

# The South Etobicoke News

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## A female squatter set on fire in laneway tent

A local woman is fighting for her life in hospital after being set on fire at a controversial laneway tent encampment in New Toronto.

Toronto Police and fire investigators are working long hours to determine how the woman managed to catch on fire.

A 22 Division officer suffered minor injuries as he pulled the blazing female out of a tent erected behind an abandoned building at the corner of Lake Shore Blvd., and Eighth Street around 10:40 a.m. on December 2.

Police are appealing for a woman who was seen leaving the scene earlier to get in touch with officers as they work to piece together what happened.



OFFICERS OF a Mounted Unit (left) search for a woman sought by police for setting a female on fire in a tent (centre) which was set ablaze behind a deserted building (right) at Eighth Street and Lake Shore Blvd. W., in New Toronto.

Residents have been complaining for months that squatters were living in the abandoned former office building, with some sleeping in tents in a laneway behind the building. The squatters have been a sensitive issue in the community.

The building was at one time being considered for use as a municipal shelter, but that plan was scrapped after local groups staged protests against a proposed 60-bed facility for homeless men.

A plan by its owner to redevelop the building failed, so did calls from business owners who wanted it torn down claiming it is an eyesore on Lake Shore Blvd. W.

Duty Insp. Peter Wallace said the victim is about 50-years-old and was suffering life-threatening injuries.

Wallace said police drove up to the blazing tent and used a fire extinguisher to douse the blaze.

“Officers pulled her out and provided the necessary medical attention, along with paramedics. She was rushed to a trauma center with life-threatening injuries.”

## More police officers to patrol South Etobicoke

More community officers will be hitting the streets of South Etobicoke to help residents and crack down on crime, says Toronto Police Chief Myron Demkiw.

Four additional Neighbourhood Community Officers (NCOs) will by the end of December be joining the 18 community officers at 22 Division.

Demkiw said the Service has received funds for 16 new NCOs, four each will be based at 22 Divisions’ Etobicoke City Centre; 11 Division at Dufferin Grove, in addition to 33 and 41 Divisions. There will be eight other NCOs dedicated to work on the TTC subway between Union and Wellesley stations and Bloor and Eglinton. “This will allow us to have a seven-day-a-week, dedicated coverage on the Yonge Line, ensuring transit



POLICE CHIEF MYRON DEMKIW (left) is adding more Neighbourhood Community officers (centre, right) who work with the various communities, including South Etobicoke, to build contacts get know residents. Four of the 16 new officers will be based here at 22 Division.

riders feel safe and secure on their commute,” the Chief said at 11 Division on November 26. Police said the neighbourhoods were chosen based on occurrences of violent crime and crimes involving youth, community safety indicators, proximity to transit and schools “The NCO Program is seen across the city as a positive link between police officers and the community,” Demkiw said. “Our members work

together with residents, business owners, and local councillors to identify challenges and develop solutions and build trust and respect among everyone.”

The NCOs based at 22 Division monitor activities in Etobicoke West Mall, Islington, Long Branch and New Toronto and other areas.

The community officers have been busy in South Etobicoke handling the heated controversy sparked by a City shelter planned for Third Street. Many residents are against locating the facility in New

Toronto. “Their role is to address and prevent issues,” the Chief said, noting that NCOs have the time to become familiar with the people in their communities and address problems before they become a 9-1-1 call. A survey this year has shown that 85 per cent of people value having an NCO in their community. Since the program began in 2013, their presence in Toronto neighbourhoods has improved relationships.

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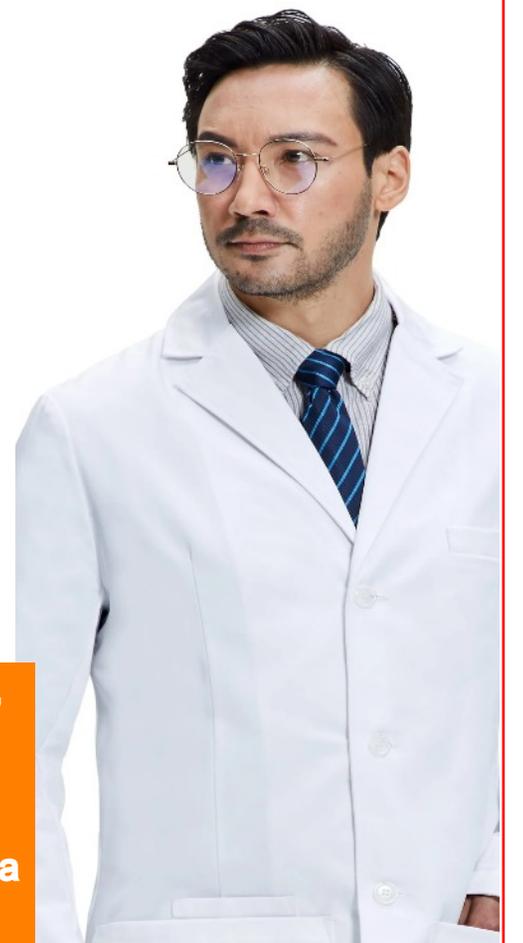
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# Police officers mourn PC Zivcic killed while in line of duty 12 years ago

Toronto Police have fond memories of their friend Constable John Zivcic a Traffic Enforcement officer at 22 Division who was killed in a car crash 12 years ago. Zivcic, 34, who had been with the force for more than six years, was responding to an emergency call on November 30, 2013 for an impaired driver with his lights and sirens on when he was involved in a collision at the intersection of Bloor St. W., and Neilson Dr. He was taken to hospital with life-threatening injuries. A woman driving the second vehicle was treated in hospital for non-life-threatening injuries. Zivcic succumbed to his injuries at St. Michael's Hospital days later on December 2, surrounded by his family as officers stood vigil at the hospital.



CONST. JOHN ZIVCIC

“Every day, members of Toronto Police Service and other police services answer the call of duty. They have chosen to serve and protect the public,” said then Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair. “They do so with a sense of pride and purpose. And they do so with the full knowledge of the risks inherent in our profession. They do it with dedication. They do it with honour.”



THOUSANDS OF POLICE officers from across Canada attended PC Zivcic's funeral procession.

Thousands of officers from across Canada attended Zivcic's funeral procession. They joined officers; other police services, including the RCMP and the OPP. Other emergency responders, including Toronto Fire Services and Toronto EMS, also participated in the full honours police memorial. Eight members of the Toronto police chief's ceremonial unit escorted Zivcic's casket, draped in a Canadian flag, as a piper led them in to a hall where thousands of officers, and others, were

joined by Zivcic's family and the public. Originally from St. Catharines, Zivcic was described as a “greatly respected guy,” specifically at 22 Division. Friends heard that he had recently gifted a single mother and two children with the kind of puppy her kids wanted after their dog had died. The officer in December 2009 received a commendation from Blair for coming to the aide of a Toronto woman involved in a moped collision in Cuba.

“He tied her legs, ripped off his shirt to make a tourniquet, hailed a cab, carried her into the cab, carried her into the hospital and stayed with her for three hours,” the memorial was told. “He also paid for her medical bill since she had no wallet at the time.” Zivcic is the 44th Toronto police officer to have died in the line of duty.

# Thieves steal backhoe in failed bank heist



FAILED CROOKS used a stolen backhoe to try and rob an ATM. Courtesy photos.

steal money from an ATM at a branch near Rexdale Boulevard and Islington Avenue around 3:15 a.m. on November 24, police said.



POLICE SEARCHING the parking lot for clues to solve the crime.

These would-be crooks are still at large. Police are poring through security footage to find would-be thieves who tried to smash their way into a north Etobicoke bank with a stolen backhoe. The attempted crooks used the heavy machine to smash into a CIBC Bank to try and

“The suspect(s) used a backhoe to break through a wall to the ATM room,” police said in a release. There were no injuries reported and no arrests have been made. It is not believed that money was stolen as the thieves seem to have left in a hurry. There were no witnesses or estimate of the backhoe damages.



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# Veterans housing being sought on Remembrance Day

Hundreds of people paid their respects to our veterans in services in South Etobicoke and the Toronto area. The front lawn of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 101 was packed with those expressing their thanks to the veterans who gave their lives



ON REMEMBRANCE DAY we pay respects to those who gave their lives for us. Courtesy photo.

The City is being asked to work with Ottawa to access sites for Royal Canadian Branches in Toronto and provide operational funding to support homeless veterans, according to the motion. "Demand for shelter space in our city continues to increase year after year,"



SURVIVING VETERANS and families (top, bottom) remember friends lost in battle who gave their lives fighting to protect our nation. Staff photos.

so we can have a better life.

There were also calls by City Councillors for homeless Canadian military veterans to be housed in subsidized homes being built on City or federal lands.

Council adopted a motion last November 18 to find affordable and supportive housing for veterans, available



in its many programs or developments. A follow up of a motion by Councillors Josh Matlow that was seconded by Jamaal Myers will be

according to the councillors. "We know this is only a band aid approach, and the real solution is to create permanent supportive affordable housing for our City's most vulnerable."

The motion said just under five per cent of those experiencing homeless in Canada are veterans, who includes members of the Canadian Armed Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

It said the veterans are more than twice likely to experience homelessness compared to the general population.

A report shows that veterans account for approximately 4.4% of those homeless.

There were good turnouts at the services at the New Toronto Cenotaph, the Royal Canadian Legion Branch, Branch 643, the Etobicoke Civic Centre and Old City Hall.

presented to council in early 2026.

Council is working to establish a permanent affordable housing site tailored specifically for homeless veterans. "Veterans who courageously served our nation and made great sacrifices should not be living on our city's streets," according to documents filed.

It commemorated their valiant service during last month's Remembrance Day, Indigenous or Veterans' Week services. "Our Veterans fulfilled their duty to us; it is our responsibility to fulfill ours to them."



POPPY NET MADE by volunteers to

The TTC also stopped for two minutes at 11 a.m. to show their respect.



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## What's Inside

- CELEBRATING 50 YEARS ... Page 4
- CHURCH FOR HOMELESS ... Page 5
- FIGHT TO SAVE RICHVIEW ... Page 7
- IMPROVING THE TTC ... Page 9
- THINGS TO KEEP BUSY ... Page 14
- MIMICO'S TOP BARBER ... Page 15

## Santa Claus is coming to town



Thousands of residents are expected to attend the free 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Etobicoke Lakeshore Santa Claus parade on December 6.

The fun-filled parade starts at 10 a.m. and runs from First Street to Twelfth Street.

Most stores along the New Toronto strip will be open for business so spectators can do some Christmas shopping.

The parade route will be shut to TTC streetcars as revellers take to the street to cheer on Santa and his elves.

About some 30 floats will take to the street to entertain parade goers.

Sections of Dwight Avenue, Second and Birmingham Street, will be shut to stage the floats.

Police officers stationed at Lake Shore Blvd. W., and Kipling may provide access or egress to Colonel Samuel Smith Park at their discretion if it is safe to do so. There will be no exit from the park once the parade is underway.

No vehicles will be allowed to cross Lake Shore Blvd. W., once the parade has started.

Lake Shore Blvd. W. will be closed from 9 a.m. to 12: 30 p.m. once the parade is underway.



# Mimico couple celebrates 50 years of business



**JOHN AND PANAGIOTA SARTZETAKIS** are celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> year of business operating their popular Home Hardware store in Mimico, where they are known by most residents. **Staff photos.**

Well-known Mimico couple John and Panagiota Sartzetakis are celebrating their store's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of doing business in the community.

The Sartzetakis' have been operating a Home Hardware, at 2404 Lake Shore Blvd. W., at the corner of Superior Avenue, which has been a hardware store for 100 years. The bright and friendly store has been owned by the Sartzetakis family for five decades as of December 4. The store was first established as a hardware about 1925, and was purchased by the family in 1975.

"We have been at the same corner for 50 years," Panagiota said. "We know all our customers by their names and they know us."

They know the hundreds of parts and products in the store. In an hour there were around 10 customers, searching for parts for fixing their taps, lighting, stoves or to get keys cut.

"Each customer has their own needs," she said. "Everyone is looking for something different so we have to know our products."

John said they are thankful for the support of the community for the past half-century.

"We are lucky to be in this community," he said. "The community has supported over the years."

Today, Panagiota is accompanied by her mom, Melpo, as they work an afternoon shift helping customers.



**THE STORE HAS** been a hardware for 100 years and is one of the oldest.

Mom and daughter agree that the Mimico area has improved since they took over the store.

"The area has changed a lot over the years," Melpo reflects. "The Motel Strip was down here a and there were issues."



**THE COUPLE KNOW ALL** their customers by name and say the area has changed for the better in last half-century. It is now a more diverse and thriving community with friendly people.

She said it is much safer in the area with more businesses moving into the area.

There are big changes coming to the area as several large condo developments are in the planning stages that will change the face of the small-town community.

Mimico was an independent municipality until 1967, when it was amalgamated into the new Borough of Etobicoke, which was itself amalgamated in 1998 into the current city of Toronto.

The community was ranked by *Toronto Life* magazine in 2012 on their "Where to Buy Now" list of Toronto neighbourhoods.

## The Shoebox Project seeking gifts for at-risk or homeless women in need



A group called The Shoebox Project for Women that collects and distribute gift-filled boxes to at-risk women or those experiencing homelessness is seeking help.

The women are wrapping up a holiday drive which ends on December 12 to obtain gift-filled shoe boxes for women in shelters this Christmas.

A shoebox gift contains a mix of essential everyday items and small luxuries that a woman would love, according to Project officials.

"Our mission is to uplift and empower women who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness through in-kind support,

education and community participation," they said in a release.

The group was founded in 2011 in Toronto by four sisters-in-laws, who noticed there were many opportunities to provide gifts to children experiencing homelessness during the holiday season, but there were no such gift drives for their mothers.

During the first season through friends and colleagues they managed to collect more than 400 Shoeboxes that led to a Canada-wide movement.

More than 350,000 of the boxes have since been handed out to at-risk women, who are homeless, in more than 620 women's shelters or social agencies across Canada.

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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.

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# A church feeding the homeless



NAOMI AND ISABELLE of Heavenly Bites show their delicious baked goods. Staff photos.

It is a busy time of the year at St. Margaret New Toronto church as volunteers work overtime to feed the homeless and raise funds for the church. The Sixth Street church held a Christmas Market with vendors last month to raise

support to the homeless and precariously housed people. She knows of church-goers who are sleeping in cars, building hallways or bus shelters. Daley said some people who are working cannot afford food and to pay their bills. "We provide an outdoor food and personal care pantry that is open 24-7 with support," the pastor said. "Hygiene support, like showers and laundry, are available during meal programs." Cara Wigle, who is organizing the December 24 dinner,



CHRISTMAS DINNER organizer Cara Wigle.

funds to help pay their bills. There were many items for sale including delicious baked goods. Volunteers are also hosting a Tealess Tea fundraising drive, where you can sit back and enjoy a cup of tea as you make a donation.

Pastor Jacqueline Daley said more than 700 meals are prepared weekly in their commercial kitchen to help feed the needy.

They are also working on the 33rd year of their popular Christmas dinner, in which a free meal and care packages are handed out to up to 250 at-risk families so they can have a memorable Christmas Eve.

"Like most churches, the last few years have significantly reduced our fundraising capacity," Daley said. "At the same time, our operating costs have continued to increase."

She said this year their insurance increased 16 per cent, building maintenance rose 21 per cent and utilities by 13 per cent; more than last year. The church is facing a \$31,500 deficit.

Daley said the church's doors are always open to those in need and it provides year-round



A HOMELESS man sleeping outside the church in the cold.

said about 50 volunteers will prepare about 400-pounds of turkey, with all the trimmings, for the take-out event. Each person receives a hot meal and some personal care items.

"There is always a big demand for the meals," Wigle said. "People are very thankful to receive a free home-cooked turkey meal." Kasia Okienska, of Hand in Hand, a food charity, said their free meals that take place on Mondays feed up to 100 people in a sit down dinner. "Winter is here and things will be worst," she said. "Many people cannot afford a meal anymore." Donations can be made to the 120-year-old church by visiting [www.smnt.ca](http://www.smnt.ca).

# One in nine seniors going hungry, they're not eating well



MANY SENIORS (top, below) are going hungry due to a lack of food after paying rent. Courtesy photos.

At least one in nine seniors is at risk of going hungry due to a lack of food for their household, or from having to choose between food and medical care, according to The Mayo

clinic. Etobicoke's FirstLight Home Care is asking the community to make food donations to their Holiday Food Brigade, food drive to help local seniors and raise awareness for this growing epidemic that impacts millions of older Canadians. "At FirstLight Home Care, we believe that everyone deserves to live with connection, purpose and joy," said the agency's Etobicoke director. "For seniors in our community, living the highest quality of life starts having their basic needs met."

"We can start here in our community by creating awareness about the issue, collecting donations and educating families about the signs of hunger and malnutrition in their senior loved ones."



FirstLight has partnered with Loblaws at 3671 Dundas St W., to set up a food drive for non-perishable food items and funds for The Salvation Army Etobicoke.

The group warned that too many seniors are not having their nutritional needs met as changes to their bodies as we age; and changing dietary needs, can make healthy eating more difficult for older adults.

The symptoms of health risks associated with malnutrition for seniors; that can include a weakened immune system, poor wound healing, muscle weakness, weight loss and dental issues.

"There are things that seniors and their families can do to ensure that nutrition needs are being met."

## LAKESHORE VILLAGE BIA

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# What happens to the speed cams



THESE TRAFFIC SPEED cameras are now history much like the old fax machines.

What to do with the more than 700 scrapped automated traffic cameras in Ontario.

New large anti-speeding signs are being installed in high-speed areas where hundreds of automated traffic speed

enforcement cameras were unplugged by the Ontario government.

The signs are being rolled out in jurisdictions where the automated cameras were banned by Premier Doug Ford. Cities are required to post the signs which identifies school zones and listing speed limits. Many politicians have claimed the signs are too large.

Mayor Olivia Chow said the City has received 20 signs for its 641 school zones. She said larger poles are required to secure the signs.

The City's 150 cameras brings in about \$40 million yearly, to which Chow said revenue lost from the cameras will lead to the termination of some crossing guards.

Cities are trying to determine what to do with the unused cameras.

City of Toronto officials have said some will be repurposed for use as red light cameras, or they can be converted for use in the monitoring of noise to catch and ticket vehicles with loud exhaust systems.

"Noise-related complaints are among the most frequent bylaw enforcement service requests the city receives,"

according to City officials. "Reducing excessive noise will

support safer neighbourhoods and improve overall community well-being."

Ford has said the automated traffic speed cameras are a cash grab for municipalities.

The issue became a provincial concern following the vandalism of Toronto's hardest working camera on Parkside Drive, which was chopped down more than seven times and previously generated 65,000 tickets earning \$7 million in revenue.

The province said it would invest \$210 million to support increased road safety in school and community zones instead.

Since 2019, over 700 municipal speed cameras have been installed in 40 municipalities across Ontario, and those previously planned are being scrapped.



PREMIER DOUG FORD with the anti-speeding signs behind him. Courtesy photo.



THE BUSY SPEED camera on Parkside Drive that has been cut down more than six times. There has been no arrests.

# Two men hospitalized in student assaults

Toronto Police say they are probing two assaults against men by alleged students outside a fast food restaurant in New Toronto.

One man last month suffered a broken wrist and was hospitalized after being assaulted by several students from a local school, witnesses said.

A witness said the youths tried to vandalize the victim's vehicle and was assaulted as he approached the suspects.

The victim, who is retired, was hospitalized for three weeks at St. Joseph's Health Centre.

A week before a homeless man was assaulted by several youths as he stood outside a fast food restaurant on Lake Shore Blvd. W., near First Street. The victim in that case was also hospitalized for several weeks.

There are no descriptions of the suspects. Police at 22 Division said no reports were filed with the Service but they are looking into the incidents.



POLICE OFFICERS examine a drone for use in helping to solve crimes.



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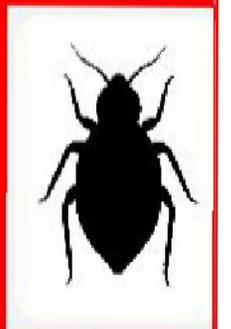
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# Humber College hub for FIFA World Cup volunteers



THE CANADIAN national soccer team is expected to be taking part in the matches.

Humber Polytechnic's Lakeshore Campus will serve as the FIFA World Cup 26 Volunteer Centre for games in Toronto next summer.

Humber as a World Cup Host City supporter will take part in the recruitment, training and operations in the City of Toronto's volunteer program for next June's World Cup.

The partnership includes learning opportunities for hundreds of students, ranging from photography and social media street teams to music, performing arts and child and youth sport engagement as well as media production, data collection and reporting.

"Humber is proud to partner as an official Host City Supporter of the FIFA World Cup 2026 delivering training and services for volunteers while offering world-class, hands-on learning opportunities for students," said Humber CEO Ann Marie Vaughan.

"This partnership demonstrates our commitment to delivering unparalleled student experiences, empowering learners, faculty and staff to make a meaningful impact in the communities we serve."

"This is more than a partnership; it's a moment where education, community and global sport come together to create lasting impact," she said.

"The City of Toronto is proud to welcome Humber Polytechnic as a Host City Supporter for FIFA World Cup 26," said Mayor Olivia Chow in a release. "This partnership will support recruiting and training our volunteers to deliver a great experience for fans as we showcase Toronto on the world stage. Together, we are building a volunteer program that reflects Toronto's diversity and spirit, while creating lasting benefits that will continue well beyond the games."

The City said nearly 400,000 people across the country have applied to volunteer in Toronto and Vancouver.

Toronto will host six World Cup matches, kicking off on June 12, with the first-ever men's FIFA World Cup match on Canadian soil, featuring Canada's Men's National Team.

FIFA has released an economic impact assessment estimating the World Cup can generate up to \$940 million in economic output for the Greater Toronto Area.

The tournament is also expected to create more than 6,600 jobs between June 2023 and August 2026, providing a substantial boost to the region's economy.



ECSTATIC TORONTO soccer fans.

# Angry residents stage demonstrations against the development of Richview Plaza

Another Etobicoke outdoor plaza is facing a massive multi-year redevelopment project that has outraged the community.

There has been a number of demonstrations by Etobicoke Centre residents, who have banned together to try and prevent three high-rise condos from being constructed at Richview Plaza, near Eglinton Avenue West and Wincott Drive.

Almost 1,700 residents have signed an online petition demanding a halt to the proposal that would see mixed-use buildings 24, 29 and 14 stories tall constructed on the site.

"Richview Plaza is the only walkable retail in our neighbourhood and it's a vital retail destination for thousands more Etobicoke residents who rely on the plaza for services, amenities and the essentials of daily living," according the petition.

The strip mall is currently home to a Pet Valu, M&M Food Market, Rexall Pharma Plus, and a TD Bank branch.

Residents said that applications have been filed to City officials that would reduce the plaza's retail space, including to the grocery store, loading docks, and parking to carve up the plaza into three to four separate lots to resell.

"The developer's piecemeal approach threatens our community's source of important retail and services, which would make this a less walkable neighbourhood as we prepare to welcome thousands of new residents."

The petition said City Council in 2021 approved a comprehensive and vibrant redevelopment that would increase density, deliver affordable housing, and protect retail services and parking.

"We are disappointed that not one unit has been built in four years," the group said, adding the developers want to reduce retail space.

The redevelopment, to be known as Richview Square, is planned to bring 1,060 residential units and more than 19,500 square feet of retail space.

Some other South Etobicoke Malls as Kipling Queensway Mall is being redeveloped to condos, as well as Sherway Gardens Mall and Cloverdale Mall, and even Dixie Outlet Mall; in which development is being planned in their massive parking lots.



RESIDENTS ARE protesting against the development of Richview Plaza into hi-rise condos.

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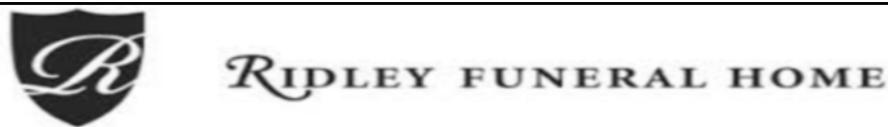
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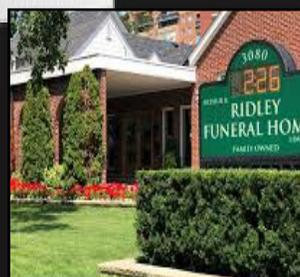


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TAMMY and co-workers at the Ridley Funeral Home booth at the successful 7th Annual Long Branch Tree Fest at Marie Curtis Park, which featured entertainment, children activities and the benefits that trees provide for our communities

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Brad Jones, the funeral director believes this Summer we're all travelling toward new beginnings and positive potentials. You can listen to Life's Undertaking Podcast wherever you listen. You may even hear a story of two about his Purple Yellow VW Camper.



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# Ragu Scratch Pasta new restaurant to move to The Queensway area

# Feeding fire evacuees



CHEFS JASON & RAQUEL

supported us from day one, and our whole mission is to give families in the area great, honest food at a fair price.” Chef Jason said they are a small, family-run fresh-pasta kitchen on The Queensway. The restaurant was featured in a *Dished Toronto* “Cheap Eats” review. The chef was inspired in the kitchen by family members. “In my family we spend all day cooking and when it’s time to sit down and eat, we talk about what we’re going to cook for the next meal,” he said.



RAGU SCRATCH PASTA

Chefs Jason & Raquel are welcoming residents to their fresh pasta kitchen called Ragu Scratch Pasta, at 934 The Queensway. “We’re incredibly proud and grateful to be serving the people of Etobicoke,” the couple said. “The neighbourhood



Its Giving Tuesday and members of the local Toronto Daily Bread Food Bank are helping to feed some of the hundreds of displaced residents evacuated for more than a week from two Thorncliffe Park towers due to a complex fire. Daily Bread volunteers packed vehicles with food to help those who had to leave their apartments at this time of the year. It is not known when they will return home. Insulation within the walls of two connected apartment buildings at Thorncliffe Park Drive and Overlea Boulevard has been burning since November 23. The residents are staying at nearby hotels as they await confirmation as to when they can safely return home. They are receiving some help from the Canadian Red Cross. Many residents have also been able to pick up some belongings from their units since the fire started, with shuttle buses arranged from their hotels. “We’re delivering prepared meals, soups, fruit, granola and water to our member agency, TNO - The Neighbourhood Organization, which is coordinating essential support for the hundreds of evacuees affected,” Food Bank officials in a social media post. To help with food donations contact Karma at [klhamo@tno-toronto.org](mailto:klhamo@tno-toronto.org).



NOW OPEN



Some customers were given free gift cards at the November 19 opening of a new Longo’s grocery store at 1055 The Queensway. The first customers to arrive received gift cards valued from \$5 to \$250, in addition to free samples. The long-awaited Longo’s will help fill a food desert in the area left by the closure of one

Sobeys at The Queensway and Kipling and pending closure of a second near Park Lawn Road and The Queensway plaza. The event marks the opening of the 43rd family-owned store in Ontario. The Canadian organization started in 1956 when three brothers, Tommy, Joe and Gus, opened their first fruit market on Yonge Street at Castlefield Rd. “Longo’s Queensway will bring a unique full-shop grocery experience to the vibrant Lakeshore community, combining freshness, quality, value, and innovation in a modern space,” store officials said at the opening. The store features a stone oven pizza and gourmet sandwich program, a hot buffet, a salad bar, ready-to-go meal solutions, and sushi made in-store daily. A deli and cheese department will showcase a selection of local, artisanal and imported cured meats and cheeses, including fresh mozzarella made in-store.



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# City looks at improving TTC and transportation systems to meet growing population and high-rises in South Etobicoke



PLANNED CONDO DEVELOPMENT at Humber Bay Shores area. Transit is a major concern for residents.

City officials say high-rise development pressures in South Etobicoke is at an all-time high and improvements has to be made in the transit and transportation systems in the area.

The City in a November 17 report said they are targeting for improvement three areas: The Queensway, Humber Bay Shores and Lake Shore Blvd. W., where the population and building growth are the highest.

The City's Planning and Housing Committee has asked

staff to examine the recent growth and emerging development pressure to improve road and transit networks in these areas.

A study in 2022 shows that a majority of trips taken in South Etobicoke are by car and are within Ward 3; where auto use is higher than the City average.

It stated the Humber Bay Shores area has experienced the greatest level of population growth from 4,365 in 2011 to 14,440 people in 2021. At the same time the Lake Shore population experienced growth from 36,120 to 39,895 people. The Queensway rate of growth went from 8,615 to 10,440 in 2021.

"Population growth estimates suggest that the three focus areas will continue to experience growth at varying rates," according to the report. "The Humber Bay Shores focus area is estimated to experience significant growth, predominantly resulting from the large future development at the former Christie (cookie) site"



It said the population of Lake Shore Blvd. W., is estimated to grow 26 per cent in the next few years; growth in The Queensway will rise 282 per cent and 141 per cent in Humber Bay Shores.

"The population is expected to continue to grow for the foreseeable future in all three focus areas, which will result in more trips and the need for continuous improvements and enhanced mobility options," City staff wrote. "This expected growth will create added pressure on the transportation system." City staff said the pause of the Park Lawn GO Station at the Christie Cookie site is devastating.



THE PARK LAWN GO Station has been placed on hold disappointing residents.

"The completion of the GO station and streetcar loop are imperative to meet existing and future demand," the report said. "The City will work to find a resolution to ensure these needed transit facilities are built."

A growing number of off-peak trips occur on weekends and evenings, indicating that in the future additional transit service may be needed in these off-peak times. The City said work is underway to re-pave the Gardiner Expressway from Highway 427 to Humber River, and the rehabilitation of five bridges in the area, including the ones at Kipling and Islington Avenues.

The City plans to conduct mobility studies along The Queensway, Kipling Avenue, Lake Shore Blvd. W., and Royal York Road to improve vehicle and cyclist traffic. Staff plans to improve traffic movement by implementing bus only or priority transit lanes, turn restrictions for general traffic, bus bays, bus bulbs, island stops, queue jump lanes and transit signal priority.

City staff are planning to shift some of the auto-base trips, and particularly the short ones, to walking, cycling and transit through targeted local improvements.

## Man freed after spending 23 years in jail for murder of child

It was a murder case that gripped the city. A South Etobicoke man who spent 23 years in jail for the 1989 murder of a 10-year-old girl has had his conviction overturned and is now a free man. Timothy Rees, now 62, had his conviction quashed last month by the Ontario Court of Appeal after being found guilty of strangling Darla

Thurrott in her bed in a Smithfield Drive home, in The Queensway and Park Lawn Road area. The girl was found by her mom the next morning.



Thurrott & Rees (right)

Rees was granted a new trial, if one is ever held, in a long case which saw evidence withheld and allegations of police misconduct. Rees was convicted of murder in September 1990 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

After spending more than two decades in prison, he was released on parole in October 2016, and remained on parole until November 27.

The case was appealed by Innocence Canada that presented a tape-recorded statement of the landlord who lived in the home and slept in the room across the hall from Darla. The landlord had given a highly incriminating statement to the police hours after the murder but the defence knew nothing of it.

"For the first time in 36 years, I do not carry the burden of the conviction for murdering Darla," Rees said on acquittal. "I did not murder her and I feel like my life can start all over again."

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# Work underway on Third Street seniors shelter

City officials are moving quickly to build a controversial shelter for seniors on Third Street.

City Council is being asked to permanently shut an 87-metre portion of the public laneway at 66 Third Street so they can construct the facility.

The matter will be considered by Council at its December 16, 17 and 18 meeting. The laneway is at the northern portion of the parking lot at 66-66Y Third Street. The closure of the public laneway within the



**SITE OF** planned shelter and homeless person (below) on the street. **Staff photos.**

management of the new shelter. "City Council approval is necessary whenever a part of a public laneway is proposed to be permanently closed," the report stated.

It "recognized the new municipal shelter as a project of City-wide significance."

City officials have determined the loss of a portion of the laneway will 'not negatively affect emergency access, traffic operations or pedestrian connectivity.'

"Existing infrastructure within the closure area will be removed as necessary (such as existing parking lot lighting and power supply)," according to the report.

Planning work has been underway to construct the 50 bed seniors shelter to be completed by 2030. The facility has drawn demonstrations by residents who do not want it in their neighbourhood.

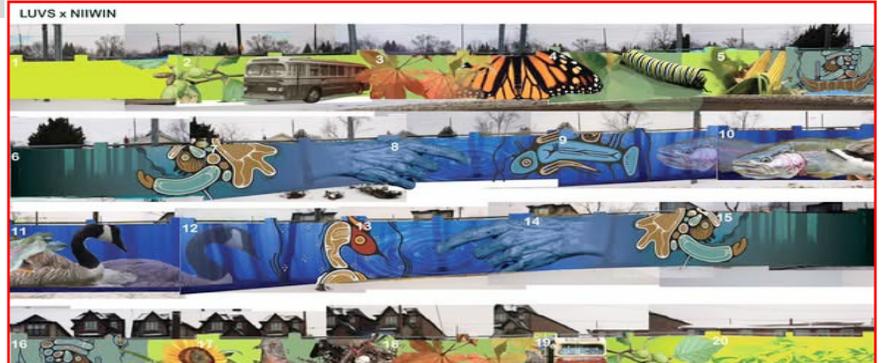


**AREA RESIDENTS** at one of the anti-shelter demonstrations in the community. **Staff photo.**

parking lot will have no impact on the existing laneway to the north of the site, according to a report by Transportation Services.

Staff said the permanently shut laneway will be transferred to Toronto Shelter and Support Services to enable the construction and

# One of City's longest wall mural to possibly get a new facelift



**SOME ARTWORK** being considered for the TTC Loop Mural (top right) that focuses on Long Branch's history. **Photos courtesy of Bill Zufelt.**

One of South Etobicoke's largest wall mural may be getting a much-needed facelift.

The Revitalization of the TTC Loop Mural, at the Long Branch GO Station, is 6,000 square feet in size, according to Bill Zufelt, a Long Branch Historian. I am "extremely excited to report new energy is surfacing to revitalize this 6,000 square foot iconic public art installation in Long Branch," Zufelt said.

He recently met with City officials, TTC and Metrolinx officials who are interested in restoring the lengthy and historic mural, which thousands of motorists pass by daily at the construction busy GO Station.

He has circulated a mock-up of paintings that reflect the history of the community that was submitted in 2020 for the TTC's Loop mural, as it is called. It has since been on hold. No decision has been made on if or when the mural will be redone to beautify the Long Branch neighbourhood.

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# This Etobicoke charity brings a merry Christmas to kids in need in Philippines



## In the Community

By TOM GODFREY



**FILIPINO STUDENTS** whose school is being helped by a Lakeshore charity. Kids there with Santa Claus at a school. **Courtesy photos.**

Etobicoke students from three schools were touched after responding to letters written to Santa Claus by fellow students in the Philippines. Almost 500 students from Bay Bay School have written letters which were answered by student volunteers from Richview Collegiate, Etobicoke

Collegiate, Upper Canada College and York University. The letters were brought back from the Philippines on November 25 by Ray Lave, of the Lakeshore Charitable Foundation, which has twinned with three schools there. "The students here were touched after reading some of the letters," Lave said. "Some of them were crying."

The letters will be returned to the Filipino schools by early January. The 500 students sponsored by groups here will also each receive three kilos of rice for the holidays.



The foundation has been operating for more than 10 years helping school children in the Philippines. Since 2016, it has taken up to 100 volunteers yearly to answer between 160 and 720 handwritten letters to Santa Claus from an elementary school in Mindanao, Philippines.

The Foundation in previous years have sent over school books and supplies; including 60 laptop computers one year. They have also in the past obtained a large Santa Claus that is placed at the school.



**RAY LAVE**, president of the Lakeshore Charitable Foundation, with boxes of letters to Santa from students.



**VOLUNTEER** Cara Wigle.

I was covering an event a couple of weeks ago at St. Margaret New Toronto Church and there was a man sleeping outside the front door on a cold day. Many at the church knew the man and looked out for his safety as he slept. There are many others who sleep on the grounds of the Sixth Street church in tents or sleeping bags due to the safety it provides. The unhoused are not harassed here because churchgoers know they have

to sleep somewhere in the community.

St. Margaret Pastor Jackie Daley knows most of the homeless by names and warns that someone has to help them. The numbers of unhoused are rising and they are more desperate. "We had a young guy here who had just arrived from Cuba," Daley recalls. "I don't know how they find out about us but somehow they end up here."

Another man, a talented musician, was forced to return home to Europe, after falling ill due to sleeping outdoors and couldn't receive help for months.

The church, which will be 120-years old next year, provides free meals on Sundays for the unhoused, provides them showers, laundry and recharging facilities for electronics and a host of other services.

She said more than 700 meals weekly are produced in their commercial kitchen to feed those in need thanks to a legion of volunteers; with some families giving their time for generations. Charitable groups like Hand in Hand feed hundreds of people free on site on Mondays thanks to the generosity of volunteers, who purchase and cook the pot-fulls of food for the hungry. Another group Food For Now helps weekly to feed those without homes or at risk in the community. Thanks to the generosity of donors and volunteers.

Daley and her volunteers are now planning their annual December 24 Christmas dinner, which serves take-out dinners to more than 200 'precariously housed' people.

Long-time volunteer Cara Wigle said about 50 volunteers help to put the meal together that will feature about 400 pounds of turkey.

"This will be our 33<sup>rd</sup> year of making a dinner to feed the community," Wigle said. "The demand has never been so great and it shows people are suffering."

Church officials are seeing more seniors and others who cannot purchase food after paying their rent and other bills.

"There is no money left over for them for food after paying their rent," Daley insist. "Many of them end up here looking for help."

She knows at least two or three church-goers who live in vehicles, others who sleep in local parks or in the hallways or staircases of buildings. Volunteers will even donate funds to help people put gas in their vehicles to obtain heat on cold winter nights.

The more than a century-old church is cash-strapped due to its many badly-needed services and on November 22 held a Christmas Market with vendors, selling jewelry and baked goods to raise funds to pay off its debt.

The church has deep links to the community and the many unhoused or in need, or in search of help. And many of the social services agencies are barely keeping up in the community to perform their life-saving work with fewer volunteers and on a limited budget.

Many would like more resources to carry on, or keep up their services, to help others in these hard times, when many cannot find work.

**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.**



**MAN** outside church.

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## Retired Judge Speaks

By Retired JUDGE LLOYD BUDZINSKI



Let me start this article with two situations I encountered with my clients. Case 1 this individual bought a vehicle with a loan payable term of 84 months (7 years). This individual's job requires a lot of travel, five years later significant wear and tear on the vehicle, the individual is forced to get a new vehicle. Now remember that the loan has not been paid on the old vehicle; the new vehicle is also financed for another period of seven years. Loan financed is the value of a new vehicle plus the old loan.

In Case Two an individual buys a car with a loan, however, a year later the car is involved in an accident and was scrapped by the Insurance Company. The individual took the scrap value and did not pay off the loan. For the benefit of the readers my reason to highlight the two cases is that the individuals are taking on debt and paying interest with after tax dollars. In Case One the question arises will the new vehicle last the seven years for the loan period.

In my experience people take on debt without focusing on the Interest and the time required to pay off the debt. This should be important consideration given the biggest spending period coming up- Christmas time.

I don't intend to recommend how one celebrates the holiday season but will be asking some important questions as you move forward.

Do you have a budget, does this budget reflect unforeseen need. If you don't have a budget, you can look at the historical spending during this period as a guideline. Are you keeping a close eye on the various sale offerings to fulfill your need. When taking advantage of the sale pricing remain focused and committed. It is very easy to spend because the price is good even though one does not need it. Don't get carried away with all the Black Friday sales.

There is gift giving and then there is home décor. The options available have no end, sure there are always more ornaments for the X-mas tree and more lighting options both for the indoor and outdoor. Yes, you could be best house on the street and the talk of the neighborhood, but can you afford it. Before you go out and buy new décor items did you unpack the décor items from the previous years, can the damaged items be repaired. If not, then replace.

Let me go back to gift giving and exchange, in some instances one can manage the expectations through dialogue. When it comes to children, is this gift providing instant gratification till the next big item comes to the market or is this gift providing long term value.

Entertainment, this is another big dollar item, those after office drinks and dining out don't have any limits. The limit has to be self-imposed, succumbing to peer pressure can be the easy way out. Bar tab can very easily add up and if dining out comes into play that would be a different story. Entertaining at home is another issue how many get together and how many people. Are these parties being catered for or are you cooking at home or a combination of the two. What are the menu items, how many starters, entrees, liquor and wine choices, not to mention the deserts. Everything is manageable and yet can be a fine dining experience.

What I have talked about are points that should be managed keeping in mind your budget and/or cash flow with the focus of not taking on debt unless it is manageable, While I was writing this piece, I took a break and was talking about this article and how I was having writers' block and here are some inputs ; "Do you have enough money set aside in the emergency fund, are you saving enough money for a down deposit on the house, are saving enough money for your kids' education and the last item was paying down debt if you have any." It was obvious to me that this person had complete control of her finances, and it was music to my ears. It is my ultimate hope that the readers and my clients embrace this sentiment and achieve it,

Now let's look at the big picture, Canada is facing significant challenges; trade issues, structural issues, rising unemployment in some industries and affordable housing. Please keep these issues in the back of your mind as one goes forward to enjoying the Holiday season. Happy holiday season and best wishes to all our readers.

**Rattan Gandhi is owner of Quick Refund Tax, 133 Sixth Street. His opinions stem from more than 20-years of experience in helping clients in the tax area. If you have question, he can be reached at 905-616- 5253 or rattangandhi@gmail.com.**

The Best gift you can give this Christmas costs nothing Main Street is aglow again. Twinkling lights line the rooftops, carols fill the air, and families bustle from store to store in search of the perfect present. After years of covering community events and chatting with neighbors at Timmy's, the Malls and walking along The Lakeshore, one truth stands out: the gifts people remember most aren't wrapped in shiny paper or tucked under a tree. They remember the front yard conversation when someone truly listened. They hold onto the handwritten note that acknowledged their pain. They treasure the moment they felt seen, heard, and valued.

The Lakeshore prides itself on neighbourliness. We wave from porches and hold doors open, Yet, authentic connection has still grown rare. We're busy. We're distracted. We ask "How are you?" and accept "Fine" without digging deeper. We've mastered small talk but lost touch with empathy and presence.

This Christmas, we have the chance to offer something far more meaningful than any material gift: genuine attention. Think back to the last time someone gave you their full attention—not while glancing at their phone or preparing their next response, but truly listening to your words, worries, and joys. If that moment feels distant, you're not alone. Many of us have fallen into the habit of half-listening. We nod while scrolling.

We murmur "uh-huh" while reading emails. We're physically present but mentally elsewhere. The consequences go beyond missed connections. Loneliness is a public health crisis. Studies show chronic loneliness can be as harmful as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day. It raises the risk of heart disease, depression, and even premature death. And right here in our community, people sit in crowded rooms feeling invisible. But there's hope -- a simple remedy. When someone listens—really listens—it changes everything. We feel safe. We open up. We feel valued. Neuroscientists have found that being heard triggers chemical changes in the brain, releasing hormones that foster trust and reduce stress.

True listening begins with one small gesture: putting your phone away. Not just flipping it over, but removing it from sight. That act alone says, "You matter more than my notifications." And once we've truly listened—once someone feels heard and understood we add the gold -- gratitude.

Gratitude costs nothing but means everything. Most of us are good at saying "thank you"—we were taught to be polite. But there's a world of difference between a routine "thanks" and a heartfelt expression that recognizes someone's effort and sacrifice. Here's the key distinction: a "thank you" is about how you feel. Gratitude is about the giver. It reflects what their effort meant, what it cost them, and how it impacted you. Consider these two responses to a home-cooked meal. "Thanks for dinner." Or: "Thank you for making that pot roast. I know you were up early getting it started, and it was absolutely delicious. It reminded me of Sunday dinners at my grandmother's house." Both are courteous. But only the second makes the cook feel truly appreciate This specific gratitude strengthens relationships. When people feel seen and valued, they're more likely to continue giving. And expressing detailed appreciation changes us too—it trains us to notice the goodness around us.

That's why handwritten notes carry such weight. Unlike a quick text, writing by hand forces us to slow down. Our handwriting—complete with crossed-out words and imperfect letters—shows we took time for someone. In today's fast-paced world, that kind of intentionality is a gift in itself. This Christmas, consider these small but powerful acts of connection. When your child asks a question—whether about dinosaurs or why the sky is blue—treat it like it matters. Look them in the eye. Let your face show that their curiosity is important. Ask your spouse how they're really doing. Then pause and listen to the truth beneath "I'm fine." Call your elderly neighbor and let them talk about their garden or grandkids without rushing. When someone helps you—whether dropping off a casserole or cutting your grass—thank them specifically. Say, "Thank you for dropping everything to help me. I was overwhelmed, your kindness made all the difference."

These aren't just nice gestures. They're acts of healing. They combat loneliness, deepen relationships, and build the kind of community we all want to be part of. The beauty of these gifts is that they ripple outward. When someone feels heard, they're more likely to listen to others. When someone feels appreciated, they're more inclined to be generous. One act of genuine attention can transform a household, a neighborhood, even a town. I've seen it firsthand. A friend began truly listening to her elderly father's war stories. He opened up feeling she was truly interested. Their bond deepened, and she found herself listening more attentively to everyone—from coworkers to cashiers.

Another neighbor started writing specific thank-you notes. "Thank you for shoveling my driveway—I saw you out there at 6 a.m., and it saved my back and my morning." Kindness spread across the block. We need to slow down and connect.

This Christmas, our stores will sparkle. Lights will twinkle. Carols will fill the air. Families will gather around tables. But beneath the festive surface, many will feel lonely. Some are grieving. Others are struggling silently. Many are simply worn out from pretending everything's fine. You can make a difference. Choose presence over presents. Listen—really listen—to someone who needs to be heard. Express gratitude that goes beyond politeness. Write a note by hand. Slow down enough to see the people around you. These events will be remembered long after the decorations are packed away. They remind us we matter, we need each other. These gifts are available to all of us -- for free.

**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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# Jim Tovey conservation wildlife area opening at Marie Curtis Park

# Residents say no Christmas at High Park due to vehicle ban



THE SOON TO BE opened Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area promises to be rich in nature and wildlife. Courtesy photos.

A new lakefront 26-hectare conservation area with trails, wildlife and boardwalks is in the works and will be opened next year besides Marie Curtis Park. An information session was held on November 27 to update the Lakeview and Etobicoke communities on the huge Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area, at 1300 Lakeshore Road East, in Mississauga. The conservation area is slated to open in May next year after 10 years of work at a cost of \$59 million. The large area contains wetlands, grasslands and forest environments and is located on Lake

Ontario next to Marie Curtis Park and the future Lakeview Village development. The massive development at the former Ontario Power Generation (OPG) coal burning power plant is slated to have 16,000 home dwellings and as many as 40,000 people when completed. The area in the 1940s was called 'Etobicoke Flats,' because there were some 277 residences on the flats. It was then used as a Canadian military small arms manufacturing company that was constructed during World War II.

There are still remnants of a military shooting range still standing. The conservation area has been the work of Peel Region and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

Access to the conservation area will be through Marie Curtis Park, and a public parking area is in the plans at Lakeview Village.

Once open, residents will be able to walk and cycle through the area. Dogs will be permitted on a leash and fishing will be allowed in some areas. There is no boat launch. Conservation staff will be on hand once the area opens. Features of the conservation area include a paved, 1.9-kilometre section of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, pedestrian bridges, lookouts, 70 metres of boardwalk trail and a promontory that rises 15 metres above lake level.

A barge, constructed in the late 1800s, is being repurposed as a walkway out onto the lake. Marie Curtis Park is located at the mouth of the Etobicoke Creek on Lake Ontario in Long Branch. The park was built after the devastating floods of Hurricane Hazel in 1954 destroyed 56 homes and cottages on the site, leaving 1,868 persons homeless and 81 dead.

It is named after Marie Curtis, the reeve of Long Branch at the time of its construction. Long Branch at the time was a separate village; it's now amalgamated into the City of Toronto.



AERIAL SHOT of the new conservation area which will contain wetland and forests.



CYCLISTS and pedestrians at High Park with a car ban in place, to which businesses say they are suffering.

Some residents of the High Park community are outraged that three much-loved Christmastime events will not be taking place in the park this year. Resident Diane Buckell said the High Park Christmas Celebration was traditionally held this month in

which visitors could visit Santa at the Zoo and join the Christmas celebration at Patio Café. Families and friends came to enjoy the many activities provided by Children's Garden, Colborne Lodge, High Park Zoo, Labyrinth and Nature Centre, to enjoy hot chocolate, cookies, roasting marshmallows, and music from local schools.

Buckell said the night ended with a tree lighting ceremony. She recalled the High Park Zoo's had a beautiful Holiday Tree event with 20 plus trees decorated by local schools and organizations. Many recall a Snowflake Walk when the trees were all lit and Santa came to visit, with sing-alongs and carol singers.

"Farewell to these wonderful family events, one wonders just what the City Council believes a park is for?" she asked. "The current deterrent policy to park visitors is hard to understand."

Along with miles of natural trails with native plants and wildlife, the park has formal gardens, Grenadier Pond, Labyrinth, Nature Centre, High Park Zoo, Childrens Garden, Colborne Lodge Museum, Adventure Playground, Allotment Gardens, Dog Hill, Sports Facilities, Swimming Pool and Splash Pad, with the Grenadier Café to rest and refresh.

High Park closed to vehicles for COVID and since then has continued to be closed on weekends and statutory holidays.



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# Looking after yourself and others in the community

**DECEMBER 4 CHAIR YOGA** with Briar (also available online) for gently stretching and music in a supportive environment. The class helps improve flexibility, reduce tension and create a sense of calm. Contact Jasmin at [jasmind@lampchc.org](mailto:jasmind@lampchc.org) or call 416-252-6471 ext. 308. All classes take place at LAMP Community Health Centre, 185 Fifth St.

**DECEMBER 5 DRUMMING** at 1 p.m. to end your week with rhythm. Drumming promotes creativity, stress relief, and community engagement. No experience is needed, and drums are provided. Contact [jasmind@lampchc.org](mailto:jasmind@lampchc.org) or call 416-252-6471 ext. 308.

**DECEMBER 5 TO 15 FIFTH ANNUAL MISSISSAUGA FESTIVAL OF TREES** holiday market with 90 plus vendors, live music and tree installations by 10 Ontario based artists. Event at the Small Arms Inspection Building, 1352 Lakeshore Road E. Contact [info@creativehub1352.ca](mailto:info@creativehub1352.ca) or [www.creativehub1352.ca](http://www.creativehub1352.ca)

**DECEMBER 6 TTC STUFF THE BUS** with Toronto Police 22 Division Help bring joy to a child in need Donate an unwrapped toy or essentials for children or teens in our community from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at ToysRus, 25 The West Mall, on the South Side of Queensway Mall.

**DECEMBER 6 ETOBICOKE CENTENNIAL CHOIR** presents "A Ceremony of Christmas" which celebrates the art and joy of choral singing. Delight in traditional carols and a sing-along to some of your favourite carols at 7:30 p.m. at Runnymede United Church, 432 Runnymede. Tickets required. For more call 416-695-9034 or

Visit: [www.etobicokecentennialchoir.ca](http://www.etobicokecentennialchoir.ca)

**ART EXHIBIT FROM DECEMBER 3 TO JANUARY 14** at the Etobicoke Civic Centre Art Gallery, 399 The West Mall, Alder for the Heart showcases more than 30 works from emerging artists from Etobicoke and across the GTA. Reception December 6 from 2p.m., to 4 p.m. The show is free and open to the public. Visit [alderfortheheart.wixsite.com](http://alderfortheheart.wixsite.com)

**DECEMBER 10 SOCA CARDIO** a low-impâct dance class inspired by Caribbean rhythms to get moving and boost your energy and have fun. Hosted by Teacher Chris. Class takes place at 11:15 a.m. at LAMP CHC, 185 Fifth Street. Boost your energy.

**DECEMBER 11 ETOBICOKE GENEALOGY GROUP** meeting from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Richview Public Library, 1806 Islington Avenue. Cost \$5. For more e-mail Joanne at [jjenn@rogers.com](mailto:jjenn@rogers.com)

**UNTIL DECEMBER 12 ANNUAL HAVEN ON QUEENSWAY** toy drive to donate new unwrapped toys, gift cards, cash or volunteer to help South Etobicoke youths. Items can also be left at Joya Condos, 1045 The Queensway, Mercedes Benz 1631 The Queensway or at Haven at 76 Fordhouse Blvd. Contact 416.640.2005 or email [info@havenontheq.com](mailto:info@havenontheq.com)

**DECEMBER 12 THE GATEHOUSE** Annual Holiday Celebration Potluck — an evening of connection, gratitude, and celebration with friends, volunteers, survivors, and supporters. Come together to share food, laughter, and holiday cheer as we reflect on another meaningful year of healing and hope. From 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion Hall, 3850 Lake Shore Blvd. W. For more information call 416-255-5900 ext. 225 or visit [thegatehouse.org](http://thegatehouse.org)

**DECEMBER 12 THE ETOBICOKE COMMUNITY** Concert Band annual Christmas show in the auditorium of Etobicoke Collegiate Institute, at 86 Montgomery Road. Special guests Pentacle and former **MP Jean Augustine** who will be narrator for The Night Before Christmas. Show starts 7:30 p.m. and tickets \$25. Kids under 12 free. For more [www.eccb.ca](http://www.eccb.ca)

**DECEMBER 17 SENIORS HOLIDAY PARTY** from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., and celebrate the season, share laughter, and make memories with fellow community members. Participate in karaoke, live entertainment by our drumming and ukulele classes, delicious food, and other holiday festivities. Contact [jasmind@lampchc.org](mailto:jasmind@lampchc.org) or call 416-252-6471 ext. 308.

**DECEMBER 17 SENIORS GENTLE EXERCISE** from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Stonegate CHC, 10 Neighbourhood Lane, Trillium Room. A U of T kinesiology student will lead the exercises. To register call 416-231-7070 ext. 307 or e-mail [health.promotion@stonegatechc.org](mailto:health.promotion@stonegatechc.org)

**DECEMBER 18 QUILTING GROUP** join **Sandra Kuzniak** from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. as she leads participants in making their own machine and hand-pieced quilts at Stonegate CHC, Unit 201, 10 Neighbourhood Lane. All levels welcome. Some quilting materials provided. To register e-mail [health.promotion@stonegatechc.org](mailto:health.promotion@stonegatechc.org) or call 416-231-7070 ext. 307.

**DECEMBER 20 BREAKFAST WITH SANTA** from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast, a bouncy castle and a visit from Good Old St. Nick at Franklin Horner Community Center, 432 Horner Ave. Contact 416-252-6822 for tickets, \$10 for adults and \$7 for kids.

**DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE** light service at 7:30 p.m. and on Christmas Day at 10:30 a.m. at St. Margaret New Toronto Church, 156 Sixth Street. Call 416-259-2659 or e-mail

[stmargaretnewtoronto@toronto.anglican.ca](mailto:stmargaretnewtoronto@toronto.anglican.ca)  
**LEARNING UNLIMITED FOR SENIORS** is looking for those who love learning. The group is in its 50th year of providing university-level lectures for seniors. They are a member of Third Age Network, a 24-member organizations that represent 8,000 lifelong learners. New Learning Unlimited groups are being created in Toronto and new classes are starting in January. For more visit [www.learningunlimitedetobicoke](http://www.learningunlimitedetobicoke)

**JANUARY 21 IS AN EVICTION** Prevention Workshop at LAMP. Contact [jasmind@lampchc.org](mailto:jasmind@lampchc.org) or call 416-252-6471 ext. 308.

**SPEND DECEMBER AT LAMP** Community Health Centre for a variety of fun, interactive, and health-focused free programs designed to support your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Many classes are available online so you can participate.

## Trail shut for GO Station work



A busy section of the Etobicoke Creek bike trail will be shut for about a month for construction work near the Long Branch GO Station.

The trail will be closed from November 28 to December 22 as a long-term rehabilitation project is being conducted on the Etobicoke Creek Railway Bridge, according to Metrolinx.

The rail company said the closure can last longer depending on progress of the work.

A section of the trail under the railway bridge is to be closed due to increased crews and equipment and various work sites.

Work on the bridge supports started early this year,

and the rehab has since advanced to replacement of the crossing's steel spans, requiring seven service interruptions on the Lakeshore West Line scheduled to occur between September and December.

This is part of an ongoing upgrade of the Long Branch GO Station to improve access, safety and increased service.

There are reports that a second passenger was hit by a GO Train near the Long Branch Station last month. A woman was also hit several months ago and survived while on her way to work.

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Dec. 12 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Christmas Turkey Dinner &amp; Dance</b>	7 pm - 12 am \$40
Dec. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Ugly Sweater Tea Dance</b>	12-3:30 pm \$23
Dec. 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Java Club Christmas Eve Dance</b>	7:30-11:30 pm \$20
Dec. 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Holiday Tea Dance</b>	12-5 pm \$23
Dec. 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>New Year's Eve Celebration</b>	
	Gourmet dinner, dancing and bubbly at midnight (booked by Dec. 15 <sup>th</sup> )	7 pm - 1 am \$120
	<b>Or after 9 celebration</b>	9 pm - 1 am \$45
	just dancing, dessert and bubbly (no dinner)	
January 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>New Year's Day Lunch &amp; Dance</b>	12-5 pm \$23

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# So-called Mimico Mayor Compton's barber shop



JONATHAN COMPTON, (left) owner of Trendz Community Barber Shop, with long time customer Ahmed. Staff photos.

Long-serving Mimico barber Jonathan Compton is often called the 'Mayor of Mimico.' Compton is known by generations of families as he has been practicing his hair-styling craft for 30 years, starting in his native St. Lucia, in the Caribbean. After many years of managing a salon at 2381 Lake Shore Blvd. W., near Superior Ave., he was recently able to purchase the business, which he renamed 'Hair Trendz Community Barber Shop.'

"I have spent many years here and I finally own the place," Compton says proudly. "I am now independent and I don't have to work for anyone." The self-described photographer, writer, music producer and master whistler operates a busy shop and his appointment book is always filled. Loyal customers book their haircuts weeks in advance to get an appointment.

"I have cut the hair of generations of men in this area," he says. "I cut the hair of the fathers and I am now cutting their sons." His easy-going, laid-back shop is a place where men know each other from previous visits. The conversation is loud and pleasant. Long-time Mimico resident Ahmed is today getting a trim to celebrate the Christmas season. "I have been coming here for years," Ahmed says. "He is easy to get along with and we always have a good conversation." Compton knows the style of cut that Ahmed likes and doesn't have to be told. He chooses style in which the sides of his head are cut low. He often helps the needy providing free haircuts to some risk youths or the homeless. "I am blessed to live in Mimico."



COMPTON and Ahmed outside his Mimico barber shop.

Today top calypsonian Pan Man Pat paid a visit to the salon get a trim. Pan Man Pat, who also lives in Mimico, credited with helping to bring the popular Trinidadian steelpan and calypso music to Canada. He is still active in the Caribbean Cultural Parade and performed with his steelpan band at the recent Santa Clause Parade. The popular musician was a former teacher and Toronto Police officer.

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## Fears of Canada Post boxes on City streets



A HARD-WORKING postie on the job.

Our national mail service is facing big challenges as Canada Post faces less-filled mailbags and billion dollar losses. City of Toronto officials are very concerned by a plan by the federal government to eliminate Canada Post door-to-door delivery and

replace the service with community mailboxes. One councillor brought before City Council an urgent motion demanding more information on plans by the post office for community mailboxes in Toronto. It is estimated up to 11,000 mail boxes will be needed to replace home delivery in Toronto. The boxes will be an eyesore for many; leading to problems with their placement in dense areas; with snow plowing and maintaining, according to Councillor Josh Matlow.

Matlow's urgent motion by Matlow was considered by Council last October 9 calling for City staff to approach Canada Post for more details on the mailboxes. "It will be particularly challenging to find enough possible locations in dense, older parts of the city," Council was told. Staff also have "to consider the aesthetic impacts on our neighbourhoods and practical concerns including accessibility, safety, traffic and snow clearing."

Councillors are seeking the number of mailboxes and where they will be installed; the timelines for installation; designs being considered and guidelines for citing the structures.

The motion asked if the City will be reimbursed for its services in upkeeping the boxes once installed. The costs include: installation, traffic management, snow clearing and litter collection.

"Implementing these new boxes poses a lot of potential issues," Matlow said. "Further complicating matters is that Canada Post requires the boxes to be on concrete slabs and at least nine metres from an intersection." Some 75 percent of Canadians receive their mail through these boxes," according to the motion. "However, they have been placed in very few dense, urban areas across the country."

This is not the first time that community mailboxes in Toronto have been considered. In 2014, the federal government announced their intention to eliminate home delivery but due to public outrage, the plan was cancelled in 2018.



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