

# The South Etobicoke News

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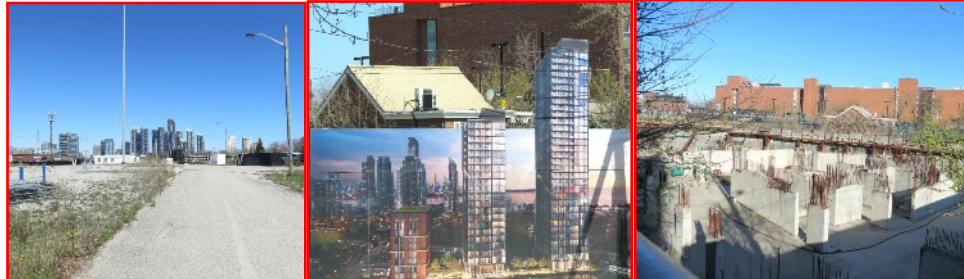
## Mimico goes from a boom town to ghost town

The once booming condo construction industry in southeast Etobicoke has fizzled, leaving around 10 towers, hundreds of units, purchasers, and workers in limbo.

The halt in construction reflects a 70 per cent drop of condo sales in Toronto. About 60 projects have been grounded due to a lack of sales from high interest rates.

The local ghost town effect came about mostly due to developer Vandyk Properties filing for receivership, leaving highrises near the Mimico GO Station on hold, along with projects in other areas of Toronto, Mississauga and Newmarket.

Vandyk planned to build Grand Central Mimico, with six apartment buildings containing more than 2,000 housing units on properties next to the GO Station on Royal York Road and Newcastle Street. The company had other



**BLOCKS OF DESERTED** development is all that is left of the once thriving condo construction boom that was taking place in Mimico. The workers have left leaving empty holes behind.

planned developments on Buckingham Street with three buildings and 749 units.

Metrolinx terminated its agreement with Vandyk in November, CBC News reported. The Crown agency, which manages and integrates road and public transport for the province in the GTA, has yet to find a builder to

complete a “transit-oriented community” beside the station. That facility was to be replaced with a new structure, including 300 underground parking spots, a transit plaza and bicycle parking.

Gone are the many community benefits Vandyk promised, including affordable housing, a pedestrian and cyclist bridge, extending a greenway, plus public art.

More than a year later, the GO Station remains often overwhelmed, with demand for parking outstripping available spaces and three main development sites currently blocked by fences. Excavation has started on two while the third remains vacant. Gone are the many large cranes, construction crews and bulldozers that once worked on the site. Residents said they wake up to deserted, vacant sites with all the promises made gone.

## Bike lane like Bloor coming to The Queensway

First there was a cycling lane on Bloor Street W., now another bike lane is coming to The Queensway.

This comes as many residents remain angry and blame the Bloor Street W., cycling lane for congested traffic, a lack of parking and suffering businesses.

The City is moving ahead with the installation of a protective bicycle lane on The Queensway despite protests from small business owners on Bloor Street W., who complain they’ve been hit hard because there is no place for their customers to park.

The Queensway bike lane will run from Royal York Road east past the Ontario Food Terminal to just east of South Kingsway. The proposed cycling lane can be seen online on a City 2022 to 2024



**MANY RESIDENTS FEAR** traffic congestion from a lane closure and suffering businesses from a cycling lane on Bloor Street W., will result from a similar bike lane planned for The Queensway, starting at Royal York Rd.

Cycling Program for the Etobicoke York District. It shows The Queensway bike lane is part of a programmed cycling project for which work is underway.

The City is planning to add a raised, protected bikeway separated from car lanes

with a concrete curb, new bike signals and protective corner islands at key signalized intersections. It will be included in work along The Queensway to install new storm water management features new including sidewalks, with some being widened.

City crews will also be planting trees and landscaping to beautify the area.

Cycling Toronto in a meeting called for more distance between the bikeway and the roadway for increased comfort and safety and an upgrading of the existing painted bikeway on The Queensway to provide a safe connection across the Humber River.

Many area residents are outraged by the plan claiming it will be bad for small businesses along The Queensway since the protected bike lanes will lead to less parking and traffic congestion. Many Bloor Street businesses said they have taken a hit due to the lack of road parking for their customers, who include the elderly or those with mobility issues.

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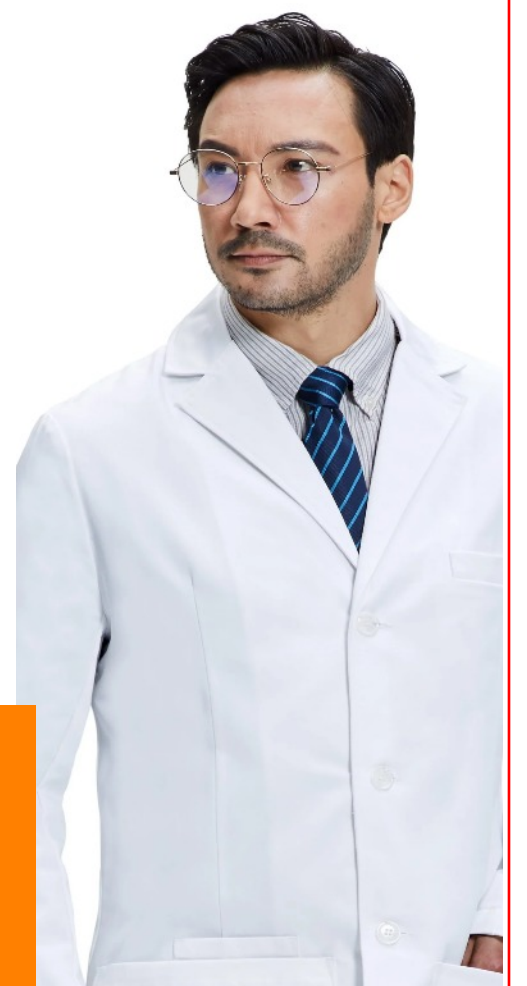
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# World poker champ killed in Long Branch

# Two airline employees among six arrested in Canada's largest gold heist of \$20 million at PLIA



**MATTHEW BERGART** was slain on April 25.

Three men are sought for the Long Branch home invasion murder of a professional poker player. Matthew Bergart, 30, of Toronto, was shot to death on April 25 around 2:25 a.m. by the masked suspects who forced their way into a townhouse in the Lake Shore Blvd. W., and Long Branch Avenue area.

Homicide officers said the suspects 'forcibly entered a residential unit and made demands for personal valuables.' Two other occupants were in the home at the time. A struggle ensued and Bergart was shot multiple times, Det.-Sgt. Brandon Price said.

"The victim was transported to hospital where he succumbed to his injuries," police said.

The suspects were described as wearing dark clothing, and balaclavas, and fled in a white or light-coloured sedan southbound on Long Branch Avenue. Officers were canvassing area residents to obtain video from security cameras.

"We believe this is a targeted situation in that valuables were sought," Price said. The victim was rushed to hospital via emergency run but later died.

Police said the victim did not reside at the townhouse but was visiting the residence. Bergart is listed in a poker database as an upcoming professional player whose earnings was \$18,535.

He won the sum in 2019 at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual World Series of Poker in a World Championship \$10,000 Buy in No-Limit Hold'em main event.

Bergart is ranked 825 in the top 1,000 earners in the World Series of Poker.



**ARRESTED ARE** Air Canada employees Parmpal Sidhu (left) and Simran Preet Panesar. The truck and driver picking up the gold and cash (bottom) in security video.

Canada's largest gold and cash theft of more than \$22 million was an inside job involving two former Air Canada employees, Peel Regional Police say.

Six men, from the GTA, have been arrested and warrants have been issued for three others relating to the April 17, 2023 theft of 6,600 gold bars, worth \$20 million, and \$2.5 million in cash. Only one gold bar, worth about \$90,000 was recovered, along with \$434,000 in cash, by police in Project 24 Carat.

Peel police said the gold was melted down by the thieves in the GTA. They seized four crude bracelets of almost pure gold that led to the arrests.

Peel Police Chief Nishan Duraiappah said one of the suspects arrested was a former Air Canada manager and the other was a warehouse worker.

"They (organized crime) exploited people who held certain positions at the airport," the Chief said. "We are working closely with national and international law enforcement partners to arrest those responsible."

Police showed a five-ton truck that they claimed the thieves backed up to a loading dock of an Air Canada warehouse hours after the shipment had arrived from Zurich, Switzerland.

The thieves presented a legitimate waybill printed at an Air Canada facility that was for a shipment of fish that

arrived a day before. The document was used to present to authorities to obtain the gold, which was loaded into the vehicle. A jewellery store owner was also charged. A team of 17 detectives were assembled in a task force to investigate the case. The officers collected security video from more than 200 businesses and homes, and conducted dozens of interviews, as they tracked the gold-filled truck through the streets of Mississauga.

Officers in Project 24 Carat say a lot of work has to be done to find the rest of the gold.

The gang was rounded up following the arrest of the truck driver by U.S. Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives officers in Philadelphia, who was pulled over in a rental vehicle for a traffic infraction. The driver of the vehicle was also the driver of the gold truck in Mississauga. A search of the rental car turned up 65 firearms, destined for for sale in Canada.

"Firearms trafficking presents a grave threat to public



**POLICE** search around a Long Branch townhouse for clues.



safety," said ATF Special Agent Eric J. DeGree, of the Philadelphia Field Division. "Law enforcement cooperation with our U.S. and international partners is key to seeking justice and preventing crimes that extend beyond our borders."

Police had flagged the driver's name on a law enforcement computer system that showed his involvement in the Pearson gold heist.

Among those arrested were former Air Canada manager Parmpal Sidhu, 54, who is at large; employee Simran Preet Panesar, 31; and Durante King-McLean, 25, the suspected driver.

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# Happy birthday Bernice on your first 100 years



BERNICE ROBINSON turns 100.

Clean living centenarian Bernice Robinson has lived in Long Branch her entire life and remembers when the area was farm country with dirt roads.

Robinson, who turned 100 last March 25, was presented with a bouquet of flowers by members of the Long Branch Neighbourhood Association to mark the special day.

She says her secret to a long life is to keep mentally active, live a clean lifestyle and remain busy with church activities.

Robinson is mentally alert and has a great memory, so much so she remembers when the trolleys (now streetcars) that ran along Lake Shore Blvd. W., cost

about 10-cents and had pot-belly stoves that were continually filled with coal by a conductor to keep passengers warm.

“There was a lot of heat but many times we were cold,” she recalls. “On cold days the conductor had to keep filling it with coal.”

Back then the trolleys frequently came off the tracks, the streets weren’t numbered as they are today and most people knew each other.

“There were four movie theatres and it was a country village,” the active church-goer remembered. “The theatres used to give us bowls or plates every time we went to a movie and after time you would have a whole set.”

The people walked everywhere since ‘you were considered rich if you had a car.’

“We went swimming three times a day in the lake and took part in church activities and that would be our main entertainment.”

Back then Marie Curtis Park was busy with wartime activities with the Small Arms building and a shooting range for the men to practice.

The Lake Shore strip was a collection of small stores with fields, dirt roads and empty spaces between the businesses.

The area was alive and most people held jobs working at Goodyear Tire, Campbell Soup, Anaconda American Brass, W. & A. Gilbey's Distillery, Reg N. Boxer; later called Canadian Wallpaper Manufacturing Limited, Ritchie and Ramsey Paper Mills, DuPont's Fabrikoid, George Williams Shoes and Continental Can.

“Those companies opened up the area at the time,” Robinson explains. “It was a good time for the community.”

Robinson said the boom took a dive after WW11 ended.

She recalls the Great Depression in the 1930s when as many as 2,168 Etobicoke men

were unemployed and receiving relief benefits in cash or in vouchers that could be used to buy food and other necessities. “After the war things picked up a bit but got worst,” she says.

The men in exchange were expected to work on road maintenance or other types of unskilled public work. Rotating strikes and public protests were common.

Robinson said the community has drastically changed for the worst since then.

“Everywhere you go now is tall condos where people do not know each other,” she complains. “People today have no history or don’t know their history.”

Robinson still lives in the same Twenty Seventh Street home that her dad built and was only forced to change church after St. Paul United Church was sold.



BERNICE IN younger days with her late hubby.

## May Polish Heritage month



Some 1.1 million Canadians of Polish background who have settled for more than 270 years in South Etobicoke and across this country are being celebrated.

May 3 has been designated by Parliament as Polish Constitution Day and May as Polish Heritage Month, in recognition of the significant contributions Polish Canadians have made to Canadian society, economy, politics and culture.

Polish immigration to Canada dates back to as early as 1752, when the first documented Polish immigrant set foot on Canadian soil.

The Polish Canadian community numbers over a million strong in Canada.

More than 525,000 people of Polish heritage live in Ontario and Polish Heritage Month was established as a private members bill by Etobicoke Lakeshore MPP Christine Hogarth in 2021.

Many have settled in the community and are helped by the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Toronto, at 2603 Lake Shore Blvd. W., in Mimico.

There are many Polish festivities, parades and activities that take place across the country to celebrate the month.

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# Call for lifetime license ban for stealing vehicles in Toronto



**THERE ARE CALLS** for City Council to work to ban drivers licenses for life for convicted car thieves to curb the crime. Below thief checks out a vehicle for possible theft.



**OFFICER PAT DOWN** a suspected car thief as (below) a vehicle is discovered in outgoing container.

have more than doubled year to date in 2024,” according to the motion considered on April 30 by the Economic and Community Development Committee. Toronto Police said that there have been more than 107 carjackings so far this year, which is a 106 per cent increase over the same time period in 2023. Auto thefts in 2023 topped 12,200 vehicles, an increase from 9,821 cars stolen in 2022. At least 20 vehicles a week are stolen in the Etobicoke area, according to police. In many cases the doors of homes are kicked in late at night and residents terrified by thieves with weapons demanding the keys for their cars parked in the driveway. Thieves even place tracking devices to follow vehicles from shopping malls so they can be stolen. Some are even stolen on major streets by gun wielding crooks wearing masks and threatening to injure vehicle owners.



“As the increase in carjackings demonstrates, auto thefts have become increasingly brazen and violent including break-and-enters related to auto theft,” the Committee was told. Councillors said carjackings “are on the rise and have climbed to more than 34

incidents so far this year, eclipsing the 22 reported for all of 2023.”

“There is more that needs to be done to combat this urgent and escalating crisis,”

according to the motion. “After unacceptable delays in action, the provincial and federal governments have finally begun the process to end this epidemic but we must act swiftly and decisively.”

Council was told the thefts are part of a network of organized crime, with vehicles being stolen and shipped internationally or to commit crimes here.

They were told that the vulnerabilities of shipping ports have to be addressed along with the ‘antiquated anti-theft technologies offered by auto manufacturers.’

“More effective legislative action is required to act as a deterrent at the source – the criminals stealing the cars in the first place,” according to the motion.

It said the issues should ‘be deemed urgent due to the need for immediate action at all levels of government, and the need for stiffer penalties to crack down on these crimes.’

Police said a new trend shows that stolen vehicles are now being sold online by thieves with (Vehicle Identification Numbers) VIN numbers from U.S. jurisdictions, which do not show up on the Canadian police computer system. Online buyers are being warned to check the VIN stickers of their potential vehicles to see if it has been tampered with or if it

appears suspicious. If so call police.

Two weeks ago four teenagers were arrested for a series of attempted carjackings in Scarborough in which masks were worn by the suspects at area malls to rob car owners entering their vehicles. Many of those charged are young offenders, who police say are being used by gang members to steal vehicles because they face lesser criminal charges.





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The **South Etobicoke News** is a free, independent monthly newspaper that serves Humber Bay Shores, Mimico, Lake Shore Village, Long Branch and Alderwood areas. Established in 1999.

We live in the community and cover local news, amateur sports, business and civic life while honouring those who gave so much of themselves so we can have the lives we enjoy today.

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# Earth Day cleanup activities

Some 400 Trees For Life were planted in honour of healthcare workers at the Trillium Queensway Health Centre. Dozens of volunteers planted a grove of native trees on April 20, at the Sherway Trail, next to the Health Centre.



**VOLUNTEERS FOR** Trees For Life plant trees at Sherway Trail for Earth Day as another group (below) clean up litter at Col. Sam Smith Park. Courtesy photos.

The trees and shrubs “honour healthcare workers who work tirelessly to support our health and well-being,” Trees For Life organizers said. The event took place two days before Earth Day 2024, on April 22, as Trees for Life want to help grow “Hero Forests” in communities across Canada, the group said. There were community cleanups at Humber Bay Shores, or to pick up trash at Colonel Sam Smith, with MPP Christine Hogarth, or Marie Curtis Parks as part of Earth Day. A donation of \$1 million was made by the Barrett Family Foundation to help grow more Trees of Heroes projects nationwide. “Protecting the environment and ecological sustainability is a core value of Barrett Family Foundation,” said chair Bob Barrett. The charity was founded by Mark Cullen, who is still its president; and attending the tree-planting were co-founder Barrett, and Karli Farrow, CEO of Trillium Health Partners. “The links between increased tree canopy coverage, access to public green spaces and the mental and

physical health benefits that come as a result are well documented,” Cullen said. We are “extremely fitting to plant trees to honour those on the front line of healthcare.” Construction began last month for the Trillium Queensway Health Centre, which is expected to open in late 2029. A \$1.3 billion contract to build the health centre is said to represent Canada’s largest health infrastructure renewal project. The 600,000-square-foot hospital will include a new patient tower, including a modern nine-story facility with over 350 beds and private patient rooms to ensure privacy and enhance infection prevention

control. The expanded space will allow the centre to connect more people to specialized care, including continuing care and rehabilitation services, according to Ontario government officials. “We are thrilled to break ground on the new Gilgan Family Queensway Health Centre, a critical step in making care more connected and convenient in Etobicoke and neighbouring communities,” Premier Doug Ford said then. Trees for Life is a Canadian charity that inspire, support and mobilize community-led tree and shrub-planting initiatives. Its projects include the Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign and Grand Trees Climate Solutions. The charity has raised more than \$18 million for the planting of over 3.3 million trees. across Canada.



# Eco-art on display here by the Nipissing Collective

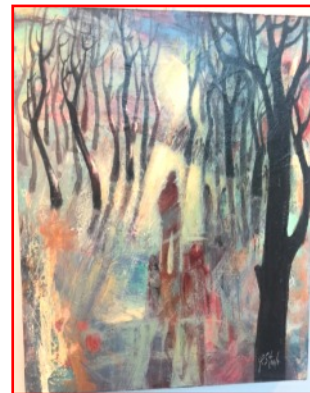
By TANYA VIVIDLY

Exploring art from an environmental interpretation with the hopes of building public awareness. An art exhibition by Nipissing Region Curatorial Collective is on display until May 9 at the Assembly Hall Gallery, at 1 Colonel Samuel Smith Park Drive.



**SOME OF THE** artworks of the Nipissing Region Curatorial Collective. Photos by Tanya Vividly.

As you proceed through this show you are aware that this group finds it alarming that humanity has corrupted our natural environment to its current severity. The collective’s focus of concern includes our eco system of industrial pollution, climate change and wildfires to name a few. As this world wide dilemma increases the outcry for change gets louder. You are embraced figuratively by the bold imagery and colours used in each piece.



This exhibit features more than 40 works from various regions of the world including Brazil, Poland and Canada. The art styles used include mixed media, photography and oils. This is humanity’s time to embrace the urgency and join the movement that our natural environment needs our help. The Collective works with curators, artists, collectives and cultural organizations to promote, produce and document cultural events.

## LAKE SHORE WEST GARDEN TOUR

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# Toronto Fire outreach for a more diverse service



TORONTO FIRE TRUCKS WITH Pride decals and with crew (top and right).

down culture shift and leadership expectations.”  
“Conduct and behaviour that is inconsistent with corporate policy is not tolerated,” the TFS said.  
The TFS said its training for recruits will include equity and inclusion, understanding gender and sexual orientation, human rights and understanding allyship.  
Recruits will undergo a formal training program focusing on the historical challenges faced by Toronto’s 2SLGBTQ+ persons, fostering 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion and human rights.



The Toronto Fire Services (TFS) are reaching out to make the service more diversified to reflect the community.

The TFS in an Inclusion and Community Outreach Update on April 16 said they are ‘fostering a culture that is safe, inclusive, welcoming and supportive for members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.’

The Services have been criticized in the past for not having a diversified workforce that reflects the population of the city.

We are “continuing to prioritize equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) at all levels of TFS,” its officials told a City committee. We are “continuing top-



FEMALE TORONTO FIREFIGHTER. Courtesy photos.

The report said a TFS Positive Space Committee (PSC) was established in 2016 and supports 2SLGBTQ+ members through various initiatives, as participating in the Pride parade with family members; and Pride Month visibility with decals placed on fire trucks and pride-specific uniform and clothing.  
TFS members will also provide advice to management on new initiatives or supports, according to the Update.

We “directly support the strategic goal of building an increasingly diverse workforce that is reflective of the communities TFS serves,” the report stated.

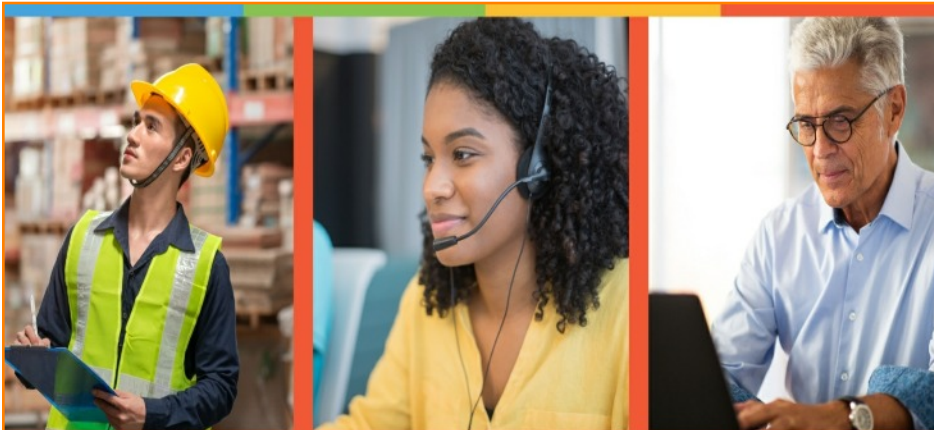
It said 37 per cent of its Operations staff hired last year self-identify as members of an equity deserving group; 42 per cent of its January 2024 Operation recruits identified as being members of an equity deserving group and 14 per cent as a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

The report said of the 152 members who left the TFS last year, some 132 retired, 13 resigned, two were terminated and seven died.

The TFS is the largest fire service in Canada, and the fifth largest fire service in North America. It has more than 3,150 staffers, 84 fire stations and 124 front line emergency vehicles.



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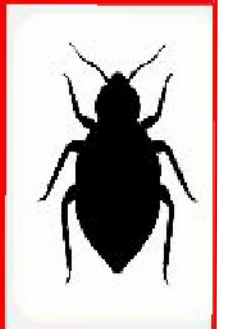
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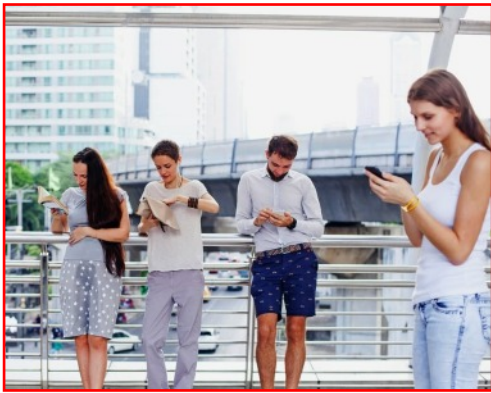
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# Free Wi-Fi and high speed Internet may be in City spaces



INTERNET WI-FI availability may soon be common place in City of Toronto facilities. Courtesy photos.

The City of Toronto is planning to offer free Wi-Fi Internet service at public building, parks and access zones. Public discussions will begin virtually on May 30 and June 18 and in person on June 4 at the Driftwood Community Centre and June 13 at the Heron Park Community Centre. City officials in a ConnectTO Wi-Fi Strategy said the free service is now provided at 100 Toronto public libraries, community and recreation centres, which serves 7,000 users daily. They plan to expand the service to all City buildings, parks and so-called Wi-

applicants. They also intend to provide the service in warming and cooling centres. The service will also be available when people seek City services, which will be listed. The City will also partner with local organizations to identify and address the needs of underserved communities. Staff will enhance user experience and encourage usage by providing couches, tables or privacy features so users are comfortable. The City will display signage with information on how to connect and troubleshooting at all locations, through pamphlets, brochures or cards and create a web page linking all low-cost Internet service provider plans including eligibility requirements. Also proposed is the partnering with local Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to



A WI-FI PORTABLE station in the middle of the city (top). A sign advising the service (below).

enhance experiences by offering free Wi-Fi, connecting people to more information. They will also create and display QR codes at public locations like monuments and discovery walks, to provide more information to users. Also planned is the installation of secure charging ports painted by local artists in outdoor spaces so users may leave devices to charge without fear of theft. The City is also looking at providing residents and businesses with affordable high speed Internet that can access critical services online.



## Two South Etobicoke art groups of six getting City funds

Two South Etobicoke arts groups are among six that stand to receive almost \$2 million in funding by the City. Arts Etobicoke is slated to receive \$425,000 and Lakeshore Arts almost \$306,000 if recommendations by the Economic Development and Culture (EDC) is approved by City Council on May 22. Also on the list are East End Arts, which will collect \$226,000; North York Arts \$300,000; Scarborough Arts with \$310,000 and the UrbanArts Community Arts Council to receive \$329,000. It will cost the City some \$1,897,494 if the grants are approved by Council.

“Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs) are independent, not-for-profit, community arts organizations that deliver customized and responsive arts and culture programs, events and services at a local level in outside-the-core neighbourhoods across the city,” City Council was told. The EDC said there are six LASOs and they promote cultural vibrancy, offering low-barrier, free and low-cost arts participation opportunities to communities across the city. “The LASOs also provide critical support and capacity-building opportunities to local artists and arts organizations,” according to the EDC.

It said the LASOs provide essential arts services, working to meet identified community needs and deliver programs to serve artists, children and youth, seniors, newcomers, 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, Black, Persons of Colour and equity-deserving community members. Arts Etobicoke focuses on improving people’s lives through the arts,” according to its website. “We have developed an inclusive and creative community hub that is open to all people in West Toronto.” It said Arts Etobicoke is a place where everyone can freely express their art and culture through programs, exhibitions, workshops, events, classes, and professional development. Lakeshore Arts said they are dedicated to engaging all residents.

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# Food for Now helps the homeless and needy men in our area

Volunteer Daniel Lauzon has fed or clothed a majority of the homeless or marginalized people in our community. Lauzon is the founder of Food for Now, a group that helps to feed, clothe, or provide small electronic items or basics, to those living on our streets, bus stops, parks or staircases.



FOOD FOR NOW volunteers donate food and other items.

He carries a selection of food and other basics in his car which he gladly hands out to the unfortunate as he drives around South Etobicoke. The group is on a mission to help these men and has a number of supporters, called Food for Now Angels, who donate the many items handed out. He knows most of the homeless or marginalized, mostly men, and makes sure they are looked after on the coldest days.

Lauzon speaks fondly of Joe, who has been sleeping in a large cardboard box in New Toronto, until the Angels were able to provide him a more secure sleeping spot in a park with a tent and heater. "Joe worked hard for more than 30-years and looked after a son," he recalls. "He lost his job and things fell apart with COVID."

Then there is a strong-will senior, who with another man, sleeps in a car outside a community social agency in New Toronto. There is also another younger man who had set up shop at a bus stop at Lake Shore Blvd. W., and Kipling Avenue before moving with his worldly belongings to outside a grocery store near Browns Line. "These are all good people who have fallen on hard times," says Lauzon.



DANIEL LAUZON and some of his team of volunteers.

His group is aware of more than 20 homeless or marginalized men in the area who they help. Most Mondays Food for Now and its Angels set up tables outside a McDonalds Restaurant near Second Street from about 5:30 p.m. until 7 p.m. to provide meals for the needy, in addition to clothing, shoes or small electronic items like cell phones.

Food for Now is always searching for foodstuffs as snap-open cans of tuna, pasta, soups, chicken, granola bars or protein sticks. They also accept men's clothing, like socks and underwear, or old but working lap tops or cell phones. Lauzon can be reached at 416-333-6763 if you would like to donate.

## Happy Polish Heritage Month!

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# Old Civic Centre to stay open as new one is built

As a new Etobicoke Civic Centre is being built, the existing one will remain open for as many as four more years or longer.

The existing centre, at 399 The West Mall, is expected to remain in operation until 2028 when the new one is open and councillors have moved in," according to Ward 2 Councillor Stephen Holyday. Mayor Olivia Chow, Holyday and other city councillors on April 10 took part in a ground-breaking launch of the new Civic Centre. Construction of the mixed-use

centre is underway at City-owned lands at 3755 Bloor Street W., in the Kipling Avenue and Bloor Street W. area. It is expected to be completed in 2028, with staff moving in by December.

"This is a monumental day for the residents of Etobicoke, who have long needed a civic space that meets the growing needs of this community," said Holyday. "With the Council Chamber and municipal offices co-located with many public facilities, the new Centre will be a people-oriented development."

The new centre will house a recreation centre, ceremonial rooms, public meeting rooms, an art gallery and retail spaces, all leading out to an open civic square with a Sacred Fire Vessel.

The recreation facility is proposed to have a gymnasium, aquatic centre, multi-purpose rooms and fitness rooms, according to plans.

The Centre will be the cornerstone of a community on six hectares of former Westwood Theatre Lands. It will anchor a new residential and retail area with as many as 2,700 homes, 900 of which will meet Toronto's affordable housing criteria.

Holyday said community council and other meetings will continue to be held at the existing centre until the new one is opened.

"There are still meetings and other events that take place there," he said. Gatherings, art shows and exhibitions regularly take place at the centre that was built in 1958 and is 66-years-old.



CONSTRUCTION HAS begun on the new Etobicoke Civic Centre (top), with cenotaph below.

Holyday said parts of the existing centre, like a section of the front door, has been deemed as having heritage value and has to be kept intact.

He speculates at some point sections of the massive property will be sold for possible use for housing. The centre has a large parking lot in the front and rear.

He, and other city officials, deny reports on social media that the property has already



THE EXISTING ETOBICOKE CIVIC centre will remain open until 2028 and then probably sold for housing.



been sold to developers for condos.

He said a decision has to be made on what happens to the historic limestone cenotaph, the War Memorial, which was constructed in 1968 in memory of the brave men who lost their lives in World War 1, World War II and the Korean War.

Adjacent to the Cenotaph is a provincial plaque commemorating Corporal Frederick George Topham, V.C., an Etobicoke war Hero that was erected in 1980. Hundreds of area residents gather at the cenotaph to commemorate Remembrance Day.

Properties next door to the Centre used by The Board of Education and Ontario Hydro are also owned by the City having been acquired by Etobicoke for civic use in 1969. The new civic hub will feature more than 508,000 square feet of accessible public-facing space. It will include four office towers, a podium-level multi-purpose council chamber, a child care centre, a new Toronto Public Library branch, a public health clinic for dental services and breastfeeding.

The spacious Civic Centre will cost about \$526 million to build.

# Police warn of paving or building scams at this time of year

As the weather gets warmer police are warning elderly homeowners to beware of scammers involved in paving and construction fraud.

The OPP said they aware of a crime trend involving comen trying to defraud homeowners seeking paving or construction work as the weather gets milder.

"Every year thousands of Canadians are victimized, and millions of dollars are lost through many forms of fraud," an OPP release said.

To avoid becoming a victim, the OPP are reminding residents to be alert to repair deals as fraudsters are persistent, persuasive, and can be very aggressive.

Police are warning homeowners to be wary of so-called

'contractors' who do not have an official online presence, registration with local chambers of commerce, the Better Business Bureau or similar reputable organizations.

The OPP said fraudsters often contact individuals directly at their homes or by telephone, employing persuasive tactics about the necessity for a service they neither requested nor require.

"Use caution when opening your door to visitors or solicitors offering items or services," police warn. They said fraudsters employ professionally designed flyers and websites that have a legitimate appearance. And most contractors will know how much material they

need for a job, so if they show up at your door saying they have "leftover" from another job, be cautious.

"It's a red flag when a payment is asked for up-front or before the job is complete," police said.

Detectives said if there's no written contract with an up-front quote, and the price changes mid-job due to "unforeseen problems," you're at their mercy.

Fraudsters target vulnerable people, including seniors, and request cash payments for "today only" deals.

The OPP said if you receive a fraudulent call, text, or email, or if you've been a victim of a fraud call the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or visit [www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca](http://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca).



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# Etobicoke Creek Watershed is in bad shape, study

Water in the Etobicoke Creek Watershed is poor, so is its aquatic life partially due to a large amount of runoffs and erosion rate, according to a conservation report.

The Etobicoke Creek Watershed Plan states 'there is a low amount of natural cover and the habitat rate is generally poor.'

"The remaining natural cover is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change," according to a report released in March by the Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA) for approval by Toronto, Peel, Mississauga, Brampton and other jurisdictions.

The implementation of the plan will help reduce flooding, improve conditions for biodiversity, and increase resiliency to the impacts of climate change across the watershed.

The Etobicoke Creek watershed is about 22,404 hectares in size and represents the south-western border of the City of Toronto. It is bordered by the Credit River watershed to the west and the Mimico Creek and Humber River watersheds to the east.

The City represents 9.2 per cent of the Etobicoke Creek watershed area, including portions of Etobicoke-Lakeshore and Etobicoke Centre. The watershed begins in the Greenbelt in the Town of Caledon and flows south through the Cities of Brampton and

Mississauga, before entering Lake Ontario at the mouth of the Etobicoke Creek in Marie Curtis Park.

The plan was developed to reflect the latest data and science, provincial policies, and best management practices. It can be refined as needed and includes regular monitoring and evaluation.

Its vision is to ensure the "Etobicoke Creek watershed is protected and restored to a cleaner, healthier, and more



THE VEGETATION along the watershed is suffering along with the water quality

natural state, to sustain its waterways, ecosystems, and human communities."



THE ETOBICOKE CREEK watershed is in poor shape due to pollution and has affected aquatic life. Courtesy photos.

The plan in 2019 stated the Etobicoke Creek watershed is heavily urbanized with about 60 per cent of urban use; has very low amounts or about 12 per cent of natural cover and about 28 per cent of the area for rural land uses.

"The general trend indicates increasing urbanization and loss of rural and natural cover over the past two decades," according to the report.

The plan warns that the watershed suffers from medium to high erosion sensitivity and has six flood prone areas including Long Branch, at the mouth of Etobicoke Creek north of Lakeshore Road, and West Mall in the vicinity of Dundas Street East surrounding Etobicoke Creek.

The Long Branch flood plain was hit hard during Hurricane Hazel in October 1954 in which the creek flooded it banks washing away homes and causing the deaths of 81 residents, leaving 1,900 families homeless.

"As urbanization increases and the climate changes, there will be negative impacts to all the watershed components," according to the TRCA. "By increasing levels of enhancements the overall ecological health and the ability of the natural environment to adapt and respond to climate change increases."

The report 'provides the process for implementation, tracking and reporting of the plan and provides information on the inventory, monitoring and evaluation that will take place to evaluate watershed health, and the adaptive management plan.'

The Etobicoke Creek Watershed Plan will continue to inform land use and infrastructure planning decisions and other municipal initiatives, help identify opportunities to protect, enhance and restore the health of the watershed including important natural features and areas.

"As a downstream municipality, it is vital to acknowledge how the overall ecological health of Toronto is influenced by land use and urbanization patterns upstream," the report stated.



PART OF Etobicoke Creek polluted with ink.

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# Rexdale casino flying high

Canada's largest casino resort in Rexdale has been good for many in the community. Hundreds of Etobicoke residents have been hired and millions of dollars in gaming revenue dished out to the City of Toronto in the five years Great Canadian Casino Resort has been operating. More than \$26 million in revenue was dished to the City last year; and more than \$100 million went to City coffers since the casino was opened in 2018.



THE WOODBINE CASINO resort is generating revenue and hiring local residents.

The casino in a required update to Toronto City Council said of its 1,734 employees, almost 1,100 employees have full time jobs and 638 are working part time at the sprawling facility at 1133 Queens Plate Dr., which includes a 400-room hotel and entertainment complex. More than 230 local and 1,200 diversified residents are among the almost 3,000 hired at the former Casino Woodbine since its opening, according to the report.

"There are remaining opportunities to continue connecting the local Rexdale community to employment at the casino," the report said. "Community benefits aim to create inclusive workforce development and other economic opportunities for Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving communities."

It said \$88 million has been spent on 14 suppliers, and \$4.6 million to 10 diversified suppliers providing goods or services for the casino.

The casino has taken part in monthly hiring events, conducted community outreach to promote casino hiring opportunities, and participated in quarterly casino hiring information sessions. It "also made strong efforts to administer equity-focused forms for data

tracking purposes," the report to City Hall said. "Despite these efforts, the local employment hiring target is not currently being achieved."

In 2023, Casino Woodbine was re-branded as Great Canadian Casino Resort Toronto.

The casino provided a Letter of Credit for a \$5 million contribution to the City's Children's Services Division in 2018 for a future child care centre. It will be connected to a Toronto Community Housing Corporation building unit near the casino and is accessible by public transit.

The child care centre will be a three-level space over 10,000 square feet, including 2,265 square feet playground space located on two levels with separate playgrounds for each age group.

The casino plans to make Woodbine Entertainment Complex among the top three urban casino/entertainment resorts in North America. It features top acts including a boxing world championship this month along with entertainers Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani.

The casino is billed as Canada's largest casino resort with a 5,000-person entertainment venue, 3,000 slot machines and parkade with 3,800 parking spots and multiple on-site dining areas.



## In the Community

By TOM GODFREY

The chaotic rollout of the City's Home Vacancy Tax has many concerned in our community.

Tens of thousands of residents – with a majority being seniors – have lined up at City Hall and Civic Centres with envelopes in hand to find out why they're being taxed for living in their houses.

The program, which taxes those who do not live in their homes, now has been put on hold as City officials decide how to fix it or scrap it all together, as some Councillors have called for.

It should be noted that Etobicoke has the most seniors of all districts of Toronto. Many in our Alderwood community are still confused and wondering why they have to pay another tax on their homes.

The move heightens a distrust among residents who believe City officials are just out to take every dime they have saved over the years or to gouge them for more because the City is broke.

Many of our residents have worked hard and purchased their homes 40 or 50 or more years ago and dutifully pay their taxes and other expenses without question. Some may travel to Florida or some place warm for a few weeks in the winter with their families but always return home.

It is a disgrace to now try to tax them, in some cases up to \$10,000, for homes their families worked so hard to pay off over the years.

I have spoken too many of the neighbours who claim they never knew the tax was coming until receiving an envelope from the City. The bureaucrats have no reason to cause undue stress to these people trekking to City Hall, as many are in their final years.

Take Bernice Robinson for example. She is 100 years old and still lives quite independently in the same home in Long Branch that her dad built.

Where will Bernice find the money to pay another tax, if the dreaded Home Vacancy Tax is approved by Council. She has not travelled far in years and doesn't plan to leave her dwelling for long periods.

She like most other older citizens in the area do not have e-mail, Internet or quite often a computer to follow many of the latest directives and bulletins issued by the City.

They receive their news from old fashioned sources like community newspapers like this one that they pick up for free. Many used to get their favourite daily newspapers delivered, but complain it is now too expensive.

City officials have to recognize that not everyone are computer literate or have smart phones with WiFi.

If City officials had placed advertising or notices in our local newspapers, we would quite likely not be in the mess that we are in today and dragging the elderly to fight for their dues at City Hall.

Many of them are still not aware of a pending so-called Rain Tax, in which the City plans to slap a further tax on the size of their lot and the amount of water runoff from their properties.

The fixed-income seniors, those challenged or with disabilities, are in for another fight on their hands when the Rain Tax comes before City Council again.

Let City officials try explaining that to ailing Bernice, who was here when South Etobicoke was a village surrounded by farmland. That is if we can ever find our Councillor who many residents claim does not have the heart to face our seniors and address their concerns.

Most residents these days feel they are being squeezed from all angles by staff at City Hall who are trying to pick their pockets for every dime they can get. It is not our fault that the City is cash strapped. Its about time they try cutting or reduce spending on some of the pie-in-the-sky programs than making this a City that many contend is on the decline.

Tom Godfrey is Publisher of the *South Etobicoke News*, who lives in the community. He was a reporter at the *Toronto Sun* for many years before deciding to use his skills to work in community journalism.

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## Your Health

By MONIKA MEULMAN

In case you missed spring training in the big baseball leagues, don't worry. The time is nigh to adopt your very own spring training program. It's not what you think. And no, you don't have to be a professional athlete. But just in case you were wondering about the Grapefruit League results (yes, that is a thing): Toronto Blue Jays came in second in runs scored (181) to the Baltimore Orioles (183).

Both teams, just like their namesakes, Blue Jays and Orioles, have migrated back to their 'summer' homes and are well into their regular 'summer' season, after their traditional spring training of February to March. Did you know that they play 162 games during their regular season?

A lot of planning and early training goes into playing such a long season. Even though spring training is commonly used in sports as a warm-up or a conditioning period for pros, there is more to it than that. In MBL (Major League Baseball) it is also an opportunity for newbies to showcase their developing talent and prepare for the season ahead. Adopt that strategy to maximize your fun in the warm weather months of this spring and summer.

As all the sports ramp up their games, it's a good time for you to fill up your vision board. Dust off your glue stick, gather your favourite magazines (does anyone still buy magazines...) and let's go. Before you fire up that BBQ or start up lawn mower and get into the swing of things, take a moment to set a goal for summer. I know, sounds counterintuitive, but read on.

May is perfect for daydreaming. Daydream your way into your summer plans. Seriously, that's how it works! According to Walden University blog, "daydreaming been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, but it also helps with problem-solving and enhances creativity". Less stress, more creative, problems solved makes daydreaming sound just dreamy.

Since summer is just around the corner, there is no time to lose and get started by sitting down! The warm weather is here to stay for a good time, not a long time. Instead of just running off to Costco and buying the latest, trending BBQ sauce, take stock of what this summer means to you. By the way, the best BBQ sauce to try is Montgomery Inn Barbecue Sauce,



according to Bon Appétit Magazine. So what's the plan? That's right: make a plan. Movies in the backyard? Great. Road tripping to see your favourite music festival is a summer must. Hot tip: start with the Orangeville Blues and Jazz festival May 31–June 2, 2024 and head over to Collingwood, July 5–12, 2024, after the big Toronto Fireworks Canada day celebrations

at Ashbridges Bay.

There's no shortage of great ideas for summer. BBQ ribs street challenge anyone? You already have the best BBQ sauce, so that 'must-find-secret-recipe-item' is off your list! Want to build a Little Free Library for your neighbourhood? There is a limited supply of warm summer days.

May is so inviting and pleasant. Take a moment to jot down some fun ideas while enjoying your first picnic of the season. By the way, Picnix Niagara is a service, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where you can rent a picnic cart, with a five course gourmet meal prepared for you. How divine and summerlicious is that?

Ontario farmers are supported. You eat a delicious, artfully curated meal Al Fresco and all you have to choose is the day and park location. You see the value in setting a goal in your sights?

May is your 'spring training' for living the best season of your life thus far. So set up your hammock at Colonel Sam Smith Park, lounge under the May stars and let your imagination flow right onto your summer vision board as the last of the pond turtles tuck themselves into crevices along the water's edge.

Savour these gentle moments before the frenzy of summer rolls in with the first heat wave. This is spring training that suits just about anyone. Prove me wrong. P.S.-See you all at the LEGS Plant Exchange May 11th! Assembly Hall. Be there or be a square stem of mint!

"May is the month of expectation, the month of wishes, the month of hope."  
— Emily Brontë

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## Retired Judge Speaks

By Retired JUDGE LLOYD BUDZINSKI



CHARLOTTE LIND (BUDZINSKY) left, and Ryann Budzinsky. Photos by Lloyd Budzinski.

Summer is coming, and we are thinking of various camps or experiences for our children, especially those with an artistic interest. I want to share my experience with two highly athletic art forms: one traditional and the other new.

I am blessed with two exceptional granddaughters, each carving their unique paths. One resides in Toronto, while the other calls the vibrant streets of New York home. Both are remarkable individuals with a deep passion for athleticism and the arts. While they both began their journeys in the more traditional gymnastics or ballet skills, their paths diverged, leading them to pursue their distinct passions.

In New York, my granddaughter, now 19 and a university student, embarked on a journey fuelled by her childhood dreams of ballet. From the tender age of two, she would twirl and dance in my living room, lost in a world of classical melodies and imagination. Today, she dedicates endless hours to auditions, striving to become a professional ballet dancer. Her training is rigorous and disciplined, focusing on perfection in every movement, every line, and every shape. Like a skater on ice, her spins must exude freedom, her jumps light as a feather. Yet, she faces fierce competition, where success is not solely determined by skill but often influenced by subjective factors such as phenotype and body shape.

Despite these challenges, Charlotte possesses the attributes needed to succeed, her determination unwavering as she pursues her art with grace and dedication.

My Canadian granddaughter's journey took a different turn on the other side of the border. From a young age, she displayed a penchant for physicality, delighting in jumps, dives, and summersaults. Unlike her cousin, she was less drawn to the strict confines of ballet, preferring to explore and experiment with movement in her inventive way. Her spirit was daring and innovative, unafraid to push boundaries and break free from convention.

Her path led her to the world of circus arts, a realm where athleticism meets creativity in a breathtaking fusion of movement and expression. Ryann found her calling in this dynamic art form, where the emphasis is not solely on technical precision but on individuality and innovation. Circus celebrates diversity, welcoming artists of all body types and backgrounds, allowing each performer to shine uniquely.

Elisa Kovacic, a Director at a nearby cirque school in Mississauga, shared her thoughts on this art form, stating, "Circus, unlike dance, is not confined to a specific pedagogy or syllabus. It is a melting pot of athleticism and artistry, drawing techniques from various disciplines such as gymnastics, martial arts, diving, and dance. What makes the circus so captivating is its ability to transform athletes from diverse backgrounds into performers who can express themselves uniquely and personally. The focus is not solely on technical excellence but on how one can add an individual touch, an emotional layer, and 'play' into their performances."

As an enthusiast of dance and circus, I've come to appreciate each art form's distinct beauty and challenges. While dance embodies discipline and tradition, circus thrives on versatility and creativity. Both offer a platform for self-expression and exploration, each with its allure and charm.

If you're intrigued by the circus world, I invite you to experience it firsthand in a welcoming and supportive environment at Cirque-it, Work-it. Discover the joy of movement, the thrill of performance, and the boundless possibilities of artistic expression.

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If you're intrigued by the circus world, I invite you to experience it firsthand in a welcoming and supportive environment at Cirque-it, Work-it. Discover the joy of movement, the thrill of performance, and the boundless possibilities of artistic expression.

Judge Lloyd Budzinski retired after 28 years and was a former Crown Attorney, Defence Counsel and Ontario's Assistant Deputy Minister of Criminal Law. He was Chief Prosecutor in the trial of ex-RCMP officer Patrick Michael Kelly, found guilty of murder for throwing his wife from a 17<sup>th</sup> floor balcony in March 1981. He can be reached at lbudzinski@talkjustice.info

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# Trillium health expands

South Etobicoke residents will receive more convenient care with a new state-of-the-art health care centre under construction.

Premier Doug Ford and other dignitaries took part in an April 9 ground-breaking for Trillium Health Partner's (THP) new Gilgan Family Queensway Health Centre, opposite Sherway Gardens. Construction began last month and the centre is expected to open in late 2029.

A \$1.3 billion contract has been awarded to EllisDon for the construction work, which officials said will represent Canada's largest health infrastructure renewal project. The 600,000-square-foot hospital will include a new patient tower, including a modern nine-story facility with over 350



THE UPCOMING GILGAN Family Queensway Health Centre (top, below) will help more seniors and other patients in the community. **Courtesy photos.**

"We are thrilled to break ground on the new Gilgan Family Queensway Health Centre, a critical step in making care more connected and convenient in Etobicoke and neighbouring communities," said Premier Ford.

"With our government's support for this project and more than 50 hospital projects across the province, we're building a strong and resilient health care system for all Ontarians."

TPH is one of the largest community hospital systems in Canada, serving over 1.7 million patients yearly in Mississauga, West Toronto and communities across its three sites: Credit Valley Hospital, the Mississauga Hospital and the Queensway Health Centre. "With this new hospital expansion, our government is ensuring the needs of Peel Region and Etobicoke will be met for decades to come," said Health Minister Sylvia Jones. She said demand for specialized care in the community will grow significantly over the next two decades, moreso in rehabilitation and complex continuing care as our community ages.



beds and fully private patient rooms to ensure privacy and enhance infection prevention control. A new 800-space parking structure was completed in February. The expanded space will also allow TPH to connect more people to specialized care, including continuing care and rehabilitation services, according to Ontario government officials.

# Etobicoke may be new site of long-awaited Somali community centre

Etobicoke is being considered as a possible site for a Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation for which plans are moving ahead.

A proposed or pending acquisition or sale of land by the City of Toronto for the Centre has been recommended by City staff. CreateTO in a February 16 letter is asking City Council to consider a request to both the Ontario and federal governments to provide financial support for the project. The City's intends to negotiate a long-term lease for the Somali centre once a City site has been selected, and pending provincial and federal government funding.

The plan is part of a plan to develop affordable housing in the northwest of the City. The Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation is a non-profit organization led by a group of Somali Canadian young professionals from across Ontario aiming to create a cultural recreation and community space for Somalis in Toronto.

"There has been a 40-year effort from the Somali community to develop a culture and recreation centre in Toronto to address the needs of this under-served community," according to a City report.

"The main goal of this centre is to create a central space for the Somali community to gather and receive culturally appropriate community services from non-profit service providers and agencies."

Ward 3 Councillor Amber Morley in a letter of support said there is a recommended site that is suitable and desirable for both a Somali centre and mixed-use residential development.

"It is fundamental that we support our diverse communities across Toronto to ensure they have access to livable and complete communities," Morley wrote, adding it will serve as a catalyst for long overdue investments in infrastructure for

diverse Black communities. Etobicoke is one of the sites being looked at for the centre. By leveraging City-owned parcels of land, the Somali Centre will contribute to addressing our City's urgent need," she said.

There are an estimated 80,000 Somalis living in Canada with most settling in Toronto in five Etobicoke areas, including Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown, Islington-City Centre West, Elms-Old Rexdale, and Willowridge-Martingrove-Richview.



A NEW SOMALI CENTRE for Culture and Recreation is being built to cater to the many Somali families (top, below) in the City. **Courtesy photos.**



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**MAY 5 ST. GEORGES ON-THE-HILL ANGLICAN CHURCH**

A Season of Growth Spring Concert 4 p.m. at the church 4600 Dundas Street W., featuring Canadian Sinfonietta Youth Orchestra and the choir of St. George's. Tickets \$30. For more visit [www.stgoth.ca](http://www.stgoth.ca)

**MAY 5 LAMP AWARDS OF MERIT NOMINATION** day accepting nomination for the 2024 Awards of Merit. Please help to identify those unsung heroes who go out of their way to make life better for others.

Nominate someone and help recognize their actions. Let's celebrate those who contribute to a kinder, gentler world. Mark your calendar for LAMP's 24th Annual Awards of Merit on June 19, at 6 p.m., a celebration of community champions with music, entertainment, community resources and spirit. Fill out the nomination form online <https://forms.gle/m1YAmfxT6nVBrTndA>

**MAY 8 UNTIL JUNE 6 REGRET ART EXHIBITION** opening reception May 11 at 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. uncover figurative and abstract works by the Organization of Kingston Women Artists that respond to the theme of regret and draw on inspiring women's experiences at the Etobicoke Civic Centre Main Gallery, 399 The West Mall. Call 416-394-8628 or visit [toronto.ca/eccartgallery](http://toronto.ca/eccartgallery)

**MAY 10 MOTHER'S DAY HIGH TEA** from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. to ring in Mother's Day weekend at Franklin Horner Community Centre, on Horner Avenue, in its High Tea event sponsored by Ridley Funeral Home. Tickets are \$25 to \$30 and include lunch with sweets, tea and live music. Contact the office at 416-252-6822 for more info.

**MAY 11 LEGS PLANT SALE & EXCHANGE** presented by Lakeshore Environmental Gardening Society from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Assembly Hall Community

Cultural Centre, 1 Colonel Samuel Smith Park Drive. There will be a seed exchange table, plant exchange table, plant sale and plant resources. Everyone is welcome. Contact 416-347-5449 or visit [legsetobicoke.ca](http://legsetobicoke.ca)

**MAY 14 MAY SOUP EVENT** Split Red Lentil Soup enjoy a bowl and learn to make pickled red onion from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Stonegate CHC, Multipurpose Room. To register call 416-231-7070 ext. 307 or e-mail [health.promotion@stonegatechc.org](mailto:health.promotion@stonegatechc.org)

**MAY 18 ETOBICOKE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** Annual Plant Sale rain or shine from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Fairfield Seniors Centre, 80 Lothian Ave., for a large selection of perennials, native and pollinator friendly plants, herbs, annuals, shrubs and house plants. Also garden accessories, tools and gardening advice. Cash or credit card accepted. More at [www.etobicokehort.ca](http://www.etobicokehort.ca)

**MAY 23 MOVIE MATINEE** at LAMP CHC at 1 p.m. in the community room for the screening of a family friendly film. For more information, contact [AnthonyA@lampchc.org](mailto:AnthonyA@lampchc.org) or phone 416-252-6471 ext. 246

**UNTIL MAY 24 FREE ENGLISH CONVERSATION CLASSES** learn and improve your English skills with ESL teacher. Adults only, beginners and intermediate levels are welcome. Fridays to May 24 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Stonegate CHC Meeting room, 10 Neighbourhood Lane, Unit 201. To register call 416-231-7070 ext. 307 or e-mail [health.promotion@stonegatechc.org](mailto:health.promotion@stonegatechc.org)

**MAY 25 COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE** from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Do our Spring cleaning together at Franklin Horner Community Centre, on Horner Avenue, in its garage sale. All is welcome. Tables \$25. Also a BBQ that day. For more contact 416-252-6822.

**MAY 25 FREE GIANT GARAGE SALE** presented by the Royal York United Church from 8:30 a.m. to noon to come and shop for treasures, like housewares, small furniture, games, toys and puzzles, jewelry and purses. There will be a gardening area with

perennials, houseplants, pots and gardening items. At 851 Royal York Road, three blocks south of Bloor Street W. Call or text 647-292-2448 or visit [ryru.ca](http://ryru.ca) for further information.

**MAY 25 - 15TH ANNUAL SPRING BIRD FESTIVAL** at Colonel Sam Smith Park, Lake Shore Blvd. W., and Kipling Ave., from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a day of guided bird walks, live birds, reptiles and amphibians, backyard habitat building, art workshops and children's activities. Bird walks run regularly during the festival and place your dog on a leash. The festival is part of the annual Toronto Bird Celebration that runs through May. See more at [Toronto.ca/SpringBirdFestival](http://Toronto.ca/SpringBirdFestival).

**EVERY THURSDAY UNTIL JUNE 6** Virtual Chair Exercise on Zoom for older adults at 11:30 a.m. Join Fitness Instructor Cynthia as she leads a group for 45 minutes with seated exercise in your own home to improve mobility and endurance. To register call 416-231-7070 ext. 307 or e-mail [health.promotion@stonegatechc.org](mailto:health.promotion@stonegatechc.org)

**STONEGATE CHC THE GOOD FOOD MARKET** runs every Thursday from 12 noon to 3 p.m. at 10 Neighbourhood Lane, 2nd floor, for affordable produce. Cash and debit accepted. Any questions call 416-231-7070 ext. 307.

**EVERY TUESDAY SENIORS GENTLE CHAIR EXERCISE** from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at Trillium Room at Stonegate CHC, 10 Neighbourhood Lane. A Registered kinesiologist will lead a group with exercises to increase strength, balance and flexibility. To register call 416-243-0127 ext. 503 and specify Stonegate location or visit [www.stonegatechc.org](http://www.stonegatechc.org).

**LAST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH OLDER ADULTS 55 PLUS** Seniors Social Game Group from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Stonegate CHC, 10 Neighbourhood Lane. It is an opportunity to meet, socialize and take part in card and board games. Light lunch served. To register call 416-231-7070 Ext. 307 or email [health.promotion@stonegatechc.org](mailto:health.promotion@stonegatechc.org).

**EVERY FRIDAY LATIN DANCING** Spice up your dance moves and immerse yourself at LAMP CHC in the vibrant rhythms of salsa, bachata, and more. No partner or experience needed - just bring your passion for dancing! For more e-mail [anthonya@lampchc.org](mailto:anthonya@lampchc.org) or call 416-252-6471 ext. 246.

**DAILY WALKING GROUP WITH NIKI AND MARY** at 2:30 p.m. at LAMP. Step into a healthier, happier lifestyle by joining our local walking group! Lace up your shoes and let's stride towards better health and stronger community bonds together! To register, contact **Niki** at [NikiM@lampchc.org](mailto:NikiM@lampchc.org) or phone 416-252-6471 ext. 257.

**THURSDAYS AT 3 P.M. FREE ART CLASSES** in person at LAMP CHC join local artist **Nataliya Sydorenko** and experience the health benefits of painting and drawing - enhance your creativity, improve memory and reduce stress. To register, please email [anthonya@lampchc.org](mailto:anthonya@lampchc.org) or phone 416-252-6471 ext. 246.

**WEDNESDAYS UKELELE 101** at 2:30 p.m. at LAMP call Anthony 416-252-6471 xt. 246.

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## Lakeshore Charitable Foundation



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# Venues to hear live music in the neighbourhood

This month, we continue our journey around South Etobicoke to New Toronto and Mimico, but first I'd like to mention a couple more places in Long Branch and Alderwood that I didn't have room to include in last month's column.

I have fond memories of playing at South Shore Bar and Grill on Brown's Line, just north of Lakeshore, and it's good to see they are getting back into live music. Friday and Saturday nights, they'll have live bands performing.

They're also doing a jam the first and third Wednesday of each month. If you play an instrument, it's a great opportunity to join some other



apt description of TJ O' Shea's.

Because it's not big, you won't find bands playing here. However, its intimacy lends itself well to singer-songwriters, where you'll hear mostly new compositions and at a comfortable volume.

New Toronto and Mimico has a number of bars that either closed or are no longer hosting live bands. This is unfortunate because this neighbourhood is home to Humber College's famed jazz program that has a lot of talented young musicians.

Mimico used to be the home of The Blue Goose; an institution located near the Mimico GO station. Sadly, the property on which the Blue Goose was located was redeveloped into town homes, causing the bar to be closed. The developers seem to suggest the Blue Goose will return as a brew pub, but no mention about plans or about of live music.

In the past, I played at two venues in New Toronto – New Toronto Billiards and Maple Leaf House.

Sadly, New Toronto Billiards closed in August 2020. I believe the COVID pandemic was a factor, causing them to close for several months. They had a really good area set



By **RON JAMIESON**

musicians on stage and to get some experience playing in front of an audience. For those of you who used to participate in the Wednesday night jam at Dakota's, the band at South Shore will be very familiar and happy to see you out at their new home.

You'll find TJ O' Shea's Irish Snug on the south side of Lakeshore, near Thirty First Street.

A snug is a term used in the U.K. and Ireland that suggests a small, cozy space, and that's an

aside for bands to set up and had a sound person to help the bands sound their best.

Maple Leaf House, at the corner of Lakeshore and First Street, used to have live bands, but have not done so for some time.

However, that being said, they plan to have acoustic music

Sunday afternoons on the patio while it is open.

Dakota's Sports Bar & Grill on Lakeshore at Third Street

is currently the only place in New

Toronto that features live bands on a regular basis. They have bands every Friday and Saturday night. - sometimes with a cover charge.

They used to have a jam on Wednesday nights, but that is on hiatus for now.

At the time of writing this article, the owners of Dakota's announced they were taking on new partners. They were to re-open on April 12. We don't know how this might impact their music policy, but we'll let you know as soon as we hear more.

Not far from where The Blue Goose was, there's Mimico Pub on Royal York, just north of the railway tracks.

It's not a huge bar, so you'll soon get to know the regulars. Every Saturday afternoon, from 3 til 7, they have a jam that's open to all musicians. The focus is on the blues and classic rock.

That's followed, at 10 p.m., by karaoke, hosted by DJ Doug. They also have karaoke on Friday nights from 10 til 2 a.m.

In our next article, we'll introduce you to the venues in the Bloor/Royal York area and along Dundas Street West.

If you'd like to include your establishment in this column, please drop me a line at [rgjamieson@rogers.com](mailto:rgjamieson@rogers.com)



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