

The South Etobicoke News

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City has 10,256 staff paid \$100Ks plus yearly

The cash-strapped City of Toronto has deep pockets when paying staff with more than 10,000 workers earning in excess of \$100,000 yearly.

Now there is a push by the City to establish a 'Sunshine list' of its estimated 10,256 workers of its 43,440 staff who earn more than \$100,000 yearly and taxable benefits in 2024, according to a City report.

The City Manager and Chief People Officer in a December report said the disclosure will be similar to that released annually by the Province of Ontario and include the employees' names, positions, salaries, and taxable benefits of their earnings of \$100,000 or more annually.



HUNDREDS OF TORONTO POLICE OFFICERS are among 10,256 City staff earning in excess of \$100,000 yearly. Many City employees are protesting a plan to name the high-wage earners on a municipal Sunshine List.

Ironically, the City Manager's position paid an annual salary of \$333,596.93, along with a taxable benefit of \$1,907.38. The information will be

published in a City of Toronto public sector salary disclosure, along with its agencies and corporations, in what is dubbed as the "Sunshine List".

City staff reached out to City agencies and corporations who are not currently required to disclose their salary and requested they provide their salaries. But under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

City Boards are defined as separate entities. Officials said the City does not have the ability to compel a Board or its employees to disclose personal information without consent.

Some of the high-paying jobs pay up to \$155,000 yearly, or about \$60 an hour. These positions include: Senior Systems Integrator, which pays \$149,000 yearly and a recently hired traffic czar who earns about \$300,000 yearly.

A Long Branch masseuse face second sex charge

A suspended Long Branch massage therapist has been charged for sexually assaulting a second client while giving them a treatment.

David Ludwig, 66, who was suspended from practicing massage therapy last July, has now been charged with one additional count of sexual assault.

Police said the suspect is accused of sexually assaulting two clients during treatments at his Lake Shore Blvd. W., and Thirty Three Street in 2018 and 2025.

"While receiving a massage, the victim was sexually assaulted," police alleged in a statement released on December 27.

A suspect was subsequently identified and he was arrested on December 27.

Toronto Police is notifying the public as they believe there could be more victims. He is scheduled to appear at



A SUSPENDED LONG BRANCH massage therapist has been charged for sexually assaulting a second client while giving them treatments at his Lake Shore Blvd. W. and Thirty Third Street spa. David Ludwig has been charged.

the Ontario Court of Justice, on Armoury Street, on February 11, in room 201.

The College of Massage Therapists of Ontario website shows Ludwig signed "an undertaking" when he was released by police on July 30 that restricted him from

contacting "a specified client" and directed him not to go "within 50 metres" of that client.

The undertaking also ordered him not to "provide massage to any client unless that client has signed a form prior to their massage acknowledging that he has been charged with sexual assault."

The site said the suspended medical specialist had been operating in the Long Branch community for about 10 years.

Police have not released the identity of the salon the suspect worked at or issued a warning to its customers. Some Long Branch residents say they are surprised by the arrest at a business in their community.

The investigation is ongoing and more charges may be laid. Anyone with information is asked to contact police at 416-808-2200, Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477), or at www.222tips.com.

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Impaired driver pleads guilty to killing three children in horrific auto crash



MEMBERS OF shattered family wiped out by a drunk driver.

It was a horrific South Etobicoke crash that killed three young children, wiped out a family and left the City in mourning. Ethan Lehouillier, of Georgetown, was in tears on December 15 when he pleaded guilty to three

The kids mom Avery Lavina, 35-year-old Jade Galve, and their mother's boyfriend, 40-year-old driver Akesh Paladugu survived. The incident has shattered the family. Ramone in an obituary was described as the "protective big brother, watching out for his siblings with care and compassion."



COURT SKETCH of drunk driver to be sentenced February 26.

counts of impaired driving causing death and three counts of impaired driving causing bodily harm. He will be sentenced on February 26. Court heard Lehouillier was exiting Highway 401 at Renforth Drive at a high rate of speed on May 18, 2025 when he crashed into a minivan stopped at a red light with six people inside. The children – Ramone, 15, Jace, 13 and Mya, 6, didn't have a chance and were killed. The other three in the van, including their mother, a family friend and a 10-year-old child, miraculously survived the crash. Police said Lehouillier, 19 at the time, was alone and speeding in a Dodge Caravan while heading east and was exiting the 401 when he lost control of his vehicle. His minivan hit the median separating northbound and southbound traffic lanes and launched into the air. It struck the stationary Dodge Pacifica, which was in a northbound lane on Renforth Drive at a red light. Lehouillier's vehicle continued east past Renforth Drive, over the raised traffic island and came to a rest upside down on the Highway 427 on-ramp.

A GoFundMe page at the time raised nearly \$250,000 from sorrowful Toronto residents to help with funeral expenses. The children were described as treasured and beloved. Jace was "his mom's helper, always lending a hand with his younger siblings," the obituary said. He also enjoyed playing basketball and served on his student council. Their sister, Mya, was an "intelligent ray of sunshine" who enjoyed collecting purses, dancing and singing, the obituary read.



RAMONE, JACE and Mya lost their young lives to an impaired driver.

An officer suffers injury in crash on The Queensway



A Toronto police officer was taken to hospital after his cruiser collided with another vehicle on The Queensway. Police said an officer was responding to a call with emergency lights on when the vehicle was involved in a collision at The Queensway and Kipling Avenue at around 9:38 a.m. on December 21. The unidentified officer was taken to hospital by Toronto paramedics with non-life-threatening injuries. Police say there were no injuries reported among the occupants of the other vehicle. Investigators say a traffic light pole was knocked down, causing traffic signals to be out at the intersection. Southbound Kipling Avenue was closed for hours at The Queensway as crews worked to restore the scene. Some lanes of traffic were shut as City crews replaced the down traffic light pole. It was the second crash with injury in the area in a week. A woman was hit by a TTC bus several days earlier in the Evans Avenue and West Mall Road area. The woman was hospitalized with serious injuries. There are no reports of charges laid to the TTC bus driver.



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Santa and friends in town



SANTA MAKES his appearance before a cheering crowd,

Toronto, who was there with his kids. "It was a good turnout and we had a good time."

Some merchants said the parade brought customers into their store, which was good for business.

"It was a great parade this year," said Patricia Delfin, a fifth-generation owner of The Clock Factory. "The volunteers did a great job and there seem to be more people."

The weather was cold but not super freezing, so some of the families took advantage of Christmas shopping.

"There was a good turnout and people had a good time this year," said Keith Pope, of Village Vinyl. "It was a lovely event that gave us a feeling of community."

His store contained a number of unique life-sized statues of musician Louis 'Satchmo' Armstrong in a bright yellow suit. A full-sized statue of actor Humphrey Bogart was also for sale, along with thousands of vinyl records.

Shafique Bani, of Southside Auto Centre, was also impressed by the parade. "It was a good show," Bani said. "There was a lot of people plus the weather was good and people enjoyed themselves."

Thousands of ecstatic residents lined Lake Shore Blvd. W. to catch a glimpse of Santa Claus and his merry helpers.

The boulevard and TTC were shut for the annual December 6 parade that was attended by many families with excited children.

There were colourful floats, marching bands and student groups making their way in front of Santa's float, which was not a disappointment.

There were cheers from the crowd as the Jolly man appeared on his float yelling 'ho, ho, ho.'

Many families sat on the curb as they waited to catch a glimpse of the Santa with his flowing white beard.

"It was a good parade this year," said Bernard, of New



EVERYONE HAD a great time at the annual festival. Courtesy photos.

West-Way Dancers take to the floor to raise funds and toys for Sally Ann



MEMBERS OF THE West-Way Dance club hit the floor to raise funds for the Salvation Army. Photos by West-Way Dance Club.

Members of the 55-year-old West-Way Dance Club held a toy drive to aid the Salvation Army help those in need.

The club collected about six large Santa bags filled with toys and about \$2,000, which they matched, and were presented to Captain Brian Bobolo at a December 10 Tea Dance.

The not-for-profit club, which is located at 341 Evans Avenue, Unit 1, has about 500 members, some who have been there for decades.

"It's all about dancing," said Alice Parnis, the Club's Chair of Volunteers. "Some people love dancing and the enjoyment it brings."

Parnis claims the large dance floor is one

of the best in the country.

"Ours is one of the best dance floors of all of Canada," she boasts. "It is the way it is made with the wood the moves and it is clean."

The club is always busy with different classes or events taking place since it offers a range of dancing and lessons in ballroom, Latin, social, line dance and other styles.

"Latin nights is on Fridays and it is very busy," Parnis said. "Latin and ballroom are the most popular dances."

"The Club has been the premier dance destination for the Mimico-Queensway community for more than 55 years," she said. "Our club offers a warm and welcoming environment where people of all ages can come together to enjoy the joy and energy of dance".

Dancing is a wonderful way to meet new people, connect with your community, and stay active—while providing significant health benefits for both body and mind, she said.

Members have enjoyed live bands, competitions, and special events such as St. Patrick's Day, XMAS, New Year's Eve, Halloween, and Valentine's Day. The Club hosted many other activities such as car rally's, bowling, cruises, and other fund-raising initiatives. The club started in 1970 and was first designated as a "singles" social dance club for singles to meet and dance to ballroom and Latin music.



DANCE CLUB OFFICIALS present cheque to Salvation Army.

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City fights back vs shelter suits

The City solicitor is being urged to vigorously contest 'nuisance' law suits filed by groups in a bid to stop the homeless shelters from being built.

A motion by Councillor Paula Fletcher said shelter operators and outreach workers contracted by the City to work with the neighbourhoods affected by the 30 planned shelters are also named in the legal proceedings and should be reimbursed up to \$50,000 to defend themselves in court.

The planned Third Street shelter is among those being sued. Last October a local group filed a \$1 million suit against the City of Toronto and Councillor Amber Morley for \$1 million in damages over the plan to build a shelter for seniors at 66 Third Street.

Legal action was also filed against planned shelters at locations on Cummer Avenue, Adelaide Street West, Wardlaw Crescent and Sheppard Avenue East.

"... the plaintiffs are newly-created non-profit organizations without assets and may in fact meet the test of a "straw man" for the purposes of bringing litigation and may never be able to pay costs if they are awarded by the court," according to the motion to be considered by Council. "There is also some evidence that the various plaintiffs in these separate actions are in fact working in concert and retaining the same legal counsel."



SOME OF MANY anti-shelter residents protest the planned Third Street shelter. File photo.

22 Division Community officers bonding with community



22 DIVISION NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY officers at their annual Stuff the Bus toy drive campaign. **Staff photo.**

“Almost two large bins were filled with non-perishable for goods, essential items as food and donations.

“We are very thankful for everyone who helped in this worthy cause,” Thakur said. Police had much support in other community campaigns this holiday season. Loblaws at 80 The East Mall hosted a police and community holiday dinner on December 21 as a gesture to thank its partners.

There were a number of families from the community who attended the dinner. Thakur said the dinner was a way to connect with the community. The families received free groceries and toys.

And, the officers on December 6 took part in their annual Stuff the Bus toy drive campaign to provide gifts for the needy.

Officers had their lights flashing outside ToysRUs, on Evans Avenue, where they accepted donations to fill a TTC bus.

“Together we can fill the bus with toys and bring a smile to a child’s face this holiday season,” police said.

Neighbourhood Community Officers of 22 Division collected two large bins with non-perishable foods and essential items to help those hit hard by Hurricane Melissa that plummeted Jamaica.

The Toronto Police initiative was part of an internal Hurricane Melissa Relief Drive that collected skids of goods to help those impacted by the October 28 hurricane, that wiped out parts of Jamaica. The drive was organized by the force’s Black Internal Support Network, in which bins were placed at all police divisions. The officers also conducted multiple drives “22 Division stepped up to the plate and exceeded expectations for this drive,” Const. Varun Thakur said.



SOME OF THE ITEMS collected by police to help Jamaica hard-hit by Hurricane Melissa (left) and officers chow down at a Loblaws community dinner (top) and some of the many toy donations (bottom right). **Courtesy photos.**

City to lend funds to at risk kids to buy bikes

The City is studying a plan to start a rebate program so low income youth can purchase bicycles.

A motion for the program was adopted on December 4 and City staff are slated to report back with a cost estimate and program outline to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee in the Spring.

“Affordability and mobility are major concerns for young people in Toronto, especially for those living on a very low income,” according to a motion by Councillor Dianne Saxe.

She said Cities around the world have had considerable success addressing both problems by assisting low income youth acquire bicycles, typically with purchase rebates that can only be redeemed at local retailers.

“Now that Toronto provides timely winter maintenance of its growing network of bike lanes, bicycles can offer most youth a fast, convenient, year-round transportation option with almost no operating costs,” she said.

She said studies have shown that having access to a bicycle can reduce financial and other stresses for young people, improves their health and enhances their access to education.



AT RISK KIDS may soon receive financial help from the City to buy their first bicycle and freedom. **Courtesy photos.**



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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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Politicians pitch for global bank

The Premier and Mayor are among those calling for a global NATO-member bank to set up its new headquarters in Toronto saying it will create thousands of jobs.

If the Defence, Security and Resilience Bank (DSRB) choose Toronto for its headquarters it will create more than 3,500 high-quality jobs, make the City a hub of finance and innovation and boost our gross domestic product, according to a motion before Council.

The Bank is now in the process of selecting a site for a new headquarters and officials hope that Toronto would be selected.

A motion calling for the bank will be considered by an Economic and Community Development Committee and then City Council.

“Council must take aggressive action to grow our economy, secure high-quality jobs, and ensure our long-term prosperity,” according to the motion.

Premier Doug Ford and Mayor Olivia Chow have said Toronto has a skilled workforce and financial institutions for the bank to thrive.

“The City’s unemployment is approaching nine per cent and a concerning trend of out-migration saw more than 70,000 residents leave Toronto in the last year,” city councillors said.

Canada and other anchor nations have partnered to establish the DSRB, a new initiative designed for governments to finance critical infrastructure, secure supply chains, and strengthen cyber resilience, according to the motion.

“A decision that could create thousands of high-quality jobs, strengthen its host city’s position as a hub of

finance and innovation, and provide a significant boost to gross domestic product,” according to the politicians.

“Toronto is the engine of the Canadian economy, producing roughly one-fifth of the national gross domestic product and anchoring the country’s financial system,”

Chow said. She said the City is uniquely positioned as it has a huge amount of institutional investors, pension plans, leads the way in artificial intelligence and analytics ecosystem.

Headquartering the Bank here will drive immediate and long-term job creation and allow the financial institution to tap into Toronto’s diverse, globally connected workforce. Ottawa and Montreal are also in the running as possible sites for the bank.



IMAGES SUPPLIED by the NATO Bank to promote its services. Courtesy photos.

The Defence, Security & Resilience (DSR) Bank is a new multilateral lending institution created to address the defence financing crisis facing both governments and industry.

Their website states the Bank raises capital from global markets, backed by the combined credit strength of our member state, which provides governments low-cost, long-term funding without increasing national debt.

Retired Canadian Forces Chief of Staff Rick Hillier sits on the board of the Bank.

City staff cracking down on tax cheats who owe \$49 million



THE CITY is going after tax cheats.

City officials say they are cracking down on cheats who owe the City \$49 million in back taxes. Some \$49 million in back taxes are owed to City coffers by the owners of 27 properties that owe more than \$500,000

each, according to a report. Three of the properties are owned by individuals and 24 by corporations, that owe the City more than \$46 million. The owners and companies cannot be identified as the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act prevents the public disclosure of information that could identify an individual without their consent. Of the commercially owned properties, seven new properties have been added to the largest debtors list since the last report “Largest Property Tax Debtors with Tax Arrears greater than \$500,000 as of June 2024”. The remaining 17 properties were previously reported, and although there have been payments made the balance of outstanding receivables has increased by \$3.5 million. “... the efforts that have been made to collect the unpaid taxes, and whether a bailiff has been used in collection effort,” according to the City’s Chief Financial Officer. Council has approved procedures in cases where properties with unpaid taxes are known or suspected to be affected by environmental contamination, including the registration of a Tax Arrears Certificate against title to the property.

“Outstanding property tax receivables continue to be monitored and acted upon in a timely manner,” according to City staff. “The largest debtor accounts continue to be a priority for collection action.”

The City charges 15% interest per year on overdue Largest Property Tax debtors. Penalties are applied at a rate of 1.25% on the first day of default. There are about 10 major city debtors in Etobicoke, including facilities on Toryork Drive, which owes about \$7 million, The Queensway, owing \$1 million and Islington Ave., with about \$3 million, Bloor Street W., owing \$502,000, and Newcastle Street with \$525,000. and The Queens Plate.



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Calls to merge conservation areas

City Council is being urged to oppose a provincial plan to merge Ontario's 36 conservation authorities under a new governing body.

A plan by the Ontario government to re-name the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority is facing stiff opposition by some members of City Council. The province plans to amalgamate Ontario's three-dozen conservation authorities into seven centralized regional entities governed by a new "Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency".

The municipal authorities were formed to help prevent another deadly October 1954 Hurricane Hazel that killed 81 in Canada and left almost 7,500 homeless.

The issue was adopted by an Infrastructure and Environment Committee and was considered by City Council at its meeting on December 16.

The authorities were established to manage local watershed-based bodies, flooding and work in partnership with municipalities.

"Their jurisdiction and responsibilities were broadened after the devastation of Hurricane Hazel," wrote Councillor Dianne Saxe. It is "even more critical now that climate



NATURE LOVERS (top, below) enjoy bird watching at one of our many local parks. **Courtesy photos.**

breakdown is worsening the severity of erosion, flooding and storms."

She said the conservation authorities are governed by Boards of Directors made up of municipally elected officials or appointees who ensure accountability to taxpayers.

The authorities receive about five per cent of funding from the province with the remainder of their budget raised through municipal levies or self-generated.

"The TRCA has deservedly earned international recognition for its exceptional, highly skilled, outstanding work protecting Toronto's residents, flood plains and natural areas," according to the motion.

It said some of their essential work is to refuse to permit real estate development on hazard lands where it does not belong. "This forced amalgamation and subordination will dilute local decision-making, sever the critical link between local funding and local service delivery," the committee was told.

It will imperil the essential work of the TRCA and ignore the unique hydrological and environmental differences between watersheds, the motion stated. Council is being advised to oppose the new agency.



Charges under review for child murder case

A man who spent 26-years in jail for the murder of 10-year-old Etobicoke girl Darla Thurrott is having his case reviewed.

Timothy Rees, now 62, had a second-degree murder charge

withdrawn by

prosecutors after spending more than two decades behind bars for the 1989 killing of Thurrott at a Park Lawn area apartment.

Justice Ministry officials said the conviction of Rees for Thurrott's murder has been sent back to the Ontario Court of Appeal to be reviewed.

"I'm relieved that I'm no longer classified as a murderer and it's now off my back. I have to just move forward," he said.

Darla was strangled in her bed at her apartment on March 16, 1989. She was found by her mother in the morning.



ACCUSED REES is having his case reviewed.



WHO KILLED Darla Thurrott.

Rees, then 25 years old, who had visited Darla's parents the evening before and stayed overnight. He was convicted of the murder in 1990, and sentenced to life imprisonment.

His appeals were rejected down and he was released

on parole in 2016. Police did not reveal vital evidence.



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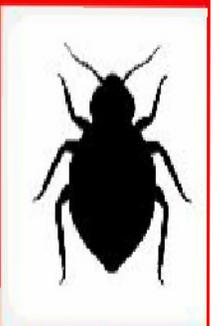
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Thousands sign petition to ban oiling Mute Swan eggs



MUTE SWANS are beloved by many bird lovers who launched a petition to ban the oiling of their eggs.

to stop the practice, which they call inhumane. An online petition by Sara Thompson has racked up more than 2,300 signatures of residents calling for the practice to be banned. The petition proposes a balanced, reasoned, and more compassionate approach to Mute Swans in Etobicoke-Lakeshore. "This petition seeks to save these swans from having their eggs destroyed by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)," according to the petition. "In the past, this pair's eggs have been destroyed by TRCA." The Society said the eggs are destroyed by 'oiling' them, which cuts off the oxygen the

A group called the Mute Swan Society is trying to stop a practice of having the eggs of the birds 'oiled' to avert them from having sygnets. The beautiful, white swans are considered



cygnets inside need to develop. This is fatal for the cygnets.' "It is very inhumane," Thompson said. "Mothers have been known to stay on the nest weeks longer than usual, nearly starving but unwilling to give up on the cygnets she thinks will emerge," the petition stated. The Society said Mute Swans should be given space during breeding season to prevent aggressive encounters. "Don't let this pair lose another brood," the petition states. "Save our swans from having their eggs oiled and let them be parents."



WARD 3 COUNCILLOR Amber Morley accepts a petition calling an end of the Mute Swan egg oiling practice.

to be aggressive and invasive by conservation authorities. Group members have presented a petition to Councillor Amber Morley seeking her help

Hundreds of kids with illnesses get dream lifetime shopping spree at Toys'R' Us



ILL KIDS AND their families (top, below) having fun with Santa at Toys "R" Us free shopping spree. **Photos by Starlight Children's Foundation.**

Almost 200 children living with serious illnesses received a chance to choose the toys they dreamed off in a closed-door shopping spree at Toys "R" Us Canada. The Evans Avenue store opened early on December 14 so the children could choose their Christmas gifts. They had received gift cards to choose the toys they wanted. "The store will transform into a private winter wonderland for children facing the daily challenges of serious illness" said spokesperson Kristina Hopp. We are "offering a rare moment where hospital routines and medical worries

fade into the background." The families were able to meet Santa, super heroes, princesses, or other beloved characters, creating an atmosphere filled with warmth, excitement, and holiday cheer. "We are so excited again be a part of Herb's Secret Santa event with the Starlight Children's Foundation," said Casey Torres, Toys "R" Us Store Manager. "Hosting Starlight events in our store this time of year is very special for our team. It gives us an opportunity to see first-hand the impact we can help make to Starlight families." The event took place at eight stores across Canada, to bring holiday joy and much-needed comfort to more than 750 families during a season when they need it most.



The shopping event was sponsored by the Starlight Children's Foundation Canada and Herb's Secret Santa. *Herb's Secret Santa* began a decade ago in Montreal, created by Ross Paperman in honour of his father, Herb. This year marks the fifth time the event will be offered nationally, thanks to the generosity of The UPS Store Canada and other partners. For nearly three decades, Toys "R" Us Canada and Starlight Children's Foundation have been bringing joy, comfort, and play to seriously ill children and their families. Since forming their partnership in 1998, the generosity of Toys "R" Us Canada employees and customers has raised more than \$30 million to help the thousands of children.

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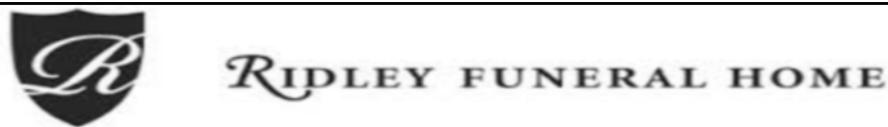
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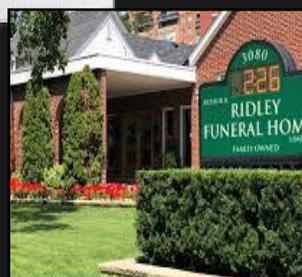
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a podcast

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Church feeds hundreds of needy in the area for Christmas



TRAYS FILLED WITH baked turkey ready to be served.

More than 250 takeout Christmas dinners were served by volunteers to those in need at St. Margaret New Toronto as the church marked its 33rd year of feeding the needy. An army of about 40 volunteers days before prepared 20 large turkeys, 150 pounds of potatoes, and bushels of turnips, carrots, onions and other vegetables to make sure most people had something to

Today Matt is cooking the turkeys in two stoves as three large pots of soup filled with veggies simmer. "Everybody leaves here with a cup of soup and other items," he says. "People look forward to these meals." He said the meal left overs are used to make a community dinner. "We feed more and more people every year," said Cara. "This year people seemed to be more concerned."



VOLUNTEERS FROM Hand in Hand feed the needy at St. Margaret New Toronto church. Staff photos.

eat during the Christmas holidays.

People in the New Toronto community received a meal containing turkey, ham, dessert, soup, mash potato, peas and turnips. They also left with a little bag containing grooming items.

Bob and Cara Wigle with son Matt and granddaughter Allegra were among the many volunteers working to cook and prepare the meals. "We have been volunteering to help with these dinners for 33 years," Bob said. "The people are very appreciative and thankful for the food." The dinners are individually packed in bags and those receiving meals have to register and show up to pick up the food, which is enough for two or three days.



THESE YOUNG HELPERS hand out gift bags to needy residents as they get their meals.

At noon on December 24 people begin lining up outside the Sixth Street church to collect their meals and other goodies. The church on Sundays serve a meal for those hungry or precariously housed so they can take a shower and recharge their electronics.

Pastor Jaqueline Daley said those receiving the free dinners in most cases have nowhere to go, are precariously housed and are in need.

"Times are tough and the amount of people receiving meals grow bigger every year," she said. "People look forward to this because they know they can get something to eat."

Other free meals are served by LAMP CHC, Hand in Hand and Food for Now charities.



VOLUNTEER MATT and wife Christine making pots of soup.



FOOD FOR NOW under founder Daniel Lauzon feed the homeless and precariously housed weekly on a New Toronto sidewalk. Most of the food are obtained through donations from residents and businesses. Lauzon drives through community with food and supplies to keep them warm.



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Community mourns the loss of popular volunteer and Rotarian who was a top Caribana bandleader

A well-known community volunteer, former teacher, Rotarian and Caribana bandleader is being mourned by family and friends.

Former high school teacher Courtney Doldron passed away in November. He was 75.

Doldron was a member of the Lakeshore Charitable Foundation that works with students and has twinned Toronto schools with three schools in the Philippines.

He visited students at one of the schools there last February and was presented the Distinguished Service Cross at the International Assembly in Cebu.

An educator, he taught at the Toronto public and Catholic school boards for a number of years before retiring in 2009 as a Co-operative Education Facilitator.

There was no relaxation for Doldron as he gave a lot of time to charity work.

He was best-known for leading his own band of revellers for many years with Caribana, now known as the Caribbean Cultural Committee.

Doldron also received the



THE LATE Courtney Doldron will be missed.

Queen Elizabeth 11 Platinum Jubilee Medallion recently in Toronto for his years of service to the community.

He was active in the Rotary Club and was an Assistant Governor with Rotary District 7070 in Toronto.

The father of three grown daughters was a former president of the Ontario Multicultural Association, Bayview Village Association and founder of Afri-Americas Foundation.

He never lived to see a dream come true. He was booked on a 17-day cruise in December to Argentina, Antarctica and Falkland Island.

"May the good Lord bless and keep me for this period of my life," he wrote on social media.

His friend Paul Rampersaud said: "He has been a long standing friend and supporter who we have worked with for over 25 plus years.

Truly will be missed in the Caribbean scene and culture."



DOLDRON WITH a family member.

Helen Keller Centre in a tax dispute with City



A back and forth dispute between the City and the Canadian Helen Keller Centre (CHKC) (above) over a development charge is maybe nearing an end.

City officials have been trying to collect a \$184,500 development charge from the Centre as an Education Development Charge with no luck.

The Centre will house a 56-unit accessible apartment complex at 150 Eighth Street for its clients. It is expected to be completed by July.

The issue was considered by City Council on October 9 and no decision was reached.

"The Canadian Helen Keller Centre are of the opinion that they should be exempt from education development charges," according to a motion by the City.

The CHKC officials claim the \$184,500 should be refunded as this redevelopment was part of Toronto's Rapid Housing Initiative and the fees were waived or exempted.

The new six-storey building will also include a training centre where residents and other people who are deafblind and don't live on site can learn essential life skills.

City staff said the fee has already been collected and forwarded to the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) as required.

City officials said they reviewed the complaint and the by-law was applied properly, and no error was made.

The complainant was eligible to have their development charges waived or exempted, but there is no corresponding exemption provided by the TCDSB.

The property is a partnership between the Centre, the City of Toronto and the federal government through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The new housing development will help reduce CHKC's waitlist and give more people with a combination of hearing and vision loss access to an independent life. People with other disabilities will use any remaining units.

The facility will include a 6,500 square foot training centre for clients.

Happy
New Year



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Mourning three firemen killed in one of worst blaze



LLOYD JANES

These brave firefighters will not be forgotten. Etobicoke firefighters took time to reflect on three colleagues who were killed on December 4, 1978 in a massive blaze at a Kimberly-



JOHN CLARK

Janes body was found almost immediately in the rubble and it would be some time later when the bodies of Kerr and Clark were discovered.



DONALD KERR

Clark warehouse. District Chief Lloyd Janes, Captain Donald Kerr and Fire Fighter John Clark had responded to the Kimberly-Clark fire on Disco Road 47 years ago that involved large bales of rolled paper.

The building had been the scene of two recent, suspicious fires weeks before, news clips reported.

"The sprinkler system had contained the fire, but during overhaul of the blaze, the three firemen were killed instantly when 600-pound water-soaked paper rolls fell on them," according to reports.

"The paper rolls were five-feet in diameter, stacked 18-inches apart and 20 feet high and became unstable and toppled burying the men," the accounts state.

It was one of the worst tragedies to rock Etobicoke Fire Department and most residents of Toronto.

"It was a day that we will never forget," said the son of one of the firefighters killed.

The three were beyond help, colleagues said then.

Janes was a war veteran who had risen through the ranks of the New Toronto Fire Department to become Deputy Chief of the Etobicoke Fire Department after the amalgamation of forces in 1967.

Kerr was an experienced 23-year veteran fireman who joined the department in 1955. Clark was recently married when he met his untimely death and was a 14-year veteran.

The tragedy then was the second largest one-time loss of life of Etobicoke firefighters and was only surpassed by the deaths of five volunteer firemen in the swollen Humber River during Hurricane Hazel in October 1954 that killed 469 people, including 81 in Canada.

Hurricane Hazel left thousands homeless, including many in South Etobicoke, as 110-km winds caused more than 11-inches of rain to fall in 48 hours. It caused an estimated at \$100 million (about \$1 billion today) in damages.

Senior wins battle against City to keep her driveway unpaved



SENIOR ZANDRA Forbes Roberts in front of her home and the gravel driveway will remain. Staff photos.

An 81-year-old Long Branch widow will undergo less stress this Christmas after a City by-law infraction to pave her gravel driveway was quashed. Zandra Forbes-Roberts, who lives on Walnut Crescent, received a hand-delivered mail last August 15 from City officials ordering her

to pave her gravel driveway as it is an alleged by-law infraction.

"I am glad it is over. It was a lot of stress that I do not wish on anyone," she said. "Having to deal with the City is not easy."

The alleged infraction was rescinded on December 9 by members at a Standing Committee Zoom hearing.

The long-time area resident has been living in the same house for about 50 years. The home is a former area cottage, with no basement, which was built in 1910 and still in good shape, she said.

"I am a senior living on a fixed income so the paving of the driveway will cause financial hardship, as it will cost between \$6,500 to \$10,000," Forbes-Roberts told a panel. "I have always made every effort to maintain my property to make sure it is in good order." The case has generated a lot of attention with more than 430 people signing an online petition against the repavement.

She presented to City officials 38 photographs of homes in her area with gravel driveways. "Forbes-Roberts said the more than a century old cottage has had flooding issues and the gravel absorbs the excess water, "I feel that I was unfairly targeted," she said.



SENIOR ZANDRA with friend hold a City letter ordering her to pave her driveway.

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Community Crisis Service gets a training centre to equip its officers

The City is dishing out \$2.5 million to establish a Toronto crisis training centre for its officers embedded with other emergency personnel.

The Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) is called the City's fourth emergency service, as they will be working alongside Toronto Police, Fire and Paramedic Services, each with its own training facility.

The Service will "seamlessly integrate within the emergency service ecosystem at the level of professionalism expected of Toronto's fourth emergency service."

The TCCS plan was adopted by the Economic and Community Development Committee and was considered by City Council at its December meeting.

A report said the TCCS will be located on the fourth floor of a City Family Service building at 355 Church Street. The City will dish out \$2.5 million to construct and outfit the 7,500 square feet.

The TCCS will provide round-the-clock community-based, client-centred, trauma-informed, non-police-led response to wellness checks and people experiencing mental health crisis.

The Service has responded to more than 34,000 mental health crisis calls, resolved 78 percent of calls transferred from 911 without police involvement and in 2023, contributed to a 4.5 per cent decrease in mental health-related 911 calls.

TCCS teams have also completed over 8,000 post-crisis follow-up interactions, connecting 1,400 service users to ongoing case management and making 6,191 referrals to wraparound supports.

"This service reduces police engagements and increases community-based solutions that connect people in crisis to much-needed mental health and well-being programs and services," according to the report.

The Service has 200 staff members, of which 100 are crisis workers and 12 mobile units. If approved, the centre can be launched by the end of 2026.

Its members provides free, confidential, mental health support from mobile crisis teams in person to Toronto residents 16 years of age or older.



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In the Community

By TOM GODFREY



We wish all our readers a safe and Happy New Year!

It is hard these days to have much joy or merriment when the prices of goods, rent and City services are all increasing this year.

Starting on January 1 the City is raising our taxes for water, garbage collection, the bins; and later this year the mansion land transfer tax on homes more than \$3 million takes effect, not that it may affect many of us.

The City tax increases does not seems to end, and councillors once elected forget that there is only one taxpayer and we get little in return.

Many argue that the City, with a budget of more than \$20 billion yearly, has a spending problem and should focus on our needs and not try to please every group or those who shout the loudest. No way City staff should be providing hundreds of new air conditioners for seniors and others in need as they did last summer.

Toronto City Council approved a 3.75 per cent interim increase to Solid Waste Management Services and Toronto Water rates and fees for water customers. There is also a 1.25 per cent interim increase for participants in the Industrial Water Rate Program, which offers manufacturers a discounted water rate to support economic growth and encourage water conservation.

For the average Toronto household using 230 cubic metres of water per year, the 3.75 per cent increase represents an additional \$40 annually, for a total estimated cost of \$1,118 in 2026. That's quite a hit for taxpayers and you can count on more increases on other services during the year.

Mind you, water fees cover the cost of providing drinking water, managing sewage and storm water, upgrades to aging infrastructures and preparing for the impacts of climate change. These increases, the City says, are to maintain water treatment and waste collection, repair aging infrastructure and cover rising costs of material and labour.

As well, the City will no longer be responsible for picking up recycling bins at houses and apartments, as the work has been contracted to a private company. City staff will continue covering parks and public spaces. And a new super-large recycling container will also be introduced by the private company.

The increases coupled with the high price of food items and rent is already sky high making this one of the more expensive cities in North America to live. Thousands of Toronto residents are moving to more affordable communities outside the GTA.

In the South Etobicoke area we have many seniors living on fixed income and just how are they supposed to pay for the many tax grabs to pay for things we don't necessarily need, or want.

The price of the bins are also increasing ranging on the size. It now cost \$317.85 for a small bin and that will rise \$11.50 this year. A medium bin is \$385.86, which will rise by \$14 this year. A large bin that cost \$524 will rise by \$19; and a \$606 extra- large bin will rise by \$22. City officials said service levels in 2026 are expected to remain consistent with 2025, with continued investments focused on enhancing reliability and customer service.

The increase also reflects the rising costs of maintaining critical infrastructure and ensuring high-quality service delivery.

Mayor Olivia Chow and our city leaders have an over-spending issue and seem to want to spend money to please every group, or to whoever screams the loudest.

There are also so many highly-paid lobbyists at City Hall jockeying for position in getting certain laws passed.

While a lot of Toronto residents are already strapped for cash, given the high rent prices and expensive grocery items, and having to pay extra for water and garbage isn't exactly the most ideal way to celebrate the New Year.

The City is providing rebate programs for low-income residents, as seniors, and people with disabilities who are looking to reduce water and garbage charges.

Many residents are one pay cheque away from being on the streets.

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 Money \$ Wealth

Saving Money with RATTAN GANDHI

Hello readers Happy New Year, hope you had a good holiday season celebrating Christmas with family and friends.

As I had suggested in an article earlier this would be a good time to start setting some goals to help you with your financial health a good place to start would be creating a budget or some semblance of it.

Why I am stressing on this because it will be the foundation going forward in 2026.

My initial thought of writing this article was to title it "frugal living "but more really it is to address your "cutting living cost", and a good budget would point out the when and where and maybe how.

A long time back I remember ready an article titled Frugal Living. This article was a case study of an individual living a life on an average salary and had retired as a millionaire, the individual had home cooked meals, minimal wardrobe expenses and no automobile. The only thing he splurged on was good pair of shoes and that stood out, it was \$400, as he walked to work or used public transit.

Did you know the average cost of owning a car (assuming a new car) is \$15,000 to \$17,000 per year in Ontario. Remember you one must earn \$19,200 per year before tax to support this expense.

I have always read articles like the above, my spending habits have seeped into my sub conscience as a result every expense small or major is sub- concisely calculated, if I do stray off course, I basically tell myself off. Keeping my experiences in mind I can tell you that I absolutely hate debt and if I don't have one. I made a concentrated effort to pay it off the mortgage and the car loan.

Going back to cost cutting and budgets, lets talk about food inflation It is expected to be around 3% in 2026. To highlight this this let's look at a medium coffee from McDonalds, the cost has gone from \$1.30 to \$1.45 an increase of 15 cents or 12%.

Another example would be on eating out, just before Covid I used to buy an oxtail meal from a local restaurant and paid \$12, yesterday I bought the same dish from another local restaurant and I paid \$24.85 more than

double over a period of five years, was I happy- NO.

So how does one handle and save on expenses, the start you must be looking at your spending habits (budget). Grocery shopping buy no-name brands instead of big brands and buy bulk where and when possible, shopping at Costco is a great option both for bulk and Kirkland branded products.

Day to day commuting use public transit, walk, cycle, bike share, carpooling or some of the options that can and should be considered. If one has no car Uber or Lyft can also be a good option when needed.

As I indicted earlier re the average cost of owing a car is very high and if having a car is a must, buy a used auto or consider a hybrid or EV vehicle look at these options and do the math before buying.

Debt, have no debt should be the primary focus. Credit card debt is very expensive remember one is paying with after tax money. Some banks have good offers to transfer your credit card balances, offering a few months of interest free payments. Mortgage debt at renewal time look

at various options use a mortgage broker, once agreed upon, pay your mortgage as if you had signed off on the higher rate.

A .5% reduction in the mortgage will save \$2,500 on a \$50,000 mortgage per year in interest. This is huge, again remember you are paying with after tax money.

Eating out or dining/ entertaining can be a big draw on your resources, and it is easily controllable. When, where and why is all in your hands, in my pervious example this was a 207% increase over a 5-year period. Yes, it is very convenient, and the reader may have no

choice but to throw caution into the wind, if doing so, weigh the options. Wardrobe shopping for yourself and the family, buying the latest fashion's can be a very expensive habit and not to say not very eco-friendly. Growing family consider hand-me-down when and where possible. Second hand stores do carry a lot of good products and should be a part of your wardrobe. Have a happy New Year.

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.



Retired Judge Speaks

By Retired JUDGE LLOYD BUDZINSKI

Our New Year's resolution: defining what it means to be Canadian in a world of conflict.

As we start this new year, we're all thinking about resolutions—promises we make to ourselves. But this year, we need a big promise, a national one: We have to decide, once and for all, what it means to be Canadian in a world that's gone half-crazy with conflict.

The news is brutal. When you see those reports—mass killings in Australia, the attacks on ordinary folks at churches and synagogues in the U.S. and in Canada—it hits home.

It reminds you of the violence people were running from when they came here.

Here's the plain truth: we have a choice. Do we let the ugly fights from overseas spoil the peace we work hard for every day? Or do we stand shoulder-to-shoulder to protect this Canadian life? It's a bit like a moral Canada First rather than a greedy' Economic America First'

The answer, if you use common sense and remember our history, is clear: We can't have demonstrations that stir up trouble or turn one neighbour against another. Our most important first job is keeping the peace right here at home before we try to solve problems abroad.

Our focus should not be as much finding fault as finding peace. That's the message for university campuses, government and in our diverse communities

If we want to have any say in the world, we have to look united. You can't be a serious international peacekeeper if your own backyard is full of shouting and hatred. When a country is divided, nobody listens to its advice.

Our peace at home is our best diplomatic uniform. If that uniform is ripped up by local fights, we look like a mess, and we lose all our pull in the world. Our unity is the foundation for everything. We need civility. Parents and our leaders must teach civility, there are too many threats and name calling. The noise doesn't enhance problem solving it destroys dialogue

Our world reputation is working together to find solutions

To see why this matters, look at how Canada was built. We weren't born out of a simple revolution. We were built by the long, hard work of compromise.

From the start, the French and the English had to figure out how to share the land. But we ignored the First Nations. Catholics and Protestants had to agree on rules to live.

Then came the waves of folks from every country you can name, all joining in as neighbours.

Finally, we learned the importance of reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples, who were here first, that for peace, all people must be seated at the table. Inclusion is the key.

If you are Canadian, this tradition of finding a workable solution is deep in your bones. It's in our DNA to compromise.

Just look around South Etobicoke. Walk down to the water. You see a mix of every colour, every background and every faith. That mix is not a headache, it's an opportunity, the world at our doorstep—it's our Canadian success story.

What ties us together is simple: the dream. We want a safe place to raise our families, a decent job, and a fair shake from the people next door. We or our parents came here fleeing violence and chaos. We traded uncertainty for the stability of a Canadian life. This peace is worth more than gold, and we can't let outside arguments wreck it.

The Lakeshore itself is a perfect example. The water changes every day, but the shoreline is always there. We share that shoreline—fishing, walking, watching the kids. It's a physical reminder that we all stand on the same solid ground.

When people show up to protest, that's their right. But when those protests become angry shouting matches that target Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Croatian, Serb, White, Gay, Brown or Black or anyone else, they are committing violence against the Canadian way of doing things.

Our tradition is to build understanding, not division. When you're a good neighbour, you don't care about ancient history; you ask if they need a hand with the groceries. That's the Canadian spirit. When hate comes to town, it ruins the trust that lets a mixed community work.

We are not "us and them." We are all "us," sharing the same lakeside air. This is our covenant: The Jew must protect the Muslim; the Christian must protect the LGBTQ and so and so on.

We must protect every single neighbour, no matter what fight is raging overseas, because our mutual protection is the core of our values. We have as much a duty to protect Charter Right as does the State.

Our job as citizens is practical: refuse to take the bait, insist on dialogue, and actively protect the person next door. Our national anthem says, "We stand on guard for thee." That promise is not just for soldiers; it's for us. In our diverse community, standing on guard for thee means every single background stands together to protect the peace we all found here.

If we keep the peace at home, we honour the promise this country made to everyone who came here seeking refuge. We become the steady, clear-headed model the world desperately needs. Let's focus on the local work of peace.

That is the Canadian way forward. Reach out and protect your neighbour even if you disagree at least you can share a coffee together and talk about the weather.

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 17th floor balcony in March 1981. He can be reached at lbudzinski@talkjustice.info

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Three Etobicoke teachers are chosen among tops in C'da

City to hold sweepstakes for fans who can't buy FIFA tix



TEACHER MIEKE NICHOLSON

Three Etobicoke teachers have been awarded the prestigious Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence for positively changing the lives of their students. "Every year, educators spark curiosity, build confidence and change the lives of their students," said awards spokesman Eric Dumoulin. He said The Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence in STEM and Excellence in Early Childhood Education recognize their outstanding contributions. This year 70 recipients from across the country were honoured with awards for their creativity and dedication. The top Etobicoke educators teach at Beaumonde Heights Junior Middle School, Thistletown Collegiate Institute and Silver Creek Pre-School. Teachers Chey Cheney and Pawanjit Kaur Wander, of Beaumonde Heights, in the Islington and Finch Aves. W. area, took top honours for

teaching excellence.

"Cheney turns student voice into a tool for change," according to a release. "Through podcasts and media projects, he teaches them to speak up and impact their world."

Wander puts inclusion and social justice front and centre as her students 'speak up, express themselves, and engage in their community. She shows them their voices can transform society.'

Thistletown's Keith Hoare is described as making science exciting and accessible to his students.

"His hands-on experiments push his students to think differently," organizers noted. "His teaching turns curiosity into a driver of success."



CHEY CHENEY top teacher from Beaumonde Heights.

Mieke Nicholson was recognized for Excellence in Early Childhood Education, and awakening scientific curiosity through hands-on experiments.

"Her students ask questions, tinker, and discover for themselves. Her classroom becomes a lab of wonder," they noted.

The Prime Minister's Awards recognize teachers and early childhood educators for their achievements in education. Nominations for the 2026 Awards are still open.



TEACHER KEITH HOARE of Thistletown.



SWEEPSTAKE for FIFA World Cup tickets.

City officials are kicking around a plan to hold a sweepstake for FIFA World Cup 2026 tickets for games in Toronto this June.

A motion has been adopted by City Council to purchase an allotment of 3,546 World Cup tickets that Toronto has an opportunity to

purchase to generate funds as World Cup Hosts.

A soccer hub at Centennial Park, free programming and mini pitches will be created from revenue generated from the sweepstakes as part of a Soccer for All Legacy program.

Councillors have authorized FIFA Toronto officials to conduct a sweepstake or other prize draw that will provide some Ontario residents a chance to buy 52 of the World Cup Toronto 2026 tickets to raise funds.

The Executive Director FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto Secretariat will be able to determine the appropriate contest rules for such prize, including eligibility requirements, in accordance with any legal requirements for such prize.

The City of Toronto as FIFA World Cup hosts has the opportunity to purchase a ticket allocation of 1.5 percent of the stadium capacity, or 591 tickets per match for a total of 3,546 tickets for the Toronto matches.

A report said 1,594 or 45 per cent of these tickets are allocated for City officials or for use in a Host City Commercial Hospitality Program.

"... the City of Toronto can generate revenue and provide access to fans by conducting a sweepstakes," according to a report. "The sweepstakes would offer Ontario residents the ability to pay a nominal fee for a chance to access tickets to a World Cup 2026 Toronto match."

The matter was considered urgent as the sweepstakes must be in market by March 3, to 'maximize revenue generation potential, launching the sweepstakes as soon as possible.'



Former politicians skate for Food Bank



WELL-KNOWN ETOBICOKE politicians former MPP Morley Kells (left) and former Etobicoke Mayor and Toronto Deputy Mayor Doug Holyday, members of the Etobicoke Hockey Club, with the help of police (below) held their annual Friends & Family Christmas Skate December 21 at the Ford Performance Centre and collected hundreds of pounds of food and some funds to help the Daily Bread Food Bank and a local animal shelter. **Courtesy photos.**



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Looking after yourself and others in the community

JANUARY 6, 13, 20, 27, STONEGATE CHC afternoon drop-in on Mondays and Tuesdays from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for children up to six years of age and their caregivers at 10 Neighbourhood Lane, Unit 201. Indoor running shoes required. For more e-mail early.years@stonegatechc.org

STARTING JANUARY 8 USE mindfulness to improve sleep or anxiety at 3:00 p.m. online with **Corin De Sousa**. The class develops strategies to build your coping skills and resilience. You will gain tools to manage everyday stress or worry. To register, e-mail JasminD@lampchc.org or ericao@lampchc.org or phone 416-252-6471 ext. 308.

JANUARY 8 AND 15 WELLNESS SELF-MANAGEMENT series at 6 p.m. at LAMP CHC, 185 Fifth Street, if you are feeling stressed out or overwhelmed join us for a free workshop series to learn simple strategies to embrace your wellness with coach **Mary Craig**. Class will focus on breathing and muscle relaxation. To register email JasminD@lampchc.org or anthonya@lampchc.org phone 416-252-6471 ext. 308.

STARTING JANUARY 13 Chair Yoga with Meaux on Mondays at 10 a.m. and Wednesday at 1:15 p.m. for a gentle seated workout to strengthen muscles and mobility and improve balance using bands or light weights. Contact JasminD@lampchc.org or anthonya@lampchc.org call 416-252-6471 ext. 308.

JANUARY 13 QiGONG WITH KATY on Mondays January 13, 20, 27 at 11 a.m. at LAMP CHC. Qigong is an ancient Chinese practice combining gentle movements, breathing technique, and meditation to balance energy in the body. QiGong reduces stress and anxiety, enhances balance and flexibility, boosts energy, and improves mental clarity. E-mail jasminD@lampchc.org or ericao@lampchc.org phone 416-252-6471 ext. 308.

JANUARY 14, 21, 28 FREE DRUMMING WORKSHOPS AT LAMP CHC, at 1 p.m. for workshops with Chris and let the rhythm take control. No experience required and come unleash your inner groove. Great activity

for brain health. E-mail rosema@lampchc.org or JasminD@lampchc.org or call 416-252-6471 ext. 308

JANUARY 14 SOUTH ETOBICOKE COMMUNITY Land Trust 2025 planning session at 6 p.m. at LAMP CHC and become part of a transformative movement! As a member, you'll have a say in preserving affordable housing, green spaces, and community amenities for generations to come. For more contact info@SECLT.ca

STARTING JANUARY 16 on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga with **Briar** at LAMP-CHC for a gentle-seated workout. Stretch and enjoy some music and movement with Certified Hatha Yoga instructor Briar Boake. Build your core strength and improve your flexibility. Contact jasminD@lampchc.org call 416-252-6471 ext. 308.

JANUARY 19 MP JAMES MALONEY New Year's Levee from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 643, 110 Jutland Road. For more information call 416-251-5510.

MONDAY WALKING GROUP & Qigong from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. meet at LAMP CHC and join as we experience nature and take in the Fall beauty. Walking with or without poles, move at two speeds and enjoy gentle Tai Chi-like practice called Qigong. To register e-mail jasminD@lampchc.org or phone 416-252-6471 ext. 257, 308.

JANUARY 24 FREE HEARING SCREENINGS at LAMP CHC, 185 Fifth Street, if you experience trouble hearing? Canadian Hearing Services will be at LAMP to screen for hearing loss in order to book an appointment, contact jasminD@lampchc.org at 416-252-6471.

JANUARY 30 LAHAAG AFFORDABLE HOUSING Meeting at LAMP CHC, 185 Fifth Street, 6 p.m. for a continuing conversation of the development of co-op housing in South Etobicoke. Also an invitation to participate in the leadership renewal team planning session. For more and to register email info@lahaag.ca

JANUARY 30 COOKING CLASS at Among Friends at 10 a.m. with LAMP dietician **Eileen Chan** for a fun, hands-on session as you learn to whip up Taco, lentil soup, pineapple salsa, or guacamole. E-mail ericao@lampchc.org or jasminD@lampchc.org or phone 416-252-6471 ext. 257 Hosted at Among Friends location, at 2788 Lakeshore Blvd West Unit #1.

JANUARY 31 MARKLAND WOOD GOLF CLUB at 1:30 p.m. to hear **Mark Goulart**, a FIFA Senior Project Manager reveal the extensive renovations being made to Centennial Park for the 2026 soccer tournament. All are welcome. \$20. RSVP by January 24 to website kingswaywomensclub.wordpress.com

FEBRUARY 5, 6 THE FUTURE OF CO-OP Housing Part 2 at 6 p.m. at LAMP CHC, part of a Building Affordable Housing Series. Guest speaker is **Tom Clement**, Executive Director of the Co-Op Housing Federation of Toronto. To register e-mail JasminD@lampchc.org or phone 416-252-6471 ext. 308.

FEBRUARY 12, 19, COPING WITH ANXIETY WORKSHOP at 6 p.m. at LAMP CHC for free workshop with wellness coach **Mary Craig** to learn coping mechanisms, mindfulness and wellness toolbox strategies. To register e-mail jasminD@lampchc.org or phone 416-252-6471 ext. 308.

LEARN THE UKELE on Wednesdays at 2:15 p.m. Free Ukulele Classes at LAMP CHC! Whether you're a beginner or just looking to brush up on your skills, join us for a fun and engaging musical journey with **Santiago!** To register, email anthonya@lampchc.org or phone 416-252-6471

FEBRUARY 28 COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR annual fundraiser by Haven on the Queensway. Walk around the Haven building and along 76 Fordhouse Blvd. for a winterrific family-friendly walk to raise money for charity. Check in 4 p.m. and walkers are asked to dress warm and comfortable. For more phone 416-640-2005 or visit info@havenontheq.co

Three strikes and you are out



Hundreds of encampment residents have to be asked by City staff three times if they require shelter space before sites are cleared. The encampments can be removed if they are 50 metres of a school, daycare or playground within 48 hours of being reported to the City. If outreach workers make three offers to place encampment residents in city shelters — regardless of whether there's actually enough space in those shelters — staff will then move to clear the site.

The move stems from change of by-law by

City Council last month.

The change stems from a response to a damning ombudsman's report that condemned the city's aggressive clearing of park encampments saying staff had "chosen speed over people."

The three-offer limit and directing staff to start with the 18 encampments located within 50 metres of schools and childcare centres.

A cut to refugee shelter programs by Ottawa would leave the city on the hook for \$107 million this year to support housing nearly 3,500 refugees in shelters, which Mayor Olivia Chow has argued should be a federal responsibility.

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Dec. 24 th	Java Club Christmas Eve Dance	7:30 - 11:30 pm \$20
Dec. 26 th	Holiday Tea Dance	12 - 5 pm \$23
Dec. 31 st	New Year's Eve Celebration	
	Gourmet dinner, dancing and bubbly at midnight (booked by Dec. 15 th)	7 pm - 1 am \$120
	Or after 9 celebration	9 pm - 1 am \$45
	just dancing, dessert and bubbly (no dinner)	
January 1 st	New Year's Day Lunch & Dance	12 - 5 pm \$23

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Spin me a Yarn helping to keep our community warm



TREENA EVANS AND Bob Carrol, of Spin Me a Yarn, in New Toronto, leave homemade free knitted or crocheted winter gear outside their store attached to a pole (right) for those who are cold to stay warm. **Staff photos.**

Treena Evans and hubby Bob Carrol are working to keep at risk members of the community warm and safe this winter. Evans has owned the Spin Me a Yarn store for eight years at 2855 Lake Shore Blvd. W., and is involved in a range of charities. Her store is well-known to area crafters for helping residents stay out of the cold.

“People in the community know the items are here and take it to stay warm,” he said. Evans said more younger people are getting into the craft since COVID. “It is good for concentration and mindfulness,” she said. “There are many benefits to crocheting and knitting.” The store is busy this holiday as people stock up with wool, yarn, needles and other accessories. Customers like the social space for crafters to knit and crochet; a place for people to learn new skills and where people can gather and share their projects. “We carry a wide range of Indy dyed yarns from local and Canadian dyers and we focus on bringing in new yarns every month,” she said. Today the couple are loading dozens of boxes into a vehicle in a Shoebox Project, in which the boxes are filled with gifts for at-risk women in shelters. They are also involved in a drive making blankets for pets in shelters. You can visit the store at spinmeayarn.ca



Outside the store are plastic bags containing home-made items as toques, gloves or scarves tied to a pole and available free for those who are suffering from the cold. All the items in Project Warmth are knitted or crocheted with love by dozens of volunteers, some in a social room in the store. “We have been doing this for three years,” Evans said. “Most of the items are gone overnight taken by those in need.” She shows a “thank you” note left by someone who took items to fight the deep freeze. “Anyone in need can come and take one,” Evans said. “The items are placed in plastic bags and are for those who are cold.” Bob said he got the idea from a social media post by another yarn shop years ago.

Etobicoke students set Canadian relay record



The Etobicoke Track team set an Ontario and Canadian records for the 4 x 400 relay at a York University track meet on December 7. The record was for mens’ under 18. It also turns out it is a Canadian record that was set 19 years ago. The team had two 17 year olds, one 16 year old and the youngest was Shaun Donald, of Long Branch, who is 15 years old. He is inset in the photo. The other members of the relay team included Trace Fordham, Kanury Uzuriaga and Mark Van Dalfsen. Donald is a Grade 10 student at Lakeshore Collegiate Institute. The previous record was set in 2006.

Etobicoke Community Band

30th annual show was great

BY MEGAN RAMPERSAUD

The Etobicoke Community Concert Band held its long-awaited 30th annual holiday concert “To Much Tinsel” in the auditorium at the Etobicoke Collegiate Institute. The December 12 concert was conducted by the Artistic Director John Edward Liddle and fans enjoyed classic Christmas songs as, “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” “Silent Night,” “Sleigh Ride” and many more. Attendees were invited to sing along to the Christmas songs and celebrated the season with treats during



THE BAND is jamming and the audience likes it. **Photos by Megan Rampersaud.**

intermission. The evening featured a special reading of “Twas the Night Before Christmas” by former Etobicoke MP Jean Augustine, who was last year’s special guest. “I’m always very happy to participate in any community events... I think it’s important for us to bring young people along so that they could participate, they could learn from, they could be mentored by some of the older musicians in the band,” Augustine said. She said the songs brought a fresh cultural and religious spirit of Christmas over the years. “If you walk through the room I’m sure people here are all religions and all nationality, but we all gravitate around the Christmas spirit... these men and women who are a part of the community are bringing that joy to us.” This year’s holiday concert was special to Liddle as the band is celebrating its 30th anniversary. “It’s an honour to still be doing it... COVID-19 has destroyed a lot of bands and our audience was older, so there was a three-year spread where nothing was happening,” he said. The band consists of about 40 volunteer musicians of all ages. “So now we’re in a rebuilding phase with regards to audiences and letting everybody know we still exist,” he said. Liddle explained that no person is left out and the goal is for ‘the community to feel life with music for a couple of hours.’ “It’s a privilege and honour to have Jean Augustine narrate for us, every year we try to have a special guest read but we were lucky to get her again,” he said.



THANK YOU FOR READING US AND WE WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A SAFE, HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!



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