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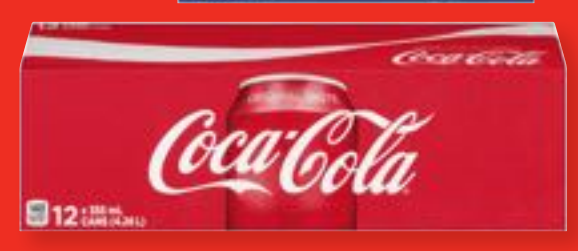
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The Alterna Savings Red Hot Chili Steppers team was excited to head out for this year's Coldest Night of the Year walk.

PHOTO BY ZACHARY ROMAN

Participants raise over $110,000 for Caledon Community Services through Coldest Night of the Year walk

CNOY walk held February 22 in Caledon East

BY ZACHARY ROMAN
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Caledon residents and businesses showed their generosity and community spirit at a recent fundraiser.

On February 22, Caledon Community Services (CCS) hosted its annual Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) fundraising walk.

Charities across Canada that support those facing hurt, hunger and homelessness host CNOY walks each year. The walks are held in the heart of winter to remind people of the struggles people experiencing homelessness face during Canada's cold winters.

For this year's walk, CCS set a fundraising goal of $100,000. As of February 24, residents and businesses had smashed past that goal and raised over $110,000.

Geraldine Aguiar, CEO of CCS, addressed the over 200 walkers participating in this year's event with a welcome speech before they headed out.

Continued on Page A7

Caledon seeks reimbursement from Province for dissolution-related expenses

BY ZACHARY ROMAN
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

While the Region of Peel is not being dissolved after all, the Town of Caledon is still dealing with the impacts of the process.

At Caledon Council's February 25 meeting, Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell brought forward two motions relating to the dissolution process.

In his first motion, Maskell asks that the Province reimburse Caledon for all expenses it incurred in relation to the potential dissolution of Peel.

"The Town had to allocate scarce resources from its reserves to deal with this situation," said Maskell.

Ward 5 Councillor Tony Rosa supported Maskell's motion.

Continued on Page A6

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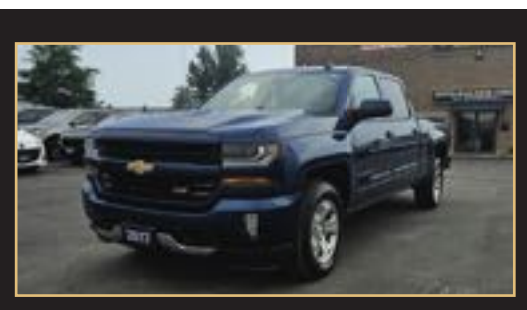
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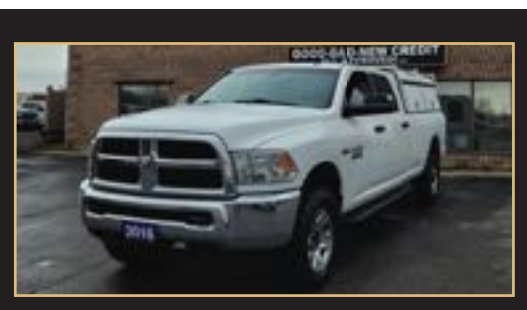
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Dufferin-Caledon Provincial election candidates square off at Shelburne debate

Debate was the second to be hosted by Dufferin Board of Trade

BY ZACHARY ROMAN
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER



From left: Debate moderator Doug Harkness, Dufferin Board of Trade; George Nakitsas, Ontario NDP; Jeffrey Halsall, independent; Michael Dehn, Ontario Liberal Party; and Sandy Brown, Green Party of Ontario. **DUFFERIN BOARD OF TRADE IMAGE**

Provincial election candidates for the Liberal, NDP and Green parties, and an independent candidate, attended a recent debate in Shelburne.

On February 20, the Dufferin Board of Trade held a debate at Grace Tipling Hall in Shelburne that was open to all candidates.

Sandy Brown, Green Party of Ontario candidate; Michael Dehn, Ontario Liberal Party candidate; George Nakitsas, Ontario NDP candidate; and Jeffrey Halsall, independent candidate attended the debate.

At the debate, the floor was open for residents to ask questions of the candidates. There were also questions from local organizations.

The Dufferin Federation of Agriculture asked what candidates would do to support farmers in Dufferin-Caledon if elected.

Nakitsas said the first thing he'd do is make sure the riding's farmland is preserved and spared from sprawling development and the proposed Highway 413. He also said he'd work to find new markets for Ontario agricultural products.

Halsall said more support should be given to events like farmers markets and that he'd focus on finding ways to encourage support of local farmers.

Dehn said tariff protections and strengthening the internal agriculture market would be key.

Brown said the Ontario Greens want to make an "Ontario Food Belt" to permanently protect agricultural land from non-agricultural uses like urban sprawl and highways. He said as Ontario is only 5 per cent farmland, it should not be losing it at a rate of 300 acres per day.

The Greater Dufferin Home Builders Association asked candidates if they still believe development charges are the right tool to pay for growth, and if not, what their party proposes instead.

Nakitsas said the government should be involved in creating affordable housing to fill the gaps the development industry is leaving.

Dehn said he would like to work with the federal government to eliminate GST on any new home purchase that's a primary residence.

Brown said if development charges are removed, property taxes will go up so it's not a simple fix. He said the Conservatives have ignored Dufferin-Caledon for too long and that he'd do more to advocate for infrastructure-enabling funding.

The Orangeville Food Bank asked candidates how they would ensure that people who access the food bank have sustainable, long-term access to resources that support their well-being, ultimately helping them get to a place where they do not need to rely on non-profits.

Halsall said the solution lies in strengthening the economy so people have access to good jobs.

Dehn said he would look at a "regional living wage" as he said the provincial minimum wage does not work for all communities. He said the Liberals would double Ontario Disability Support Program funding and support the creation of tiny homes.

Brown said a housing-first approach is needed, and also said Ontario Disability Support Program funding should be increased. He said people should not have to choose between rent and groceries, and that the government needs to step up to help people succeed.

The February 20 debate can be viewed in its entirety on the Dufferin Board of Trade's YouTube channel.

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Everything you need to know about voting in today's provincial election



ELECTIONS ONTARIO IMAGE

BY SAM ODROWSKI

The provincial election is taking place today (Feb. 27) and there are several different voting locations in the Dufferin–Caledon riding.

To find out where your polling station is, enter your postal code into "Voter Information Service" on the Election Ontario website at elections.on.ca.

The polls are open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

There are seven candidates running in the Dufferin–Caledon riding.

Incumbent PC Party MPP Sylvia Jones, who has won the last five elections in the riding, is seeking re-election. She has been serving as the deputy premier and minister of health since 2022.

Sandy Brown, former mayor of Orangeville, is seeking election under the Green Party of Ontario banner.

Michael Dehn, mayor of Erin, is running for the Liberal Party of Ontario in the provincial election.

George Nakitsas, who worked for NDP leaders Jack Layton and Ed Broadbent for over 10 years, has put his name forward to represent the NDP.

Jeffrey Halsall is running as an Independent, Kris Eggleton is running as a New Blue Party candidate and Alexey Cherkashov is running as an Ontario Moderate Party candidate.

In the 2022 provincial election, the voter turnout was 41.67 per cent or 46,088 of the eligible 110,615 voters cast a ballot in Dufferin–Caledon. This was on par with the provincial turnout of 43.5 per cent, which was the lowest voter turnout on record since Ontario was founded.

This year, 6.14 per cent of eligible Ontario voters have taken part in advanced voting. In 2022, 9.92 per cent of voters cast ballots in early voting and in 2018 it was 6.8 per cent.

Roughly 10.8 million people are eligible to vote in Ontario.

The results of the 2022 provincial election in Dufferin–Caledon were:

- Sylvia Jones (PC Party) received 49.67 per cent of the vote;
- Bob Gordanier (Liberal Party) received 18.81 per cent of the vote;
- Laura Campbell (Green Party) received 14.13 per cent of the vote;
- Tess Prendergast (NDP) received 10.77 per cent of the vote;
- Andrea Banyai (New Blue Party) received 4.94 per cent of the vote;
- Lil Nguyen (Ontario Party) received 1.28 per cent of the vote;
- Erickumar Emmanuel (Moderate) received 0.23 per cent of the vote;
- Kay Sayer (Public Benefit) received 0.17 per cent of the vote.

All voting information in the upcoming provincial election can be found at elections.on.ca or by calling the Dufferin–Caledon Elections Ontario Office at 1-(833)-505-3408 between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. from Monday to Saturday. The office is also open on Sundays from noon to 5 p.m.



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IMPAIRED DRIVING

Members of the Caledon Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have charged a driver with impaired operation following a driving complaint.

"On February 19, 2025, just before 8:00 p.m., officers responded to a traffic complaint regarding a vehicle being operated in a concerning manner in the area of Dougall Avenue and Learmont Avenue," say Police. "Officers located the vehicle and began their investigation. Grounds were formed that the driver's ability to operate a motor vehicle was impaired by alcohol and was subsequently arrested.

As a result, Amanpreet Grewal, 29, of Caledon, was charged with:

- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)

The accused is scheduled to attend the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville on March 6, 2025, to answer to the charge.

The charge has not been proven.

The driver's licence was also suspended for 90 days, and the vehicle impounded for seven.

"On February 21, 2025, just before midnight, officers were conducting a RIDE (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) initiative in the area of Mclaughin Road and Tim Manley Avenue," say Police. "At that time, a vehicle was observed attempting to avoid the location and was stopped by police a short distance away. During the encounter, grounds were formed that the driver's ability to operate a motor vehicle was impaired by alcohol leading to their arrest."

Devon Francis, 44, of Brampton, was charged with:

- Failure or refusal to comply with demand;
- Novice driver refuse to provide breath sample;
- Obstruct peace officer;
- Driving motor vehicle with liquor readily available;
- Drive vehicle with cannabis readily available;
- Drive while under suspension;
- Possession of a Schedule I substance – cocaine.

The charges have not been proven.

"On February 22, 2025, just before 1:00 a.m., an officer patrolling Mayfield Road, near Dixie Road, initiated a traffic stop for a Highway Traffic Act violation. During the investigation, grounds were formed that the driver's ability to operate a motor vehicle was impaired by alcohol and was subsequently arrested."

Akisha Dundas, 29, of Sudbury, was charged with:

- Failure or refusal to comply with demand.

The charge has not been proven.

"Later that same morning, just after 3:30 a.m., officers responded to a vehicle in the ditch on Mayfield Road, near Chinguacousy Road. During the investigation, grounds were formed that the driver's ability to operate a motor vehicle was impaired by alcohol and was subsequently arrested.

Nitesh, 20, of Brampton, was charged with:

- Operation while impaired – alcohol;
- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus);
- Novice driver - B.A.C. above zero.

The charges have not been proven.

The three accused are scheduled to attend the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville on March 13, 2025, to answer to their charges. The driver's licences were also suspended for 90 days, and the vehicles impounded for seven.

In addition to running its annual Festive RIDE campaign, the OPP conducts RIDE spot checks throughout the year, 24/7. The OPP remains committed to taking alcohol/drug-impaired drivers off our roads through enforcement and public education. If you're planning to drink or use drugs, make sure you don't drive. Instead, arrange for a designated driver, take a taxi, use public transportation, or find another safe way home. If you suspect someone is driving under the influence, it's important to call 9-1-1 to report it. If the situation is not urgent or currently ongoing, you can also provide information anonymously by contacting Peel Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or through their website at https://peelcrimestoppers.ca. When you contact Crime Stoppers, you stay anonymous, and you never have to testify.

If you're planning to drink or use drugs, make sure you don't drive. Instead, arrange for a designated driver, take a taxi, use public transportation, or find another safe way home. If you suspect someone is driving under the influence, it's important to call 9-1-1 to report it.

For more information about the penalties of driving impaired, visit: https://www.ontario.ca/page/impaired-driving.

WATER SAFETY AMID WARMER WEATHER

With warmer temperatures sweeping through Dufferin County, many are relieved to take a break from the snow. However, members of the Dufferin Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is urging the public to exercise caution around local rivers and creeks as the weather continues to change.

The OPP is reminding residents that the warmer weather is causing the ice on many water sources to weaken, leading to rapidly changing conditions. Creeks and rivers are now unpredictable, and the base is extremely unstable. Authorities advise staying a safe distance from all bodies of water to avoid the risk of falling through thin ice or being swept away by strong currents.

The Dufferin County OPP urges the community to remain vigilant and avoid all water activities until the ice has completely melted and conditions improve. Stay informed and ensure you and your loved ones are safe during this transitional period in the weather.

Members of the Dufferin OPP are committed to public safety, delivering proactive and innovative policing in partnership with our communities. Officers value your contribution to building safe communities.

"SNOW FORTS AND ROADWAYS DON'T MIX," SAY POLICE

Members of the Dufferin Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are reminding residents that while building snow tunnels and forts is a fun winter activity, it can quickly turn dangerous if not done safely.

"With the recent snowfall and towering snowbanks, it is hard to resist the urge to dig in. But before you get too carried away with your 'snowy palace,' remember the potential risks, especially near roadways and driveways. Snowplows and vehicles can unexpectedly move or collapse these structures, which could turn a day of fun into a winter disaster.

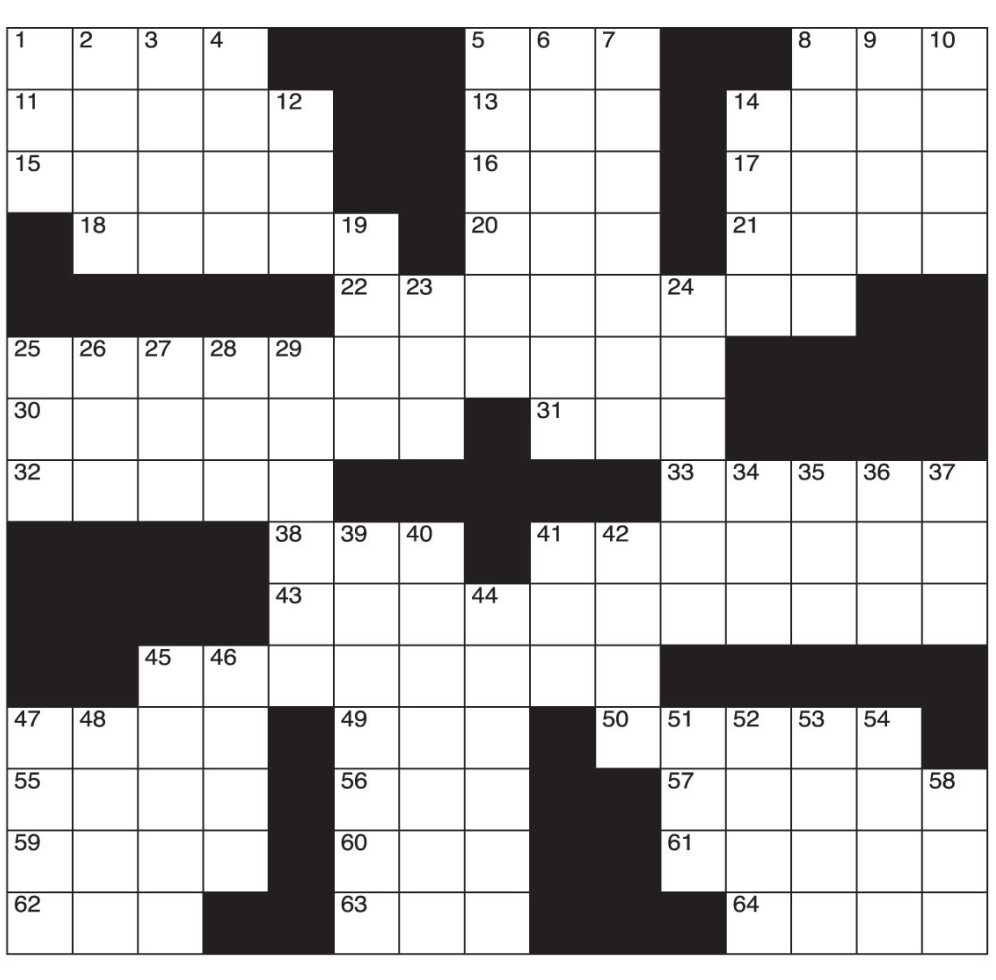
"We know it sounds like common sense, but every year emergency responders are called to situations where snow forts or tunnels near roads lead to accidents. Snowbanks along roadsides are not the ideal playground even though they may look like the perfect spot for a snow fort, but they are also prime real estate for snowplows and passing vehicles, who might not see your little one behind the snow piles.

"So, let's make it easy, choose safer spots for snow fun, like backyards, parks, or other designated play areas. And while the snowbanks may be calling your name, let's avoid turning them into the 'fort of doom.' With just a little planning, we can make sure everyone stays safe and keeps having fun this winter.

"Let's work together to make sure winter is full of laughter, not emergencies. Stay safe and play smart this winter."

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50. Volcanic craters
55. Large musical instrument
56. Liquefied natural gas
57. Ethiopian town
59. Not closed
60. A team's best pitcher
61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
62. Disfigure
63. Prefix denoting "in a"
64. Sleep

CLUES DOWN

1. S. American plant
2. Soul and calypso song
3. Fruit of the service tree
4. Continent
5. Albania's capital
6. Poisonous plant
7. Argues
8. Assists
9. Town in Galilee
10. Russian leader
12. Promotional materials
14. Wings
19. Not odd
23. Expression of creativity
24. Conceptualize
25. A digital tape recording of sound
26. Peyton's little brother
27. Cost, insurance and freight (abbr.)
28. Difference in potential
29. Owner
34. I (German)
35. Chinese conception of poetry
36. The world of the dead
37. Sign language
39. Coincide
40. Religious observance
41. Confined condition (abbr.)
42. Polite interruption sound
44. Texas ballplayer
45. Type of sword
46. Abba __, Israeli politician
47. Basic unit of a chemical element
48. Native American people in California
51. Swiss river
52. Hebrew calendar month
53. Easily swindled person
54. One point south of southwest
58. Small island (British)

No one has more self-confidence than the person who does a crossword puzzle with a pen.

Caledon adding $50,000 to Outdoor Maintenance Assistance program

Popularity of program, recent heavy snowfall led to addition of funds

BY ZACHARY ROMAN
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It's been a snowy winter and there will soon be more support available for low-income older adults (65+), older adults (75+), and low-income individuals with disabilities for assistance with outdoor maintenance.

The Town of Caledon offers a financial grant of up to $500, through a rebate, to successful applicants to its Outdoor Maintenance Assistance Program.

Through the 2025 budget process, Caledon allocated $150,000 for this program, enough to support 300 applicants. Through January and February, this limit has already been reached.

At Caledon Council's February 25 meeting, Mayor Annette Groves brought forward a motion requesting that $50,000 be added to the program so more people can be supported by it. The motion was supported unanimously by all Caledon Councillors.

Ward 4 Councillor Nick de Boer said the program has proven to be very well-received considering how well-used it is.

Groves said she wanted to thank Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell for bringing the need for more funding to her attention; she said Maskell heard about the need when he attended the 55+ Active Living & Wellness Fair at the Caledon Seniors Centre last Thursday.

"The program was so well-used by our residents, and given the amount of snow we've had… this will help 100 more seniors with snow shovelling and maintenance," said Groves. "This is a very cost-effective way of assisting our seniors."

Maskell said he wanted to thank Caledon's Age Friendly Task Force and Caledon's age-friendly staff for getting the word out about the Outdoor Maintenance Assistance Program.

Ward 5 Councillor Tony Rosa said he was happy to see marketing for the program has worked.

"This has been quite the challenging winter; it's been challenging for myself, I can imagine senior citizens who are dealing with this," said Rosa. "I've had a lot of positive feedback from seniors in my neighbourhood."



Caledon Seniors Centre manager Beverley Nurden, Caledon Seniors Centre program coordinator Cheryl Sampson, and Golden Transitions Consulting owner Angie Giusto at the 55+ Active Living & Wellness Fair.
PHOTO BY ZACHARY ROMAN

Seniors enjoy active living fair at Caledon Seniors Centre

Fair was held on February 20

BY ZACHARY ROMAN
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

An informative event was held at the Caledon Seniors Centre last week.

On February 20, the Caledon Seniors Centre (CSC) held its biannual 55+ Active Living & Wellness Fair. The event is dedicated to connecting older adults to health and wellness services available in their area. The fair featured a wide array of exhibitors in the non-profit and for-profit sectors, a free lunch for attendees, program demonstrations and guest speakers.

Caledon Seniors Centre manager Beverly Nurden said the event is great for informing seniors of services they could benefit from that they don't know about.

Angie Giusto, owner of Golden Transitions Consulting, a company that specializes in events like the 55+ Active Living & Wellness Fair, worked with the Caledon Seniors Centre to help organize the recent event.

She said she was proud to bring many local vendors to the fair. For seniors and caregivers, Giusto said attending a hands-on, in-person event is the best way to learn about what's out there.

"Seeing it all come to fruition, seeing seniors going table to table and getting that information… you can also see the vendors meeting all the other vendors and networking… seeing that, you feel good," said Giusto.

LIBERAL
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- Building more affordable housing

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Authorized by the CFO for the Michael Dehn campaign.

Democracy Caledon against recent updates to Caledon's purchasing bylaw

Town's CAO can now source contracts up to $500,000 without Council approval

BY ZACHARY ROMAN
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A local advocacy group is decrying recent updates to Caledon's purchasing bylaw that allow the Town's CAO to source contracts up to $500,000 without Council approval.

Democracy Caledon issued a media release on February 21 to express "grave concern" with the policy change, which was made at council's February 4 general committee meeting and ratified on Tuesday.

Specifically, the change is for non-standard procurements for single and sole-source contracts up to $500,000; the CAO can now approve these. Before the change, Town staff would not be able to approve any such contract above $50,000 without bringing it to Council for its approval first.

Caledon's Chief Financial Officer Robert Cummings said the purchasing bylaw change brings Caledon in line with other municipalities of its size and allows purchasing processes to be sped up when necessary.

Debbe Crandall, President of Democracy Caledon, said the change is an "alarming surrender of Council's fiscal management responsibilities to staff."

Further, she said it's a dangerous concentration of power that undermines transparency and accountability for Caledon taxpayers.

Democracy Caledon is advocating for a $100,000 limit for CAO-approved non-standard procurements.

"Council is abdicating and outsourcing its responsibility to oversee significant expenditures of taxpayer money," said Crandall.

At the Tuesday, February 25, Council meeting, more discussion on the policy change took place. Mayor Annette Groves, Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell, Ward 5 Councillor Tony Rosa, Ward 6 Councillor Cosimo Napoli, and Regional Councillor Mario Russo supported the change.

Ward 1 Councillor Lynn Kiernan, Ward 2 Councillor Dave Sheen, Ward 4 Councillor Nick de Boer, and Regional Councillor Christina Early were against it.

Groves said she takes fiscal responsibility seriously and that the change in the procurement process reflects the need to be able to adapt quickly. She also noted a biannual report on acquisition of goods and services over $50,000 is presented to Council to ensure transparency and sound financial management.

In response, de Boer said the initial staff report on the change — which was presented on February 4 — did not have enough information for him to be able to support it.

Sheen agreed with de Boer, and added that Council should not be delegating so much responsibility to Town staff.

"I think that's what the public elected us to do is to be careful with how money is spent," said Sheen. "I'm not saying that staff can't spend money carefully, but good governance requires Council to exercise that kind of authority."

Rosa said he does not want to see projects slowed down as a result of Caledon's purchasing bylaw.

"We need to get the work done. We need to trust the individuals that are veterans… who work in the best interest of our community… executing the budget that we have approved," said Rosa.

Town also wants to see confidential recommendations of Peel Transition Board made public

Continued from FRONT

"I don't believe that it should be the responsibility of the Caledon taxpayer…" said Rosa. "I think it's an extremely reasonable ask."

Regional Councillor Mario Russo also shared words to back Maskell.

"It's an important thing to be on the record to make sure that we're taking care of our taxpayers and making sure that this process that's been put forward on us, that's been mandated upon us, doesn't cost us any more than it should," said Russo.

In Maskell's motion, he notes Caledon allocated just over $1.3 million in its 2025 budget to deal with anticipated costs associated with the downloading of services to the Town of Caledon from the Region of Peel.

Councillors unanimously supported Maskell's motion.

Maskell's next motion asks the Province to reveal all confidential recommendations of the Peel Transition Board, the group assigned with researching and deciding if dissolving Peel was worthwhile.

"Town of Caledon Councillors and Town staff have not seen the confidential recommendations of the Peel Transition Board that relate to the Town of Caledon… there has been neither any indication of the full financial impact of the downloading of roads, waste, water and wastewater to the residents of Peel Region nor the impact on the taxpayers of Caledon," reads Maskell's motion.

Councillors unanimously supported this motion too.

The Town of Caledon will now formally ask the Province to take action on these two items.





Well over 200 people came out to participate in Coldest Night of the Year in Caledon.

PHOTO BY ZACHARY ROMAN

Participants raise over $110,000 for Caledon Communty Services through Coldest Night of the Year walk

Continued from FRONT

"Tonight, we don't just walk, we are making a statement… we are raising awareness for those who need us the most," said Aguiar. "What is our why? Our why is so that single mom of three won't have to choose between paying their rent on time and having enough food in the fridge. It's for that local senior who won't need to skip meals in order to afford heating. It's so that that child in your son or daughter's classroom will have a full lunch box to go to school on Monday."

Aguiar shared that demand for CCS' food bank, The Exchange, continues to grow.

"People are coming to our food bank 35 per cent more than they were last year," said Aguiar. "Tonight, we step out in a cold and we're sending a message. No one in Caledon should feel invisible, forgotten or alone. Every dollar raised, every step taken, brings warmth where there is cold, food where there is hunger, and hope where there is struggle."

Mayor Annette Groves also addressed the crowd and commended everyone for their fundraising efforts.

"What you're doing today is so special… you're making sure that families are not going hungry," said Groves. "It is very important that we remember something when we leave here today: we go home and we have a warm bed and we can take a nice, warm shower. But many people, they don't have that luxury."

Caledon Council implements lobbyist registry

Lobbyist registrar will be appointed to provide transparency about individuals, organizations who lobby public office holders

BY ZACHARY ROMAN
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Lobbying in the Town of Caledon will now be more transparent.

At Caledon Council's February 25 meeting, Councillors unanimously supported a bylaw that establishes a lobbyist registry for the Town.

Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell said he wanted to thank Town staff and members of Caledon's Governance Review Committee for their work in setting up the lobbyist registry.

"I think this is a significant moment in Caledon… I think we're the 16th municipality across the Province to adopt one of these, I think it's great practice," said Maskell. "There's a lot of talk about openness and transparency and I think this is a great opportunity for us to demonstrate that as a council going forward."

Once implemented, Caledon's lobbyist registry will be available for viewing online.

A lobbyist registrar will be appointed to oversee and maintain the lobbyist registry; according to the bylaw implemented, Caledon's Town Clerk will be appointed as the registrar unless someone else is appointed.

In Caledon's lobbyist registry bylaw, there are three types of lobbyists: consultant lobbyists, individuals who lobby for payment on behalf of a client; in-house lobbyists, individuals who are employees, partners or sole proprietors and lobby on behalf of their own employer, business or other entity; and voluntary unpaid lobbyists, individuals who lobby without payment on behalf of an individual, business or any other for-profit entity for the benefit of the interests of the individual, business or for-profit entity.

In the bylaw, lobbying is defined as follows: "any communication with a public office holder not otherwise exempted under Part 5 of this By-law by an individual who represents a business or financial interest with the goal of trying to influence any legislative action including development, introduction, passage, defeat, amendment or repeal of a bylaw, motion, resolution, or the outcome of a decision on any matter before Council, a Committee of Council, or a staff member acting under delegated authority."

Caledon's new lobbyist registry bylaw is known officially as By-law No. 2025-010 and can be found in its entirety on the Town of Caledon's website, caledon.ca.





BROCK WEIR
BROCK'S BANTER

Re-energize and re-engage

It's often said that you can tell a lot about someone by the company they keep.

Personally, I don't know how much water that old adage holds, as circumstances are not always under your control.

If you're a public figure, you regularly find yourselves in situations where everyone wants to have their photo taken with you –and those situations are often at such a fast pace it's impossible to pre-vet everyone coming your way. If you're a more private individual, it's a bit rude, for example, to RSVP as "pending" (to quote the iconic Moira Rose) to a friend's dinner invitation when the only thing that is pending is a full guest list for your review.

If you're a kid, of course, the company you keep is often beyond your control.

I had to chuckle last week when talking to a friend about the different types of neighbourhoods we grew up in.

Raised in Newmarket, I was fortunate enough to spend my early childhood on a street that boasted reasonably large detached homes, housing very colourful and memorable personalities, but the real kicker was the large plots of land on which our homes were built.

In the spring and summer, the nature all around kept us endlessly entertained, provided opportunities to learn about the land, and even make it work for us. You got to know the rhythms of this little microcosm in an ever-growing community and, as odd as it might be to say, you got to know its politics as well.

In this case, it couldn't be helped.

We lived on the south end of the street and between our home and the street's outlet near Highway 404 lived a cabinet minister serving in the government of Liberal Premier of Ontario David Peterson. Next door to them, immediately to the south, was the community's serving Progressive Conservative Member of Parliament under Brian Mulroney, and across the street and four doors down was a prominent local fundraiser for the then-burgeoning Reform Party of Canada, a forerunner for today's Federal Conservatives.

As such, it wasn't unusual to see a helicopter land in your neighbour's yard only for Preston Manning to pop out for some hand-shaking. To pick just one example.

Oddly enough, until the MP's time in Ottawa came to an end and they successfully contested the position of Mayor shortly thereafter, we were just short of the municipal level in achieving a political trifecta! By that time, the cabinet minister had retired, so we still stood at two-outta-three.

To say it was a politically happening street was a bit of an understatement and, looking back, I suppose it was an environment in which becoming a so-called "political junkie" was inevitable – and I certainly lived up to it.

But it didn't just stoke an interest; it underscored the value of our system of government and, most importantly, the value of being engaged within it. Sure, I was too young to cast a vote myself, but I was actively engaged in which candidates tickled my parents' respective fancies (and why) and, if I had an opinion of my own to offer, did my utmost to run not-always-successful domestic campaigns to get them to see things my way.

By the time came for me to cast my own vote in a consequential election, I took my role, however small, very seriously – devouring each party's platform, learning who was running to bring the platforms to fruition, attempting to meet them wherever possible, such as at all-candidates' debates, and come away with what specifically they hoped to achieve for their community.

The excitement of casting that first ballot on that election day is an indelible memory – and how I wish there were more people in our communities that share in that unique sentiment.

On Monday, with just a few days left in the Provincial Election campaign, Elections Ontario reported nearly 700,000 Ontarians cast their vote in advance voting this year. While more than half-a-million votes are nothing to sneeze at, it clocks in at merely 6.14 per cent of eligible voters.

If that seems paltry, this election's 678,789 advance votes pales in comparison to 1,066,545 voters – or 9.92 per cent of those eligible – who did their democratic duty early in the 2022 election.

"Thank you to all voters who participated in advance voting and to the dedicated staff who worked to keep the voting process in Ontario safe, efficient, and secure," said Chief Electoral Officer Greg Essensa in a statement. "If you haven't cast your ballot yet, there's still time."

There's indeed still time, but I would be very surprised if we exceed the 44 per cent voter turnout in 2022, given the fact we're in a winter election where the weather has been less than clement, and the short period of time party leaders and their local candidates have had to engage and interact with their potential constituents.

With that said, given our recent weather challenges, and the challenges our communities have had in fully digging us out, credit must be given where credit is due, so kudos to those determined Ontarians for getting out and doing what is right.

We can only hope that this week's big melt galvanizes residents to get out and do what's right as well, whether they're eager to bolster Doug Ford's mandate, see him toppled in favour of Bonnie Crombie, Marit Stiles, or Mike Schreiner, or whether they're simply supporting the local candidate who best has their finger on the pulse of the community rather than leader or party stripes.

Consistent polls throughout this campaign indicate that we probably shouldn't expect too many surprises after polls close on Thursday night, but no matter who is elected – and recent by-elections and trips to the ballot box by our recently-estranged American cousins show we can't count anything out – I hope we can collectively move forward on what needs to be done. Looming Federal election aside.

As attention inevitably – and rightly – returns to fighting the Trump Tariffs, which we were told Monday by the US President were still on track for enaction, I hope we can carve out some attention and direct it towards voter engagement.

Generally speaking, when it comes to local events, promising "light refreshments" can significantly increase turnout, but on the Provincial and Federal front, a heartier meal might be required – after all, immersive experiences like my childhood's, I'd wager, are pretty rare.

From mandatory voting, to incentivizing voting – a tax break at year's end or even a toonie when you leave the polling place, to name but two examples – it's time to get creative.

Our democracy – whether at the municipal, Regional, Provincial, or Federal level – is only as strong as its participants: the candidates vying for the job and our collective HR department – that's all of you.



Are we all more closely connected than we think?



"You are, in fact, part of the glorious oneness of the universe. Everything beautiful in the world is within you." – Russell Brand

by Mark Pavilons

Stuck in our own heads, it's easy to get distracted by our self-centredness.

To us, and our brains, we are all that really matters. Everything else is just a bonus.

We are ego-centric by nature – we view the world through our own, unique lenses. Of course, these lenses are biased, jaded, and shaped by our personal experiences. They're never the best representation of the world around us.

There's no way to know why we were designed this way, other than perhaps for self-preservation.

It's one of the greatest stumbling blocks of humankind. Why doesn't everyone see things the same way?

If we had that problem licked, there would be no conflict, war, hunger and crime.

While we're wandering around this earth on our unique life's journey, we're often not alone. We have to emerge, like the proverbial butterfly from a cocoons, into the world of other people, other opinions, other sources of energy and emotion.

We are social creatures and our very survival depended on our ancestors forming groups and societies for mutual well-being.

You don't have to be a scientist to grasp the interconnectedness of all things – a powerful concept that suggests everything in the universe is connected, and our actions and choices can have a ripple effect on the world around us.

I often think of the ripple in the pond scenario to see just how far the rings spread. I also loved skipping rocks over the water, just to see what strange forces kept it from sinking.

Richard Feynman, in his lecture "The Relation of Physics to Other Sciences," said our individual and group divisions in life are artificial and arbitrary.

We can be broken down into physics, biology, psychology and even astronomy. It's the recipe we're all made of.

The universe made us all the same. Every human has the same internal organs, requires food and water, and lives a similar life cycle. Our design is quite impressive.

We are 99.9% genetically identical to every other person on the planet. So, we base the differences we see on only a 0.1% difference, a statistically tiny amount.

As human beings, we all share emotions, which tend to guide our lives. We all understand happiness, anger, love, and fear. We enjoy food and tap our toes to music. We are in awe of Mother Nature. We like how a new piece of clothing makes us feel.

We all share this planet as our home, a miraculous ball of life that was created some 4 billion years ago, by powers we may never fully comprehend.

We all rely on "Mother Earth" to provide us with clean air, nourishing foods from the soil, and fresh drinking water. Our particular orbit gives us four seasons and our closeness to the sun maintains all life.

We are not made to be solitary creatures, rather we have an innate ability to connect with others. We need others as much as we need food.

Our relationships – a connectedness – give our lives meaning, give us love, and allow us to grow. Our connections to others enhance our well-being. We help one another grow and enjoy new experiences.

In a way, we are all responsible for opening the eyes of our loved ones, exposing them to life's wonders. That's perhaps not a job we signed up for, but we've slid into the role effortlessly.

Again, one has to ask why ego-centric beings can be so giving, thoughtful and compassionate to others. It's almost the biggest catch-22 of our species. Experts say everything we do has an impact on others, just like those ripples in the pond. If you are an artist or writer, your work serves to inspire, evoke emotion perhaps even creates change. A builder can enjoy what she has created out of brick and mortar. A scientist unlocks hidden secrets for all humankind.

Sure, you can live in relative obscurity, but some believe who you are matters and we're constantly in a "dance" of mutual influence. We matter to one another.

Despite our inherent qualities that bring us together, we've created barriers to keep us apart. Some believe the internet – the greatest info sharing platform in our history – is actually making us more reclusive, and giving us a false sense of connectedness. Personal interactions are vital.

Just look around at your own community. While many discuss issues and exchange info via local social networks, we also go out to the local coffee shop, attend town hall meetings, participate in fundraisers and fun public events.

These are what connect us – not an invisible signal through our smart phones.

When we reach out and bond with our co-workers, cashiers, and fellow parishioners, we expand our communal ties. I believe the words "community" and "connection" are one in the same.

If connecting with large groups isn't your "thing," then reach out to Nature, where you'll always find a warm welcome. Nature – from tree roots and hummingbirds to veggies and squirrels – are also among our friend groups. It's uncanny how wild animals know to approach a human for help. And yet we don't extend the same courtesy.

Connecting with others isn't difficult but it does take effort. Go out of your way to be kind to others and listen to the person who's speaking. Share a story or joke and remind your family members you always have their backs.

The Theory of Everything (TOE) is a hypothetical idea in physics that fully explains and links everything in the universe together. While that formula is currently elusive, certain facts remain.

Everything in the Universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation.

According to Margaret J. Wheatley, "we have to stop pretending we are individuals that can go it alone."

While quantum mechanics is still in its infancy, some scientists believe that our consciousness, like energy, is embedded in the quantum structure of reality. Rather than simply ceasing to exist, our consciousness transforms in a new form after the body dies.

Perhaps, since we're all connected – our consciousness and memories will return to the universe, being placed on a massive bookshelf of the ultimate cosmic library, with the subject of ourselves filtering back into the pool of everything.



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Choose your own adventure

SHERALYN ROMAN
TALK CALEDON



Welcome to our first interactive, choose your own ending column. There will be a number of choices you can make throughout, and we'll try to ensure as many options are included as the variety of readers there are here in Caledon. Of course, that's impossible, but since the previous two columns appearing in this space seem to have generated significant conversation, it seemed like a good idea to encourage even more this week. Have fun!

First things first. Have you voted? If the answer is NO, and you are reading this before 9 p.m. – GO NOW. Seriously. Go right now. There are very few excuses not to vote when you live in a free and democratic country and have the right to do so. Some might even argue that right is actually a responsibility, defined as "having an obligation to do so." Policies that are most likely to impact us as citizens are largely decided at the municipal and provincial level. Not voting is an abdication of your obligation to help create the kind of community we'd all like to live in. It's choose your own adventure time. You have a choice to make now. Here's hoping you do the responsible thing.

If the answer is YES in this "choose your own adventure," thank you! Regardless of how you voted, thank you for exercising your democratic right to do so, particularly in these trying times where it seems the very concept of democracy is in peril. Feel free to reward yourself now. Are you a sweet or salty snack lover? If you've chosen an option starting with the letter "S," go ahead and snack away, you've earned it!

Perhaps you think my comments about taking the right to vote so seriously are an exaggeration. Maybe you think local municipal politics, or even provincial politics just don't matter all that much. Perhaps you're thinking the only thing that really matters is "F Trudeau?" First of all, let's keep this clean, it's a family newspaper after all, and as for getting rid of Trudeau? Well, he's already stepped aside – so stop griping and do some reflecting on who is actually responsible for some of your current woes. In the following examples, choose one:

If you have an issue with exorbitant rent, or lack of affordable housing options do you blame: A) Trudeau, B) Doug Ford and Sylvia Jones or C) Mayor Groves?

If you feel our roads are unsafe to drive on due to serious truck training/licensing issues, who do you blame? See options above.

If you're worried about the greenbelt, non-existent highways and tunnels, taxes on and/or availability of alcohol in corner stores, again, who do you blame? Same options as in the first (and second!) question.

If you are concerned about access to health care in Caledon/Dufferin, or illegal trucking yards, quarries or public transportation – who do you ask for help? (See options listed in questions 1, 2 & 3)

You get the idea …. the concerns many of us have right now, the concerns that impact our daily lives, affecting how we get to work, the type of housing we can afford, even when snow gets removed from our streets are all policies and decisions made largely at the municipal and provincial level. To not take your right to vote, nor have an understanding of who makes these decisions on your behalf is frankly, irresponsible.

Finally, speaking about the importance of having your say, whether by vote or in other ways, the last several columns appearing in this space have generated a great deal of conversation both on and offline. That's a good thing. We don't always have to agree on the matters discussed, and I'd go so far as to suggest I can usually predict with some confidence those times when we might not, and that's ok. It's my firm belief that this space is meant to provoke thoughtful conversation about, and serious consideration of, the issues impacting all of us who live, work and play here in Caledon. Whether we're talking about what's happening locally, about key decisions made (or not made!) by our municipal council, or promoting important local good news stories, talking about our various non-profits, celebrating PRIDE month, or honouring Remembrance Day, we're sharing a local perspective on issues that may be of concern to every Caledon resident.

As the "Talk Caledon," title suggests, we're talking about things that matter to our residents and that have the potential to impact the greater good of every member of the community. So, whether we agree or disagree, let's keep engaging respectfully in conversations that keep the dialogue flowing. We're all each other's neighbours after all.

P.S. Before we go … here's your last chance to choose your own adventure, this one will be about the next four years. I'm conducting an informal poll. Will it be "Deja Doug," or as David Bowie might have crooned in a song once, will there be "Ch Ch Ch Ch … Changes coming to Dufferin/Caledon?"

Our Readers Write

American Egoism and Canadian Angst: A letter to my northern kin

During a recent Instagram post—where I eloquently lamented the confederacy of dunces currently pilfering our legal system and raping our system of jurisprudence—I was reminded by a former Canadian colleague and valued friend that my words might be a bit... personal and intended for family. To which I replied, "Absolutely! And you, my friend, are part of my family."

As a former executive at Husky IMS—Canada's industrial crown jewel in the plastics realm—I find myself both bewildered and exasperated at the antics of our current leadership. Canada, our ever-patient neighbor, has long welcomed us with open arms, rich traditions, and an unwavering loyalty that, quite frankly, we haven't always deserved. Having played a role in Husky's rise to a $2 billion behemoth, I count that time as one of my proudest professional achievements. As Director of Sales Force Development and Best Practices, I cultivated deep, lasting relationships with some of the finest professionals I've ever known. I often commented that a walkabout through our halls was as if I was on the bridge of the Starship Enterprise amidst the accents, dialects, and nationalities—a welcome chorus of genius at work.

And yet, here we are—watching a shameful display of arrogance and ignorance directed at one of our most steadfast allies. Canada, a nation that has stood shoulder to shoulder with the U.S. through wars, crises, and global challenges, is now being disrespected by an administration that operates like a dysfunctional daycare. At the helm, we have an intellectual eunuch, propped up by a morally bankrupt billionaire and a misguided VP enthralled by the same reactionary, xenophobic policies that have emboldened Europe's far-right racists.

This reckless posture not only insults a trusted friend but also weakens America's credibility on the world stage. The hypocrisy is staggering. We love to invoke the ideals of democracy, mutual respect, and cooperation—so long as they suit our immediate interests. We wag our fingers at nations who undermine international agreements, yet our own leaders treat trade pacts like disposable napkins, tearing them up when it's politically expedient and expecting the world to fall in line. We boast about standing by our allies, yet we spit in the faces of those who have stood by us through thick and thin, all while thumping our chests about patriotism and strength.

The truth is, America's obsession with dominance is a thinly veiled insecurity. We demand unwavering loyalty from our partners yet offer them little but condescension in return. Canada has remained patient—sometimes to a fault. But patience should not be mistaken for weakness. It takes far more strength to remain principled in the face of arrogance than it does to wield bluster like a club.

I've often said that Canadians take their time responding to criticism. At first, I thought it was hesitation, but I came to realize—through years of working alongside them—that it's actually wisdom. They understand the value of measured thought before engagement. After all, as Twain suggested, "Better to remain silent and be considered a fool than to speak and remove all doubt."

So, to my Canadian family: please know this—your values, your integrity, and your commitment to mutual respect and responsibility stand tall, even as petulant insults and empty threats are hurled your way. The posturing of a fading empire cannot erase the formidable accomplishments you have built over generations. Remain steady, my friends. Some of us here still see you clearly—and hold you in the highest regard, as one of the finest and most principled nations in North America.

From Husky IMS, my pride and heart, to the broader Canadian ethos, I have witnessed first-hand the nation's strength and unwavering commitment to fairness and kindness. The lessons learned from my Canadian colleagues are many, and I cherish each one. They have shown me that respect is not just earned; it is an inherent virtue that reflects one's character and leadership. Canadians embody this virtue in their conduct and actions.

Canada, a beacon of resilience and sensibility, continues to inspire me. Their patience in the face of adversity is not weakness, but a profound demonstration of strength. While America grapples with its insecurities and flawed pursuit of dominance, Canada stands as a testament to what true leadership looks like—one that values wisdom over bravado, integrity over deception, and unity over division.

My northern kin, you are a source of pride and admiration. Your steadfast commitment to principles and fairness is a guiding light in these tumultuous times. Know that your efforts do not go unnoticed, and your contributions to a better world are deeply appreciated. As we navigate these uncertain waters, let us remember that the bonds we share are stronger than the divisions that may arise.

In solidarity and with deep respect,

MICHAEL SMITH

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"A look at food insecurity in Ontario and how you can help" *by Kim D'Eri, Manager, Community Animation, Caledon Community Services*



What do you picture when you hear the phrase 'unravelling at the seams?' Maybe you're drawn to a comedic vision of a knitted sweater that has seen better days. Perhaps you recall the more sobering scene of a loved one struggling with an impossible situation.

The dictionary defines this phrase as 'something deteriorating at a rapid rate.' When this definition is applied to food security in Ontario and right here at home, it paints a scary picture.

'Unravelling at the Seams' is the name of Feed Ontario's 2024 Hunger Report, detailing the precarious and accelerating rate of food insecurity in communities across Ontario. With ever-increasing costs of living, the report found that not only are more people turning to their local food banks for help, but also that some of those who were once in a position to help are no longer able to make donations or cannot provide the same level of support as they have in the past. Donors and supporters are becoming clients and food banks are struggling to keep up with the demand.

The report states that 1,001,105 people used a food bank in Ontario between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024. This is a 25 per cent increase over the previous year and a staggering 86 per cent increase since 2019-2020. 38 per cent of food banks have had to reduce the amount of food they're able to provide and some are being forced to cut services as demand exceeds their resources.

This is a reality we've seen first-hand. Visits to Caledon Community Services' (CCS) Exchange, Caledon's only full-service food bank have surged 35 per cent in 2024 and demand continues to increase as we experience fast-paced changes in the world at large. The support of our caring community is more important than ever. And we know neighbours will step up to help wherever they can – that's part of the incredible magic of Caledon. So what can you do to help if you're able?

Donate online at ccs4u.org to help us fill gaps in our pantry and provide basic essentials for those in need. You can also add a few items to your list the next time you go on a grocery run or consider hosting a food drive. (Some most needed items include: jam, honey, peanut butter, canned meats and fruit, shelf-stable milk, cooking oil, sugar and flour. Hygiene items are also welcome and appreciated.) For more information and up-to-date most needed items, visit ccs4u.org or call 905-584-2300 ext. 202. Thank you Caledon, together we're creating a healthy and engaged community.

How Do You See It?

Tell us how you see it.
Cathy Perennec McLean, Director, Programs and Operations, Caledon Community Services at 905-584-2300 ext. 220 or cmclean@ccs4u.org

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Agius and Fang produce two-point nights for Admirals, but Caledon falls 5-3 to Cobourg

BY JIM STEWART

Ayden Agius and Jake Fang contributed two points each in the Caledon Admirals' narrow 5-3 loss to the Cobourg Cougars on Thursday night at the Mayfield Recreation Complex.

The visitors' fifth goal was into an empty net with six seconds left after the Admirals had caged the Cougars with a sustained, suspenseful, but goal-less two-minute offensive zone blitz with the extra attacker.

Seventh-place Cobourg rolled into The Icebox on Thursday with a playoff position clinched. However, the Cougars (23-21-2-6) also found themselves immersed in a cat fight with the Pickering Panthers (23-25-1-4) for the OJHL West seventh-seed and needed a win against the feisty Admirals. The eighth-seed draws the mighty Trenton Golden Hawks (44-6-2-0) in the opening round.

The young Admirals (10-41-2-0) had their own source of motivation versus Cobourg. When the Cougars arrived in Caledon for their only visit this season, it marked the return of Jack Fang's old club. Fang, a talented forward who has made an impact since he arrived from Cobourg on January 4, earned two assists against his old teammates on Thursday.

The excellent home ice effort put forth by the Admirals, after a pair of clunkers against Oakville and Milton last week, was explained by Assistant Captain Agius: "We wanted to win it for Jack Fang. We wanted to put our best effort forward in the game for him. He played really well out there tonight with two assists in the second period to get us back in the game. We were also better tonight because we had the weekend off to help us recuperate after playing twelve games in three weeks. We were ready to play tonight."

The smooth-skating blueliner, who contributed a goal and an assist to the Admirals' attack, praised Blake Sloan's efforts, especially in the first two periods during which the acrobatic netminder made 23 saves.

"Blake's been a good goalie for us all year. He's great side to side and he's crazy quick with the glove. He gave us a chance to win tonight."

The only shot to elude Sloan in the first period was Liam Oravsky's 15th of the season at 4:09. Sloan repelled a couple of golden scoring opportunities by the green-clad Cougars to limit the visitors' lead to 1-0 after twenty minutes of play.

Disaster struck the Admirals less than two minutes into the second period. Enjoying a 5-on-3 power play advantage, a Caledon defender lost an edge at the blue line and Cougar penalty killer Nico Laforge stole the puck with only open ice between him and Sloan. The speedy Laforge finished a clearcut, 110-foot breakaway by deking the Admirals' netminder and scoring on the backhand to give the visitors a 2-0 lead at 1:54.

Despite surrendering the shortie, the Admirals demonstrated resilience by converting their extra-man advantage one minute later. Agius showcased his marksmanship when his wrist shot from the left point beat Cougars' goaltender Reece Herman cleanly at 2:59.

Fang and Quenten Cheney earned assists on Agius's power play marker that lifted the spirits of the home side.

Admirals' forward Owen Meli made a nifty move in the slot to create space, deked Herman, and backhanded the biscuit into the cage at 4:27 to make it 2-2. Fang and Eric He earned their tenth assists of the season on Meli's tying goal.

After Meli's 10th marker of the season, Sloan made a series of sensational saves to preserve the tie.

Particularly impressive was when the lefty goaltender flashed the leather and stole a goal in the slot at 12:22. However, two kick saves later, the Cougars finally beat Sloan and reclaimed a one-goal lead when Wyatt Gregory deftly tipped a pass from Laforge at 12:57.

Nathan Whipkey staked the visitors to a 4-2 lead when he converted a 2-on-1 rush at 14:37 by firing a wrist shot top shelf stick side past Sloan.



Admirals' Assistant Captain Ayden Agius' two-point performance led his club in a narrow 5-3 loss to Cobourg.

PHOTO BY JIM STEWART

With 3:20 left in the hotly-contested second period, haymakers reminiscent of a vintage Don Cherry Rock 'Em, Sock 'Em video were dished out by Caledon combatants Quenten Chaney and Kaleb Young and Cougar agitators Declan Ready and Jesse English. The mid-ice melee earned the quartet fighting majors and game misconducts while Cobourg's Carson Durnin earned an unsportsmanlike misconduct for his role in inciting the dustup.

After Cobourg's Carson Durbin earned a tripping minor at 11:58 of the final frame, Clarence Allain sniped his tenth of the season by picking the top corner from a tough angle to pull Caledon to within one.

Cobourg challenged the goal because, remarkably, the net was lifted off its moorings again by Herman who had already drawn two minor penalties for rearranging the rink's furniture to his liking. However, justice prevailed and Allain's marker was verified by video replay.

Cam Lang earned his 31st assist of the season on Allain's crafty power play goal and Agius notched his 16th assist on his entry pass to Lang.

Despite the excellent empty net pressure exerted by the Admirals in the closing two minutes, Cougars' leading goal scorer Beckett Ewart fired his 26th of the season into the yawning cage at 19:54 to seal the deal for the visitors.

Despite Thursday's loss on home ice, Agius felt that team chemistry contributed to the Admirals' competitive effort against a playoff-bound team like Cobourg: "The team's coming together really well at this part of the season. We're working towards next year and want to work hard in our remaining three games. We're all working on little things to make each of us better and we're pushing each other to get better. We want to play the role of spoiler as we finish the season."

The Admirals' final home game of the season is Thursday, February 27 when they host the fifth-place Burlington Cougars (21-18-3-2). Puck drop will be 7:30 p.m. at the Mayfield Recreation Complex.

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ARTS & CULTURE



Harmony for Hospice fundraiser to be held in memory of Don Gillespie

Five barbershop quartets to perform at Mayfield United Church

BY ZACHARY ROMAN
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

An exciting afternoon of music in Caledon will raise money for local hospice care.

At 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 5, Bethell Hospice will host "Harmony for Hospice" at Mayfield United Church (12496 Dixie Road).

The event will feature performances from five amazing barbershop quartets: Constructive Criticism, The Aristocrats, Diamond Cuts, Firefly, and Full Swing.

The emcee for the event will be Chris Starkey, a barbershopper since the late 1980s who has sung in choruses in Kitchener, Mississauga, Toronto and Hamilton.

Tickets are $25 each and all funds raised will go to Bethell Hospice, which offers free hospice palliative care and community programs. The following is the link to purchase tickets online: bhf.akaraisin.com/ui/HarmonyforHospice.

Harmony for Hospice is being organized by Cathy Gillespie in memory of her husband Don, who was a singer and barbershopper. Don passed away at Bethell Hospice in 2024 at the age of 91.



CONTRIBUTED IMAGE

"Although we were only at the hospice for three days, there aren't enough words to describe the enormity of the positive feelings I have for the staff and volunteers," said Gillespie. "Bethell Hospice is a wonderful place and the support we received had such an amazing impact not only on my husband, but me and my family as well."

Local author reads her children's book exploring Canadian Black history at MoD event



SHARING CANADIAN BLACK HISTORY: Local author and educator Suzette Daley hosted two reading sessions of her children's book The Story of Lucie and Thornton Blackburn, at the Museum of Dufferin (MoD) on Saturday. After her reading session, children enjoyed an archeological excavation simulating the 1980s dig at the Blackburn house in Toronto. PAULA BROWN PHOTO

BY PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Dufferin County residents had the opportunity to learn about a commonly forgotten story in Canadian Black History from a local author, focused on highlighting the experiences of people of colour.

The Museum of Dufferin (MoD), hosted local author and educator Suzette Daley on Saturday (Feb. 22) for two reading sessions of her children's book The Lucie and Thornton Blackburn Story.

The book follows the real-life story of Lucie and Thornton Blackburn, two freedom seekers who escaped enslavement in Kentucky and later founded Toronto's first taxi company, The City. After their deaths, the duo left behind a legacy of entrepreneurship, community and anti-slavery activism, which led Thornton and Lucie to be designated as "persons of national historic significance" by the Government of Canada in 1999.

"It's important for me to highlight their story, their journey, their resilience and perseverance and what they've done for Canada over the years. It's also to highlight a story that has been undiscovered for many people," said Daley.

Daley was first introduced to the Blackburn story through the books I've Got a Home in Glory Land by Karolyn Smardz Frost and Trailblazers by Tiyahna Ridley-Padmore. After reading both books, Daley began writing her own version of the true story, but this time with a focus on regaling it to children.

Continued on Page A15



COMMUNITY events

This column is provided as a free public service to non-profit organizations to announce up-coming events. Please contact the Caledon Citizen by calling ***(905) 857-6626*** *or emailing* ***admin@caledoncitizen.com*** *if you wish to have an announcement published.*

TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) ON 1344 Bolton is a non-profit group. We meet weekly on Wed. evenings in the basement of Bolton United Church. Weigh-in is from 6:00-6:30PM, followed by a meeting. If you have weight to lose and/or want to improve your health, we can help. We promote healthy eating, and support the efforts of all our members. Your first meeting is free. Annual fee including a starter kit is $70 USD. Monthly chapter dues are $15.00 CAD. Come join us! For more information, visit www.tops.org or call Marion at 905-857-5191.

Monthly Dinner – February 28, 2025
The Caledon Seniors Centre at Rotary Place in Bolton is having a Monthly Dinner on Friday, February 28, 2025. The menu is stuffed chicken breast, roasted potatoes, kale salad, ice-cream sandwich dessert. Cost is $16. Pick-up at 5:15 pm, dine-in served at 5:30 pm, local delivery available for $2.
Call the Centre at 905-951-6114 to buy your tickets! Everyone welcome!

CALEDON CHAMBER CONCERTS, presents…
THE VENUTI STRING QUARTET – Saturday, March 1, 2025 – 7:30 p.m.
The Great Hall of St. James Anglican Church, 60125 Old Church Road, Caledon East
Admission: Free to 18 years old and under; $40 per adult

Free Community Pancake Breakfast
St. Patrick's Day theme
Saturday, March 1st, 2025 from 8:30 am to 10:30 am.
Caledon East United Church, 6046 Old Church Rd.
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AUCTIONS

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Under the innkeeper's Act of Ontario the following horse will be sold at Woodville Sales Barn on March 8th, 2025 at 10:30 am. 2018 registered thoroughbred mare "No Whammie". The horse will incur daily costs until the day of auction, including but not limited to, daily board rates of $35, late payment fees and auction fees.

The horse has been seized to satisfy a debt owing for board in the amount of $2889.70 by Mike Dunslow and Penny Sharman of Mississauga Ontario to Leila DiPasquale/ True Blue Stables of Mono Ontario.

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OBITUARIES

JOYCE RATKOWSKY



Joyce Ratkowsky passed away peacefully at Headwaters Health Care Centre, in Orangeville Ontario, with her niece Bonnie Brown by her side, on February 18, 2025, at 3:55am, at the age of 81.

Loving sister of the late Mary Brown (husband Ray). Dear Aunt of Bonnie Brown and her late brother Robert. Great Aunt to Justin Walsh, Sydney Gray, Adrianna, Kaitlyn, and Nicholas Stoneham. Beloved Best Friend of Jenniffer Wilson (Embree) and Nana to Daniel Embree (Brittany Hastings), Joshua Embree (Jamie Lynn), Jamie Leigh-Mary Embree (Sandro Pipia), Brittney Embree (Jayson Dick), Deanna Stewart (Joel) and Great Nana to Embree Stewart.

Joyce led a life full of adventures and mischief, and a legacy of kindness, humour and compassion. She worked hard and played harder, always having a joke to tell, and a hand to lend. She would never leave anyone behind and took care of everyone with compassion and empathy. At Joyce's request there will be no funeral service however an internment will take place in the spring at Greenwood Cemetery. Joyce would like her life to be remembered for all of us to spread the same kindness she did!

FLY HIGH JOYCEE POO (Bear)!

Condolences may be offered to the family at www.dodsandmcnair.com

OBITUARIES

BERNADETTE PRICE



It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden passing of Bernadette Price at Headwaters Health Care Centre on Thursday, February 20th, 2025, in her 79th year, with her children at her side. Ever devoted wife of late Richard Leblanc and late Joseph Price, beloved mother of, Julie (Brett), Gisèle (Louis) & Dennis (Amanda), dear stepmother of Ulrich (Meltem) & Melissa Price, loving grandmother of Chelsea (Corey), Dylan (Kristina), Elizabeth (Trisha), Jacob (Teodora), Cameron (Celeste), Andrew (Emily), Jackson & Violet, great grandmother to Jason and Charlie-Clare and step grandmother to Selim, Brandon and Zachary. She is also survived by her sisters; Annette (wife of late Jack Ferris) and Fernande (Claude Tremblay), and brother, France (Jeanne). Predeceased by her sister Rachelle (survived by Normand Brouillette) and brother Claude (survived by Claire). Bernadette will also be greatly missed by many in her extended family and numerous friends.

Born in Cache Bay, Ontario, to loving parents late Renè and Florida Giguère, Bernadette married her first love, Richard, before moving to Brampton, Ontario, with the rest of the Leblanc family and starting a family. She worked at CN Rail for several years before moving to Caledon and then the house in Orangeville where she spent the rest of her days. She became the office manager at Drummond Business Forms and was a part of that family until she retired at 52 in 1998.

After tragically losing her first husband, she met her second love, Joseph, and they were married in 1985. They retired early to travel, which they did for several years. They became very involved with St. Timothy's Church Community, the Orangeville Seniors Centre and playing bridge. They also felt strongly about giving to charity, largely for the poor and disadvantaged, and volunteered for the Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul and more.

Bernadette was a vital part of each of the various communities that she belonged to and had deep connections with so many people. She loved everyone - her loss will be felt deeply.

Family and friends are invited to share their memories, thoughts, and messages on the tribute wall as a way to celebrate Bernadette's life. Your words will offer comfort and allow us to cherish the lasting impact she had on so many. Please take a moment to leave a message, share a memory, or express your condolences.

Visitation will be held at the Dods & McNair Funeral Home, Chapel & Reception Centre, 21 First St., Orangeville on Friday, February 28th, 2025, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm and 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Funeral Service will be held at St. Timothy Roman Catholic Church 42 Dawson Road Orangeville, on Saturday, March 1st, 2025, at 12:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers, donations to St. Vincent De Paul, The Salvation Army or the Food Bank would be appreciated by the family.

Condolences may be offered to the family at *www.dodsandmcnair.com*

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The Lord Dufferin Chapter IODE 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.aanorthhaltonerin.org.

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FOR INFORMATION regarding **HEART and STROKE**, call Dori Ebel (519)941-1865 or 1-800-360-1557.

IF YOU or a **FAMILY MEMBER** are struggling with gambling, Gamblers Anonymous is there to HELP. Call: 1(855) 222-5542 or visit www.gatoronto.ca.

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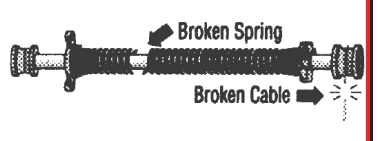
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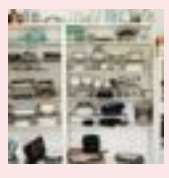
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Local author reads her children's book exploring Canadian Black history at MoD event

Continued from Page A11

"As an educator I wanted the younger generation to have a nice snapshot of these two stories. I created my book to tell it without giving them too much information," she explained.

Shelburne resident Janine Rose and her eight-year-old daughter Emma, were among the individuals who attended the reading sessions at the Museum of Dufferin.

"She comes home [from school] with so much information about different cultures, and I don't feel like we had as much exposure," said Rose, about attending the event. "It's good to have more knowledge and understanding of the different aspects in the community."

Marcia Ortiz and her friend Ann Maree Day also attended the reading and noted they'd never heard the story of Lucie and Thornton Blackburn.

"It really is an awesome to hear the story of these two people and what they built," said Ortiz.

Speaking with the Free Press, Daley concluded that she hopes by sharing Lucie and Thornton's story that younger generations understand resilience and perseverance.

"If a couple coming all the way from Kentucky with nothing can come to Canada and start a taxi company we now celebrate today, then anything is possible," said Daley.

REMEMBER TO SHOP LOCAL!

Bolton ComiCon nears at CCRW

BY MARK PAVILONS

Fans, get ready to get your "geek on" at the upcoming Bolton ComiCon.

Pop Culture Canada and Brian Gaudet is presenting the ComiCon Sunday, March 16 at the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness. The event runs 10 a.m. to 3 p.,m.

On tap will be many vendors, selling (and buying) comic books, new and vintage toys, jewelry, anime, manga, prints, and a variety of other awesome geek stuff, among other things. There will even be some artists and authors present with their own art, books and comics. Visit their booths and get some unique items and even some free autographs.

Special guest this time is Patricia Patts, the voice of Peppermint Patty on the Peanuts TV specials from 1979 to 1980. She's an actress, singer and songwriter.

Admission is $5 for adults, and children 12 and under are admitted free.

You can get your tickets online at Eventbrite and at the door. If you purchase your ticket online you will get a free comic book at the door!

Organizers are also offering a VIP pass, which get you a premier shopping bag with one adult admission, a mystery Funko Pop, two collector comics and a few other goodies. It's valued at more than $40.

Visitors are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items for the local community food bank and get entered to win some fun prizes. One raffle ticket will be given for each item.

The following items are in high demand and are greatly appreciated: children school snacks, juice boxes, canned veggies and fruit, canned pasta, cereal, toothpaste, soap, pet food, baby supplies.

The organizers say Cosplay is always encouraged. Spend an afternoon lost in your favourite genre. For tickets, visit https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/bolton-comicon-march-16th-2025-comic-con-tickets-1075952265189.

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