

The Uxbridge Cosmos

Vol. 18 No. 8

TheCosmos.ca

Thursday, February 24, 2022

Why Black History Month? • Walking for women's health • Celebrating rural women



50 YEARS AND STILL FIGHTING - March 2, 2022, marks 50 years since the federal government announced it was expropriating over 18,000 acres of land, including a portion of the Township of Uxbridge, to make way for a new international airport. Standing in front of a locked-down Brougham Hall, which was headquarters for half a century of advocacy by People or Planes (POP) and then Land Over Landings, are, from left: Sari Sarriddine (Youth Wing Chair); Mary Delaney (Chair); and Gord McGregor (Honourary Chair). For more, see story below.

Photo courtesy of Land Over Landings

It's been 50 years, and it 'ain't over yet!

by Justyne Edgell

A story both historic and current marks a milestone next Wednesday. March 2, 1972, is when the federal government announced massive expropriations to make way for a new Toronto airport. March 2, 2022, marks 50 years of citizen action “to protect these soils, waterways, wetlands, and woodlots – all still here, all still an oasis of blue and green in a growing sea of sprawl.” And, according to Land Over Landings, the seemingly never-ending story of the airport that was never built is still worth retelling, not only because it’s “both heart-

breaking and inspiring,” but also because, in LOL’s words, “it ain’t over yet!”

In 1972, the expropriation of over 18,600 acres of land to build an airport began the Land Over Landings (formerly People or Planes) movement, a “massive citizens’ uprising” to protect the lands in Pickering, Markham and Uxbridge, and preserve the watershed and prime farmlands that were slated to be used as airport grounds. The organization’s goal has always been to have this land permanently protected, for “sustainable jobs now, the food and water needs of future generations, life in a world of climate change, and solutions for the

greater good.

“It runs the gamut of human emotion, from rage and despair to determination and hope. It’s about politics, ethics, food justice, the environment, and social movements,” says Land Over Landings chair Mary Delaney. “It’s about the kind of critical decisions that all of society and every level of government face as we balance on the edge of an existential precipice.”

However, LOL says it’s also about celebrating the efforts and accomplishments over the past 50 years, of “relentless, unstoppable citizen action.”

...continued on page 6

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Council & Committee Meetings

Meeting Schedule for February, 2022

Monday, February 28
COUNCIL, 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Schedule for March, 2022

Monday, March 7
COMMITTEE MEETING, 10:00 a.m.
Monday, March 14
NO MEETING – MARCH BREAK

Winter Ice Conditions

Elgin Pond

The Township of Uxbridge will be testing the ice conditions at Elgin Pond throughout the winter. A flag notification system is in place:

No Flags – Testing has not begun

Red Flags – Ice is not safe – please stay off

Yellow Flags – Skate with caution

Flags are located at the North End of Elgin Pond, beside Mill St. Please keep away from water inlets and outlets on the pond, as ice thickness is compromised.

Storm water Management Facilities

Please keep off of all storm water management facilities. Water levels fluctuate at these facilities and as such are not safe for skating or other activities.

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

From the Tax Office

FIRST Tax Installment is due on February 24, 2022.

SECOND Tax Installment is due on April 27, 2022.

2022 Interim Property Tax Bills have been mailed for all properties, with exception of properties enrolled in the Monthly Pre-Authorized Payment Plan or tax bills paid by Mortgage companies.

The taxes due are based on the billing date. If your account is currently in arrears, the February 1st interest charge on "Past Due Taxes" is not included on this bill and will need to be paid in addition to the February installment.

Tax Payments Options:

- In person at Town Hall during regular business hours of Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Accepted payment methods are cash, cheque, or Interac debit. All visitors to Town Hall must sign the COVID Contact Tracking sheet, wear a mask, and sanitize their hands.
- In an after-hours Drop Box located in the Municipal Office front parking lot. – DO NOT DEPOSIT CASH. Post-dated cheques are accepted.
- By Mail - Payments must reach the Municipal Office by the due date.
- Through Internet or Telephone Banking.
- At most Financial Institutions.
- Credit cards and e-transfers are **not accepted** for tax payments.

Penalty/Interest Charges:

For non-payment of a tax levy on or before the respective due dates of each installment, a penalty of 1.25% shall be imposed on the first day of each calendar month and thereafter in which the default continues. Failure to receive a Tax Bill does not excuse the taxpayer from responsibility for payment of taxes nor liability of any penalty or interest due to late payments.

The penalty/interest charges cannot be waived or reduced by the Tax Department or Council for any reason.

If a reprinted tax bill, receipt or Statement of Account is required for any year's taxes, a fee of \$15.00 will apply. If you did not receive your 2022 Interim Tax Bill, please call the Tax Department at 905-852-9181.

Weight Restrictions on Lake Ridge Road (Regional Road 23)

Weight restriction of 5,000 kilograms or five tonnes per axle are in immediate effect on Lake Ridge Road (Reg. Rd. 23) from Myrtle Road (Reg. Rd. 5) to approximately 2 kms south of Goodwood Road (Reg. Rd. 21) in the City of Pickering, Town of Whitby, and townships of Scugog and Uxbridge.

Closures

- Lake Ridge Rd. from Myrtle Rd. (Reg. Rd. 5) north to Goodwood Rd. (Reg. Rd. 21) will experience lane restrictions from Feb. 15 onward, due to emergency road repairs. A Half Load restriction will also be in effect.
- Sandford Rd. from Conc. 2 to Conc. 3 will be closed for bridge repairs from January 31 to March 8, 2022.
- Brock Rd. south from Hwy. 47 to Taunton Rd. will experience periodic lane restrictions to facilitate installation of a fibre optic network.
- York/Durham Reg. Rd. 30 from north of Durham Reg. Rd. 39/Queensville Sideroad to south of Holborn Rd., East Gwillimbury. Bridge repairs require road closures from Jan. 21, 2022 until 2024.

Employment Opportunities

Complete details are available at

uxbridge.ca/employment_opportunities

Treasury Department

Student Accounting/Tax Clerk

Closes Friday, March 4, 2022

Community Services Department – Aquatic

Program Supervisor, permanent P-T

Closes Thursday, March 18, 2022

Treasury Department – Payroll and Accounting Coordinator, Permanent F-T

Closes Friday, March 25, 2022

Community Services Department

Summer Camp Counsellor, 16+

Closes Thursday, March 31, 2022

Community Services Department

Assistant Summer Camp Counsellor, 15+

Closes Thursday, March 31, 2022

Bids & Tenders

All current bid opportunities are posted to

Uxbridge.ca/bids_and_tenders

• U22-07 Sidewalk Installation and Repairs

Closes March 1, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

• U22-08 Fields of Uxbridge Lighting

Closes March 9, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

• U22-11 Cleaning and Relining of Culvert

Closes March 10, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

• U22-05 Pulverization and Hot Mix Paving

Closes March 15, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

• U22-09 Application of Driveway Apron Paving and Patching

Closes March 15, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

All bids must be received by the Township by the deadline stated, either electronically via the Township's website or in-person at the Township Office located at 51 Toronto St. South. Public tender openings are not happening currently however bid results will be posted at Uxbridge.ca/bids_and_tenders in a timely manner.

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email: accessibility@uxbridge.ca
phone: 905-852-9181 ext.209

Bruins come back from catastrophe

by Roger Varley

Fans attending last Friday's game between the Uxbridge Bruins and the Lakefield Chiefs likely will remember the game for a long time to come. That's because the Bruins overcame a catastrophe to stage an overtime 8-7 comeback win.

The first two periods of the fast-paced game were entertaining, with the lead going back and forth. The Chiefs opened the scoring in the first, only to see Matthew Gordon tie the game nine seconds later, assisted by Jordan Romualdo and Dalton Strongman. However, a long shot from the blue line went under goalie Jack Randall's pads to give Lakefield the lead again.

Early in the second period, a power-play goal by Strongman, assisted by Anthony Messina and Daniel Giorgio, restored the tie until Quinn Yule moved the Bruins ahead, assisted by Zach Power and newcomer Jake Rigillo. Back came the Chiefs with a shot that trickled under Randall's pads. The period ended with the Bruins ahead 4-3 on a goal by Ryan Daponte, with assists going to Quinn Meek and Tomas Palandra.

It stayed that way until the middle of the third period, when Trent Underwood received a game misconduct, plus five minutes for fighting plus two minutes for removing a chin strap. That left the Bruins short-handed for seven straight minutes and the Chiefs took full advantage, scoring four power-play goals in a row for a 7-4 lead. With less than five minutes remaining in the period, the Bruins staged an amazing comeback, scoring three goals in the space of three-and-a-half minutes to tie the game. Meek notched the first marker, assisted by Palandra, followed by Liam Vogun's long shot from the blue line, with assists credited to Palandra and Messina. Finally, with Randall pulled for the extra attacker, Palandra tied it up, assisted by Vogun, to send the game into overtime.

In the overtime period, playing three-on-three, Palandra scored his fifth point of the night when he fired his own rebound into the net. Giorgio was given the assist.

The outcome gave the Bruins a 2-1 decision over the Chiefs in their three-in-a-row series after they defeated the Chiefs 6-4 in Lakefield last Tuesday.

However, the Bruins were not able to carry that comeback performance into North Kawartha. Playing in Apsley on Monday afternoon, following postponement of Saturday's scheduled match because of bad weather, the Bruins were edged 4-3 by the Knights.

The Bruins will be back in action tomorrow night (Friday) at 7:45 p.m. when they host the Clarington Eagles, currently holding second place in the seven-team PJHL Junior C Orr Division.

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Our two cents

Why Black History Month?

The following is a condensed version of a letter received from Tonia Lyons, Uxbridge. The Cosmos requested permission to print this letter to acknowledge Black History Month. The full letter can be read at thecosmos.ca/ourtwocents

One question that surfaces continuously, either spoken aloud or remaining an intangible thought kept within the confines of the mind, is: Why is there a month distinguishing Black history? Despite almost a century of commemorating Black history in North America, understanding of its function and its importance remains elusive to large swaths of people - particularly people who are white.

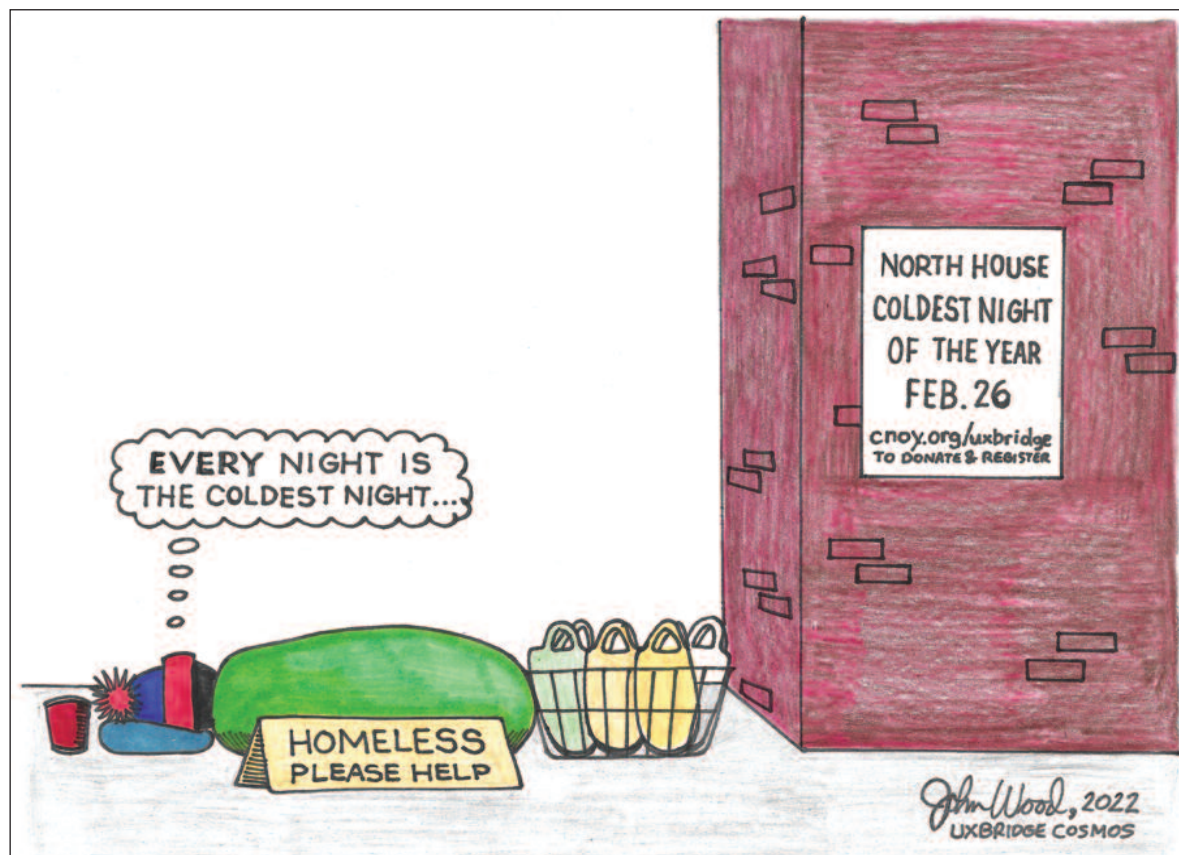
I know that just by calling people 'white', I have lost readers who either: a) take offense to having their physical appearance used as a group identifier; b) feel uncomfortable with that qualifier because they are afraid of being grouped in with 'racists'; and/or c) who scoff at the idea that their physical appearance holds meaning. I hope people will continue reading despite those reactions, to potentially gain insight that has either been avoided or disregarded in the past.

We all know, even if we fail to acknowledge it, that humans are physically diverse - that we come in all different skin tones, hair textures, features, and body shapes. If humans lived in a vacuum - the metaphorical one that describes a world in which something is isolated from context and stands alone - and the history of people discriminating amongst people based on physical qualities never existed, then showing preference for people based on their appearance would be exclusionary and divisive.

What ends up happening for some people is that they mentally live in this metaphorical vacuum. They divorce historical and societal context from the concept of race, allowing them to believe that race should not hold meaning in our world (because in this vacuum, it either never has or it once did but doesn't any longer).

Without historical and societal contexts, some people see movements such as "Black Lives Matter," hear chants of "Black Excellence" and view a month dedicated to Black history as exclusionary and divisive. And in their efforts to demand that preference not be shown to any specific racial group, they respond with "All Lives Matter" or they retort, "Well what about white history?" and "Can I say white excellence, then?"

To understand why Black History Month is commemorated, why Black individuals are celebrated for their race, and why saying Black Excellence is not problematic, we need to unplug the metaphorical vacuum that ignores societal and historical contexts. Black History Month exists because white history is 'history'. Black Excellence is chanted because we live in a society that privileges whiteness, and when people excel in spite of not having those same privileges, it is something that is celebrated. Black Lives Matter exists because we live in a society that shows, in myriad ways, that they don't matter as much as white lives. If you fail to see the ways in which living in a society built for whiteness impacts the world, then you will fail to see the importance of talking about race. When you fail to see the lived reality of people of colour. When you fail to see the lived reality of people of colour, particularly Black people, you will fail to see why we commemorate this group of people during Black History Month.



Letters to the Editor

Museum Heritage Week

This week, February 21 – 27, is Museum Heritage Week 2022. This week highlights Ontario's museums, their staff and volunteers, and their community contributions.

The Ontario Museum Association says that "Museums serve every community in the province through programs and services, helping to make Ontario a vibrant and vital place to live, work, and invest."

The Township of Uxbridge has a rich heritage and history. We thank you for your support in the past and appreciate your continued support now and in the future.

**Melanie Whitfield, on behalf of
The Leaskdale Manse National
Historic Site; The Foster Memo-
rial; The Uxbridge Historical Cen-
ter; The Uxbridge Quaker Meeting
House**

Reflections on freedom

Several posts I have read (online) claim that (the people who wrote them) either "found" God at Ottawa or that they "took/are taking" God/Jesus to the convoy. These people claim to be Christians, yet they are supporting one group of people for taking away the freedoms of most of the citizens of that city, our capital city at that!

If you know your Bible, recall that the chief priests and scribes came to Jesus determined to trick him. They showed him a coin and asked him who it belonged to and who he served. His answer was "Give to God what is God's and to Caesar (being the government of the day) what is Caesar's." That is certainly

not what the convoy was doing, nor were those who support them!

I am a senior senior. I have done a bit of world travelling and have lived in other countries. No country on Earth is as free as Canada, including the USA. Wherever I went, I was advised to wear a Canadian lapel pin, mostly to distinguish us from Americans, but also because Canada was looked up to around the world.

I have sung the national anthem with pride and enjoyed all the freedoms our maple leaf flag provides for us, but I will never sing that song or wave that flag with the same enthusiasm again because it has been besmirched, fouled by pseudo-patriots who think that having to get a needle to save their lives and the lives of all around them is loss of freedom.

You have to go to school, you have to use seat belts, you have to get licenses for this and that. How dreadful that the government, whatever level, "forces" you to do all these things to help save your life.

In Canada we have legal elections. If you don't like the government of the day, that's the place and time to show your concern.

**Dr. Patricia M. Asling
Sandford**

Re: Feb. 17 edition

Three items in the Feb. 17 issue should be required reading for the motley assortment of protestors who have been reacting to COVID restrictions by illegally clamouring for "freedom" – whatever that is – in places such as Ottawa, several points of entry to the USA and

some provincial capital cities.

Their disdain for "mainstream media" was deftly dealt with in the editorial. Ted Barris' column and the letter of John Tomlinson were also dead on, hitting the nail on the head fairly and squarely.

I can't say the same for the letter of Ron Bouwmeister, who professes to be a news junkie, thereby suggesting that he is well informed – but then he tells us that he has cancelled his satellite television because of its "bias." So what is he now relying on? Is it social media which, in reality, is the life blood of the misinformed? He wants the "freedom" that the protesters in Ottawa are seeking. Exactly what freedom is that? It is certainly not my freedom or that of the thousands of people whose rights and freedoms have been trampled on by these protesters, most of whom are selfishly obsessed with their own personal, absolute freedom, and to the hell with everyone else. It is not the freedom of millions of Canadians who are trying to avoid contracting COVID.

I invite Mr. Bouwmeister to read and contemplate the three items referred to earlier. To use an expression that was common when I was a younger person: let him put them in his pipe and smoke it! He might also ponder a recently coined word and its definition: FREEDUMB – the belief that your personal freedom outweighs others' personal safety.

**Earle Lockerby
Sandford**

...continued on page 6

Your Universe

The Uxbridge Cosmos

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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.



Am I Wrong?

column by Roger Varley

'Houston, we have a problem'

Many of you will perhaps remember that iconic but incorrect quote from the movie *Apollo 13* (astronaut Jack Swigert actually said, "Okay, Houston, we've had a problem here..."). These days, that could be said in conjunction with another iconic line, this time from the movie *Cool Hand Luke*: "What we have here is failure to communicate."

That failure to communicate, which is a huge problem, is evident every day. We've long since moved past communicating with each other to screaming at each other via social media.

Immersing myself in news from all quarters, as I do every day, I attempt to gain some idea of what people are thinking by reading, when they are available, comments from the general public on news items. It quickly becomes apparent that most people are not thinking; they are merely reacting, much like one would yell at a quarterback on television. The problem is, when you yell at the television screen, no one hears you: when you yell on social media, someone is more than likely going to yell back. And then someone else chimes in and it snowballs from there, until any semblance of discussion, of communication, is completely lost amid an avalanche of insults, threats and put-downs.

Although I live in hope, seldom do I see any thoughtful exchange of viewpoints in comment sections. It makes me long for my days in grammar school when our English master would regularly hold debates in an attempt to hone our critical thinking skills. Taking part in a debate wasn't just a matter of calling those on the other side of the issue at hand "idiots;" it required us to defend our positions with facts. In the early days of English television, one of my family's favourite shows was the Oxford-Cambridge debates. At times it was difficult for us to decide which side of a motion we supported because the debaters on both sides were so eloquent and persuasive in their arguments.

For those old enough to remember, the Parliamentary debates between Lester Pearson and John Diefenbaker were legendary: two accomplished debaters going at it hammer

and tongs, but with a sense of decorum.

Watching the House of Commons debate the Emergency Act the last few days, we see Conservative after Conservative spouting the same arguments, using the same terminology, over and over again and the Liberals responding with the same replies over and over again. It's not a debate: it's just more screaming.

And when you scream, you'd better be careful, as I found out recently. While watching a recent council meeting on Zoom, I yelled at my computer screen while Councillor Todd Snooks was arguing in favour of fencing around the Fields of Uxbridge. When some other councillor questioned how it could be done, I yelled: "You've got to start somewhere." Unfortunately, I didn't realize that I was not muted and my comment was heard by all members of council. It was a terrible breach of protocol, for which I profusely apologized. But it just goes to show that reacting without thinking is not a good thing.

There are those who are against any form of censorship: I used to be that way myself. But I now realize that censorship is necessary in some cases. For example, if I wrote an anti-Semitic screed, my editor would be well within her rights to censor it. If I advocated for imprisonment for gays, I rightly would be censored. And yet such screeds and advocacies are to be found all over the internet, especially on social media. You can be sure that if I had young children in my care, they would not be allowed on any social media sites and their internet use would be closely monitored.

It seems to me that our education system should be at the forefront of teaching our children of the dangers of the internet and social media and how to do a little research into who is making some of the outrageous statements and claims that are inundating them. If you find out that some of these statements are coming from extremists, you can at least determine whether they are valid or not.

Tell me, am I wrong?



The Barris Beat

column by Ted Barris

Mind the gap

It's been a ritual for years. Generally, on Saturdays, I convene adults and kids in the family Donut Club. I rustle up the donuts. They readily eat them. And through most of those years, the orders for the kids have been the same – chocolate-glazed or sprinkled donuts from Bredin's Bakery in town. Well, the pandemic and the closure of the bakery changed all that. The Donut Club hasn't met as regularly as it used to. But last Saturday morning, I put out the call for the donut orders anyway.

"Boston Cream, please," came back one order. "Boston Cream? Since when?" I asked.

Well, because everything's been turned upside down for these past two years. And the donut delivery guy (me) has been separated from the donut eaters (them) for quite a while. Like every other relationship during the COVID virus outbreak and (at least in this country) through most of the recovery period, everybody's lost step with routine, social norms, regular relationships and family rituals, such as enjoying contact via our Donut Club. On the road back to normalcy, we've all faced a lot of awkward reconnection, reacquainting, re-acclimatizing, and a sometimes difficult bridging of the gap that little or no social interaction has inflicted on us.

The art of contact with others truly needs a makeover.

With that notion in mind, I invited a friend to lunch last week. We enjoyed a socially distanced, masked (when not eating) and almost normal sit-down meal at Navarra's. But I think what struck both of us was how much ground we needed to cover to fill the gap of time we've not seen each other – catching up on kids' lives, sharing our favourite NHL teams' wins and losses, exchanging travel nightmares during the pandemic, and acknowledging life and death in our community. In fact, when we mentioned the recent accidental death of Bob Hubers, well, that sparked a wider conversation with a young woman at the table next to us. Bob had once been her hockey coach, and his death had consequently hit her very hard. But like so much during these locked-down, isolated times over these past two years, she'd kind of suffered in silence. The pandemic has even driven a gulf between dying and grieving.

But this two-year viral wedge hasn't just deprived people of expression. It's also, for exam-

ple, forced a complete rethink in the world of enterprise. And I'm not just talking about wearing masks in stores and sanitizing everything 24/7. If you shop in town, every merchant and her staff, every service manager and his employees has completely relearned the art of customer service. They've all had to invent new ways of bridging the divide that masked faces, sanitized environments and mandated social distancing have imposed on commercial interaction. More shopkeepers around town are asking shoppers on exit, "Did you find everything you were looking for?" or "Is there anything else I can help you with?" One store employee asked me if I'd been dissatisfied with any of their services. "I'll spot a problem if you look into my eyes," she said. When I left, I went out of my way to thank her by trying to make my eyes smile with gratitude. Awkward perhaps, but a necessary accommodation even as COVID cases diminish.

Over the Family Day weekend, a few of us got together for a meal for the first time in months. I found myself catching up weeks and months of what our daughters and their children have accomplished during the separation imposed by the pandemic. Grandchildren have moved on from elementary school to high school, or from one grade school to another. Indeed, one family's kids returned to in-class learning for the first time in two years. I revelled in the chance to see them off to class this week. We took huge breaths of fresh air as we walked together. We talked about clouds, puddle jumping and bird calls. We hadn't forgotten how to do all that, but like everything else, we were a bit rusty at it.

Oddly, this week, I found myself trying to bridge the gap with our national flag too. So often over the past three weeks our Red Maple Leaf – draped over demonstrators backs in Ottawa or fluttering from pickup trucks at blockades at Coutts or Windsor – has symbolized endorsement of the so-called "Freedom Convoy." If anybody had asked (nobody did) "Are you supporting the anti-mandate demonstrators with the flag on the front of your house?" I'd quickly have replied, "No. It's for the Canadian women who are Olympic champions in hockey."

It's kind of like donuts. There's a big difference between Boston Cream and chocolate-glazed.

For more Barris Beat columns, go to www.tedbarris.com

JENNIFER CARON

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

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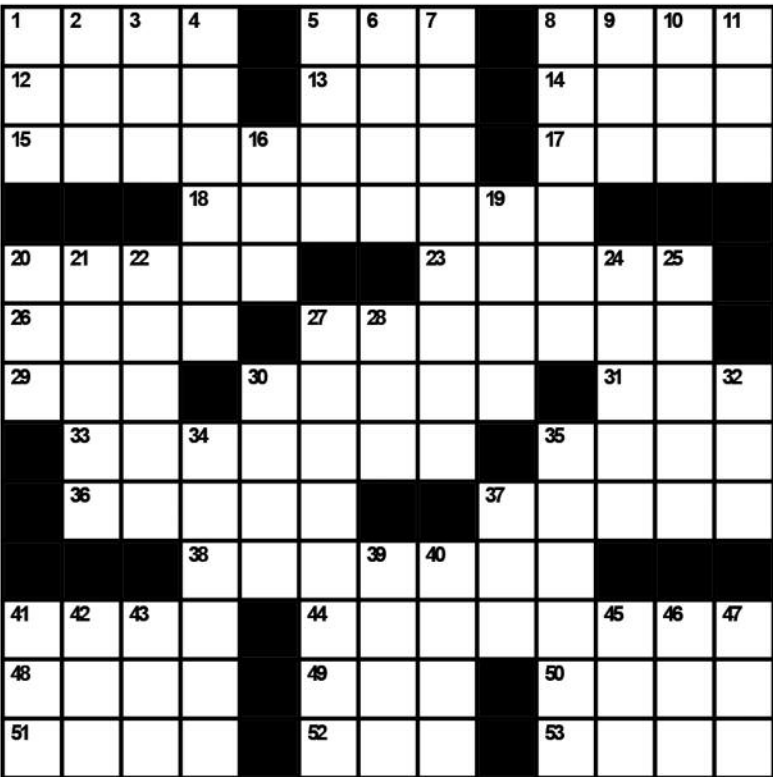
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23 Stop
26 Sickening
27 Slogan carriers
29 ___ out a living....
30 Japanese liquors
31 Stars and Stripes land
33 Concerning vivid recall of images
35 ___ dragon
36 Portray
37 Nymph chaser
38 Great
41 Coordinate
44 Rapid data-processing system (2 words)
48 Scottish hillside
49 Lay an ___
50 Gad about
51 Long in the tooth
52 Old programming language
53 Odds and ___
- Down**
1 Priest's robe
2 One of the "Three Kingdoms"
3 Moray
4 Forming large piles, as of snow
5 Copier
6 Blah
7 Angelic
8 Show-off
9 Suitable
10 Fork over
11 Sierra Nevada, e.g.
16 Taboos
19 Rostrum
20 Disapproving expression
21 Pear-shaped tropical fruit
22 Coil
24 Hinder the growth of
25 School assignment
27 Ragged
28 Schuss, e.g.
30 Small denomination
32 Bank loan letters
34 Darted
35 French existentialist
37 Baseball's Maglie
39 Kid's plastic block
40 Falls behind
41 A good degree
42 Unit of energy
43 Envelope type
45 + or - item
46 Like some scientists
47 Type widths

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Wood Team hosting second 'Walk for Women'

by Justyne Edgell

For the second year in a row, Uxbridge realtor Cindy Wood and her 'team' is organizing an "International Women's Day Walk For Women" in support of the Uxbridge Hospital's new state-of-the-art mammography machine.

Wood says that last year she wanted to find a way to support women's health in the community, and, because of pandemic restrictions, a walk was just the right endeavor. The team asked for donations for the hos-

pital, then encouraged people to get out and walk on March 8, International Women's Day.

Wood's team plans to meet outside the Passionate Cook shop on Brock St. W. and walk to the hospital and back.

"Last year we raised \$8,000 dollars and I think we will have even more interest this year," says Wood.

The new 3D mammography machine will cost around \$620,000.

To join the Walk For Women, visit <https://bit.ly/WalkForWomen2022>

50 years of LOL, from page 1

"We were instrumental in getting the first half of the Lands protected," says Delaney. "In 2018, we released *A Future for the Lands*, an attention-getting report on transforming the remaining 9,000 acres into an agricultural and agri-tourism hub."

Last year the group successfully ral-

lied to save Duffins Creek, and this year is fighting for the protection of Carruthers Creek.

In 2013 and 2015, over half the federal lands were transferred to Rouge National Urban Park. While much of the remaining land is being rented and farmed, the remaining 9,000 acres still have the potential to see an airport built on them.

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Letters, from page 4

Re: Bouwmeister, Letter to the Editor, Feb. 17 edition

Your letter is well written. I came from the UK to live in Canada 22 years ago and I love this amazing country, especially its friendly, hard working people. I too am a news-hound, reading several online editions each day from all continents, and I am lucky enough to have traveled for work to many of those countries. However, with the exception of the "Epoch Times," I have never found a Canadian media outlet which does not apply its own terrible spin and bias to the things they choose to report...worst of all, the Liberal government here has the sheer Gaul (*sic*) to criticize people for turning to other sources for their information!

Along with my whole family, I am triple vaccinated and happy to take whatever boosters become available. I respect the choice of others who have decided not to be vaccinated, that is their choice, and it is unlikely that those people will now change their minds, so we should stop trying to force them to do so.

From the start of this pandemic I have followed the rules and still do, even when it has badly effected (*sic*) my ability to work as a self-employed renovation contractor. Some clients were and remain scared of COVID; they wanted to delay projects or put work in progress on hold because they simply did not want me in their home, working on their bathroom or kitchen. I respect their choices but it has cost me money. There was a time when government restrictions, lock downs, mandates, capacity limits and stay-at-home orders made sense...that time is long past. COVID is now endemic.

It was time for the protesters to clear our streets and bridges but it is also long gone time for Justin Trudeau to at least hear what the people taking part are saying. Instead, he dug his heels in, went into hiding and has gone WAY too far with these emergency wartime measures, especially considering the existing laws had more than enough clout to keep it reasonable. Truth be told, the OPP and RCMP, all of who rely on mutual respect between public/police after the madness is done, were not willing to enforce them and were actually critical of the government, behind closed doors at least!

David Brewer
Uxbridge
More letters online at thecosmos.ca

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The Nature Nut

column by Nancy Melcher

Squirrel!

You've seen them running up a nearby tree, leaping between branches, and tightrope walking along power lines overhead. Squirrels! Their acrobatic antics entertain us, but they're sometimes a nuisance, whether stealing seeds from our bird feeders or causing damage by living in our attics, garages, and sheds.

There are several members of the squirrel family found in the Uxbridge area. Many urban homeowners are familiar with the grey squirrel (including black phase individuals). We also may see the smaller red squirrel, with their distinctive white eye-ring, and striped chipmunks. Flying squirrels also live here, but their nocturnal habits mean they are rarely seen.

Grey and red squirrels build homes in trees, making stick nests lined with moss, grass, and feathers.

Flying squirrels like old woodpecker holes, nest boxes, or abandoned bird nests.

Grey squirrels and flying squirrels bury food in small caches for the winter. I find walnut trees growing in my flowerbeds every spring!

Sometimes their choice of location is the engine compartment of your vehicle. Red squirrels eat seeds from cones, creating huge piles of cast-off scales at the base of a feeding tree. All will help themselves to seeds at feeders to supplement their diets.

It's illegal to move a live-trapped squirrel more than one kilometre from its home. They're great navigators and will easily find their way "home." Should you have a problem with unwanted squirrel visitors, use a pest control company to remove them and to secure your home from future invasions.



One lone squirrel filled this truck engine with walnuts.

Photo by Bill Fischer

Women's Institute celebrates 125 years of 'diverse skills'

by Justyne Edgell

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, on Feb. 19, to be precise, a group of women in Stoney Creek, Ontario, trudged through a snowstorm to hold the first meeting of the Women's Institute in a small, 19th century farmhouse. Their aim was to bring women together to learn "diverse skills and to promote civic reform, helping them break the grinding isolation of rural life."

The group was inspired by one Adelaide Hoodless, and supported by Erland and Janet Lee, who drafted the constitution of the Stoney Creek Women's Institute. Soon after, women from all across Canada and in the United Kingdom were inspired to start their own Women's Institutes in their own communities.

Uxbridge and Port Perry were no different - the Bethesda Reach branch of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) has been meeting for the past 64 years, and organizing programs to support community needs.

Kathy Wasylenky, member of the Bethesda Reach branch, says their organization has been involved in both towns' local fairs, provided scholarships to both Port Perry High School and Uxbridge Secondary School, funded various 4-H participants, and more. The group is also passionate about keeping the local history

alive with the use of the Tweedsmuir history program.

"There is always fun and fellowship at the meetings as well!" says Wasylenky.



A newspaper clipping from the *Scugog Citizen*, May 9, 1995, shows off a quilt made by Bethesda Reach charter members Corinne Croxall, Jean Smith, Fern Burnett and Dorothy Doble. The clip is from the FWIO Home & Country newsletter archives, which can be found at fwio.on.ca

On Women's Institute Day (Feb. 19), Wasylenky says many of local branch members signed on to the Tea at the Lee celebration event, held via Zoom as a result of pandemic restrictions.

Ninety years ago, the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and other like-minded groups from around the world came together to form the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). Today there are about 80 countries belonging to this organization, which has status at the United Nations, in the areas of Status of Women, Sustainable Agriculture and the elimination of hunger and food waste.

"All are welcome to join the Women's Institute, regardless of political affiliation, race or religion," says Wasylenky. The non-profit organization promotes "inclusive and supportive social networking for community action and personal growth," and encourages women from all backgrounds to join the team.

The farmhouse which held the first Women's Institute meeting in 1897, was turned into a museum in 1972. The FWIO restored the building, with an 1860 addition serving as living space for the Museum's live-in hostess and her family until the mid-1990s. The FWIO now operates out of the 1860 addition.

For more information about the Bethesda Reach Women's Institute, visit fwio.on.ca or call Barb Weese, Bethesda Reach branch president, at 905-985-3976.



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