



**THE STUFF DREAMS ARE MADE OF** - The window of The Bridge Social on Brock St. W. came alive with vignettes from the classic Christmas ballet *The Nutcracker* on the weekend. Uxbridge Dance Academy students Olivia Middleton as Clara, and Ellen McDonald as the Nutcracker, encouraged children of all ages stop to bask in the magic of the scene and season.  
*Photo by Justyne Edgell*

## There's one place, and that's home, for the holidays

by Justyne Edgell, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Sorry, Ontario, but you're not getting the Christmas present you were hoping for.

On Monday, Premier Doug Ford announced a province-wide lockdown beginning at 12:01 a.m. on Dec. 26. Ford said this was a difficult decision but that this temporary, one-time measure should allow more freedom in the future. The majority of the province will be in lockdown for 28 days, with some northern areas locked down for only 14.

This latest pandemic precautionary move by the province takes away the one event Uxbridge could enjoy during the holiday season - the Optimist Club's Fantasy of Lights at Elgin Park. The new COVID lockdown restrictions are slightly revised from those that were im-

posed earlier in the pandemic, but the new lockdown prohibits drive through events for entertainment.

President of the Optimist Club of Uxbridge, Chris Wilson, says he is sad to see the end of what they have called "a beacon of light in a dark year."

"We are extremely disappointed to have to end this year early, but we understand the urgency, and as Optimists we are stewards of the law," says Wilson.

The holiday light display will remain open to the public until 9:30 p.m. Christmas night, Dec. 25.

As COVID numbers continue to rise, with a reported 70 per cent increase in hospitalizations and 80 per cent increase in intensive care unit cases in the past four weeks, the province says this "urgent and immediate action" is needed

to support the healthcare system.

Ford reminded the province that with ICU beds at over 100 per cent capacity, there is no space to treat emergencies like car accidents or heart attacks.

When asked why the shutdown wouldn't commence immediately, Premier Ford replied that the delayed start is to help the small business prepare for the shutdown and to get rid of stock, also noting that the hardest hit areas, like Toronto and Peel, are already shut down.

Through this period of lockdown, everyone is asked to stay home unless leaving the house is "absolutely necessary," says Ford. The province will return to reduced capacity for essential businesses with only curbside pick-up available to all others.

...continued on page 6

**What will you do with your commission savings?**

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Merry Christmas Uxbridge!

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### Inside Your Cosmos

Putting fibre optics in the trunk . . . . page 3  
How we got through 2020

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## Council & Committee Meetings

### Meeting Schedule for January 2021

Monday, January 11,  
10:00 a.m.  
COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, January 12,  
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
DEPARTMENT BUDGET  
PRESENTATIONS (if needed)

## Employment Opportunity

[uxbridge.ca/careers](http://uxbridge.ca/careers)  
Crossing Guards

The Township of Uxbridge is currently seeking a Crossing Guard in the Town of Uxbridge.

If you are interested in a position, please contact Jo Ann Merrick at 905-852-9181 ext 202 or email: [jmerrick@uxbridge.ca](mailto:jmerrick@uxbridge.ca)

# Uxbridge at a Glance

The Corporation of The Township of Uxbridge  
51 Toronto Street South, P.O. Box 190  
Uxbridge L9P 1T1  
905-852-9181 [info@uxbridge.ca](mailto:info@uxbridge.ca)

## RFP U20-28 - Public Consultation & Renderings for Uxbridge Downtown

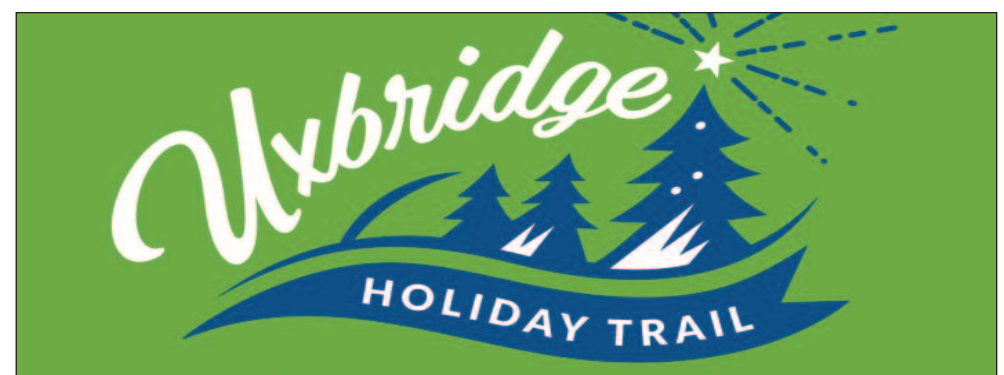
The Township of Uxbridge requires the services of a company to develop 3D renderings for the Uxbridge Downtown Area. Details of this RFP may be found at [uxbridge.ca/tenders](http://uxbridge.ca/tenders). Lowest or any bid not necessarily accepted. Bids may be delivered in person, dropped in our 'Red Barn' drop box or mailed to Debbie Leroux, Clerk/Director of Legislative Services, 51 Toronto St. S., Uxbridge, ON L9P 1H1. All electronic or written submissions must be received by **2:00 p.m. Tuesday January 5, 2021.**

## Durham Region Forest Temporary Trail Closures

As part of ongoing forest management activities at Durham Regional Forest, select trails will be closed to the public between **December 14, 2020 and January 22, 2021:**

**Norton Tract** - subject to temporary full closure from December 14 to January 15, 2021

**Main Tract** - select trails will be subject to temporary closures from December 21 to January 22, 2021. Please refer to [uxbridge.ca/news](http://uxbridge.ca/news) for full details and maps.



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[www.DiscoverUxbridge.ca/HolidayTrail](http://www.DiscoverUxbridge.ca/HolidayTrail)

## Public Notice

NOTICE is hereby given that the Council of the Township of Uxbridge hereby proposes to dispose of the following lands:

The property legally described as a portion of the Second Street Road Allowance, located south of Young Street, being a portion of PIN 26849-0022(LT), being that part of Second Street on Plan 30 as described in CO235494 (fourthly) South of Dallas Street (formerly Young Street), Township of Uxbridge is surplus to the needs of the Municipality.

FURTHER NOTICE is hereby given that the Township Council at its regular meeting held on December 14, 2020, declared by Resolution No. 2020-09 the aforementioned lands to be surplus to the needs of the municipality. A copy of the plan showing the location of the lands may be viewed in the Office of the Clerk.



## Township of Uxbridge COVID-19 Updates

### Facility Closure Information

Town Hall - Open Jan. 4th by appointment only  
Uxbridge Arena - Closed until Jan. 24th  
Uxpool - Closed until Jan. 24th  
Uxbridge/Zephyr Library - Curbside pick-up only  
Pump Park/Skate Park closed  
Dog Park Open - 10 person limit  
Uxbridge/Scugog Animal Shelter - closed to the public, call (905) 985-9547 for service

Questions? Contact Us!  
t: 905-852-9181  
[info@uxbridge.ca](mailto:info@uxbridge.ca)  
[www.uxbridge.ca](http://www.uxbridge.ca)

Effective Dec. 26th the Region of Durham is in Grey Zone COVID Restrictions



Township of Uxbridge documents are available in alternate formats upon request.  
Please fill out the Request for Alternate Formats Form at [uxbridge.ca/accessibility](http://uxbridge.ca/accessibility)

email: [accessibility@uxbridge.ca](mailto:accessibility@uxbridge.ca)  
phone: 905-852-9181 ext.209





## Writing Fitz

column by Shelagh Fitz

### My garage is my COVID haven

What got me through 2020? Well, who knew a garage could be so versatile and that as a space it would play such an integral part to COVID survival 2020 for me and my clan?

For reference, in March, I was five short months from official empty nest status. The pandemic was called and rather than fly to vacation with my child studying in Spain, I was scrambling for flights to get her home before they closed the borders. More children followed suit. With the addition of a couple of 'plus ones,' my nest had suddenly reached capacity! Quaint as it seems now, June was tagged the likely pandemic end date.

Renovations began. The garage, in this first incarnation, served as a paint station, workbench, build site, and purge-inspired pre-dump storage facility, as well as a great place to share a beer after a hard day of manual labour. Plotting and planning the next project or pondering the predicament we found ourselves in with the present one. Laughter continues to come easy in these moments.

A birthday loomed on the May horizon. From our 'all dressed up, with no place to go' mentality a plan was hatched to throw a COVID-friendly 21st birthday 'pub' crawl. Seven themed bars with corresponding cocktails, each fashioned by each participant, were plotted on the crawl map. Fifth stop was a 'frat party' in the garage, replete with game room gear rescued from the recent family cottage sale: tunes, darts, foosball, beer pong on the ping pong table, along with expertly crafted layered shots. By the time we completed the seventh stop it was 2 a.m. and our cheeks hurt from all the laughter.

It became clear within a few weeks that our one-off celebration to get us to the end of June was merely the blueprint for myriad celebrations to come. Pride was next on our list of celebrations and the rainbow ruled the day: clothing, dinner, drinks. Our bubble has since hosted another eight birthday celebrations, three graduations, and a few impromptu socially distanced visits – most of which included a stint in the garage. For my own birthday, my children applied every lesson I ever taught them about throwing a child's birthday party and transformed the garage into a wonderful carnival-themed party extravaganza: games, prizes, caramel corn and a tickle-trunk inspired photobooth – priceless on so many levels. In September,

my 82-year-old father met the challenge offered by his 18-year-old grandson for a table tennis match-up that counts among my favourite memories of 2020! A girlfriend's launch into senior-hood was also safely navigated in and around the garage.

As the second wave of the pandemic gathered momentum, Thanksgiving loomed large. The garage delivered again. In a middle-of-the-night stroke of brilliance, I saw that with the right heating, lighting and an extremely large cloth covering, the ping pong table made the perfect socially distancing table. Once again, the garage was reimagined and reinvented. There was much to be grateful for, including the technology that allowed my Dal-housie student to join in.

Obviously, it was not the space itself but the people in it that made the difference this year. My bubble companions have brought great joy. Their creativity and willingness to go along for the ride made the garage so much more than the uninsulated, unfinished, poorly lit space that it is. With each celebration, we renewed hope for our future and an eventual return to normalcy. The pandemic has left us with a lot of uncertainty, but with a lot of memories too. Christmas is up in the air. On New Year's Eve, there will be a celebration as 2020 moves into hindsight. Beyond that, what I do know is, come March, we have a double header – my daughter shares her birthday with her grandfather. It seems only fitting that they get their COVID birthday celebration too – I just wonder how the garage will factor into that one?



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## More broadband access for Uxbridge this time next year

by Justyne Edgell, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Last week, in the Durham Regional Council meeting, the Pickering-Uxbridge Broadband Fibre Trunk Project was approved to proceed. This \$3.3 million project will see a new fiber trunk (a fiber optic cable capable of supporting multiple users or devices) installed from Pickering through Goodwood and into Uxbridge.

Uxbridge Mayor Dave Barton says he is looking forward to this additional service being brought to Uxbridge.

"This is a huge win for us and it will be built in 2021," says Barton.

There have been a spate of both provincial and federal funding announcements recently, for projects like ICON and IBF; however, the region pointed out that "eligibility restrictions have excluded certain geographies within Durham – areas

that staff have independently determined to be a high priority." This new project will connect some of the underserved areas which do not qualify for the larger scale government plans.

According to the region, the project will follow an approximately 35 km route running north along Brock

Rd. from Taunton Rd., west along Reg. Rd. 21 to Goodwood, then north along Hwy. 47 into Uxbridge.

Tender bidding for this project is now underway with construction scheduled to begin in June, and service expected to be operational by December 2021.

### UXBRIDGE COSMOS HOLIDAY HOURS

**The Uxbridge Cosmos office will be closed between Wednesday, Dec. 23 at 12 p.m., and Sunday, Jan. 3, 2021. The office will reopen at 10 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 4, 2021, and will be following all COVID-19 protocols as dictated by public health.**

**We can be reached at 647-220-9173.**

## MORE ..... IN UXBRIDGE!

**We would love to get a better understanding of our community's thoughts on household appliances.**

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# Our two cents

## A year of discovery

What can we possibly say about 2020? Nothing to write about for “the year that wasn’t,” but in truth, so much *did* happen. It was a year of discovery.

We discovered that, when presented with a calamity, we could all turn on a dime and change the way we live. Doesn’t mean everyone *liked* it, just meant we could do it. From day to day - in some cases, from minute to minute - we discovered that we could work from home rather than driving two hours every day to and from work. We discovered that we could grocery shop once a week. We discovered that we could (or could not!) help our children do school exclusively online. The list goes on.

We discovered that we are incredibly negligent towards those who live in long-term care homes. We knew it before, but the pandemic really drove it home. Others who were suffering, like the homeless or abused persons - we found the cracks in the systems that (don’t) support them. We need to do better.

We discovered that we are a creative bunch, us humans, who are capable of coming up with wild stories to explain the unusual times in which we’re living. Conspiracy theories are always amusing; definitely a source of entertainment during lockdown.

Speaking of lockdown, even the most hermit-like among us discovered that we are truly social beings, we don’t like being made to stay home and associate with the same people all the time. We may love those in our bubbles, but few can say they aren’t aching for a good get-together with the friends and family they’ve been missing.

We’ve discovered that we’re a giving lot - there have been so many instances of giving and helping, both here in Uxbridge and elsewhere - that it’s enough to make the Grinch’s heart grow three *more* sizes. People everywhere have done what they can to mitigate the effect of this pandemic on those less fortunate, those who are along, and those who maybe aren’t handling it all as well as the rest of us. We *do* love our neighbour.

We’ve discovered who the “essential” workers really are. They aren’t on high-level sports teams, they aren’t celebrities - they’re the people who look after us when we’re sick. The ones who manage our food. The ones who ensure we have the necessities of life. After those are attended to, it’s just gift wrap.

Finally, we’ve discovered that the world is truly a global community. We’re sick of hearing it, but we *are* all this together. Not one of us hasn’t been affected by what’s happened this year. May our global consciousness kick in, then, and make 2021 a year that makes up for the one it’s replacing. Cheers!



## Letters to the Editor

In regard to the one letter to the editor in the Dec. 17 issue of the *Cosmos*, I say “Amen; right on!”

In a nutshell, the writer was making the unfortunate, but entirely accurate, observation that too many people are not paying sufficient attention to the rules and strong recommendations that have been issued by the appropriate authorities with respect to minimizing the spread of COVID-19.

Far too many people are taking the attitude that since they wear a mask, they don’t need to bother to physically distance or can safely get away with paying lip service to physical distancing. It is for good reason that the Government of Ontario, in their half-page message on page 13 of the same edition of the paper, pleads with the populace to both wear a mask AND to maintain two metres of physical distance.

I am personally doing my best to support local enterprise by doing my shopping in Uxbridge. I am grateful that everyone, staff and shoppers, wears masks in the stores. Being 80 years of age, I am at greater risk of a bad outcome should I become infected with COVID-19 than most others who are in a store when I am there. When I am in the stores I try to keep two metres from others. But here is the rub! In general, it is not my fellow shoppers who invade my space, it is those who are working in the stores. The majority of fellow shoppers have more respect for my safety (and their own) than those who want my business. In general, I’m not pointing the finger at the check-out personnel. It is those who are moving about the store, restocking shelves, etc., including those who come needlessly close to me after I have requested their help in finding something. The stores have all the appropriate signage, sanitiz-

ers, etc., yet many of the staff are careless or unthinking about adequate physical distancing with their customers.

Most of the stores in town have used plexiglass to good effect in the area of the check-out counters, some better than others. Recently, however, on paying for several pairs of jeans purchased at Marks, I was dismayed to find that I was face to face with the check-out person, with absolutely no barrier between us. Some plexiglass was in evidence, but positioned in such a way that it offered no protection to him or me. Rather, the Plexiglass that was deployed seemed designed to protect from each other side-by-side customers who might be simultaneously checking out at a counter that had two or three computers and debit/credit card readers along its length.

Quite understandably, we are all being urged to shop locally at a time when many of our retailers are hurting. In return for my support, I would like to see more respect on their part for my safety and that of my fellow shoppers.

**Earle Lockerby  
Sandford**

The anticipation of a new year comes hand in hand with reflections on a year almost done. Asking what we wish for in 2021 offers the opportunity to share thoughts.

As a member of a local Uxbridge volunteer collective, I appreciate much will be different in 2021, expecting positive responses to the availability of a COVID vaccine. If we each reach out a little further, positive change will happen related to food security, housing for vulnerable people, acceptance of diversity, to suggest a few.

Recently, Senator Murray Sinclair expressed that not enough change

has occurred in the five years since Canada’s Truth & Reconciliation Commission published its final report and corresponding 94 Calls to Action. Number 53 - Part 4 calls on all Canadians to: “Promote Public Dialogue, Public/private Partnerships, and Public Initiatives for Reconciliation” in support of a National Council for Reconciliation.

Eight volunteer members of a collective based in Uxbridge acknowledge this as work in progress. And an acknowledgement/fundraiser related to MMIWG2S Peoples continues in our town for 2021.

Please consider requesting, as members of a service club, book club and other social gatherings, that your executive offer a land acknowledgement at the start of your meetings in 2021, as the Uxbridge PROBUS Club did in their fall AGM - 2020 Zoom meeting. The Uxbridge Defeat Depression Walk 2019 began with a land acknowledgement, and in 2017/18/19, the Uxbridge Juried Art Show, part of Uxbridge Celebration of the Arts, has opened its awards evening this way.

Our collective plans to contact all service clubs in our community who have created physical structures to consider placing a plaque to recognize that Uxbridge is on the land of the First Peoples, including the Hodinohsoni and Anishinaabe, who have lived on these lands for millennia, taking only what they needed and leaving abundance for all who followed behind.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit (Indigenous) peoples are not history but live, work, and thrive amongst us.

**Barbara Blower  
Coordinator  
Maamawi Collective**

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## Am I Wrong?

column by Roger Varley

### Thank you, Donald

For the final edition of the *Cosmos* for 2020, editor Lisha asked all her writers to address the topic: "What got me through 2020?"

I told her my answer could be summed up in three words: "Pure, bloody stubbornness!" There is quite a bit of truth in that statement, but, on reflection, I believe what most helped me survive this year was probably Donald Trump.

Although he began campaigning for re-election the moment he took the presidential oath of office, the real campaign swung into full gear at the start of the year. Like most of the world, I found it impossible to turn my eyes away from the campaign, but, more specifically, it was the wild, crazed antics of Trump that couldn't be ignored. It was rather like driving past a horrible traffic accident: you don't really want to see what is going on, but you have to look anyway.

Hardly a day went by without wondering what the lunatic would get up to next, what crime he would commit, what hate group he would endorse or what ally he would offend. Massive rallies without social distancing or mask-wearing, withholding COVID-19 aid to states run by Democratic governors, using armed forces and federal police to smash protesters (again in Democrat-run cities and states), it never stopped.

But at the same time, COVID-19 hit and, although the rest of the world was also dealing with the devastating consequences of the pandemic, it was Trump's handling - (read mishandling) - of the crisis that captured our attention. Surely, the entire world must now know of his idiotic suggestion that the coronavirus could be killed by injecting bleach or his prediction that it would just disappear like a miracle.

No matter what problems we were facing at home as a result of the pandemic, we could always look at Trump's U.S. and say: "At least we're not that bad."

Like a lot of people, there were times during the past year that I felt like just giving up. However, being a life-long newsman - (and, by definition, extremely nosey) - I just had to know what was coming next. I couldn't stand the thought of not knowing how the U.S. election would turn out. That's where the stubbornness came in.

Being of an age where contracting COVID-19 would likely be a death sentence, I wore the mask, I sanitized my hands, I kept my distance and I stayed out of crowds.

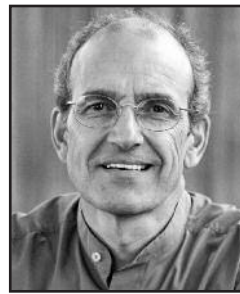
Admittedly, it was probably easier for me than a lot of people because I already lead a fairly solitary life. Most of my waking hours are spent alone and the only people I have regular contact with are Lisha and Sue at the office. So, the initial lockdown and the subsequent restrictions really didn't change my life that much. While I have had a few minor peeves with Premier Doug Ford's handling of the pandemic - (why, initially, could I buy milk at a convenience store, but not a lottery ticket?) - I only had to take a look at Trump and his constant belittling of health experts and scientific advisers to realize that at least Ford was trying to keep me safe.

Now, as this year winds down, I feel my stubbornness kicking in again. I intend to hang around long enough to see whether Trump faces any criminal charges once he is removed from office. I also intend to hang around to see if my prediction of civil war in the U.S. comes true. Lord knows, they're close to it already. I also intend to hang around long enough to receive the vaccine.

So, basically, it was Trump that got me through 2020. But a great many thanks also go out to the residents of Uxbridge. Throughout the year, I have been impressed by the perseverance and out-of-the-box thinking that many of our local merchants have shown to keep their businesses going in these trying times. I have been humbled by the generosity I have seen throughout the community as people came together to help those less fortunate and to raise the community spirit. I have been proud to see so many of my neighbours sticking to the protocols of mask-wearing and hand-sanitizing. I have been happy to see, especially during this Christmas season, so many people supporting their local merchants.

In retrospect, perhaps the title of this column should really be: "Thank you, Donald Trump - and Uxbridge."

Tell me, am I wrong?



## The Barris Beat

column by Ted Barris

### Visits - at a distance - are my vaccine

She seemed kind of nervous. It was Remembrance Day week. She stood at the base of a lamp post on our main street. A "Lest We Forget" banner above her acknowledged the Second World War service of her great-grandfather. There was a camera pointed at her and the editor of this newspaper making notes and taking photos. Then, she got the go-ahead to tell the story.

"My name is Layne and above me is a picture of my great-grandfather, Alex Barris," she said into the camera. She was more relaxed now because it was a story she and I have shared a number of times.

"He was born in 1922. In 1942, he was called up by the U.S. Army. They made him a medic. And in the Battle of the Bulge he saved four members of his medical team. He received the Bronze Star."

The video my granddaughter, Layne, recorded that day, became part of the Nov. 11 Remembrance event at her elementary school in town. I didn't see the final product. But it didn't matter. I have mental video of it in my head now. And in a year when we've all looked for something to hold on to, to give us solace, watching my granddaughter describe from memory my father's heroism 75 years ago stays with me.

I guess we're all trying to pull things from this pandemic-plagued year that have a redeeming quality. And, like many of the things etched in my mind from 2020, you've probably grasped at straws too, to salvage what matters in a year that COVID has wrought such tragedy and loss on so many families in the country and around the world. Perhaps not surprisingly, in contrast to the vastness of a global pandemic, what I treasure from 2020 are the little things, specifically moments I've shared with the youngest members of our family - our grandkids.

Layne's younger brothers, while great playmates, are distinctly different people. Wyatt, the youngest, is athletic. And among my greatest joys last winter, before the March lockdown, was attending his minor-league hockey games. With dash and pleasure, he raced around the ice surface with all the abandon I don't think I've ever had when I played hockey as a kid or today as an oldtimer. Meanwhile, his older, quieter brother Sawyer, I learned, recently gave an online solo presentation speaking "for four minutes" to teacher and class. Whether on the ice or online, I'll remember

2020 for their unique forms of expression.

In the earliest days of the lockdown, last spring, my wife and I knew for safety we couldn't enjoy the normal grandparent pleasures - hugging and kissing the grandchildren. We had to settle for periodic visits with our other grandsons in our backyard. With chairs positioned in a distanced circle in the sunshine or the shade, we got the chance to listen to the kids talk about online schooling, how they've adapted to participating in class via computer, and how much they missed their classmates. Then, one day, grandson Coen brought along a story he'd written about, "Mr. Dancing Dandy Lion who travelled for 6 days, 4 hours, 10 minutes and 23 seconds" looking for friends. For a professional writer, happiness is a grandson who loves to write stories.

Coen's young brother, Huxley, and I shared a routine joke through the summer of 2020. Whenever they made those backyard visits - whether for an hour or a few minutes - inevitably the boys would itch to get moving and do something more exciting than sit in a circle with their grandparents. Hux would say, "Can we go now?" to his mom.

"But you just got here," I'd say with a whine. "You always say that!" Hux would say with laugh.

It was like Carol Burnett's tweak of the ear at the end of her TV show for her mom, or Edward R. Murrow's "Good night and good luck," signoff for his radio audience. Hux knew what to expect from me. I knew what to expect from him. And off they'd go until our next visit.

My COVID year moment with our youngest grandson, Tully, came with the first big snowfall a few weeks ago. I'd said the next time it snowed big fat, wet, packing snowflakes, I'd come to his backyard and we'd make snowmen. Well, not only did we make a snowman, but also a snowwoman, and a snow dog. But the highlight of the entire visit came down to that moment of discovery. I took a snowball, packed it and began to roll it into an ever-expanding ball of snow. Then, without a second of hesitation, he rolled his own snowball into a bigger and bigger ball. "How's that?" I asked. "Wow," was all he said.

That's as good an antidote to the pandemic as I need.

**For more Barris Beat columns, go to [www.tedbarris.com](http://www.tedbarris.com)**



## Happy Holidays!

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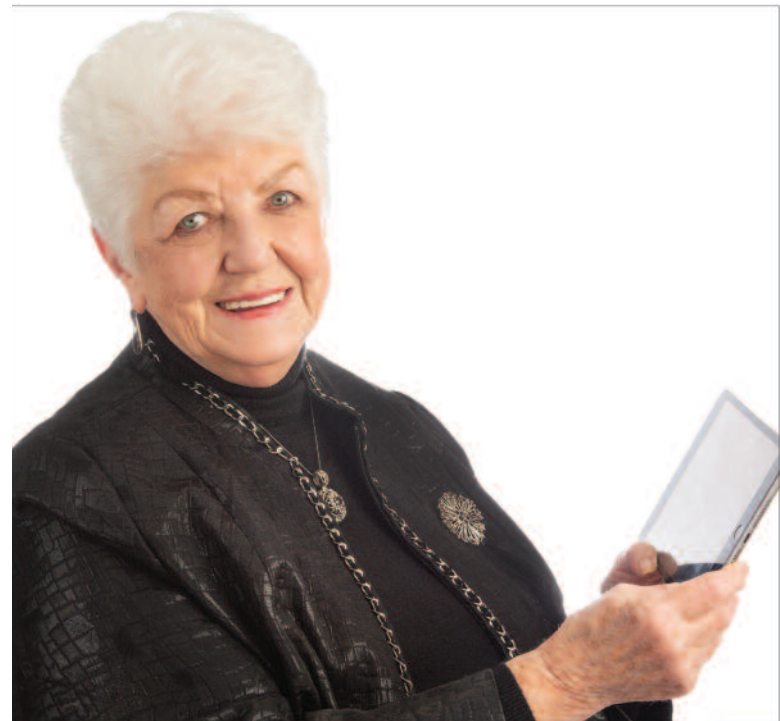

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## Province heading into new lockdown, from page 1

Parents of school-age children will have to wait until the afternoon of Monday, Jan. 4, to learn details about the online learning their children will have to do starting Jan. 5. As of this writing, students in Kindergarten to grade 8 are expected to be back in the classroom on Jan. 11, and high school students will continue learning virtually until Jan. 25.



## Never too old to learn something new

Helen enjoys reading and volunteers with the Oshawa Senior Community Centres (OSCC). She believes aging is a state of mind.

[durham.ca/agefriendly](http://durham.ca/agefriendly)  
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Along with the lockdown, the province announced a \$42 million plan for high priority community support. This includes funding for outreach, better access to testing, transportation and rapid testing.

As everyone draws nearer to the time of holiday gathering, the province urges everyone to keep this year's festivities to only those in their household bubbles.

"We've flattened the curve before and we can do it again," said Health Minister Christine Elliott.

By *Cosmos* print time on Monday evening, Durham Region had 911 active COVID-19 cases, with seven of those cases in home isolation in Uxbridge.




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We are pleased to welcome Rev. Karen Hammond Croxall to our pulpit and would be delighted for you to join us virtually for Christmas Eve while our Sanctuary is undergoing renovations. Please contact the church office at the phone number or email address above to receive the Zoom and YouTube links.

**Christmas Blessings everyone!**



# Not your grandfather's library

by Roger Varley

New additions to the Uxbridge Public Library were unveiled on Friday, taking it a step farther away from the traditional library where silence was golden.

With Santa and Mrs. Claus on hand, Mayor Dave Barton opened the new Welcome Centre, which offers both indoor and outdoor amenities. Inside the library is a new area

where the public can use a computer workstation, a study cubicle, recharge electronic devices, obtain business or tourism information - and even get a cup of coffee. On the outdoor patio, which now has a new wheelchair-accessible ramp, there are benches, a picnic table with inlaid chessboard, a water bottle-refilling station and free WiFi.


The Welcome Centre was funded by the township, the Region of

Durham and a Rural Economic Development grant from the provincial government. The grant was in the amount of \$8,300, the region kicked in \$5,000 and the township covered the remaining \$14,400.

Barton said the new amenities are a great improvement to the downtown and fit in well with the work of the Downtown Revitalization Committee.



Santa Claus partakes in a little outdoor chess at the Library while Mrs. Claus and Mayor Dave Barton look on.  
Photo courtesy of Colleen Baskin




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We are very thankful and proud to have provided our community with quality Physiotherapy and Massage Therapy services this year. We are grateful to our loyal clients and appreciate the new referrals. We continue to maintain the highest standards of safety possible in order to provide our services during the pandemic. Virtual care is always an option, if you are unable to attend our clinic in person.

We wish everyone in Uxbridge and surrounding communities a very safe and happy holiday spent with loved ones at home. Looking forward to good times in 2021!

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- Place your tree at the curb no later than 7 a.m. on January 4 or 11 only.
- Remove all tinsel, decorations, ornaments, stands and lights before placing out for collection.
- Christmas trees placed in plastic bags will not be collected.
- Cut natural Christmas trees that are longer than three metres in half for collection.
- Do not place Christmas trees on top of, or behind snowbanks.
- Artificial trees are not collected. Book a bulky goods collection for artificial trees by using our online waste collection calendar tool, our mobile app or call 1-800-667-5671.





## The Nature Nut

column by Nancy Melcher

### Walk it off!

"This could last for two or three YEARS!"

When I first heard that suggestion, I thought the speaker was crazy. Now, more than nine months into the pandemic, it seems they were spot-on with that prediction. Here we are about to kiss 2020 goodbye, and to kick its sorry carcass to the curb. "Good riddance"! But we're not clear of

COVID and will not be for a long time to come.

A friend drives past my house daily. She checks for any evidence that my husband and I may be "out of sorts" – so far all is good. With our in-person social activities restricted, managing personal mental health has become a priority. My husband has kept busy completing myriad small household projects

and automotive repairs and improvements: crown moulding, baseboards, painting and upgrading fixtures, LED vehicle lights and other refinements – his list is getting shorter.

For me I've been walking and cooking and using video chats. I paused my Early Birds walking group in May when we were limited to an outdoor group of five. My gardens kept me active throughout the summer. As restrictions eased, I decided to see if anyone wanted to take up where we'd left off. It's been wonderful. We've explored many of the town trails, The Great Trail, and Durham Forest.

The group varies each day, but there's a regular core group. They

may complain about the hour, the hills, the distance, and many other things, but they show up faithfully to enjoy the exercise, the company, and the absolutely beautiful scenery that awaits around the next bend. We're able to shrug off our troubles, to gripe and complain about things we can't change but still find annoying, and to just stop, and breathe fresh air, and relax. It's a welcome stress-buster, and a medically-accepted coping strategy!

As for cooking, I've tried two or three new recipes each week since September. Some were total duds, but several have made their way into my regular rotation. I get them from friends and relations, and occasionally from something I've seen on Face Book. I have "Liked" and subscribed to a few food-related pages. It's a challenge to read a recipe and contemplate whether it will be a success, or not. It also makes mealtime prep a lot more fun!

Video chats have now replaced patio drinks with the change in seasons. It's great to "see" everyone regularly, but I find it fatiguing

looking at the Hollywood Squares format and coping with technology challenges: "you're muted," "turn up your volume," frozen screens, and unwanted background noises are added frustrations these days. And yet it's how we can keep in touch. I need to see faces to read those unspoken clues about how a person is really doing. It's not the same as getting a hug, but it sure helps to feel connected to the wider world.

Whether through walking, sharing recipes, or chatting on my tablet, it's important to look after my health and that of those close to me. So, if you'll excuse me, I need to wash my hands again, cook a delicious supper to share with my handyman husband, and video chat with a family member, or friends, over a refreshing beverage. There's a light at the end of this pandemic tunnel, but it's still a way off. I'll keep doing these things that have helped me get through 2020 to tackle the challenges that 2021 might bring.

May this new year bring us all hope and good health.

## READY FOR WINTER?

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Wishing Everyone  
a Merry Christmas and a Safe and  
Happy Holiday Season.  
Best wishes in 2021!



Please continue to wear a mask and practice physical distancing during the holidays. Contact our office if you need assistance with COVID-19 supports or federal departments. We're here to help!

**Jennifer O'Connell**

Member of Parliament, Pickering-Uxbridge

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Telephone: 905.839.2878

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## Safe Holidays

- Avoid in-person gatherings.
- Celebrate only with members of your household.
- Connect virtually with loved-ones and friends outside of your household.
- Avoid travelling.
- Follow all public health guidelines.
- Stay home if you're sick or have symptoms.



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durham.ca/novelcoronavirus







...I'm just sayin'

column by Justyne Edgell

Bucking the trend to become me

When I was asked what got me through this year, I had a hard time coming up with an answer. My mind drifted to the regular things people say, like friends or family, but those didn't really fit this time. I think we've all had moments this year where we've felt an extreme disconnect from the things that usually help us get by. Not able to see friends or visit relatives, and while the Zoom calls are fun, they just don't match up to in-person connecting.

I started thinking back to what I did in the beginning of the pandemic. I was a fresh Ryerson grad, home from university and unable to go out of the house. During my "think" I realized just how many chapters of COVID lockdown I had been through.

I tried pretty much all of the lockdown trends. It started with the baking. Countless loaves of banana bread, all with slightly different recipes, testing which one would be best. (And, on the note of testing things, I also tried every brand of oat milk in town. In my opinion, Chobani wins.)

After baking, it was painting. I'm not at all a visual artist, I never have been. But I pulled out an old school sketchbook and searched the house for the craft paints. I got pretty addicted, spending hours a day painting little cartoon animals and fruits. Nothing of a masterpiece at all, but it was fun, and at one point I even thought I should start selling them online.

When my younger sister returned home from university in the UK, I was introduced to TikTok. It became this battle of who could get the most views...she won.

My painting became a source of content for TikTok. I'd pick two words from a hat and combine them in one painting for my (almost non-existent) TikTok fans. However, almost as quickly as I started painting, I stopped. It was then onto hiking.

As the weather warmed up, being outside was much more bearable. I was reminded of how lucky we are to live in the Trail Capital of Canada. We have so much to explore, and having lots of new found time, I was out to see many places I hadn't before.

With summer, came the biking trend. I don't think I had ridden a bike since I was about 14, but suddenly I had this urge to get back in the saddle, so to speak. The biking chapter of COVID might have been my favourite. It allowed me to get out with some friends for the first time in months. We'd meet up at the trailhead, and being on bikes, we

were practically forced to be at least two meters apart.

Fall was the time of building up my business and beginning to focus my energy. For a few years now, I have been a freelance photographer, but being a university student, I never had the time to dig too deep and make it much of a career. Fall is usually a busy time for photographers,



Justyne and her pup out on a pandemic hike.

Photo submitted by Justyne Edgell

as the changing colours urge people to get family portraits and Christmas card photos. Luckily, photography is one of those things that you can really do safely during a pandemic. As a natural light photographer, I do all my sessions outdoors and with a prime, portrait lens I have to be at a distance from my subjects anyway.

With my first fall clients I got my photo "bug" back and decided to focus my "COVID Trend Energy" into my business. I spent hours a week on marketing and SEO and it really seemed to pay off. This year I saw my busiest fall as a photographer. I also decided to take a leap and host

mini sessions. I found a beautiful local farm venue that was willing to host me for a day and I was able to capture lots of gorgeous, rustic fall memories for my clients.

As winter rolled around, I learned about an elk farm in Port Perry. I contacted them about hosting me for Christmas minis and, with a little creative freedom, I had Christmas photos at a reindeer farm! At the risk of bragging a little, as I write this I have received two emails inquiring about photo sessions. Business hasn't stopped!

While I thought this year was about finding new hobbies and creating a new post-COVID lockdown self, I think I've realized that it was more about growing the person I already am. I tried all the trends and some-

**Congratulations to the winners of this year's Uxbridge Cottage Hospital**

Christmas Mantlepiece - won by Cheryl Reynolds, ticket #34

Ladies Glamour Gift - won by Amy Howran, ticket #381

Gourmet Charcuterie - won by Teri Murphy, ticket #211

Thank you, everyone, for your support!

**Uxbridge Cottage Hospital Auxiliary**

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- Across**

  - 1. In the past
  - 5. Debate position
  - 8. Slip (into)
  - 12. Tries to win
  - 13. Marvel Comics super villain
  - 14. "How \_\_\_!"
  - 15. Speech problem
  - 16. Water tester
  - 17. Guitar part
  - 18. Jazz component
  - 20. Pound
  - 21. Laughing dog
  - 23. Con's explanation
  - 27. US mountains
  - 32. Fruit with slippery rind
  - 34. French, melancholy
  - 35. Hold
  - 37. Commercial maker
  - 38. Manner of speaking
  - 40. Kind of tissue
  - 43. Vinegary
  - 47. Change course
  - 48. Schtick
  - 49. Section in the newspaper )
  - 51. Forget
  - 52. Perjure
  - 53. Network of nerves
  - 54. Clever
  - 55. Picnic buster
  - 56. Board member
- Down**

  - 1. Harry Potter's mailman
  - 2. Film genre
  - 3. Truncheon
  - 4. See
  - 5. Terse
  - 6. Lodger
  - 7. Buck
  - 8. Lab burner
  - 9. The god of War
  - 10. \_\_\_ is life!
  - 11. Comic character comment
  - 19. Out of \_\_\_ (2 words)
  - 20. Make knotted patterns
  - 22. "\_\_\_ so fast!"
  - 23. "20/20" network
  - 24. Thai language
  - 25. Place to stay
  - 26. Belfry denizen
  - 28. Cincinnati or Karate?
  - 29. Theory
  - 30. Greek vowel
  - 31. Member of Cong.
  - 33. Stand by
  - 36. A B vitamin
  - 39. Group of eight
  - 40. Wimbledon contest final
  - 41. Provide a top to
  - 42. Creative
  - 44. Ripped your shirt
  - 45. Wild goat
  - 46. Mention
  - 47. Promise
  - 48. Taking after
  - 50. Detective, for short

**The Uxbridge & Area Networking Group wishes everyone a Happy Holiday and a prosperous 2021!**

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## A Blonde Moment

column by Lisha Van Nieuwenhove

### A year of being thankful

As the editor of the paper, it's often difficult coming up with a holiday theme for everyone to write about. There're only so many times you can ask people to write about their favourite Christmas memory, favourite holiday food, most embarrassing present, etc. But 2020 seemed to hand me this year's topic on a silver platter. I asked my fellow writers to tell me/us about what got them through 2020. And as you've (hopefully) read, the answers are as varied as the people. There is one common thread, however - we all got through.

As for what got me through - you're looking at it. Making sure that the *Cosmos* hit township mailboxes every week was my A1 priority. Was it a challenge coming up with non-COVID-related story material every week? You betcha it was. Was I ever worried that I'd lose every advertiser I had and the paper would cease to exist? You better believe I was. Was I grateful every time I sent the pages to print, knowing another edition had made it to press? More grateful than words can express. But words are all I have, and I can only hope that every person reading this feels

the sincerity with which I say thank you. Thank you for continuing to believe in and support this little paper. We do what we do for Uxbridge, and it has given back to us by keeping us going. Thank you, times a bazillion.

Although it occupied the majority of my time, the paper wasn't the only thing that got me out of bed in the morning. Food. Food got me out of bed. I didn't know that our Nature Nut Nancy Melcher was a fan of cooking, but now I do, and I see some serious recipe swaps in our future!

I love to cook for my family, and I often get more than a few eye rolls when, not long after the last mouth-

ful of Cheerios has been swallowed, I ask "So, any ideas on what you'd like for dinner?" It's all about the planning, the anticipation, and the joy of coming home from a day at work and pottering about in the kitchen, making a meal for my family. It's very June Cleaver of me, but I love making sure that, when my honey comes in from a hard day of farming, he has a hearty, healthy, hot meal waiting for him. And a beer. No slippers, though. He can get those himself.

So, work and cooking and not being incredibly busy - that has gotten me through. I'm used to doing two or three plays a year, and of course we're drawing a big zero on that this year. I could be putting that time to use planning a show that I was to direct in 2021, but who knows what may happen on that front? We'll have to see.

Not having a show at Herongate Barn Theatre at Christmas time has thrown me - it's been part of my Christmas season for 13 years, and I feel rather adrift without it all this year.

More than anything, however, I realize how freaking lucky I am. I have work, I have my family right by me, and I have my health. A little inconvenience from having to wear a mask is nothing compared to the hell others are living during this pandemic. I don't take anything I have or do right

now for granted. Not anything. Being grateful - that's what gets me through.

Have a very Merry Christmas, Uxbridge, and a happy holiday season. 2021 will bring what it brings, and we will continue to get through, just as we have been.



## ROLLINGS, Betty Marie

Passed away peacefully after her battle with cancer on December 19, 2020, at Caressant Care on McLaughlin with her family by her side, both in person and over the phone.

Betty, in her 90th year (1931-2020), was the beloved wife of the late Ronald Rollings. She is survived by her son Bruce of Cameron, her daughter Bev MacDonald and her grandson Cameron of Udora.

If desired a memorial donation to the Canadian Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke or your charity of choice. Donations and condolences can be made through Stoddart Funeral Home, 24 Mill Street, Lindsay or online at [www.stoddartfuneralhome.com](http://www.stoddartfuneralhome.com)

Special thanks to the Nurses and PSWs and Dr. Vorster at Caressant Care on McLaughlin.



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Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season, from all of us at

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