

# The Uxbridge COSMOS



Volume 17 No. 11

YOUR UNIVERSE

Thursday, March 18, 2021



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**RISING ABOVE** - A new 86-unit, six-storey building (artistic rendering shown) may go up on the corner of Brock St. E. and Herrema Blvd. (pictured) if Uxbridge council approves a by-law amendment application submitted by Evendale Developments Ltd. The amendment would change the current zoning from 'residential area' to 'residential area higher density.' A public meeting to discuss the application is being hosted by the Township on Monday, March 22, at 7 p.m. Those who wish to participate are asked to contact the clerk's department at the municipal offices.

Photo by Lisha Van Nieuwenhove Elevation graphic - Evendale Developments Ltd.

## Inside Your Cosmos

As good as Bill Gates .....page 9  
Good things in Goodwood .....page 11

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## Vaccine confusion continues - this may help

by Justyne Edgell,  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

If you're a bit confused about who, when, where and how to get a COVID-19 vaccine, you are not alone. As with most other elements of this pandemic, information is quickly evolving, almost too quickly to keep up.

Firstly, while community-based vaccination clinics, like the one at the Uxbridge Arena, were scheduled to open this week, a limited supply of vaccine put them on hold for a little longer. Once supply increases, and these smaller centres are able to open, a North Durham vaccination clinic will rotate through Uxbridge, Scugog and Brock Townships.

With all the excitement over the opening of the regional vaccine booking portal, even if Uxbridge residents fit into one of the priority categories, they were met with the dreaded "All appointments are full for today, please select

another date for booking" message. As vaccine supply is limited, only select days will become available at a time. The region opens booking at 8 a.m. every morning online at [durhamvaccinebooking.ca](http://durhamvaccinebooking.ca). Residents are encouraged to check back daily until able to book a vaccination appointment. Alternatively, those without internet access can call 1-888-444-5113.

Currently, to be eligible for a vaccination, you must fit into one of the following categories and must be able to show proof of your eligibility. Here is a detailed list of those who are eligible: adults 80 years or older, or who will be turning 80 in 2021; Indigenous adults 55+; primary health care providers and their office staff; community-based medical specialists and their office staff; pharmacists and pharmacy staff (those who work directly in the pharmacy); walk-in clinic staff, dentists/oral surgeons and their office staff; midwives and their office staff; nurse practitioners and their office

staff; community health centre staff; firefighters (medical first responders); long-term care and retirement home staff and essential caregivers; hospital workers with direct patient care; hospital non-patient-facing staff; lab/diagnostic service - health care providers or office staff; police (who act as medical first responders); mental health/addictions/developmental services/campus health service providers; social workers/social services (providing in person services); non-acute rehab and therapy providers; naturopaths and holistic care (direct patient care) providers; congregate living staff; independent health specialty; diagnostic imaging staff; and finally, chronic home care patients 16 years of age and older (Note: care providers of chronic home care patients are not eligible at this time).

The vaccination centres that are operating as

...continued on page 7

**Catch the Ace**  
PROGRESSIVE WEEKLY LOTTERY

**PROJECTED JACKPOT FOR THE NEXT DRAW IS \$5,600**

**DUE TO PANDEMIC-RELATED RETAIL SALES RESTRICTIONS, THE LOTTERY IS CURRENTLY ON HOLD. WATCH THIS SPACE FOR UPDATES!**

Tickets available at **PharmaSave Uxbridge**, **Vince's Market Uxbridge**, **Canadian Tire Uxbridge**, **Uxbridge Legion Br. 170 & Stouffville IDA Pharmacy**

**Ontario Problem Gambling Hotline 1-888-230-3505.**  
Lottery rules at [www.uxbridgerotary.com/catchtheace](http://www.uxbridgerotary.com/catchtheace).  
No one under 18 may purchase a ticket or win the lottery.

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## Council & Committee Meetings

### Meeting Schedule for March 2021

Thursday, March 18, 7:00 p.m.  
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN  
PUBLIC MEETING

Monday, March 22, ~~10:00 a.m.~~  
COUNCIL MEETING  
This Council Meeting will now begin at  
11:00 a.m.

Monday, March 22, 7:00 p.m.  
PUBLIC MEETING (ZBA 2021-01  
EVENDALE APARTMENT)

## Weight Restriction Season

Reduced load regulations will be in force on all roads under the jurisdiction of the Corporation of the Township of Uxbridge effective March 1 to approximately May 1, 2021.

Vehicle loads must not exceed the allowable limit of five (5) tonnes per axle.

## Uxpool Now Open!

Activenet online registration now open for Aquafit/lane swim and lessons. Swim lessons begin April 6.



## Horseshoes at the Museum

Register now for horseshoe games at the Museum - starting Tuesday, May 11, 2021 - and running every Tuesday throughout the summer!

Call Bob Kirvan at 905-852-9176 to register.

## Have Questions about COVID Vaccination Clinics?

Visit: [www.durham.ca/covidvaccines](http://www.durham.ca/covidvaccines)



# 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)

## Bids & Tenders

All 6 current bid opportunities are posted to  
[Uxbridge.ca/bids\\_and\\_tenders](http://Uxbridge.ca/bids_and_tenders)

## Township of Uxbridge 2021 Employment Opportunities

Full details of all current positions are available at [www.uxbridge.ca/careers](http://www.uxbridge.ca/careers)

BUSINESS ANALYST, FULL-TIME,  
CONTRACT  
Closing Date: Monday, March 22, 2021

## Summer Employment Opportunities

Parks Department  
STUDENT, HORTICULTURE  
Closing Date: Friday, March 19, 2021

Parks Department  
STUDENT, GENERAL LABOURERS  
Closing Date: Friday, March 19, 2021

SUMMER CAMP SUPERVISOR  
18+ Years  
Closing Date: Friday, March 19, 2021

Uxbridge/Scugog Animal Shelter - ANIMAL  
CONTROL ASSISTANT/KENNEL  
ATTENDANT  
Closing Date: Friday, March 26, 2021

Public Works Department – TWO (2)  
STUDENT GENERAL LABOURERS  
Closing Date: Friday, March 26, 2021

Leaskdale Manse - PROJECT ASSISTANT  
WITH LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY  
SOCIETY OF ONTARIO  
Closing Date: Thursday, April 15, 2021

SUMMER CAMP COUNSELLOR  
16+ Years  
Closing Date: Friday, April 16, 2021

Uxbridge Historical Centre  
COLLECTIONS ASSOCIATE  
Closing Date: Friday, April 30, 2021

Uxbridge Historical Centre  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT &  
PROGRAMMING ASSOCIATE  
Closing Date: Friday, April 30, 2021

UXPOOL – SUMMER SWIMMING  
INSTRUCTORS / LIFEGUARDS  
Closing Date: Friday, April 30, 2021

We are an equal opportunity employer in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC). The Township of Uxbridge will provide accommodations throughout the recruitment and selection and/or assessment process to applicants with disabilities and/or needs related to the OHRC. Personal information provided is collected under the authority of The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

## Closures

ELGIN POND SKATING TRAIL is now closed for the season.

All TRCA trails at East Duffins Headwaters closed March 8 - 22 due to Spring thaw.

March 19, 2020

## Notice of Lane Restriction



Main St. in Uxbridge will have temporary lane restrictions between Crosby St. and Mill St.

9:30am until 1:30pm  
Fri., March 19.

Please expect delays driving in this area.



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MONDAYS - FEB. 8 & 22, MAR. 8 & 22: Scattergories.  
WEDNESDAYS - FEB. 17: Trivia, MAR. 3: Would You Rather,  
MAR. 17: Fact Or Fiction, MAR. 31: 5 Minute Mysteries.

ALL ACTIVITIES BEGIN AT 1:30PM



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## Active Transportation Plan

Let us know your thoughts on our draft plan  
at our virtual Public Meeting

Thurs., March 18, 2021  
7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Learn more at <https://bit.ly/38o1AFV>



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



TOWN HALL  
by Roger Varley  
Notes from the March 15  
Council Meeting

Your local council costs: Uxbridge taxpayers doled out \$365,814 in 2020 to cover the salaries, benefits and expenses of Mayor Dave Barton and the six members of council.

The figure also included a one-time severance payment of \$27,919 to former mayor Gerri Lynn O'Connor. Treasurer Donna Condon said council members are eligible for severance pay when they have served more than four years in an elected position. The severance allows one month's pay (at the councillor's last

pay scale) for every year served, to a maximum of 24 months.

In a report to council, Condon showed that the mayor received a salary of \$46,992, plus benefits worth a total of \$13,330. Along with car allowance and other expenses, the mayor's total remuneration in 2020 was \$65,076. That figure does not include salary he receives from Durham Region as a member of regional council. Barton received \$60,030 from the region, plus \$471 in car allowance. Regional councillor Gord Highet received the same, but pulled in \$960 for car allowance.

Councillors, including the regional councillor, received roughly the same as each other - around the \$31,000 mark - although Gary Ruona came in at just over \$30,000, presumably because he no longer chairs any

council committees. All received roughly the same amount in benefits - (around \$11,500 each, with Ruona getting \$8,500). The benefits cover such things as pension, health and dental, life insurance, etc. In addition, every councillor was allocated \$2,400 in car expenses, except for the mayor who received \$4,620 to cover his extra travel requirements.

Councillor calls for tree policy: Councillor Bruce Garrod has called on his colleagues to institute a tree policy for the township.

In a report to council, he noted that the developer of a townhouse complex on Reach Street had agreed to provide 100 trees to the township in 2021 and another 100 trees in 2022 to compensate for trees being removed from the development prop-

erty. Garrod said the replacement trees will be planted at Bonner Fields and the Fields of Uxbridge.

Noting that the township budgets every year for tree replacement, as well as receiving donations and assistance from local nurseries, service clubs and conservation authorities, he said it is time for Uxbridge to have a tree policy similar to those already in existence in other municipalities.

"Located on the Oak Ridges Moraine, and known as the Trail Capital of Canada, the Township of Uxbridge recognizes that trees play an important role in the overall health and well-being of the municipality and its residents," his report said. "Ideally, a staged approach would be developed with a short-term goal of establishing a standard tree replacement program that all de-

velopers would be required to participate in as part of the development application approval process."

Council voted to forward Garrod's report to staff to develop a policy after consulting with the climate change committee and the environmental and sustainability committee.



Mental health poll shows pandemic taking a toll

by Justyne Edgell, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A recent poll in Ontario proves what many already know - the COVID-19 pandemic is having an effect on mental health.

Results from the poll, conducted by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario division, indicate that the negative mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is currently at an all time high.

The CMHA reports that only one third of poll participants consider their mental health to be "very good" or "excellent," a significant decrease from the 52 per cent that was reported in the first survey of this type, conducted last May.

In addition, CMHA reports that almost 80 per cent of Ontarians now believe that there will be a serious mental health crisis post-pandemic, up from 66 per cent.

CMHA Ontario CEO Camille Quenneville said they started the surveys a year ago when they began to worry about the effect the pandemic would have on mental health.

"While we were concerned after our first round of results last spring, the second round in the summer provided some hopeful results. Now, the results of this latest poll show that people are having more trouble coping with the effects of the pandemic. The need for more supports has never been more clear."

This isn't the only survey showing concerning results. In December, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) reported its own findings of significant decline

in mental health. The results showed that while anxiety levels fluctuate, seeming to mirror lockdowns and restrictions, levels of depression and loneliness remained rather stable over the course of six surveys, which began in May of 2020. The CAMH survey also found that many people are turning to substance use and abuse to cope, reporting that about one quarter of participants admitted to binge drinking in the previous week, a result which CAMH psychiatrist Dr. David Gratzer says is "less than ideal and could haunt people. After all, alcohol is addictive."

In anticipation of another possible lockdown, and in the shadow of what is said to be a third wave from variant viruses, health officials and government leaders say that when making further safety protocols, they are taking into account the mental health of the community and that they are aware that tightening restrictions increases stress levels.

In a Monday press briefing, Toronto's medical officer of health, Dr. Eileen De Villa, noted the importance of considering mental health when updating guidelines and restrictions.

"Employment is one of the key determinants of physical and mental health," she said, "and my concern is, even at it's mildest, the stress of living in this state of suspended animation is a burden"

The CMHA is urging the Ontario government to put forth more measures to prioritize mental health support, as it is anticipated to be in high demand in the coming months.

"As service providers, it's very

alarming to think about what we'll need to do to support the population," said Quenneville. "The service demands will be very significant."

The full findings of both the

CMHA and CAMH surveys can be found online on their respective websites.

Cartoon image from thelancet.com, istockphoto



**PROPOSAL NOTICE**

**for a site plan amendment under the Aggregate Resources Act and Public Information Session**

The proposed amendment involves changing the final depth of extraction from above the water table to below the water table:

**Site Description:**  
License ID# 6584  
Part Lot 16, Concession 1  
Township of Uxbridge, Durham Region

**Contact Information:**  
Chefero Sand and Gravel  
104 Prouse Rd,  
Whitchurch-Stouffville, ON L4A 7X4  
(416) 798-7336

Digital copies of the application, Site plan and reports for the proposal may be provided upon request by sending an email to [melanie@esherplanning.com](mailto:melanie@esherplanning.com):

A virtual Public Information Session will be held on **April 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm** to provide details regarding the proposal. To participate in this session, please provide your email address to the contact below and an invitation will be forwarded to you with the details.

Any person(s) wishing to comment on this proposal must send, in writing, their detailed comments to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the applicant at the addresses listed below. Email objections must provide a mailing address.

The last day on which objections may be filed with the Ministry is **May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021**  
[melanie@esherplanning.com](mailto:melanie@esherplanning.com) and to [ARAApprovals@ontario.ca](mailto:ARAApprovals@ontario.ca)

Or by mail to:

Esher Planning Inc. 133 Ayton Cres Woodbridge Ontario L4L 7H6	AND	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Integrated Aggregate Operations Section 4th Floor S, 300 Water St Peterborough Ontario K9J 3C7
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Note: All information in respect of this application including written objections, the names and addresses of any objector(s) is available for public review for the purpose of this application under the Aggregate Resources Act. In submitting a written objection an objector consents under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to its disclosure for the purposes of the application.



# Our two cents

## How slow can you go?

It seems that we, as a collective, have become terrified of traffic. We say that in light of Uxbridge council's recent suggestion to have the speed limit lowered to 40 km/h on all urban and hamlet roads. They also are asking Durham Region to institute a 40 km/h limit on regional roads running through the urban area. This activity comes about because, apparently, numerous residents have called for lower speed limits, as well as traffic calming measures, four-way stops and any number of other initiatives to slow down all the mad speeders racing through town. The only thing is, we have yet to personally observe any of these speed demons on residential streets, and we've been here awhile. The only speeding we have witnessed in the urban area is on main thoroughfares such as Brock Street, Toronto Street or Reach Street.

A few evenings ago, we drove down Toronto Street toward the retail sector at the south end of town and decided to see what it would be like to drive 40 km/h - (10 km lower than the current speed limit). We also tried it along Reach Street (we apologize to those we might have slowed down).

Travelling at 40 km/h down Toronto or along Reach is somewhat akin to taking an hour to play the *Minute Waltz*: it just doesn't seem right. We had the feeling that a police officer would suddenly pull us over for travelling too slowly. Now, we don't want to cause problems, but maybe one or two of you might try travelling at that speed yourself, even on your neighbourhood streets. You will quickly realize how ridiculously slow 40 km/h is. So slow, in fact, that we predict we will become a community of speeders simply because most of us will ignore the 40 km/h signs (law of unintended consequences, anyone?).

We have lived in the age of the automobile for many decades and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. And governments have tended to make it easier and faster for vehicular traffic to move around, as evidenced by the high-speed highways that intertwine around Ontario and advanced signals, such as the aforementioned one at Brock and Toronto. Vehicles are light years ahead of where they used to be, and roads are better engineered.

We recall reading many years ago that, at the start of the motoring age, when only a few vehicles were on the roads, some jurisdictions required motorists to have a man with a red flag on a stick walking in front of the car to warn pedestrians of its approach. It seems to us that lowering the limit to 40 km/h would be just as silly. Mind you, it could create a whole new line of employment. As they say, what goes around...

When one of these disappears, A LOT disappears.



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**The Uxbridge COSMOS**

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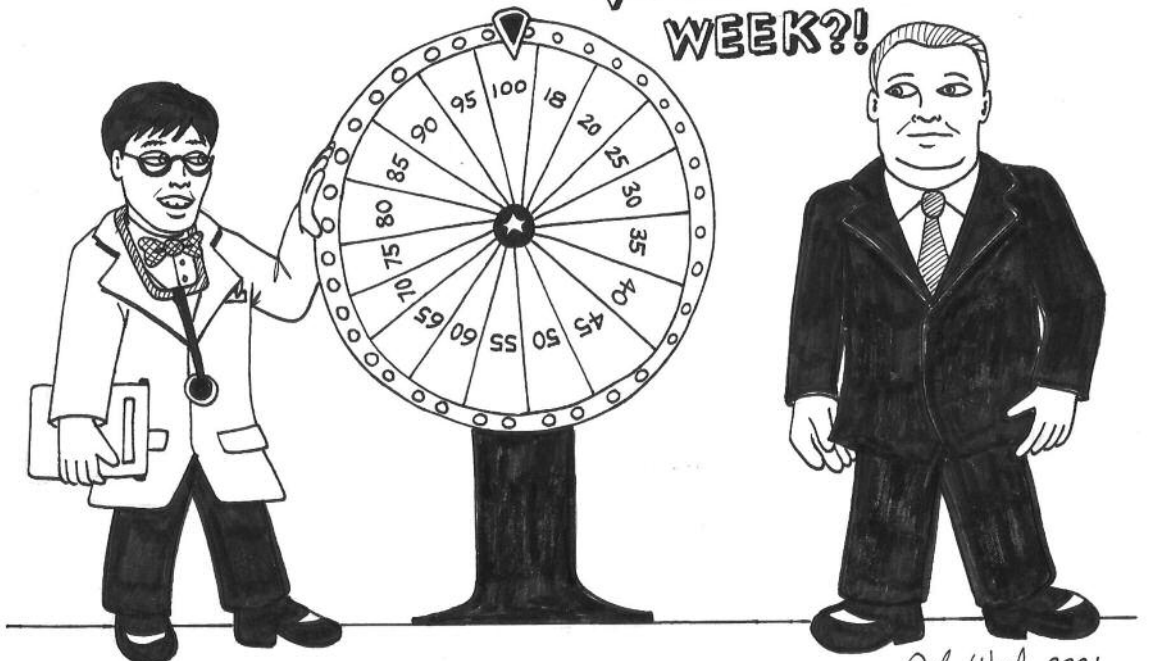
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9,500 copies of The Cosmos are published each Thursday in the Township of Uxbridge: 8,800 delivered by mail, 700 available in stores and boxes.

## TIME TO PLAY WHO GETS THE VACCINE THIS WEEK?!



John Wood, 2021  
UXBRIDGE COSMOS

## Letters to the Editor

After reading Jennifer O'Connell's "From the MP's Office" [March 11 edition], one might think that everything is going "just as planned" regarding the procurement of vaccines.

NOTHING could be further from the truth! The problem started a year ago when the prime minister's office "secured" vaccines from China. Months went by with NO disclosure that China had in fact cancelled the order in August. Now our prime minister is left scrambling to secure orders with other manufacturers, which was far too late in the game, other countries had already committed.

The PM then "attempted" to secure vaccines from those designated for poor countries. This did not sit well with the United Nations and the World Health Org. Canada was told NO.

It was not long before Canada had fallen to as low as 50th on the list of countries on a vaccine-per-1000 population. By this time the USA was giving up to two million shots daily.

When a trickle of vaccines finally did arrive here, the PM, in his con-

descending way, blamed the provinces for not getting shots into arms quick enough. REALLY!

The vaccines came to a brief end when Pfizer delayed its shipment to Canada. We were again too far down the list of countries who had in fact pre-paid.

The PM then went to the US begging for vaccines. The States declined, which was the correct thing for them to do.

My Canadian and American friends and relatives in Florida got their shots two months ago. There was no charge for Canadians.

There was a need for Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), but not to the extent that the federal government paid out. Giving myself, my wife and all retirees \$300 each is simply unnecessary. For those who are "informed," studies show that for every dollar given out in government programs, someone in the tax system will pay between \$1.70 and \$2.10 in taxes, regardless of the party in power.

Finally, in the news today (Sunday, March 14) - Uxbridge and other areas in Durham will not be getting

vaccines this week as planned. Reason... NO SUPPLY!

No, Jennifer, everything is not going to plan, if you did, in fact, have one..

**Douglas Duckworth**  
Uxbridge

I live on a quiet street. It's a private road. We get some folk taking a short cut. You always know who they are because they drive fast. But the dog walkers are the worst. They walk their small dogs on retractable leashes and stand whilst their dogs pee and poop all over residents' front lawns. Even if they pick up the poop, it's not acceptable, as grandchildren play outdoors in good weather, and it's just downright rude.

If confronted they can be very abusive . . . it staggers me. One person told me to go to hell.

Please - if this is you, walk your dog on streets where there is a boulevard, or go to the open area at the top of the street.

**Jo Whiston**  
Uxbridge

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## Wandering the Cosmos

column by Conrad Boyce

### Anserine ponderings

In one of my favourite episodes from *The Big Bang Theory*, Penny, the waitress from across the hall, asks Sheldon if he could teach her “a little physics” so she can impress her scientist boyfriend. Sceptical, Sheldon asks her what science courses she took in high school.

“Well,” she replies enthusiastically, “I took the one with the frogs.”

A highlight of any biology course anywhere on Earth was the opportunity to tack a recently-deceased amphibian to a glass plate, and dissect it. Several species of frogs were probably obliterated in the process. Which, of course, is exactly why yours truly never took “the one with the frogs.” Physics, chemistry or math courses rarely involved the flow of blood.

Not having a high school biology credit unfortunately reduced my career options. So I explored the “liberal arts,” bouncing from pre-law to teaching and eventually settling on a mix of writer/entertainer/gad-about. But many’s the time over the decades when I wish I’d become an ornithologist (a bird scientist) instead.

The most recent time I longed to get inside a bird brain was a couple of weeks back when my wife and I were strolling down by the Pickering waterfront. One trail there goes along a spit of land with Lake Ontario on one side, and Frenchman’s Bay on the other. The birds have their favourite bodies of water, with ducks and gulls usually populating the noisier lake side, and a fairly sizeable population of swans in the calmer bay.

On this day, however, we were astonished to see a huge gaggle of Canada geese in the lake, perhaps two or three thousand of them, extending for almost a kilometre down the shore. In their anserine manner (from *anser*, the Latin word for goose), they were being extremely chatty. When we went onto the beach to get closer, they clammed up a bit, no doubt wondering if we were going to throw stones at them or something. But they all stayed, busily paddling about. It was by far the most geese we had ever seen in one place.

Eventually, we crossed over to the bay side to watch the swans for a while. Our attention was diverted for maybe ten minutes, before we came back to the geese. And they were gone. Every single one of them. Not a trace, and no idea where they went. When a flock of geese take to the air, it usually happens with a great flapping of wings and loud discussion about the flight plan. But in this case, many hundreds of geese just rose silently into the sky and disappeared. Why? How? We were gobsmacked.

Did some King or Queen goose, whose voice they all somehow recognized as being the boss, rise above the cacophony and say, “Hey guys and gals, let’s blow this pop stand before the Boyces get back. Meet you at Farmer St. John’s south forty in 20 minutes. Go!” And without worrying about the vee formation, they just took off.

I recently asked the *Cosmos*’ Nature Nut, Nancy Melcher, to tell me her favourite example of breathtaking design in nature. There are some spectacular candidates, like snowflakes or honeycombs or eyes, and Nancy had some especially nice things to say about spider webs, particularly when the dew is on them. But we both agreed that our favourite design is the simple, lovely vee of the Canada goose in flight.

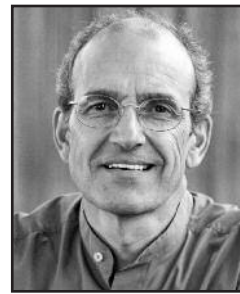
If I had decided to pursue ornithology in university, I would have had a difficult time choosing the topic for my doctoral dissertation (and a doctorate is pretty much obligatory if you’re going to find a bird job). The language of ravens? I once had a delightful conversation with one on a dark Whitehorse street in the wee hours of the morning. How barred owls do that thing with their necks? How loons stay underwater so darn long?

Ultimately, I probably would have chosen something to do with avian sociology. Were you aware that when Canada geese fly for long periods in that vee formation, the bird at the head of the vee switches off fairly regularly? I’ve never seen them actually do it, but it makes sense. Being the lead bird must get pretty taxing, physically and mentally. But what intrigues me is how they draw up the schedule. Does every bird in the vee get a turn? Is there a pecking order, perhaps according to how many migrations you’ve done?

Another goose phenomenon that mystifies me is why they descend on a snow-covered field in the middle of winter. What’s the attraction? And why are there six geese in Bob’s field, and 600 in Betty’s field just one concession over? Who makes that decision? The same Queen who gave the signal in Pickering the other day?

All in all, despite the pungent poop, and setting aside the one who nearly took my head off when I got a little close to her nest on the Countryside Preserve one time, the *branta canadensis* is quite a beautiful and fascinating creature.

You know how they’re always encouraging seniors like me to go back and further their education? I wonder if it’s too late to take “the one with the frogs”...



## The Barris Beat

column by Ted Barris

### Merge at our peril

The meeting happened on a November afternoon in 1998. A big merger was in the wind. Rumour of “Yea” or “Nay” ran rampant across the country. One man in the room at a Montreal home argued his industry needed to grow bigger in order to compete globally. The other feared that sector’s customers, Canadian consumers, might not be well served. The industry man got riled.

“You’re not listening to me!” complained John Cleghorn, chairman of the Royal Bank of Canada.

“Mergers ... are not in the best interest of Canadians,” said Paul Martin, the MP and cabinet member.

This exchange, described by the Canadian Encyclopedia, recreated the meeting between banker Cleghorn and then finance minister Martin at the latter’s Montreal home. The two were discussing plans by four of Canada’s five major banks to amalgamate – Royal Bank with Bank of Montreal, and Toronto-Dominion with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Martin told Canada’s senior bank executives then that he didn’t think two mega-banks – controlling 70 per cent of Canadian bank assets – would serve the country’s small businesses, smaller communities or average Canadians.

“History,” Cleghorn said in December 1998, “will judge if Mr. Martin has made the right decision for Canada.”

The financial crisis 10 years later proved Martin absolutely right. Most economists credit the federal government’s resistance to deregulating the industry, not being convinced that bigger is better, and rejecting the amalgamation model as key to economic prosperity, for getting the country through the 2008 financial collapse virtually unscathed.

Martin’s stance on bank mergers came to my mind on Monday, when Ontario-based Rogers Communications unveiled its plan to pay \$20 billion to buy Alberta-based Shaw Communications (and another \$6 billion to pay out the latter’s debt). Remarkably, Rogers has presented a similar argument for consolidation that the banks used for merger over 20 years ago. They say amalgamation of Rogers and Shaw will improve nationwide service (especially to under-served areas of the country), accelerate the delivery of the much anticipated 5G network, and create 3,000 jobs in the West.

Why would anybody believe Rogers’ claims? Last November, Rogers laid off a hundred workers in its sports and media business and shut down local media operations in Ontario and the Maritimes. Meanwhile, Bell Media, another of the current Big Four in the Canadian telecom business, showed more than 200 employees in its media division the door less than a month ago. Even more

illustrative of the media giants’ sensitivity to telecommunications jobs, three years ago, when Bell Canada got the green light to purchase Manitoba Telecom Services – not unlike the proposed buy-out of Shaw by Rogers – Bell cut 85 jobs immediately.

“We’ve integrated our operations due to duplication and other roles,” Bell Canada told the CBC in 2018.

The details of Rogers’ plan to gobble up Shaw seem pretty scant right now. But Rogers claims it will dedicate \$1 billion to connecting rural, remote and Indigenous communities in Western Canada to high-speed internet, while closing critical connectivity gaps faster for underserved areas. However, Laura Tribe, a spokeswoman for the advocacy group OpenMedia told CBC this week, that fewer providers almost always means higher prices.

“The result is always the same: more profits for the Big Three, worse plans and less choice for Canadians,” Tribe said.

Here’s something else. According to lobby-group research, Canada’s major telecom companies have collectively received more than \$240 million from the federal government’s wage subsidy program. Meanwhile, they’ve also managed to pay out billions in dividends to shareholders. Provincial lobby registries report that Bell received \$122.9 million, Rogers \$82.3 million, and Telus \$38.6 million, as part of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. Simultaneously, Bell paid shareholders almost \$3 billion in 2020, Rogers just over \$1 billion. So, somebody’s getting served. Not, say the lobbyists, those paying for wireless access in Canada.

Those decrying the proposed buyout loudest appear to be those angry about high internet prices for Canadian consumers. Data from a cable.co.uk survey last year indicate that Canadians paid on average \$16.77 for 1GB of wireless data (the global average is \$5.09 USD). The survey said Canada ranks 209th out of 228 countries when it comes to wireless pricing; the U.S. was 188th (a lower ranking meant a more expensive price). I guess we can complain. More relevant I think, particularly in the middle of a pandemic when governments have told us for a year now to stay home, work from home, and school from home, is who’s profiting from all this isolation? The wireless telecoms, of course.

Finally, I think former finance minister Paul Martin’s assessment of corporate mergers bears repeating: “Merger proponents want the mergers to be allowed in order to change the status quo,” he said in 1998. “We believe the status quo must be changed before any merger can be considered.”

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*Vaccine confusion, from page 1*

of Tuesday, March 16, in Durham Region are in Clarington, Pickering and Whitby, with more centres ready to open when supply becomes available.

On Tuesday, the federal government expanded the approved age range for the AstraZeneca vaccine, which is currently available at select pharmacies around the GTA. The AstraZeneca vaccine is now approved for people 18 to 65 AND for those over 65. With worries surrounding

the safety of the AZ vaccine around Europe and other parts of the world, health officials from Health Canada say they can assure Canadians that the vaccine is safe, further noting that the Canadian shipment of vaccines came from a different manufacturing facility than that of the supply in question. While select pharmacies around the GTA are approved to administer the AZ vaccine, again, supply is limited and availability will vary.

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# Watching Things Grow with Barbara Pratt

## Growing Succulents

Some succulents are tiny and cute, others are big and imposing; some are ugly-cute, some have spines, and many are colourful. Some flower often, and some seem never to bloom at all.

And they are so easy to care for!

The term “succulents” covers a range of plants that have one thing in common: they have thick leaves that hold water. That means they are dry land natives, and will always

grow best in sunny and dry conditions.

In the winter, our indoor succulents just take time off. They maintain their good looks, but don't require anything but the very occasional sip of water.

Small succulents growing outdoors will look best planted in a container and placed along a path or on a wall or table where the interesting shapes and colours can be observed at close range. A low cement trough is an ideal container, but shallow ceramic pots or even little sandy areas surrounded by rock walls are beautiful. Place some rocks or shells artistically around the plants to separate them — they don't like to be crowded together — and create a charm-ing succulent “garden.”

Jeff Mason of Mason House Gardens (“Really Cool Plants for Canadian Gardens”) recently did one of his Youtube presentations on how

to propagate succulents. This is a good time to make more little plants to put out in the summer. Watch Jeff — he made it look surprisingly easy.

Take *Echeverias* for instance. These are the compact little rosettes that



The *Echeveria* is a popular succulent that is relatively easy to propagate.

come in lovely colours of grey, yellow, pink and purple. Jeff showed us how to detach a leaf carefully from the main plant and let it rest

for a while, and it will produce little roots, and eventually a tiny new plant. Jeff can take most of the leaves off a host plants and start new plants with each leaf. Jeff even showed that a “host plant” that has had its leaves removed will produce new plants along its stem from the leaf nodes.

Whole *Echeveria* rosettes can be planted in soil, but not until after the stem has had some time to dry out and produce roots.

The popular Hens and Chicks, or *Sempervivum*, if given the right conditions will create a dense green mat. They produce “offsets,” small babies that have little roots that create the mat, or can be detached from the main plant and set into a pot or another section of the garden.

People who attended the 2019 Gardens of Uxbridge Tour will remember a garden shed sporting a green growing roof that was made up of *Sempervivums* and other succulents. And this year's Tour on June 26 features a beautiful wall-enclosed dry garden full of many suc-



An “Autumn Joy” *Sedum* is a popular succulent addition to many local gardens.

culents and grasses.

Another huge group of succulents is *sedums*, made up of about 400 different plants that includes ground covers like stonecrops, large fleshy clump-forming perennials, trailing plants like burro's tail, and the ever-popular *sedum* “Autumn Joy.” All *sedums* have the succulents' fleshy leaves, the need for sun, and the preference for well-drained soil. They can also be easily propagated, usually by splitting the main plant and rerooting the parts.

And by the way, if you think proprietors of garden centres are relaxing right now, think again. In his presentation, Jeff Mason showed “strips” of hundreds of tiny annual seedlings that are arriving right now from plant growers. Each little individual plant has to be replanted into a 4-inch pot, grown in the greenhouse, then hardened off, to be ready to sell to us home gardeners in the spring. We can hardly wait for those first visits to our local garden centres!

In the meantime, do visit the Mason House Gardens web site - [www.masonhousegardens.com](http://www.masonhousegardens.com) - and see the new plants they will have for 2021.

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# Local Rotarian earns national award

by Shelagh Fitz for the Rotary Club of Uxbridge

The Dr. Bob Scott Disease Prevention Award is a Canadian award that was originally commissioned to honour Dr. Scott upon his retirement as chair of Rotary's Polio Eradication program. The award's first recipient was none other than Bill Gates, who in 2015, was honoured for his contributions to the fight against polio. Five years later, Uxbridge Rotarian Chuck Taylor received the very same award, recognized for his efforts in providing treatment to people living with HIV in Malawi.

Inspired by Dignitas International, an organization dedicated to improving health care for people facing a high burden of disease and unequal access to services, Taylor joined the Rotary Club of Uxbridge in 2006, after hearing a presentation by the organization's co-founder, Dr. James Orbinski. Taylor learned of Rotary's existing association with Dignitas International and his passion was ig-

nited. A sweat equity trip in 2009 to Malawi only deepened Taylor's commitment.

Heather Johnson, former executive director of Dignitas, remembers attending many meetings with Taylor, presenting a plan to provide some relief and hope to people living with HIV in Malawi. Taylor's passionate presentations impressed upon attendees the seriousness of the situation in Malawi and the impact their plan would have on the HIV positive population. These presentations, and the follow up reports and updates, drove the fundraising efforts.

"Chuck, who had seen the impact of the efforts on trips to Malawi, was able to translate, to bring alive why supporting an international effort was just as important as supporting local initiatives," says Johnson.

Commitments of financial support continued, and through Taylor's understanding of finances and the grant process, these funds multiplied.

Taylor wasn't just instrumental in making the project happen, notes

Johnson - the fundraising efforts were "totally driven" by him.

"He poured his heart and soul into the project," she says, "and was successful in obtaining two very major global grants through Rotary International." Years in the making, funds were first raised at the club level. These funds were then matched at the district level and, finally, at the global level.

The project made a huge difference in the lives of many people. Johnson even suggests that "this project saved thousands of lives by virtue of clients being able to access treatment." The second phase was likewise successful. It promoted teen clubs that allowed young HIV positive mothers to receive treatment, support and education in a safe and welcoming environment. Key to working with all HIV positive patients is ensuring they stay on their medication.

"Chuck Taylor is a worthy recipient of the award, and a wonderful human being," laughs Johnson. "The world needs more Chucks."

## COSMOS CROSSWORD

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Across

- 1. Shade of blonde
- 4. Street fleet
- 8. Girls youth org. (abbr.)
- 11. Baseball's Durocher
- 12. Caspian Sea feeder
- 13. Tax month, for short
- 14. Philosophy
- 15. Stir, with "up"
- 16. Congeal
- 17. Write extra
- 18. Bug blaster
- 19. Hawaiian welcomes
- 20. Bunked with
- 22. Deeply
- 23. Aussie lizard
- 25. Small fly
- 26. Lettuce variety
- 28. With competence
- 30. Hardly a brainiac
- 33. Putdown
- 34. Go back into business
- 36. Novice
- 37. Style
- 39. Time of anticipation
- 40. Card type
- 41. London gallery
- 42. Crow's call
- 43. Civil aviation controllers
- 44. Mideast ruler
- 45. Commercials
- 46. Winter contagion

Down

- 1. Shrine
- 2. Experienced sailor (2 words)
- 3. Jinx
- 4. British pounds for example
- 5. Gave Theseus a thread to escape the labyrinth
- 6. Island east of Java
- 7. Go downhill
- 8. MO city
- 9. Gone bad
- 10. Pretentious
- 16. Clutch (2 words)
- 21. Where letters are delivered
- 24. Alphabet
- 25. Shrubs, trees, etc
- 27. Inconsistent
- 28. Creature
- 29. News office
- 31. Medicinal syrup
- 32. Reno's state
- 33. Rod
- 35. Gossipy
- 37. Library catalog abbr.
- 38. Buddhist priest

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The Uxbridge  
**COSMOS**



# Herbotanica creates well-being products in Goodwood

by Justyne Edgell, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

While Uxbridge may be a small town, it is full of creative and entrepreneurial minds. It is not uncommon to see small businesses from Uxbridge grow and flourish into notable brands. Abigail Tapper and Bailey Dunyo are turning their passion for natural health, beauty and

wellness into a business of their own.

"Herbotanica is an all natural health and beauty company that empowers people with the products, tools, and knowledge to incorporate plants into their lives," says Tapper, co-founder and social media marketer for Herbotanica.

"Abby is actually my niece through marriage," says Dunyo, Herbotanica co-founder who focuses on product

research and development. "Early in the pandemic, the whole family came back home to live together on the farm. We live on the Richters Herbs property! My sister- and brother-in-law are the owners."

Both women say that, for a long time, they had each been dreaming of creating a line of botanical products, without actually mentioning it to one another.

"One day I brought it up to Abby, and she was immediately on board. We really haven't taken a day off since," laughs Dunyo.

Herbotanica currently sells a wide range of botanical wellness products made from the highest quality ingredients, including all organic and/or wildcrafted herbs. The product range includes bath and skincare products, and they are planning to expand into home decor, the culinary realm, and beyond!

"All of our products are handmade to order in small batches in our stu-

dio in Goodwood, and everything from our ingredients to our packaging is eco-friendly and sustainable," says Dunyo.

Tapper says their goal is to add well-being to the world and its people.

"We want to influence people to take a chance on the natural gifts the world has to offer us while taking care of our planet and all the things around us."

The Herbotanica online store will be launching, appropriately, on Earth

Day, April 22, but in the meantime, customers can place an order by sending a message on Instagram at @herbotanica\_

"We are so proud of how well we've worked together to build this dream, and how much we've been able to accomplish in such a short time! We are also particularly proud of being so true to our vision of creating a product line that is truly eco-friendly and which honours the incredible bounty that the earth has provided us."



Abigail Tapper, left, and Bailey Dunyo are the co-founders of Herbotanica, an eco-friendly line of botanical wellness products that are made in small batches in Goodwood.

Submitted photo

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