think we're doing very well," said Lemke. "One of the advantageous we do have is that it's a very established group that's been together for over 35 years and we have a lot of long-time members that really care about keeping it together. We've been fortunate in that way and the social aspect is a key. When we do the rehearsals there's always time left for people to socialize and catch up about what's going on in their lives."

Going virtual has also allowed the choir to reach individuals they may not have been able to and even try new collaborative things says Grenke.

"We've had between 10 and 15 new members join during the COVID time and many of them do not live in the area, but they wanted to get their voices

in shape," Grenke said. "They wouldn't have had the opportunity to join the Achill Choir if it wasn't for COVID. Keeping the community together and building the community are two things that we've done well during this. We've also partnered with my church choir in Toronto—Eglinton St. George's United Church—and we've been rehearsing with them as well and we've done a few shared pieces with a virtual choir of about 60 people. That was neat to do and we're fortunate to be able to work with them and so there's been a handful of weeks where the Achill Choir was singing virtually every week."

As the choir grows virtually, Grenke and Lemke continue to encourage those who are interested in getting involved with Achill to reach out because, at the end of the day, the group focused on building community more than anything right now.

"With [many of the] people that have joined since COVID, we're not auditioning them in a formal way, we invite them to come sing with us and share in the community," Grenke said. "When we're able to gather in person safely, we'll do more of a formal audition where we can really hear the voices, but I can't

remember the last time I turned someone away because I really do feel that if you want to sing then you can sing."

"There are other choirs in this area that haven't been able to continue, choirs that have people that love to sing," Lemke said. "Some of those people are looking for a place to at least get some singing activity and they're joining Achill. It's really great that we can be there for them. In a normal world we'd charge membership dues, and since COVID began we've waived that requirement. So, we're offering the opportunity to anybody who wants to get involved and it's free at this point. We do ask for donations to try and support our expenses and so far we've been successful in covering them. That speaks a lot about the community and people's interest in supporting this type of art form."

With Christmas just around the corner, Grenke had the choir preparing for the Christmas concert through virtual recordings and the archives. The concert, Comfort & Joy, is online now at achill.ca through December 29.

"We're preparing for it with two virtual pieces and we're teaching those to the choir—Eric Whitacre's Seal Lullaby and a beautiful piece called O Love by Elaine Hagenberg," said Grenke before the launch. "We're going back through our archives again and finding pieces we didn't use last year to fill out the 45-minute to an hour program that everybody will be invited to. We're encouraging people to donate to the choir because the donations are what keeps the choir going."

To learn more about the Achill Choral Society or to donate to show your support, visit achill.ca.

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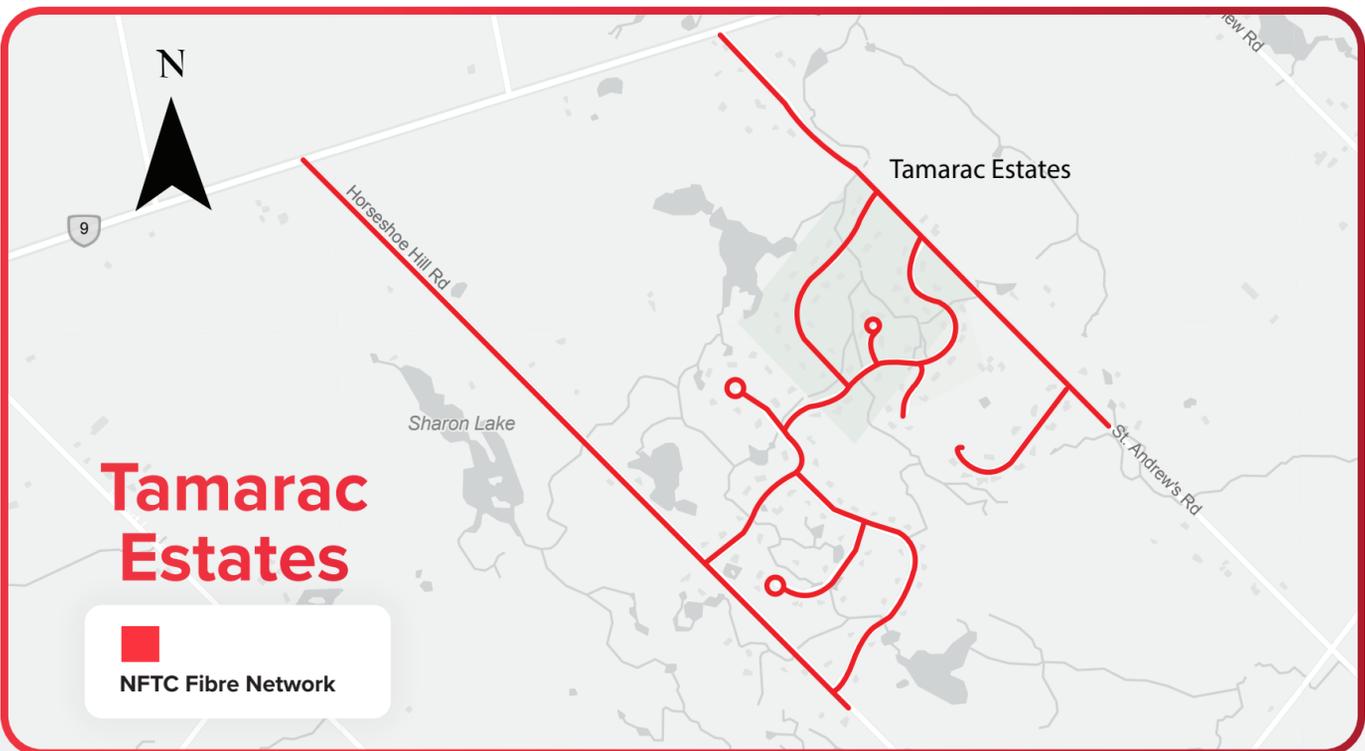
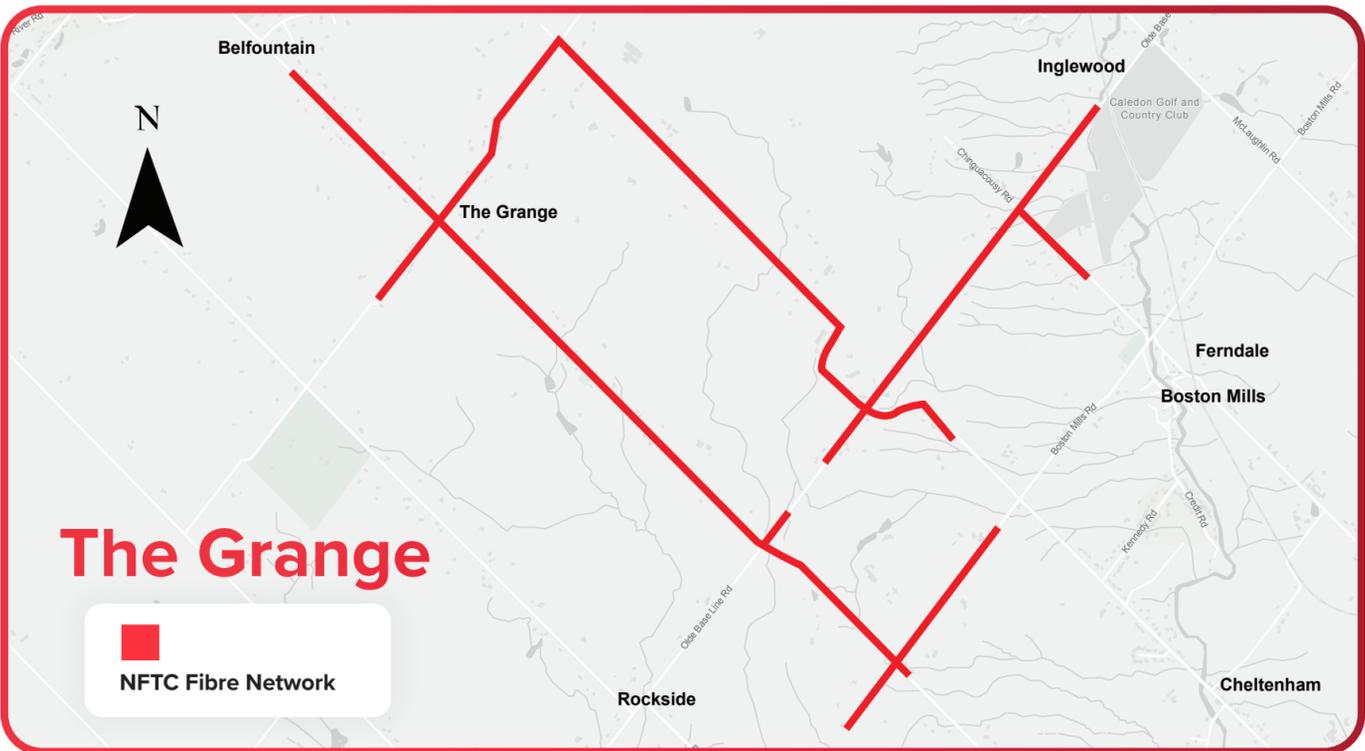
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Holiday Greetings



Image by Jill Wellington from Pixabay

A spiced and creamy holiday twist for a classic cookie

(NC) Snickerdoodles are a true classic, with the distinctive crackled top and sweet cinnamon sugar coating. While this soft and chewy favourite can be enjoyed all year long, why not give it a holiday twist by adding another timeless tradition — the flavour of eggnog?

Spiced Eggnog Snickerdoodles

Prep time: 25 minutes Cook time: 20 minutes Makes: 20 cookies

INGREDIENTS:

- Cookies:**
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
 - 1/3 cup granulated sugar
 - 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
 - 1 large egg, room temperature
 - 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
 - 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 tsp cream of tartar
 - 1/2 tsp baking soda
 - 1/4 tsp salt
- Topping:**
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
 - 1 tbsp PC eggnog spice seasoning blend

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Beat butter, granulated sugar and brown sugar in large bowl using electric hand mixer on medium-high speed until creamy and light in colour, 2 to 3 minutes; alternatively, beat in bowl of stand mixer using paddle attachment. Beat in egg and vanilla, scraping down side of bowl as needed. Set aside.
3. Whisk together flour, cream of tartar, baking soda and salt in separate bowl. Add to butter mixture; beat on low speed just until combined.
4. Stir together sugar and eggnog spice in small bowl. Scoop cookie dough and roll into balls. Roll balls in sugar mixture to coat.

Nutritional information per cookie: calories 100; fat 5 g; sodium 65 mg; carbohydrates 13 g; dietary fibre 0 g; sugars 8 g; protein 1 g.

www.newscanada.com



Merry Christmas!



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GREAT HOMEMADE FOOD GIFTS

Gifts from the heart are among the most coveted and appreciated come the holiday season. Hobbyists from all walks of life can turn their passions into handmade gifts, but few gifts may be as welcomed as those that can be eaten.

Cooking and baking ramp up during the holiday season. People can turn extra time in the kitchen into opportunities to create festive treats that are ideal for gifting. But which items are the best of the best? Even though tastes are singular, these items will appeal to most foodies and others on your gift list.

JAMS AND PRESERVES: Fruit jams and preserves are versatile foods. They are as at home on toast and biscuits as they are as fillings in cookies and tarts. Jams and preserves can be made with relatively few ingredients and work well with seasonal fruits.

CINNAMON ROLLS: Warm, sticky and full of aromatic spice, cinnamon rolls are the perfect comfort foods. These rolls do not typically have a long shelf life, so be sure to present them promptly before they get stale.

PANCAKES (OR COOKIES) IN A JAR: If you have a fantastic recipe that you can't resist sharing, try turning it into a gift. Measure and package the ingredients into mason jars, tie with ribbons and include directions for preparation and cooking.

MINI BUNDT CAKES: Fruit cakes maybe a holiday standard, but bundt cakes make for great and traditional offerings as well. Miniature bundts filled with chocolate chips, dried fruits or even those soaked in a favourite boozy-butter glaze can be moist and delicious.

CHOCOLATE BARKS OR FUDGES: Seasonal flavours can come to life in chocolate treats. White chocolate filled with peppermint pieces or dark chocolate and cherry chunks is tasty pairings. Break apart portions of the bark or cut the fudge with cookie cutters and gift inside cello bags tied with ribbons or in cardboard candy boxes.

COCKTAIL SYRUPS: Create spicy or sweet syrups that are tailor-made for enhancing cocktails. Anyone on your gift list can then become a master mixologist.

SHORTBREAD COOKIE ORNAMENTS: Circular shortbread cookies can be decorated with royal icing to look like Christmas ornaments. They can be eaten or even placed on trees to complete holiday decor.

FESTIVE COOKIE POPS: Cookie pops can be made by mixing homemade or pre-purchased crumbled cake with frosting or softened cream cheese and formed into balls. Insert a lollipop stick and dip the balls into melted chocolate or candy melts. Sprinkles, nonpareils or lustre dust can be used to enhance the covered pops.

Food gifts are perfect for the holiday season. Handmade treats from the heart show loved ones how just much you care.

A simple, tasty HOLIDAY TREAT

Baking is a holiday tradition in many families. Gingerbread cookies may be the first baked goods that come to mind when people envision the holiday season, but celebrants need not limit themselves when preparing special treats for their families.

Macaroons are one beloved baked good that busy holiday hosts may believe are too time-consuming to prepare. However, the following recipe for Coconut Macaroons with Dried Cherries from Laurey Mastertons The Fresh Honey Cookbook (Storey) is easy to whip up and makes for a tasty holiday treat.



Coconut Macaroons with Dried Cherries

Makes 25 to 30 small cookies

- 1 cup unsweetened flaked coconut
- 1 cup sweetened flaked coconut
- 8 egg whites
- Salt
- 14 cup dried cherries
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon honey, preferably orange blossom honey

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F.
2. Combine the unsweetened and sweetened coconut on a baking sheet. Lightly toast in the oven for 5 to 10 minutes. Keep a close watch, so the mixture does not burn, though you do want a nice toasted golden brown colour. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.
3. Reduce the oven temperature to 325 F. (If using a convection oven, leave at 350 F.)
4. Whip the egg whites with a pinch of salt in a medium bowl until the whites stiffen into firm peaks.
5. Fold the toasted coconut into the egg white mixture.
6. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Drop table-spoon-size rounds, perhaps using a small ice cream scoop, of the coconut mixture onto the baking sheet. Press one or two dried cherries into the top of each macaroon.
7. Melt the butter and honey together in a microwave on high for 20 seconds. Drizzle the mixture over the top of each macaroon. Sprinkle with a tiny pinch of salt.
8. Bake the macaroons for 20 to 25 minutes, until lightly browned (watch carefully to avoid burning), or for 8 to 10 minutes if using a convection oven. The macaroons should be dry to the touch. You may need to bake them longer if it is a humid day. If you live in a dry area, these will keep well for a week.

CHEF'S NOTE: If you want to be really fancy, melt some chocolate and dip each one halfway into it.

Thank you to our clients, customers, friends & family for your continued trust. May you have a happy and healthy holiday season!

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'Tis the season for GINGERBREAD COOKIES

Tradition plays a big role during the holiday season. Food is at the centre of many families traditions, which may include big family dinners and Sunday brunches together.

Holiday baking sessions also hold a sacred spot in many households. Such sessions are a great opportunity for adults and children to have some fun in the kitchen and create some tasty treats the whole family can enjoy.

Baked goods devotees may find it hard to imagine the holidays without gingerbread, and this recipe for Soft Glazed Gingerbread from Elisabeth M. Prueitt and Chad Robertsons Tartine (Chronicle Books) can ensure the whole family enjoys this holiday season staple.



Soft Glazed Gingerbread

Yields 12 to 20 cookies

Dough:

- 3 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 4 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup blackstrap or other dark molasses
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup

Glaze:

- 1 cup confectioners sugar
- 2 tablespoons water

To make the dough, stir together the flour, cocoa powder, ginger, cloves, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, and pepper in a mixing bowl. Set aside. Using a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment beat the butter on medium-high speed until creamy. Slowly add the granulated sugar and mix on medium speed until the mixture is completely smooth and soft. Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. Add the egg and mix well.

Add the molasses and corn syrup and beat until incorporated. Stop the mixer again and scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the flour mixture and beat on low speed until a dough forms that pulls away from the sides of the bowl and all the ingredients are well incorporated. Remove the dough from the bowl, flatten it on a large piece of plastic wrap into a rectangle about 1 inch thick, cover the dough with the plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper on a nonstick liner.

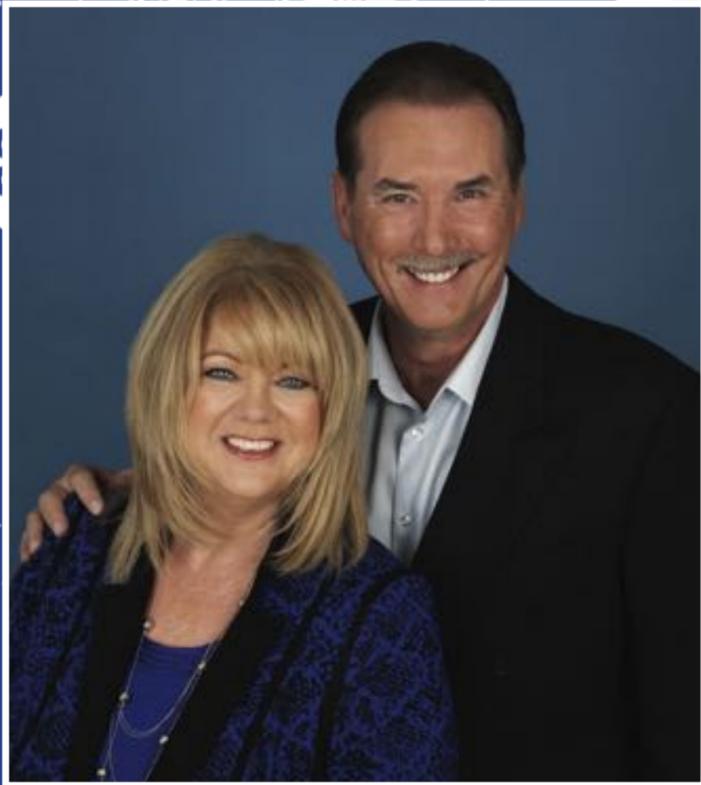
Unwrap the dough and place it on a floured work surface. If using a plaque with a design, roll out the dough 13-inch thick, lightly dust the top with flour, press your cookie molds over the dough, and then cut out the shapes with a small knife and place them on the prepared baking sheet, spacing them about 1 inch apart. Alternatively, using the mold as a guide, cut around it with a small knife, flip the mold over so the design is facing you, and place the dough over it, pressing it into the design. Unmold the shapes onto the prepared baking sheet, leaving about 1 inch between them.

If using a patterned rolling pin, lightly dust the lined baking sheet with flour and transfer the dough to the pan. Lightly dust the top of the dough with flour and roll it into a rectangle about 13-inch thick with a plain pin. Then, using the patterned pin, roll over the dough with enough pressure to ensure a clear impression of the design. Trim the sides with a small knife. It is not necessary to cut into smaller sizes before baking.

Bake the cookies until lightly golden along the sides but still soft to the touch in the centers, 7 to 15 minutes. The timing will depend on the size of the individual cookies, or if you have made a single large patterned piece that will be cut after baking.

While the cookies are baking, prepare the glaze. In a small bowl, whisk together the confectioner's sugar and water until smooth.

When the cookies are ready, remove them from the oven and let them cool in the pan on a wire rack for about 10 minutes. Then, while the cookies are still warm, using even strokes, brush a light coat of glaze on the top of each cookie, evenly covering it. Let the cookies cool completely. When the glaze dries, it should leave a shiny, opaque finish. If you have used a patterned pin to make a single large plaque, cut it into the desired sizes with a small, very sharp knife. The cookies will keep in an airtight container in a cool place for about 2 weeks. They do not freeze well, however, as the glaze becomes watery when they are thawed.



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For all that we've endured over the last two years, I wish you a very special Merry Christmas. This year, let's remember the importance of family, friends, and community, and cherish our ability to once again gather safely and responsibly. Let's remember to appreciate all that we have including the little things that bring happiness to us every day. And last but not least, let's remember to be kind to our neighbours and celebrate all of the big and small moments, and those around us.

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Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year!

**Mayor Allan Thompson
and Members of Council**



CHOCOLATE COOKIES

are a sweet finale
to your holiday dinners

The holiday entertaining season is here. Anyone who has been tasked with hosting holiday dinner understands the commitment required to prepare a delicious meal for guests, which often encompasses appetizers, several side dishes and, of course, turkey as the centerpiece. Guests attending a holiday dinner can give hosts and hostesses a break by providing dessert.

Cookies are a popular treat. Thanks to their flavour, portability and relatively short preparation and cooking times, cookies are a smart choice when bringing dessert to a holiday gathering. This recipe for Flourless Chocolate Cookies from Danielle Ryes Live Well Bake Cookies: 75 Classic Cookie Recipes for Every Occasion (Rock Point) offers the added benefit of being flourless. That means that even those with gluten allergies or intolerances can indulge.

Flourless Chocolate Cookies

Makes 24 to 36 cookies

- 3 cups powdered sugar
- 3/4 cup natural unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon espresso powder (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 large egg whites, at room temperature
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, sift the powdered sugar and unsweetened cocoa powder together, then whisk in the instant espresso powder (if using) and salt until well combined. Set aside.

In a separate mixing bowl, whisk together the egg whites, egg, and vanilla extract until fully combined.

Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients, and stir until the mixture is fully combined and smooth.

Using a 1-tablespoon cookie scoop, scoop the cookie dough onto the prepared baking sheets, making sure to leave a little room between each one.

Bake for 11 to 14 minutes, or until the tops of the cookies are set. Remove from the oven, and allow the cookies to cool completely on the baking sheets.

Store the cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days.

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Treat guests to a BELOVED HOLIDAY STAPLE

The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Many traditions are decades if not centuries old, while others do not have such long histories. One younger tradition that many people cannot go without during the holiday season is centred around a wildly popular beverage made at an equally well-liked coffeehouse chain.

The peppermint mocha was introduced to Starbucks customers during the 2002 holiday season. The beverage became something of an instant classic and is now served at more than 30,000 stores across the globe.

Holiday hosts can bring the peppermint mocha into their own homes this holiday season thanks to Starbucks. Though Starbucks notes the following DIY recipe for the Peppermint Mocha isn't the official recipe, it can help holiday hosts impress their guests and satisfy their cravings for this beloved beverage should families find themselves snowed in during their holiday gatherings this year.

DIY Peppermint Mocha

Makes one 12-ounce beverage
Preparation time: 10 minutes

1 fluid ounce coffee or 1 shot espresso, such as Starbucks Christmas Blend or Starbucks Espresso Roast Coffee
12 cup milk (or dairy alternative)
2 tablespoons peppermint-flavoured syrup
3 tablespoons mocha sauce
Whipped Cream
Dark chocolate or shaving

1. On a stovetop, heat milk on a medium setting. Whisk the milk to make foam for about 30 seconds. Set aside. (Or, use an electric milk frother at home if you have one.)
2. Pour two tablespoons of chocolate sauce and two tablespoons of peppermint syrup into the bottom of a 12-ounce or larger coffee mug.
3. Add one shot of brewed espresso. (Don't have an espresso machine? Make concentrated coffee by using less water in an alternative brewing method.)
4. Fill mug with steamed milk.
5. Top with whipped cream and garnish with chocolate shavings.



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FESTIVE PUDDING

to satisfy your hunger and your health

(NC) There are a lot of temptations during the holidays. Between desserts, drinks and special occasion foods, you may consume more sugar than usual. To help keep your health in check, here are a handy tip and a delicious festive dessert idea:

Don't go to a dinner party or potluck unprepared. Normally loaded with refined sugar and carbs, desserts can get tricky — especially if you have a health condition such as diabetes.

Bringing a lower-sugar dessert is a great way to keep you on track at a potluck, and still enjoy a delicious treat with the rest of the party.

Try this fragrant and sweet pudding, which has 5.2 grams of fibre and 9 grams of protein per serving to keep you nourished and full. It's drizzled in a fresh, fruity homemade syrup that will satisfy your sweet tooth and keep your glucose balanced.

Festive Bread Pudding

Prep time: 45 minutes + 5 min Cook time: 1 hour + 5 min
Serves: 8

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 bottles (237 mL each) vanilla Glucerna, a nutritional drink with a low glycemic index
- 5 slices whole-wheat bread, cut into 2-cm cubes
- 375 mL (1 ½ cups) bran flake cereal
- 3 eggs
- 500 mL (2 cups) fresh or frozen soft fruit
- 30 mL (2 tbsp) lemon juice • 2.5 mL (½ tsp) cinnamon
- 2.5 mL (½ tsp) vanilla extract
- 30 mL (2 tbsp) water

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 175°C (350°F).
2. Butter an 8 x 11-inch (20 x 28 centimetre) mould.
3. Spread bread cubes in mould and cover with bran flakes.
4. Mix Glucerna and eggs in a bowl and pour over bread.
5. Let sit for 30 minutes until liquid is absorbed, pressing bread from time to time.
6. Bake for 1 hour or until centre is firm.
7. For the topping, put fruit, lemon juice, cinnamon, vanilla extract and water in a saucepan and simmer for 5 minutes. Set aside or refrigerate.

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HOURS: Mon/Tues/Wed 10am-5pm • Thurs-Fri 10am-6pm Sat 10am-5pm • Sun 11am-5pm

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