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Mayor Allan Thompson Honours
International Women's Day

On International Women's Day, I am proud to recognize and pay tribute to former Caledon Mayors, Carole Seglins who served from 1994 to 2003 and Marolyn Morrison who served from 2003 to 2014. Both of these women exemplified community service and leadership and we are a better municipality because of their service and contributions.
Today, Caledon is well served by talented, professional and resilient women leaders in both the public and private sectors #CaledonProud








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Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson has announced he will not seek re-election in this fall's municipal election.. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF CALEDON

Mayor Allan Thompson not running for re-election this fall

BY ROB PAUL

In 2014, Allan Thompson was sworn in as the seventh Mayor of the Town of Caledon. As his second term comes to an end later this year, Thompson has announced he will not be running for re-election in October. Thompson, a lifelong resident and multi-generational farmer in Caledon, has been a part of Caledon Council since 2003. “Having served on Council for 19 years—first as an Area Councillor, then Regional Councillor and for the last seven-and-a-half years as Mayor—I am ready for the next chapter and new op-

portunities that the future brings,” he said. After spending nearly two decades on Council, Thompson took the time to highlight the people who have helped to support him as he’s become a leader in the Caledon community. “Serving as an elected representative is not a job that can be done alone. And I have many people to thank,” he said. “First and foremost, I am so grateful to my family for supporting me—even when I know it was hard to do. “Thank you to my Council colleagues at both the Region of Peel and the Town of Caledon over the last 19 years. I have learned so much from many of you and those lessons will continue to

serve me in whatever comes next. “Town, Regional and Provincial staff, what a privilege it is to collaborate and work with such dedicated, talented public servants, I know how hard you work for the greater good. A huge thank you to the team in the Mayor and Council office. You set a very high standard for service, community commitment and support and I can’t say enough how much I appreciate the sacrifices you make each and every day. And last, but certainly not least, I thank the community for supporting me, challenging me and holding my feet to the fire.

Continued on Page 9

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Coldest Night of the Year smashes fundraising goal

BY ROB PAUL

Anyone who was out and about on February 26 in Caledon likely saw an uptick in walkers; this was no coincidence, but rather the 194 walkers were out trying to make a difference. It was the third annual Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) event organized by Caledon Community Services (CCS) and it was a resounding success thanks to the 37 teams that raised \$98,364. CNOY is an annual event that communities across Canada take part in as they hit the streets in the evening for a brisk walk to raise funds and awareness for local charities that help the hurt, hungry, and homeless. Caledon was one of nearly 200 communities that took part this year. “It went great this year,” said Donna Cragg, CCS Director of Communications and Marketing. “We exceeded our fundraising goal by hitting 131 per cent of the goal (\$75,000) and even though we’re a small community, we came 36th out of all the communities nationally. It was a very exciting event.”

Continued on Page 2


Rob Payne
Financial Advisor

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CCS smashes Coldest Night of the Year fundraising goal thanks in part to Caledon Fire

Continued from FRONT

Though this was the third year CCS has brought CNOY to Caledon, it’s the second straight year the event has had to be run in a virtual fashion due to COVID-19.

“We’re absolutely continuing with this going forward,” said Cragg. “We’re hoping we’ll be back to doing it live next year. Social media documented it all this year with #CaledonCNOY22. Getting to see the firefighters, families, and young people walking was really great it was all very well received. People really enjoyed the experience and having the ability to help.”

When running an event like this in Caledon, it’s not hard to find support says Cragg, even with the pivoted approach to it due to the pandemic, because this is the type of community that always rises to the occasion.

“The social media aspect is nice because it allows people to still connect,” she said. “It’s that whole idea of walking together while walking apart. It allowed people to share their experiences with each other, which gave you as connected a feeling as you could have without walking live all together. This is the type of community we all aspire to live in, one that cares for the most vulnerable among us. Caledon has proven time and time again that they don’t want anyone left behind.”

One of the biggest highlights for CCS with the walk this year was seeing all the different communities, businesses, and organizations in Caledon get involved and raise large amounts of money — of the 37 teams, 26 raised over \$500 and 18 raised at least \$1,000.

“We had three local churches in the top 10 and two small communities on the west side (Cheltenham and Terra Cotta) get into the top 10 with just five or six people,” said Cragg. “It’s great to see that type of engagement Caledon-wide. We targeted 200 walkers and got to 194, which is the most we’ve ever had, and we easily surpassed our fundraising goal (the original goal was \$50,000). We had exceptional response from business sponsorships, not only businesses but the realtors really stepped up because housing is their thing. We may start a trend of it being the ‘Realtors Month of Giving’ because that’s what we’ve been calling it and we’ll see if that picks up across the country.”

One team that made a substantial difference in particular was the Caledon Fire and Emergency Services team that raised \$14,025.

“It was phenomenal to have them,” said Cragg. “They kind of just came late and took the top spot and ran with it. They really engaged with the cause because they’ve seen homelessness, they respond to fires and see families devastated so they could



Local firefighters stepped up and helped Caledon Community Services surpass its Coldest Night of the Year fundraising goal.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CCS

really identify with the cause. They stepped up in such a big way.”

Caledon Fire’s CNOY team captain, Lee-Ann Lawrence, Training Division Captain for Caledon Fire, initially planned the event for the new recruits to get involved in the community with a relatively attainable fundraising goal that they swiftly surpassed.

“The way it started was with our recruit class,” said Lawrence. “We have our recruit class do a community outreach fundraiser every year now — we did a walk for Boots on the Ground last year — and I saw this coming up and thought it would be great for our recruit class to get involved in. They were told they had to raise a minimum of \$50 and we’d do the walk in full gear. From there, we sent it out to our entire department and invited anyone else who wanted to join. My first goal was \$1,000

to \$1,500 and we reached over \$14,000.”

This type of fundraising success was unprecedented for Caledon Fire and Lawrence credits everyone on the team buying into so quickly to challenge of making a difference in the community.

“We’ve never done something this big before,” she said. “Last year we had a much smaller group with just our recruit class of 14 and they raised \$5,000, and even I thought that was amazing. This year it all just went above and beyond, it’s by far the biggest fundraiser our department has ever done. There were 39 firefighters in total from Caledon that participated by raising money.”

Being involved in community events like this are nothing new for Caledon Fire and outreach is something Lawrence says they pride themselves on and it’s a must for helping set a community-oriented tone with recruits.

“It’s a huge part of the job for us,” she said. “Our firefighters give back to the community on a regular basis with what we do for our job, but we like to step up for things that are close to the heart. With this one, all the money went to CCS, which is local and that means a lot. We always make sure to focus on things like that whenever we’re doing this, especially with the recruit class. I’m the lead for the recruit class and they come in thinking they’re just going to learn firefighting tactics but they’re here to be leaders in their community. Doing something like this brings them together as a team and starts them off in that team

environment and teaches them how to work as a team and shows what a group of people can do when they work together to give back to the community.”

This is something Caledon Fire plans to make a yearly tradition because of how much the firefighters enjoyed it and how much they care for an organization like CCS.

“I think we’re going to do it again because I’ve had numerous firefighters ask,” said Lawrence. “The timing is perfect for getting the recruit class to do it and I like it because it’s a challenge for our recruits. It’s a challenge for them both to fundraise and to do the walk in full gear—even though it’s only seven kilometres it’s hard than it looks in full gear. I would like to see us do it every year because I can’t say enough what CCS does for our community locally. We work with them with the food bank around the holidays and we work with them with the toy drive, and this is one more aspect where we can help them give back to the community.”

All of CCS applauded the efforts of Caledon Fire and is proud to have such strong leaders in the community.

“Can’t say this enough, Caledon Firefighters have absolutely lit up this event,” said Monty Laskin, CCS CEO. “Thank you all for your exceptional support and for your outreach to your own friends and family. Your results are outstanding, over-the-top fantastic.”



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Caledon receives close to \$400,000 from provincial government for pool upgrades

BY ROB PAUL

The Ontario government is providing close to \$46 million to support 186 municipalities, Indigenous communities and non-profit tourism, culture, sport and recreation organizations experiencing significant pressures due to COVID-19.

“Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, our government has supported those struggling the most,” said Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. “These capital grants will help municipalities, Indigenous communities and non-profit organizations make repairs or upgrades needed to their sport and recreation facilities to adapt to the pressures of the pandemic so they can continue to deliver programming critical to the economic and social well-being of communities across the province once their doors reopen.”

Caledon was one of three recipients in Dufferin-Caledon to receive an Ontario Trillium Fund Grant (OTF).

The Town of Caledon will receive \$399,400 for facility upgrades and replacements for the pool area at the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness. The other two recipients were the Township of Melancthon (\$62,700 for upgrades to Horning’s Mills Community Centre) and the Orangeville Curling Club (\$66,500 for upgrades to the building).

“COVID-19 has been a challenge for

so many not-for-profit tourism, culture, sport and recreation organizations, and I am proud that our government is supporting their recovery through the Community Building Fund,” said Sylvia Jones, MPP for Dufferin-Caledon. “Investing in upgrades to these facilities ensures that Dufferin-Caledon residents will have places to reconnect and socialize when it is safe to do so.”

Funding through the OTF Community Building Fund’s capital stream will help recipients complete much-needed sport and recreation facility infrastructure repairs—including retrofits and rehabilitation to meet COVID-19 public health requirements—to ensure they can continue to provide programs and services vital to their communities with the public health measures to combat to pandemic being lifted.

“This significant funding is a tremendous boost for our community providing much needed upgrades to the pool area at the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness” said Mayor Allan Thompson. “Residents of all ages will benefit. I can’t say enough how grateful I am to our Provincial Government and Minister Jones for their ongoing support of important community programs and services”.

In total, the province’s Community Building Fund is investing \$105 million to support community arts and culture, heritage, tourism, sport and recreation organizations that are experiencing significant financial pressures due to COVID-19.

CMHA sees unprecedented rise in Canadians and healthcare workers in need

BY ROB PAUL

New research shows that chronic stress resulting from the pandemic is taking a toll on Canadians.

According to a study from the Canadian Mental Health Association, 64 per cent of Canadians are worried about new variants and 57 per cent are worried about COVID-19 circulating in the population for years to come.

Having dealt with the pandemic for the last two years, it's triggered stressors, such as grief and trauma in Canadians and it's likely to lead to significant long-term mental health effects on both the population and the frontline mental health providers caring for them.

"We're seeing the signs of chronic stress on the population," says Margaret Eaton, National CEO of CMHA. "Unfortunately, community mental health organizations have drawn on shallow reserves to meet people's mental health needs during COVID, and now they're running on empty. It's time to check the engine light on our mental health system."

The chronic stress of dealing with the pandemic is taking its toll, making basic decisions harder, sapping our energy and leaving people plain tired or burnt out. Nearly half (46 per cent) of Canadians are stressed or worried about coping with uncertainty.

"We're seeing big differences—or inequities—in how different groups of people are affected by the pandemic. This is dividing our society into haves and have-nots when it comes to mental health and illness," says lead researcher Emily Jenkins, a professor of nursing at UBC who studies mental health and substance use. "The pandemic has made it impossible to ignore the long-standing service gaps and systemic barriers in our systems."

Almost one in five (17 per cent) Canadians felt they needed help with their mental health during the pandemic but didn't receive it because: they didn't know how or where to get it (36 per cent), couldn't afford to pay (36 per cent), couldn't get access (29 per cent) or because insurance didn't cover it (19 per cent).

There's been a large increase in Canadians who need mental health help, but due to long wait lists or high costs, rely on free mental health and addictions services and supports provided by the not-for-profit sector. This has resulted in organizations being pushed to their limits which has ultimately put more pressure on mental health workers.

"The community mental health and addictions sector cannot meet these growing needs with the current funding model," says Eaton. "Between chronic underfunding, patchwork services and people not knowing where to go, Canadians are not getting the help they need when they need it."

CMHA's Peel Dufferin branch has seen a steady rise throughout the pandemic in its volume of calls for both its core services and its crisis services.

"There was a 35 per cent increase in calls when you compare the year before the pandemic to the first year of the pandemic," said David Smith, CEO of CMHA Peel Dufferin.

In both years of the pandemic, CMHA Peel Dufferin has seen a minimum of nearly 5,500 crisis calls per month with it peaking at over 6,500 calls per month in the summer of 2020, October 2021, and January 2022.

Seeing such a drastic increase in calls has made it increasingly difficult on the mental health workers who have to deal with a larger load without an equal increase in resources.

"We haven't increased resources, and there's also a problem getting health workers right now," said Smith. "In the meantime, we've had to reprioritize what we work on, and we've reprioritized answering every call so we can at least get somebody some kind of help. Some of our long-term deeper services we've had to do less of as a result in order to meet the demand."

As the stigma around mental health has decreased, there's been a natural increase in people reaching out to mental health organizations for services and then when the pandemic hit, organizations like CMHA Peel Dufferin saw an unprecedented number of calls.

"The trend has been longer than the last two years," said Smith. "The focus on the reduction

of stigma has led to more and more people talking about mental health and we've seen an increase in people reaching out for support over a much longer period of time. We went from 45,000 calls per year to our crisis line to 60,000 calls—a huge jump just from the pandemic. When we took the crisis line in house seven years ago, we were getting about 24,000 calls per year. Part of that is because we have increased resources—we're in with the police and 9-1-1 to respond live to mental health calls—so our crisis services have grown, which is part of the greater demand. But there's also a steady increased demand in mental health services generally and then we saw the pandemic and the curve changed direction."

The balance of not having enough mental health workers and dealing with lacking resources while the uptick in residents reaching out for help has taken a toll on the workers in the mental health sector.

"It's been extremely difficult," said Smith. "It's hard on staff and it's hard to say no to people who do need help because you think there's someone else who needs more help—those are the choices we've been having to make. It's been a huge issue (the mental health of health workers) across all of healthcare and certainly within our organization. We've done a lot of work in bringing in people to help deal with compassion fatigue; you're hearing a lot about other people's issues and challenges and that of course weighs on your own. Our staff, like everyone else, is also challenged by the state of the world during the pandemic. So, our staff is dealing with both issues of the pandemic impacting their home lives while having this increased weight of the work. We've been doing things to try and support the mental health of our staff during the pandemic, but you still see less people satisfied with their workplace environments."

Having the supports for mental health workers to help them deal with the fatigue and burnout that comes with them being the support for the general population has been tough given the circumstances but also something CMHA has tried to prioritize.

"It's critical to have, I think we'd have a lot more staff off sick or dealing with more challenging mental health issues if it wasn't for the support of our supervision, our specialized mental health services that they can access through our benefits program, and the internal work we're doing around compassion fatigue," Smith said.

It can be easy to forget that mental health care workers are humans who struggle too, says Smith, and as the pandemic has highlighted the need for more support for mental health organizations as services become more widely accepted it is to have accessible support for mental health professionals as well.

"There was an announcement of \$12 million being [invested] provincially in supporting the mental health of healthcare workers," he said. "And, CMHA Ontario actually has a significant contract to create and deliver mental health support for people in healthcare."

With the increased workload for mental health professionals over the last two years, it's doubtful given the recent study that it will slowdown anytime soon. As a result, the shortage in healthcare workers is something that needs to be dealt with to help in the long-term.

"It's harder to recruit good people right now but we're also getting some interest in investment to improve services," said Smith. "Like many health organizations, we're doing a lot of work on recruitment, and we're also doing a lot of advocacy right now because the community mental health force has lost ground even to inflation over the last 10 years. There's lots of new programs being funded but the old programs are not receiving annual increases that equal or even come close to the rate of inflation. We underpay compared to the markets and we're trying to advocate to fix that and pay people a good living wage to do very important work."

CMHA Peel Dufferin is open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and can be reached at 905-451-2123 for intake, information, and referral. For those in crisis, CMHA Peel Dufferin has a 24/7 hotlines for all ages in Peel (905-278-9036), over 18 in Dufferin (1-888-811-2222), and under 18 in Dufferin (519-941-1530).



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**MOTORIST CHARGED
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Officers from the Caledon Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have charged a driver involved in a single motor vehicle collision with impaired driving.

“On February 28, 2022, at approximately 6:47 a.m., officers responded to a vehicle into the ditch in the area of Mayfield Road and Mississauga Road in the Town of Caledon,” say Police. “No injuries were reported. Since the officers suspected that the driver’s abilities were impaired, they were asked to provide a sample of their breath into an Approved Roadside Screening Device. As a result of the investigation, the driver was arrested for impaired driving and taken to a police station where further breath

tests were conducted.”

Consequently, Darren Stevenson, 52, of Georgetown was charged with:

- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (B.A.C.) over 80 mg

The vehicle was impounded for seven days and the driver’s licence was suspended for a period of 90 days. The accused is scheduled to appear at the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville on May 12, 2022, to answer to the charge.

The charge has not been proven.

“Drivers are reminded that no amount of alcohol or drugs in your system is safe when driving, especially when navigating winter weather changes. They can occur suddenly and dramatically in Ontario. Without warning, sudden storms and plunging temperatures can drastically change road conditions and reduce visibility. Driving too fast for the road conditions is the number one cause

of winter collisions. Even on a sunny day, black ice is a constant danger and drivers should always assume it is present.”

CALEDON WELCOMES SIX NEW OFFICERS

Earlier this month, the Caledon Detachment of the OPP welcomed six new Provincial Constables who graduated on February 4, 2022 after completing their training at the Ontario Police College in Aylmer and the Ontario Provincial Police Academy in Orillia.

“We are thrilled to announce the addition of six new officers from Class 494 to our ranks,” said Inspector Mike Garant, Commander of the Caledon Detachment. “They bring a variety of backgrounds, skills, and experiences and are committed to OPP’s mission to serve our province by protecting its citizens, upholding the law and preserving public safety. Each officer is assigned to a coach and they will be working together for the next 12 months. The new recruits are excited to begin their careers in the Town of Caledon. We encourage you to say hello as you see them in the community.”

Added Mayor Allan Thompson: “The addition of 6 new Officers to the Caledon detachment of the OPP is great news for our growing community. On behalf of council, staff and the entire community, I welcome these officers to our Town and thank them for their commitment to serving our citizens”.

PC Albuquerque-Hall

PC Albuquerque-Hall studied law and sociology at Carleton University. He grew up in this area but moved to the Ottawa region for his studies. He volunteered for an organization called Shelter Movers of Ottawa where he worked with victims of domestic violence. His background is British/Indian. He enjoys playing rugby and lacrosse. Prior to policing, he worked at a homeless shelter where he provided housing support to clients. A career in policing has been a childhood dream of his.

PC Ali

PC Ali grew up and lives in Brampton. Prior to policing, he was a behavioral clinician where he developed skill acquisition programs and implemented programming for adults and adolescents exhibiting severe aggression. He studied Law and Society from York University. He speaks Urdu, Hindi, and some Punjabi. He actively completes in jiu-jitsu and enjoys MMA. A career in policing has been a childhood dream for PC Ali.

PC Bonello

PC Bonello grew up in the GTA. Prior to policing, he was a truck driver for 13 years. He volunteered with Dufferin County Community Support Services for three years and has been assisting his elderly neighbours with various tasks such as yard maintenance and snow removal. He also volunteered his time with a local Orangeville food company assisting with making deliveries. He enjoys everything outdoors and playing drums. He is the first police officer in his family.

PC Brar

PC Brar grew up in Brampton and speaks Punjabi, Hindi, and Urdu. He’s part of the Sikh community. He studied Psychology at York University and Occupational Therapy/Physio Assistance at Humber College. He previously volunteered for Big Brothers Big Sisters and at a food bank where he also worked with at-risk youth. He’s a sports enthusiast.

PC Rae

If you can’t find PC Rae, you’ll find him at the gym. His passions are in health and wellness. Prior to joining the OPP, he was in the fitness industry. He held a variety of positions including managing two supplement store locations and sales. He holds a Bachelor in Communications from Wilfrid Laurier University.


PC Wright

PC Wright is originally from Collingwood. He speaks some French and is an avid sports fan. He spent time in the US for his post-secondary education and became a baseball umpire where he umpired professionally. He’s the referee in chief for a local hockey league.


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CLUES ACROSS

1. Neckwear
7. Fish parts
13. Cooking
14. Quality
16. Rural delivery
17. Popular superhero
19. Partner to Pa
20. Shivering fits
22. Wrath
23. Linguistics pioneer
25. Large integers
26. A way to prepare food
28. Group of badgers
29. Peyton’s little brother
30. Rock out
31. Danish krone
33. Take from with force
34. Baroque musical instrument
36. Zodiac sign
38. Hebrew alphabet letter
40. Independent member of a clone

41. Type of garment
43. Satisfy
44. One point south of due east
45. A way to wipe out
47. Moved quickly on foot
48. Bar bill
51. An idiot
53. Performed with the voice silent
55. Body fluids
56. Rhythmic patterns
58. “__ my i’s”
59. Type of wrap
60. It shows who you are
61. Carousel
64. Type of college degree
65. Molding
67. Closes again
69. Verses
70. Surface

CLUES DOWN

1. Short, thick stick
2. Rhode Island
3. Animals of the horse family

4. Very important persons
5. Folk singer Di Franco
6. Boredom
7. Long speech
8. Footballer Newton
9. Expression of sorrow or pity
10. Linear accelerator
11. One quintillion bytes
12. Smallest interval in Western music
13. Box
15. Cheese dish
18. Make a mistake
21. Done by all people or things
24. Circumference
26. Chum
27. Electrocardiogram
30. Sandwich chain Jimmy __
32. Showed old movie
35. Important event on Wall St.

37. Where wrestlers work
38. Free from contamination
39. Eastern Canada coastal region
42. Slang for gun
43. High schoolers’ test
46. Fathers
47. Call it a career
49. Productive
50. Musical groups
52. Yellowish-brown
54. Lowest point of a ridge
55. Beloved late sportscaster Craig
57. Fill up
59. Cardinal number that’s the sum of 5 and 1
62. Frost
63. Jewel
66. Atomic #45
68. Top lawyer

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Brock’s Banter

Broadened Perspectives

BY BROCK WEIR

As we enter the third year of a global pandemic, now might be a good time to take stock of where we’ve been and where we are going.

The last 24-odd months have been a struggle for all of us, first as we worked to get accustomed to our suddenly smaller world.

Some of us saw it as an opportunity to get a number of long-languishing chores done, while others saw it as an opportunity to learn a new skill, pick up a new hobby, or dust off an old one. That was a good a time as any to see if that old muscle memory snapped back into place. They always say, “Oh, it’s just like riding a bike,” but the downtime was a great opportunity to see if this equally dusty adage held true.

At the same time, for others, it was simply a matter of survival. If you felt the walls close in as we were encouraged to stay home, perhaps you felt your personal bandwidth ebb and flow accordingly.

You might not have felt you had the wherewithal to tackle those household tasks. Maybe the inspiration wasn’t there to pick up a new hobby or skill. Perhaps an old hobby that piqued your interest simply didn’t bring the same amount of joy that it once did.

That’s okay; We had a brand-new world thrust upon us with very little notice.

We all needed time to adjust and find our bearings once again.

We were told from the outset that conquering COVID was likely going to be a marathon rather than a sprint, and so, if you weren’t as productive as others in your family, friend circle, or neighbourhood, that’s fine.

All we could do in this situation was our best – and many of us did just that.

It was an adjustment and there were many “new normals” a-knocking that we had to get used to, find our way, and forge ahead.

Now, there’s another “new normal” to contend with as capacity limits in most settings are lifted and we’ve essentially been given the go-ahead to put down our QR codes – again, in most settings.

As the rules of the game change once again, with businesses given the independence to decide whether or not they will still require customers and patrons to prove their vaccination status, it will be another steep learning curve for business owners, customers, co-workers and Ontarians writ-large.

Patience, already in short supply for so many residents, will need to be exercised, even if we have to tap into our respective reserves, as we all settle into the next phase of this fight.

For some of you, the new rules might be a harbinger of joy and relief as you return to your normal day-to-day lives. For others, if you’re immunocompromised, have people in your households or families who might be, or if you’re simply cautious, it might feel like you’re descending perilously into “the wild west.”

All perspectives are valid, all come with their own reasons, and whatever your personal view, it wouldn’t hurt to consider and respect the views and, perhaps most importantly, the limitations of others.

But perspective might be something else that has taken a considerable hit over the

course of the pandemic.

Our physical worlds shrank, to be sure, but while this was the case, we found new ways to stay connected. But doing so virtually has its limitations. Virtual connections may have felt strong at the outset, but, for me and many people I know, the novelty wore off relatively quickly.

Seeing friends, family and other loved ones on a screen was initially a balm for the soul but not being able to see them in person – or, once we were able to see them in person under public health guidelines, not being able to travel to meet them in person – was frustrating at best.

This frustration may have led us to look at the global pandemic through a lens of how it was impacting us personally rather than taking stock of the broader picture at home or abroad.

In my view, we saw that in protests big and small against public health mandates, whether it was a handful of people holding placards at a busy corner getting their message out to morning rush-hour traffic, dozens of people “storming” the Eaton Centre to make some sort of vague point about something, a couple hundred people taking over the lawns of Queen’s Park to protest Provincial mandates and, apparently, lick the statues of historic Monarchs and, Premiers to... prove their robust gut health? I don’t know, those were strange times.

Most recently, we had the “Freedom Convoy” which saw thousands of people occupy Ottawa to ostensibly protest vaccine mandates for cross-border truckers, despite the fact that if the Trudeau government caved to their demands there was no guarantee the Biden government would scrap the same policy, rendering the whole affair pointless.

In between apparently fighting for our freedoms, they had the time to take their kids out of school, hold a pig roast, set up a soft-tub for a good soak in between bouts of “freedom fighting” – not exactly scenes of people who are being oppressed by their government.

Now, we’ve been snapped back to reality by the images of brave Ukrainians taking up arms to defend their nation against an foreign invasion and of women and children fleeing to the safety of Poland and other bordering nations, fighting for their lives – when their freedom is actually under threat.

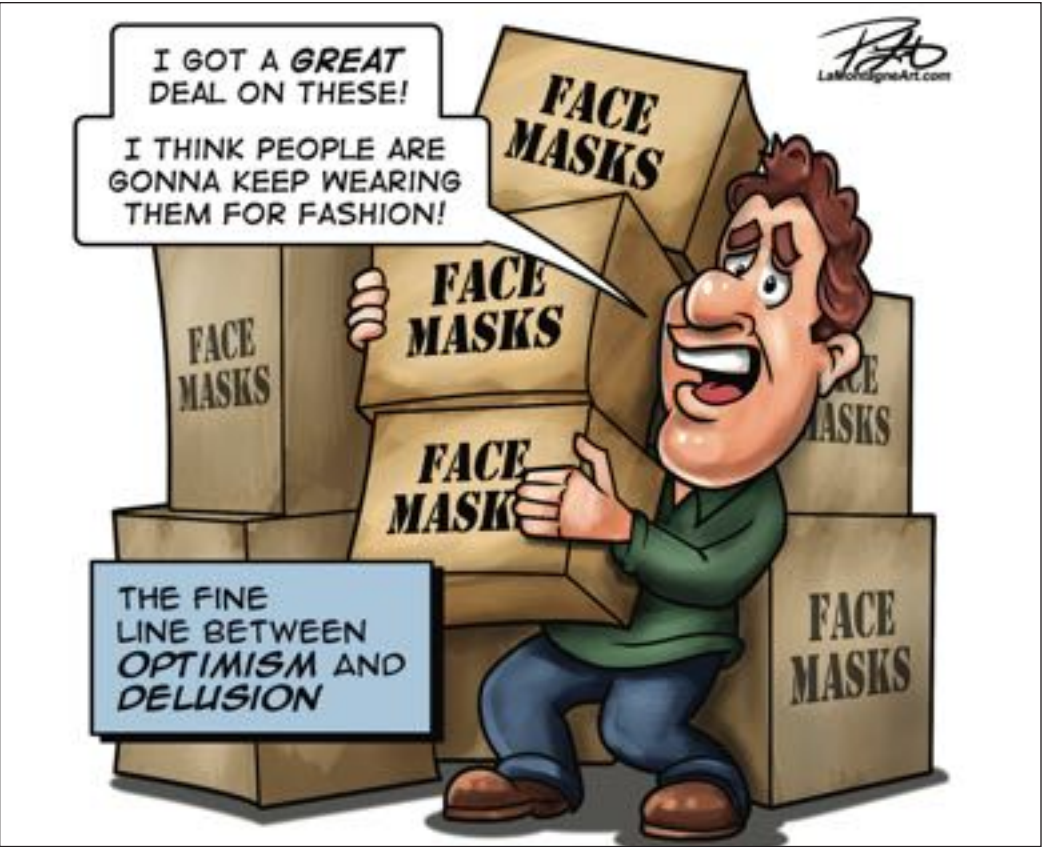
This is a terrifying situation not just for Ukraine but the world.

We might feel helpless, but there are many ways we can lend our support, be it financial or morale, to the men, women and children most immediately impacted by the war.

If nothing else, it has been a sharp reminder that even though many people may have thrown up their hands when it comes to the global pandemic, we’re still in this together, even if our definition of “this” is rapidly changing in the face of a conflict that threatens the entire globe.

It has also been a much-needed reminder of what freedom is and what it truly looks like when freedom is threatened.

The next little while will be a very challenging time for Europe, NATO member states, and the world as a whole, but these are truths and realities we can neither forget nor ignore as we head into what might be yet another, far more tragic “new normal.”



Rich rise while rest of humanity stumbles

by Mark Pavilons



Poverty is an anomaly to the rich. And it’s odd that God gave the poor a rich heart, and some of the rich, a poor one.

A new survey indicates that one new billionaire is “minted” every 26 hours and inequality contributes to the death of one person every four seconds.

A new billionaire every day? That’s great, isn’t it?

Every day around the globe, some 160,000 people pass away.

Roughly 13,800 children under the age of five died every day in 2020. Globally, infectious diseases, including pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria, remain a leading cause of under-five deaths, along with pre-term birth and intrapartum-related complications.

For roughly \$6, we can treat uncomplicated cases of malaria quickly. For roughly \$230 (U.S.) you can treat severe pneumonia.

It costs roughly \$5,000 (CAN) to build a well in a less fortunate country and roughly \$3,500 for a communal toilet. The benefits to the community are almost immeasurable. These costs would drop further if strategic partnerships were in place among manufacturers, distributors, construction companies and volunteers.

I strongly believe that we could drastically reduce all childhood illness in the world quickly, efficiently and frugally.

We’ve witnessed just how the world can cooperate and form a network to deliver vaccines to the majority of the population. These same connections can be used in the future to address any and all medical emergencies or necessities.

And yet our bloated, bloviating gentry indulges in bottled water from the Swiss Alps without giving it a thought. According to an Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of CanadaHelps, most Canadians (74%) are concerned about inflation and 17% plan to give less to charities in 2022, citing the effects of inflation on their finances. The number of Canadians who rely on charitable services in 2022 to meet their basic needs because of the pandemic or inflation could balloon from 11% today to one in four (26%).

Let’s flip back to the wealthy.

The world’s 10 richest men more than doubled their fortunes from \$875 billion to \$1.9 trillion (CAD) – at a rate of \$18,700 per second or \$1.63 billion (CAD) a day – during the first two years of a pandemic. This period has seen the incomes of 99 per cent of humanity fall and over 160 million more people forced into poverty. These billionaires now have six times more wealth than the poorest 3.1 billion people.

In a new briefing “Inequality Kills,” Oxfam says that inequality is contributing to the death of at least 21,000 people each day, or one person every four seconds. This is a conser-

vative finding based on deaths globally from lack of access to health care, gender-based violence, hunger, and climate breakdown. “Inequality at such pace and scale is happening by choice, not chance,” said Diana Sarosi, Oxfam Canada’s director of policy and campaigns. “Not only have our economic structures made all of us less safe against this pandemic, they are actively enabling those who are already extremely rich and powerful to exploit this crisis for their own profit.”

In Canada, during a global pandemic, 15 new billionaires have been minted and the fortunes of the country’s 59 billionaires have increased by \$111 billion since March 2020, roughly the same amount the Canadian government spent on COVID-19 income support to workers, including CERB and CRB (\$109 billion).

Billionaires’ wealth has risen more in the 22 months since COVID-19 began than it has in the last 14 years. At \$6.25 trillion, this is the biggest surge in billionaire wealth since record keeping began. A one-off “pandemic windfalls tax” on the 10 richest men at a rate of 99 per cent, for example, could pay to make enough vaccines for the world, and provide universal healthcare and social protection, fund climate adaptation and reduce gender-based violence in over 80 countries. All this, while still leaving these men \$10 billion better off than they were before the pandemic.

For most of us, we can’t even comprehend such numbers and vast wealth. We’re content making our mortgage payments and staying ahead of our bills.

And these numbers are just for the tip of the iceberg, the top of the wealth food chain.

There are thousands of other multi-millionaires who are equally comfortable and capable of pitching in as it were.

Some organizations see extreme inequality as a form of “economic violence,” where policies and political decisions that perpetuate and protect the wealth and power of a privileged few result in direct harm to the vast majority of people across the world and to the planet itself.

We’ve witnessed the inequality in the distribution of vaccines, where the “have” countries sent their surplus to the have-nots.

The pandemic has set back gender parity globally, which won’t be achieved now for 135 years (up from 99 years). Women collectively lost \$876 billion in earnings in 2020, with 13 million fewer women working now than in 2019. The 252 richest men have more wealth than all one billion women and girls in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean combined.

Ok, it’s easy to dump on the mega-rich and point fingers. But when you view these figures, it seems evident that the world’s wealthy could almost single-handedly end poverty and inequality as we know it. The ruling elite, in our human history, has never been overly altruistic.

I will never forget one of Canada’s heroes, Terry Fox. During his Marathon of Hope, he asked for just \$1 from every Canadian to go to cancer research. Just \$1.

What if we increase that demand of the wealthy to \$10 or even \$100, maybe \$1,000? It’s sad that we enjoy a rather comfortable lifestyle while our fellow human beings suffer, die and stagnate.

I don’t know about you, but I’d rather not wait 135 years for our world to attain equality.

Maybe this should be part of every country’s economic goal from here on in.

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What Divides Us Also Unites Us

I've been doing this for a while now, writing a regular weekly column for this paper and in the past, for several other newspapers and magazines.

Throughout that time, I've received my fair share of comments and feedback. It's always welcome (except for those who threaten or harass – that's a criminal offense) because to me, it indicates a certain level of common interest in shared discourse on the various topics I've written about. It also means readers are reading and actively engaged which is never a bad thing!

Lately, the amount of feedback I've been receiving, both through the paper and those that reach out using private messaging options, is at an all time high. As a result, I can't help but think that sometimes what divides us is also what unites us as Canadians.

Comments on the "Freedom Convoy" and reverence for our Canadian flag drew particularly vocal feedback but in true Canadian fashion, most of it was polite. Other than being accused of "selective outrage," hardly the worst thing anyone has ever said to me, the most recent interactions with readers have turned into opportunities to engage in exchanges that reflect the passion all sides have for this country we call our own. Frankly, a shared passion for all things

Canadian is NOT a bad thing.

Readers and I might agree to disagree on what constitutes "freedom" in a democracy such as ours but there's no doubt in my mind that we do all believe in democracy. Additionally, most seem to agree that Canada – compared to so much of the world – is a pretty good example of a democracy where one is free to live, work and play in peace. (As a side note, Caledon in particular is an especially great place to live, work and play!)

We may not agree on what our flag represents and/or whether or not at the moment we are proudly united behind the flag, or instead, afraid to fly it lest our motivations be questioned. What divides us also seems to unite us, however, as we all agree on this: that the Canadian flag definitely MEANS a great deal to each and every one of us.

To most, it represents freedom and democracy, even if readers and I have a differing view on what that looks like. As one reader recently shared, the weeks-long freedom convoy protest was largely characterized by what they saw as peaceful behaviour and that made them proud to fly our flag. To them, the Ottawa protest DID represent what Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson hoped it would: "sensitivity,

tolerance and compassion towards us all," citing as this individual did in their email, the number of people they witnessed sharing food, hugging, singing and dancing. I, on the other hand, continue to believe that sensitivity and compassion were in desperately short supply during the Ottawa protests, but perhaps the overall message here is that for any number of disparate reasons, we're each of us still proud of our flag.

What reader feedback means to me more than anything else though, is that in Canada we are united in our understanding that we have the freedom to disagree. In Canada, we have the right to express ourselves – provided we don't expressly infringe upon the rights of others as we do so. That's the part that still divides us. Could the "freedom convoy," for example, have driven to Ottawa and simply lined up their big rigs along only one side of the road, not blocked or harassed mask wearing pedestrians and flown flags without constantly honking horns or shouting, spitting and pushing mainstream media? I believe so. I still might not like their messaging but the methods might have been more tolerable. They may even have won more followers over to their cause.

More than any other feeling I have at the moment however, and given everything that has happened

over the last three or four days in Ukraine, I believe it's imperative we shift our focus back to what unites over what divides. Bearing witness to Ukrainian citizens taking up arms to fight for their own democracy in the face of a Russian attack is heartbreaking.

Watching the gathering of peaceful protests and rallies here at home and around the world in support of those Ukrainian citizens is heart-warming, though it's clear we must do more.

If these past few weeks in Canada have shown us anything at all, it's that at our core Canadians know, love and appreciate the principles of democracy. I firmly believe that even if we currently interpret them differently, under the kind of war such as the Ukraine now faces, as Canadians we'd rise together similarly in order to defend our freedom – becoming as one, united behind our flag. I believe too, that most, if not all of you, will join with me in the common hope for a peaceful end to this dangerous situation before more lives are lost and before any of us might ever be called upon to prove my theory correct.



SHERALYN ROMAN
TALK CALEDON

Another Cold War?

This week's news has all been about the invasion of Ukraine, and rightly so.

The Russian military build-up has been going on for months and western powers watched from their satellites and whatever other intelligence gathering sources they have as the number of troops grew to 100,000, then more.

Even while Russian president Putin denied he was planning on invading, you don't mass troops along a border in a friendly show of good will.

Putin claims they are there to liberate some regions in Ukraine, however the real strategy seems to be his attempt to reclaim some of the former glory of the Soviet Union.

European countries are nervous – and rightly so.

This invasion is too close to western Europe and now Russia is making veiled threats at western countries with the most recent being a mention that "economic wars often turn into real wars" when France's Finance Minister said western sanctions would cause Russia's economic collapse.

There is considerable opposition in Russia to the invasion, and we probably don't know the extent of that opposition, because in Russia, speaking out

against the government can land you in prison.

Russia claims to be a democracy; however, its ranking on a global scale is very low in terms of rights and freedoms, ranking 124 out of 164 countries in 2020.

Journalists and others who speak out against government corruption have been harassed and arrested.

In 2017, Jehovah's Witnesses were labelled as "extremists" by the government and were outlawed.

Opposition to this invasion will no doubt start growing when families start getting news that their sons or daughters will be returning in body bags. It's not like they are dying while defending their country – they are dying while attacking a peaceful neighbour.

Russia has a big military, but it is largely conscripts. Until recently, many of those troops were stationed in Belarus with no idea that an invasion plan was even underway.

Conscripted armies, historically, do not do well. Soldiers who are forced into service do not have the same motivation as a professional army of volunteers.

This invasion so far has not gone the way the Russian leadership has expected.

They are not making the gains they had planned for and are getting a lot of opposition from Ukrainian

forces and even local militias that have been armed.

While many are fleeing Ukraine cities, the government has called for all men between ages 18 and 60 to stay and defend their country.

I'm not a military expert, but this invasion does not seem to be very well-planned from a military point-of-view.

The Russians seem to be relying solely on ground forces and they are not making the progress they expected. They are firing missiles indiscriminately into cities with no real target.

This may serve to terrorize the local population but hitting a vacant apartment block with an expensive missile won't stop your enemy from returning fire.

Air power is critical when it comes to modern warfare. Yet there have been few reports of Russian aircraft over Ukraine cities.

Ukraine forces have reported downing five Russian fighters and several helicopters, although these reports cannot be confirmed.

Russia has very little support in their war effort. Even their close allies aren't saying much.

Several countries, including Canada, have announced they will be supporting Ukraine with arms,

however, NATO, as a military alliance is standing back, unable or unwilling to get involved.

While supporting Ukraine at arm's length, NATO cannot get involved in a shooting war unless a NATO country is involved. In that case, all NATO countries are obligated to support them.

Ukraine has expressed interest in joining NATO, which is a major problem for Russia. If Ukraine were to be accepted as a member nation, Russia would have a former Soviet Union member allied with the west and right at its border.

This war will not serve Russia well, in any capacity. They will be losing troops in a shooting war and the economy is going to be in serious trouble after the west applies the economic sanctions that are planned.

Putin seems determined to start another Cold War, or worse, but it is his own nation that will suffer the consequences of this poorly planned, unnecessary military action.



BRIAN LOCKHART
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Regular hockey season almost up, Golden Hawks in final week

BY ROBERT BELARDI

With only one month left to go, the Caledon Admirals in Jr. A and the Caledon Bombers in Jr. B hockey are more on the outside looking in for a playoff spot.

The Jr. C club Caledon Golden Hawks are ready to play their final two matches of the regular season.

There has been a lot to remember for the Admirals and the Bombers in their first year in Caledon. Plenty of lessons have been learned for both the staff and the players on top of a year full of growth both as a professionals and individuals.

Finding your footing in a new environment and representing a new area isn't that easy. Both clubs came over from Brampton in the offseason to adopt Mayfield Arena as their new home.

Last week, the Admirals dropped their back-to-back home games 3-2 in overtime against the St. Michaels Buzzers and 3-0 against the Cobourg Cougars.

The Admirals held the lead for 21:28 in total over the course of the game.

Ray Hou got the boys on the board 5:41 into the first period. Brad Somers equalized at 15:12.

Moving into the second period, the Admirals regained the lead thanks to a goal by Blake Boudreau. However, right on the cusp of intermission, Somers scored his second of the game at 19:38 to tie it up.

Admirals netminder Cale McWilliams stood on his head stopping 49 of 52 Buzzers shots. But he couldn't keep Somers out of the net Thursday night, as the Buzzers forward completed his hattrick in overtime to win it.

Giving up shots has been an issue for the Admirals all season long and against Cobourg is was a similar story.

The Admirals gave up 46 shots on the



night. Of course, there was no shortage of effort as the boys put forward 31 shots of their own. Unfortunately, Cougars netminder Mason Vaccari recorded his first shutout of the year. Diego D'Alessandro stopped 43 of 46.

The Admirals host the Buzzers again in Mayfield on March 3 at 8:00 p.m. The boys will head out on the road March 4 to play the Trenton Golden Hawks. The Admirals are 7-33-1 on the year in second-last in the South Division.

In Jr. B hockey, the Bombers earned their

14th win of the season against the Ayr Centennials last Saturday by a score of 4-2. On Sunday, against the Cambridge Redhawks, the boys dropped that game 5-0.

Two goals from Andrew Reynolds led the way for the Bombers.

Remy Dalben scored his team-high 19th goal of the season. Cameron Shephard got one on the board as well in the win against the Centennials.

Owen Porter shut the door, stopping 31 of 33 shots. The Bombers, also sit in second-last in the Midwestern Conference with a 14-19-0-2 record.

In Jr. C, the Caledon Golden Hawks defeated the Orillia Terriers 3-2 on Saturday before dropping their home game 5-4 against the Midland Flyers on Sunday.

The Golden Hawks will be taking on the Schomberg Cougars on the road in the Trisan Centre March 3 before returning home this Sunday for their final regular season game against the Penetang Kings.

The Golden Hawks have secured sixth spot in the North Carruthers Division standings with a 9-17-2 record.

Depending on how this week pans out, they will play either the Schomberg Cougars, the Alliston Hornets or the Orillia Terriers in the first round of the postseason.

Karl Subban speaks with Schomberg students for Black History Month

BY ROBERT BELARDI

Retired teacher, principal, and father of three NHL players Karl Subban spoke to children at Schomberg Public School last Friday.

Students from kindergarten all the way to Grade Six attended the virtual presentation.

Teacher Jennifer Watt reached out to Subban to educate her students on Black History Month as well as on wellness and well-being.

"[Watt] gets all the credit for me coming to that school. She reached out to me. She didn't stop until she was able to get in touch with me. Through the support of her principal and the administration there, she invited me on board," Subban said.

At the beginning of the presentation, Watt introduced Mr. Subban to all in attendance.

Subban now spends his time speaking to groups, about wellness and mental health, hard work and reaching your full potential.

He began his presentation by shedding light on the celebration of Black History Month, honouring the success and achievements of Black Canadians.

He also shared that he was currently celebrating a personal achievement.

"I'm celebrating a few things: one, it was eight years ago I was in Sochi for the Winter Olympics and my son was there for Team Canada. I never saw that one coming. But we were there. The second thing I'm celebrating is P.K Subban played his 800th game in the NHL on February 7 against the (Ottawa) Senators," Subban explained.

"I said to them, it all started with a dream. Even the trip to Sochi. That's what I mentioned to them that in my presentation, I will spend some time talking about the importance of life dreams and goals and how they help us fulfill our potential."

He would refer to the remarkable story of the first ever Black player in the NHL, Willie O'Ree.

The 86-year-old, Fredericton, NB, native, had his jersey retired in January. O'Ree spent his entire career with the Boston Bruins from 1958-1979.

O'Ree had a dream to play hockey and play in the NHL. He was always in a conflict resolution situation. O'Ree continually faced racial backlash from fans, players and others.

"But he didn't let those things detract him. Also, he lost an eye early in his career. The doctor had told him you'll never play hockey again. Willie did not accept it. It didn't stop him – the racism, the name calling, and also being blind in one eye," Subban said. "It didn't stop him from fulfilling his dream. I asked them, what's stopping you? From being a better person, from being a better student, from being a better athlete, what is stopping you?"

Subban, reflected on a time when his son P.K was told by a coach that he would never make it to the NHL. When he asked all the students if words had stopped P.K from making it, they all simultaneously shouted "no."

O'Ree lived by a quote and Subban ensured that it was written so the children can read it.

O'Ree said, "If you think you can, you can. If you feel you can't, you're right."

He quoted Martin Luther King and quoted a saying that he lives by. Subban wanted the children to know that their potential is endless. Everyone is born with it. Nobody missed out on that. It's just a matter of believing in yourself first.

Subban said he appreciated the time with the students and said everyone was fantastic.

Schomberg Public School was honoured to have Subban speak with all the children and thanked him for his time and motivation.

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CPL and ecoCaledon team up for new mask recycling program

BY ROB PAUL

Caledon Public Library (CPL) and ecoCaledon have teamed up to bring a new program to the community called “Caledon Fill the Gap.”

The program is to help Caledon residents recycle their disposable masks.

Going forward, residents can drop off their masks at the Caledon East and Southfields Village Branches. There are special Terracycle Boxes in these branches for mask collection—masks are recycled by the Terracycle Company, avoiding landfill.

“It’s an easy way to recycle your used disposable COVID masks,” said John MacRae, Co-chair, ecoCaledon. “As spring and Earth Hour/Day approach, ecoCaledon is encouraging us all to change our habits to reduce our impact on Caledon’s beautiful environment. We can help you find ways to make your homes, shopping and driving more sustainable. It is with many individual actions that we can keep Caledon one of the greenest towns in Ontario.”

There are many upcoming eco-Caledon environmental programs underway and coming up this spring including: a four-part “Food and Climate — How to Eat to Save the Planet” workshop (part one of the workshop has already taken place, but part two is March 26, part 3 is April 23, and part four May 28—all at the Palgrave United Church Kitchen); Repair Café and eco movie screening (planned for April 30, location TBA); and Caledon’s Sustainable Transportation Day event in partnership with the Electric Vehicle Society Caledon Chapter.

CPL has also been working to make a difference environmentally with its pollinator garden; the Butterflyflyway Garden at the Albion Bolton Branch, provides nourishment and habitat for pollinators, especially butterflies, during the spring, summer and fall seasons—the pollinator-friendly garden is an

extension of the Caledon Seed Library, a community-led collection.

CPL also continues to provide the opportunity for citizens to “re-use” through borrowing materials (including Library of Things) or through access to more than 2.5 million digital resources including online newspapers, magazines and books. By providing items online, CPL makes it possible for residents to reduce the community’s carbon footprint.

To help continue to reuse, the Friends of CPL’s spring break book sale is coming up on March 18, from 10 a.m. to 6 pm and March 19, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Caledon East Branch.

CPL also has a recycling program with all branches of CPL recycle alkaline and button cell batteries.

“Now is the perfect time to pick some solutions to reduce your impact on the environment. For example, adjust your thermostat to a lower temp during the night or when you are out, double up on laundry for bigger loads or fuller dryers, and turn lights out,” said MacRae. “Add some fresh air to your environmental effort by going on more walks and hikes on the trails and in the neighborhoods of Caledon or look into something bigger by taking advantage of the Federal Government’s Greener Homes Grant (www.canada.ca/greener-homes-grant). Get the whole family involved or your community to make it a challenge and fun.”

To help make a difference and recycle your disposable masks at Southfields and Caledon East branches.

Earth Hour is March 26 from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and Earth Day is April 22.

For more information and for ideas and solutions on how to help reduce your impact on the environment, visit www.ecocalledon.org, and for more information on CPL’s programs visit caledon.library.on.ca/.

Ontario and Peel Public Health officially remove COVID-19 proof of vaccination mandate

BY ROB PAUL

As of March 1, the Government of Ontario officially lifted capacity limits in indoor public settings and removed the requirement for proof of vaccination in specific settings.

Businesses still have the option to require proof of vaccination going forward but it will not be mandated by the government.

For now, masking requirements will remain in place, with a specific timeline to lift the measure to be announced later.

To align with the province, Peel Public Health has rescinded its Letter of Instruction requiring proof of vaccination in specific indoor public spaces.

“Rescinding this Letter of Instruction aligns with the end of proof of vaccination requirements by the provincial government at this time,” said Dr. Lawrence Loh, Medical Officer of Health for Peel. “Reintroduction of any measures will be carefully considered should they be necessary.

Peel Public Health continues to monitor for concerning changes during this ongoing transition of our COVID-19 response. I continue to urge all eligible residents to get vaccinated and boosted as quickly as possible given that contacts are expected to increase with reopening. Two doses and a booster present significant protection against severe outcomes, and reduces an individual’s risk of hospitalization and ICU admission by six and 10 times respectively.”

Vaccine coverage and third booster shots continue to increase in the Region. Peel has now administered 3,266,095 doses of the vaccine—1,402,505 individuals have one dose, 1,271,451 have both doses, and 587,706 have received their third dose booster.

The Region now has 81.6 per cent of all residents with two dose coverage and 86 per cent with single dose. 91.5 per cent of those 12 and older are double vaccinated and 94.3 per cent have initiated the vaccination

process—86.1 per cent of all eligible residents (5+) have both doses and 90.7 per cent have one.

In Peel, the new weekly COVID-19 case total has dropped below 1,000 for the second straight week with 736 new COVID-19 cases in the last week to bring the total to 174,162. The Region’s death count has now risen to 1,211 with 12 new deaths since last week.

Caledon’s new case count remains low with 51 new cases over the last week to bring the Town total to 7,574. There were no new deaths this week with the count staying at 27.

To book a vaccine in the Region of Peel, visit www.peel-region.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.

Mayor Thompson not running for re-election

Continued from FRONT

The decision to not run for re-election came solely from Thompson wanting to commit more time to his family as his grandchildren begin to grow up, he noted.

“I promised my wife, Anne, that if I was going to run for municipal office and miss out on family time—and let me tell you I did miss out—it would be for a better Caledon and I can honestly say I gave it everything I had,” he said. “Now I plan on making sure I am there for all of the important moments with my grandchildren.”

With the Future Caledon: Official Plan in the pro-

cess of being finalized over the next few months and it being the blueprint for how Caledon will manage growth (with the population expected to boom to around 300,000) for the next 30 years, Thompson wants to ensure the community that he will continue to bring his A-game for the rest of his term as Mayor.

“I want to reassure every Caledon resident, business owner/operator and all of those who are looking to invest in Caledon, I am fully committed to being a very present Mayor and to work hard each and every day until the inauguration of the next term of Council. My foot is firmly on the gas to complete all I can over the next eight and a half months.”

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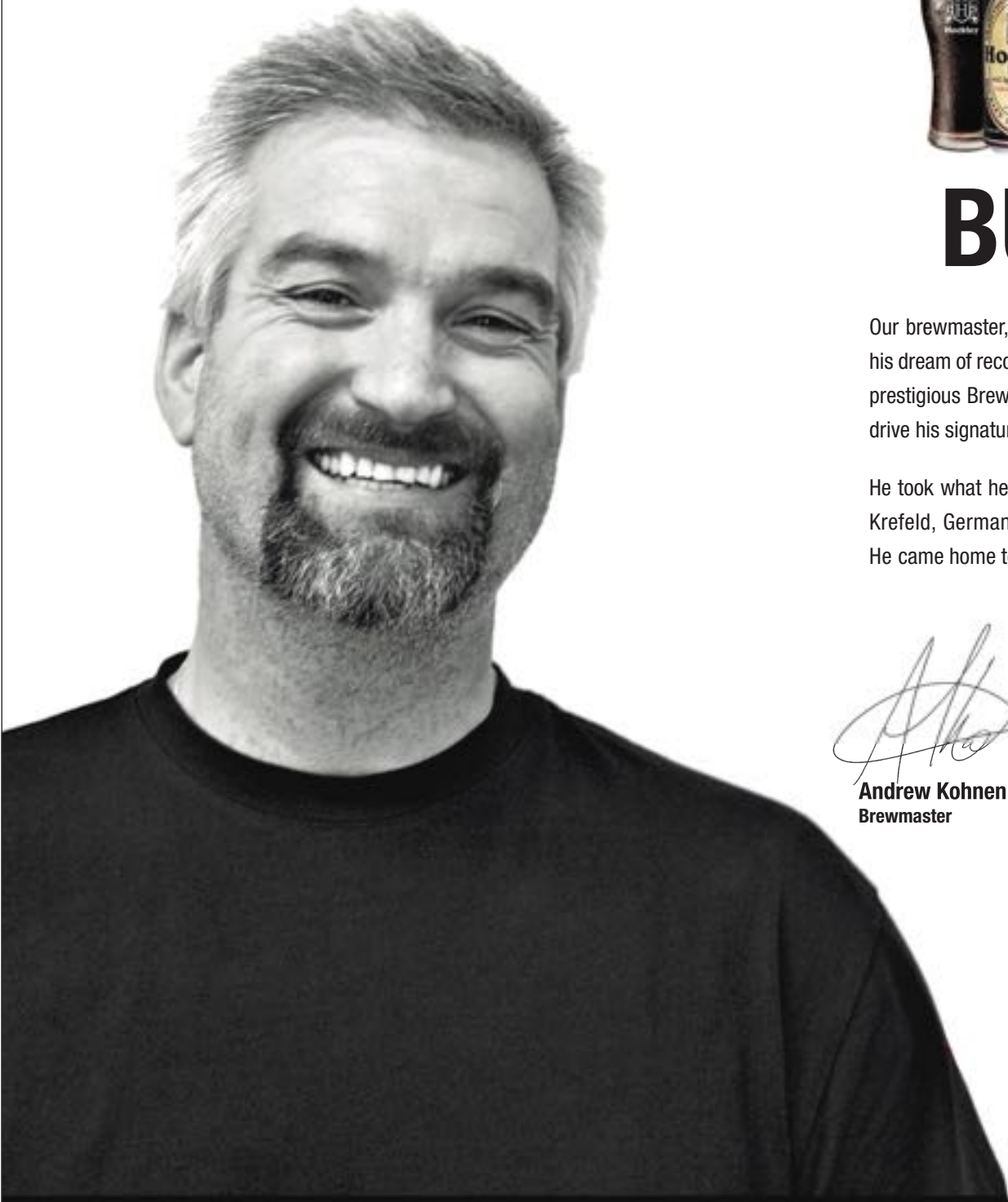
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HENRY: LORNE ANDREW TREVOR

Peacefully at his home in Orangeville, on Thursday February 24, 2022. Trevor Henry in his 94th year, beloved companion of Evelyn Henderson (nee: Cairns). Loving father of the late Doug Henry (Mary Ellen), Diane Trimble (Chris), and Lenore Snell (Bob). Dearly loved grandfather of Jason, Jackie Lee, Derek, Kurt, Craig, April, and great grandfather of Myles, Addison, Ellie, Cooper, Liam, and Demi. Predeceased by his siblings Eunice Sloan (the late Russell), and Gerald Henry. Forever in the hearts of Evelyn's children: Bob Henderson (Jadeen), Bonnie McPhee (Dave) and their families. Remembered with love by his extended family and friends. The family will receive friends at Rod Abrams Funeral Home 1666 Tottenham Rd., Tottenham 905-936-3477 on Monday March 7, 2022 from 2-5pm. Funeral Service will be held in the chapel on Tuesday March 8, 2022 at 11am. Interment will be held in Morningside Cemetery Palgrave. For those who wish, donations in Trevor's Memory to the Kidney Foundation would be appreciated. Online condolences and memories may be left for the family at www.RodAbramsFuneralHome.com.

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A ROYAL FLUSH BEATS A FULL HOUSE

Caledon Mountain Veterinary Hospital has become a big-time clinic with a small-town feel over the last 20 years

BY ROB PAUL

When you walk in, it feels like home: there's a soothing presence about it that helps keeps your anxieties at bay, even when you're fearing for a lifelong companion's well-being. That is the Caledon Mountain Veterinary Hospital.

For 20 years, Dr. John and Dana Brajkovich have aimed to instill a type of culture at the Caledon Mountain Veterinary Hospital that makes pet owners feel like family and pets feel safe in their hands.

In March of 2002, the Brajkoviches made the decision to open the clinic in an old art gallery on Elizabeth Street in Caledon Village, and what was a risk for them at the time turned into their greatest success as they've become a pillar of the community.

"I grew up here in Caledon Village and when I became a vet this building came up for sale within a year or two of graduating and I had actually worked as a volunteer in a clinic in the Village that had shut down," said John. "When this building came up for sale, we thought what better thing to do than to come back into our own community."

"The timing wasn't great because he was new and we had two young kids at the time," said Dana.

"So, we took a leap of faith and hoped that our community would support us and 20 years later we're doing well, thanks to the community," John continued. "We've supported the local community with employment, as well as fundraising for the church and community, because now we want to give back to Caledon Village."

Seeing the clinic grow from an animal hospital that supported those in the area to a staple of animal healthcare in the province has been a surreal feeling, but John and Dana are adamant the success hasn't allowed them to lose focus of the importance of connecting with clients.

"I started by myself here with Dana and we grew from three employees to about 26," John said. "We've changed pace a lot in terms of starting as a small animal hospital; we do have a small animal hospital but now most of our business is referral surgery. We get a lot of clients from all over Ontario and Quebec. They come here for specialized surgeries that other places just don't do and we have advanced imaging like CT scans and procedures that can only really be done at the university or here as referral. We've kind of gone from a small-town clinic to a big city approach with how we do things and it's very unique to this industry. Moving into the future we do have more plans on doing more procedures that people have to travel great distances for."

A big reason for the growth of the clinic over the last two decades has been John's love of advancing his knowledge and the technology within the practice to ensure they can help any and all pets in need.

"John loves technology," said Dana. "We're always getting the newest equipment—we just got a new dentistry area."

"We try to be up to date and we're doing things that most vet clinics aren't doing anywhere," John said. "For example, I'll do 3D modelling and imaging of a fracture and then prep and plan using this the 3D print and I'll bring that into surgery for an accurate, quick, and efficient procedure. There's a lot of technology that we've adapted from the human side but there's a very small cohort of surgeons that actually do that, and that's a difference with us. I also want to stay up on the newest technology and that's what attracts veterinarians and other staff



DR. JOHN BRAJKOVICH, CALEDON MOUNTAIN VETERINARY HOSPITAL
PHOTO BY ROB PAUL

here and interested. We do a lot of hip replacements here and we're only one of two or three facilities in Ontario that do total hip replacements and people travel from across the province to us."

For the Brajkoviches, it always comes back to being client-oriented and giving the best service through that old-school small-town disposition that comes with treating everyone who walks in the clinics door like a family friend.

"We've employed my kids and their friends throughout the years, and we still feel like a small family business, but we're a bigger player than most places. We feel like we're in a good spot and continuing and advancing what we do because we have so much energy and a lot of young people here that do a really good job with client services. That's what also sets us apart; we have amazing hands-on client experience as well as providing a service that you'd have to go to a facility that has a huge hospital."

"Those types of facilities are different for people; they don't have that same one-on-one conversation about the pets they care so much about. We've also done something special here called 'Fear Free' and we're all certified in that and it's to help with stress. When an owner comes in here, they're stressed, which makes the animal stressed, so we have special pheromones in rooms that settle them down and we have certain handling techniques that create a good environment for them, so they don't become stressed. Not a lot of places do it, but I think it's important that when they come in, they're feeling more like they're at their house and that's part of it with the building too. Our building doesn't feel like a clinic, it feels more like a house and none of us wear white scrubs. We want it to feel like we're all at home checking out your pet. It sets a lot of people's minds at ease."

The Brajkoviches aren't just passionate about giving back to the geographical community, but also to the community that comes with being part of a unique industry full of people that love animals and want to help them.

"We do help a lot of rescue groups because a lot

of them have no owners and no facilities and just have fundraisers," said John. "It's something that's become important to us because we can facilitate these procedures that they would need to wait a long time to get done or we can have a conversation directly with groups that have started the process of bringing an animal in. It makes it an easier transition for these groups to get animal the procedures they need done in a relaxed state because they're super anxious animals. Rescue groups are dear to our heart here because we care so much about the animals."

Having been mentored at the old clinic in Caledon Village himself all those years ago, John has made a point to do the same for others who have an interest in becoming a veterinarian and it's the biggest way he pays forward the chance he was given.

"We have a lot of pride in this place, it's a beautiful building, but it's when you see the relationships we've built through this place that have continued after starting with just three people it's amazing," said Dana. "Having all three of our kids be part of this one way or another and our youngest wanting to be a veterinarian is amazing. And John has mentored probably 100 different students over the years who want to be veterinarians, supporting others has been a big part of this place."

"I'm on the Admissions Committee for the university and I work for the College of Veterinaries in their discipline committee as well," John said. "I try to give back to our profession that way and helping mentor high school kids and university students to get them on the pathway."

"Because at some point someone took a leap of faith with him," said Dana. "He volunteered at places, and he needed to have people who were willing to take that risk with him. John said to me, 'you've got to remember where you came from and why you went into the job' because like anything in life it can get ahead of you, and you start to lose your passion but he's able to keep himself grounded by using his skill and knowledge to help others out."

"When the old country clinic here took me on as a kid, it worked out because I got enough experience there to realize this is what I want to do, and now to come back to the same area and I try to do the same for them that was done for me," said John.

The culture that the Brajkoviches have built at the Caledon Mountain Veterinary Hospital may be the achievement they're most proud of and it's the reason their relationships are so strong with clients and others in the industry.

"People come and go but the spirit of this place stays the same and I think gets better," said John. "It's this whole team that works together to make their job a happy place to come to and it's that thing we're so happy to have created—a happy place means happy employees and happy clients. It's that continuation of having a good vibe and feel when you walk through the door or talk with us on the phone. From start to finish, we want to give a full experience. People drive from the city and comment on how amazing it is, so it's a full package feel for a lot of people."

"Even with the other veterinarians in the area, there's room for everybody," said Dana. "John goes to other vets to do orthopaedics, it's not a cut-throat feeling here, it's a community."

"It's that old country feel, where everyone knows everyone but also it's the fact that we've got everything here, so you don't need to go to the city to get special imaging done or specialized procedures. We have all that here, but we'll also give you the family feel. That for us is very unique in this industry."

At the end of the day, the best part about the success that John has found at the clinic is the way it's rubbed off on his children and how he's now getting to see them grow up and achieve their dreams the way he once did when he opened the Caledon Mountain Veterinary Hospital.

"I've got a great family, and all this wouldn't happen without the community support and their support," John said. "Our kids all see how hard we work and they're using that to become successful and interested in their careers. My eldest is in agriculture at the University of Guelph and she's doing amazing thing, my son Moses is in biomedical engineering and so he helps me with a lot of projects I have, and my youngest in grade nine wants to follow in my footsteps. What drives me and motivates me is to see them interested and seeing what we've done which makes them believe they can succeed in their interests. That's what's most important to me, seeing my kids achieve their goals."

Even though they've reached massive heights the Brajkoviches have stayed humble and will never forget the support that Caledon has given them for the last 20 years.

"We're trying to navigate through a hard time, but we really want to reach out to the community and thank everyone for being patient with us and for always supporting us," said John.

"There's a list of people who have been supporting us since day one and they've seen John go from the only vet here to what we are now," said Dana. "It's those people that have been so important, those are the people who started us and got us going. They're the people who we'd rush to pick up the phone for when we first started 20 years ago because we were so anxious for support and those people are still with us and supporting us."

As the 20-year anniversary of Caledon Mountain Veterinary Hospital approaches, Dana and John encourage the community to stay tuned to the clinic's social media pages for contests that will support small local businesses in Caledon.

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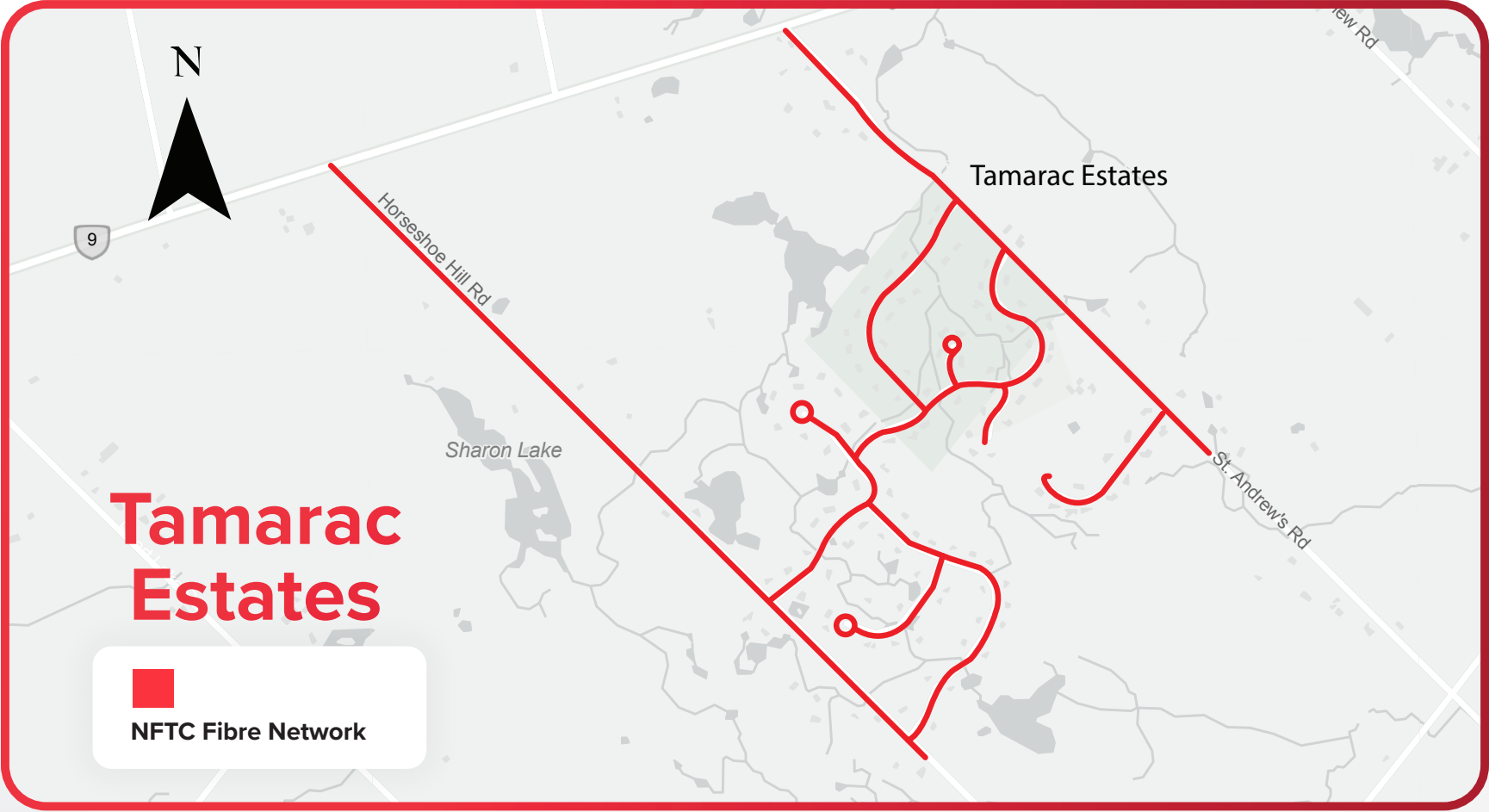
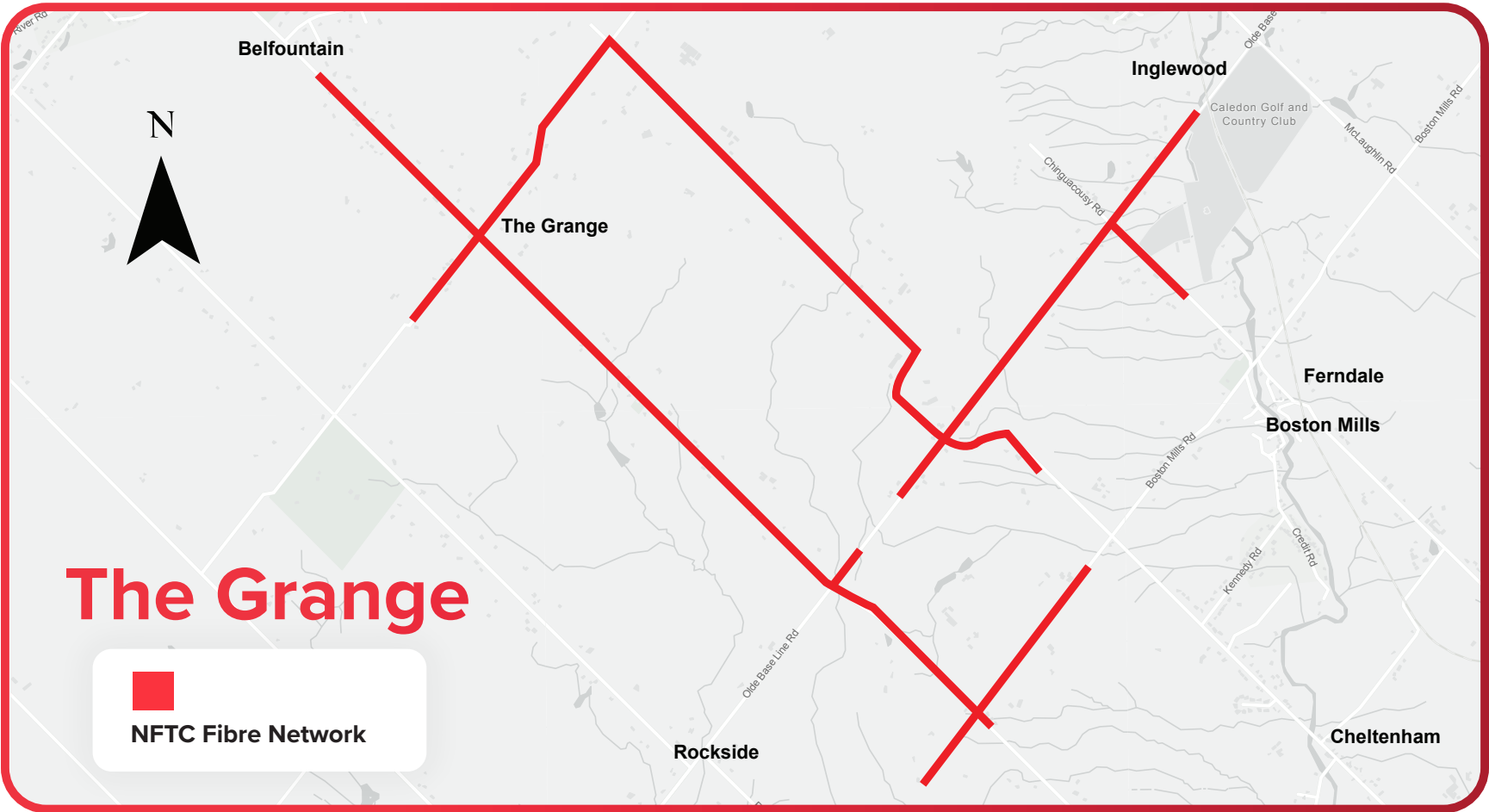
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