

The Uxbridge Cosmos

Vol. 19 No. 32

TheCosmos.ca

Thursday, August 17, 2023

Lodge Hall coming down • A catch-up conversation • Why no news is bad news



HANDS OF INCLUSION - 'Together,' a sculpture depicting a light-skinned hand and dark-skinned hand clasping together, was unveiled at the Uxbridge Historical Centre last week. Carved by Zephyr artist Ryan Locke from a dead maple still rooted in the ground, the sculpture celebrates diversity and inclusiveness.
Photo by Lisha Van Nieuwenhove

Toronto Street accident leads to displaced family, disbelief at brazen theft

Conrad Boyce, Local Journalism Initiative

An August 2 traffic accident on Toronto Street South has led to two shaken families, a badly injured truck driver, and a community shaking its collective head over the theft of the victims' household possessions.

It was about 11:30 a.m., when the family in #60 was violently disturbed by a very loud noise, and the whole house shook.

"My husband Vince works nights, and was sleeping," recalls Shannon Duke, "but he leapt out of bed and tried to get out the front door. He couldn't, the house had shifted so much."

When Vince Dayrit finally got outside, he found that a large north-bound truck had veered off the road, damaging his car and that of the family next door, before plowing into the house and coming to rest on the front porch. When the police arrived minutes later, they helped the truck driver, still conscious,

...continued on page 3

Homeless woman charged after downtown vandalism

Conrad Boyce, Local Journalism Initiative

A homeless woman who has been frequenting various downtown Uxbridge locales for the last 10 months, has been arrested and charged after windows were smashed in two Brock Street businesses.

About 4:15 a.m., on Wednesday, Aug. 2, a security camera at 1 Brock Street West, which houses the Brock and Main Business Centre and Reilly/Back Accountants, recorded a woman smashing the front door with a brick. About 15 minutes later, another camera recorded the same individual smashing a store window at Mani-Tea tea shop, 19 Brock West.

When they arrived later in the morning and discovered the damage, both Yiyuan Wang, owner of Mani-Tea, and Bruce Reilly, owner of Brock and Main, checked the camera footage and realized that they recognized the woman

wielding the brick. They turned the footage over to police, who later arrested Rachel Imhoff and charged her with nuisance under \$5,000. She was released under a peace bond that forbade her to go near that area of Uxbridge. She has not been seen in downtown Uxbridge since her arrest.

Wang said she and her husband are keeping the brick because it has a hole through the centre of it, which, on one side of the brick, is quite small and narrow, but on the other side it opens up (the hole is cone shaped), and Wang said her husband told her to keep it because if they look through it in hard times, they will always remember to look through the small things to get to the larger picture. She also said, when asked how she was on Wednesday morning, "I'm good! I'm calm! After a tornado, and then the fire (last September), this is nothing!

I'm very calm!" Wang said that Imhoff had been in the store several times, and they always gave her what she wanted (water, hot water, tea or coffee, little snacks) at no charge.

Reilly, of the accountant office, said he also had several encounters with Imhoff, usually as she sat on the bench outside his building.

"Sometimes she was pleasant, sometimes not. Lots of people along the street had the same experience. At least we know it wasn't random vandalism. We know who did it, and we know why. I hope she gets the help she needs."

Uxbridge Mayor Dave Barton, who has been dealing with complaints about Imhoff for several months, echoes that sentiment.

"Various agencies have tried to help her, but she's refused all professional help that would include wrap around supports like housing,

...continued on page 3

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Uxbridge at a Glance

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The Township of Uxbridge

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Council & Committee Meetings

Meeting Schedule for August, 2023

Monday, August 28, 7:00 p.m.
 B.I.A.

Employment Opportunities

Complete details of all open positions are available at www.uxbridge.ca/careers/

Uxpool – Lifeguards and/or Instructors, Fall season - Closes Wednesday, August 30, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

Parks Department – Grass Cutting Attendant, Union, 2-month contract
 Closes Wednesday, August 30, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

Public Works and Operations Crossing Guards
 Resumés accepted on an ongoing basis.

Fridays at the Foster Concert Series

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Every Friday night from 7:30 - 8:30pm
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Admission is by donation at the door.

Aug. 18 - Shimoda Family Ensemble – Instrumental
 Aug. 25 - David & Sarah Mills

Pre-registration required. Please call 905-640-3966 or email beverlynortheast@gmail.com

The Foster Memorial is open for tours July and August from Wed. to Sun.
 11:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

FIND YOUR FOREVER FRIEND
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 The Uxbridge-Scugog Animal Shelter has many furry friends available for adoption, including kittens, cats, bunnies and dogs!
 Meet the adoptable animals by visiting the shelter at 1340 Reach St, Port Perry
 Call 905-885-9947 for more information

Uxbridge Music Hall
 now accepting event and show bookings
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 Check out our upcoming shows at uxbridgemusicall.com

Township of Uxbridge Board & Committee Appointments

The Council of the Township of Uxbridge invites applications from members of the public who are qualified electors of the Township of Uxbridge to be considered for one of the following committees:

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Open to persons who identify as a person with a disability and who wish to work with Council to review, develop and implement plans, policies and programs to create an accessible and barrier-free community, for a four-year appointment (Term of Council, expiring November 2026).

Age Friendly Advisory Committee

Open to persons who wish to advise Council on the current state of age-friendliness of Uxbridge and can recommend ways to optimize opportunities for residents to age in place and remain engaged in all aspects of civic and social life.

Any person interested in offering their services, and would accept an appointment to these committees are invited to submit a Volunteer-Committee Member Application Form available at the Clerk's Department or on the Township of Uxbridge website under Committees and Initiatives, http://uxbridge.on.ca/committees_and_initiatives, along with a resume and letter of interest outlining relevant qualifications and experience.

Applications for the AAC and AFAC may be sent to Emily Elliott, Deputy Clerk/Uxbridge Accessibility Coordinator, 51 Toronto Street South, PO Box 190, Uxbridge ON L9P 1T1, or via email elliott@uxbridge.ca

Uxbridge BIA Board of Directors

If you own a property or operate a business within the BIA zone (see <https://www.uxbridge.ca/en/bia/about-the-bia/member-resources.aspx>) and have ideas on improving the BIA, please consider this opportunity to help shape our business community and make a difference to the vitality of Uxbridge! Applications may be sent to Debbie Leroux, Director of Legislative Services/Clerk, 51 Toronto Street South, Box 190, Uxbridge, ON L9P 1T1 or via email at dleroux@uxbridge.ca

The Township of Uxbridge is committed to ensuring that our community is fully accessible for residents and visitors alike. We do this by following the regulations outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), our Accessible Customer Service Policy and by removing barriers so individuals can access programs and services in our community.

The Township of Uxbridge is an Equal Opportunity Employer that is dedicated to an inclusive, barrier-free recruitment and selection process. The Township is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion within its community and organization, and welcomes and encourages applications from Indigenous Peoples, people of colour, women, persons who live with disabilities, people from 2SLGBTQ+ communities, and people from diverse communities. When requested, the Township of Uxbridge will accommodate applicants throughout the recruitment and selection and/or assessment process, pursuant to the Ontario Human Rights Code. These commitments also apply to our Board and Committee recruitment and selection processes.

Personal information is collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Registration for Fall Swimming Lessons opens August 29th at 9:00a.m.
 Register on-line at ActiveNet

Fire Service Training Exercises
 The Uxbridge Fire Department will conduct training exercises at the Fire Station August 18th-20th
 A smoke effect and air horns may be seen and heard by neighbours

Road Closures

- Planks Lane, between Marietta St and Main St S., July and August – sidewalk closed and ongoing road restrictions
- Brock Rd. (Reg. Rd. 1) from north of Uxbridge-Pickering Townline to north of Webb Rd., to August 22 - expect daily lane restrictions
- Victoria St. between Brock St. W and King St. W., Sundays, May 7 - October 29, 7am to 3pm - Victoria St is pedestrian-only during Farmers' Market hours
- Uxbridge East Gwillimbury Townline from north of Durham Reg. Rd. 39/Queensville Sideroad to south of Holborn Road, East Gwillimbury - closed for bridge repairs to 2024
- Uxbridge East Gwillimbury Townline from York St. 500m south of Ravenshoe Road to Zephyr Road - closed for bridge repairs to January 2024

Sidewalk Closures

- Quaker Village Drive at Widdifield Court (west side ramps) – August 11 to 18 – sidewalk closed and ongoing lane restrictions
- Quaker Village Drive at Widdifield Court/St. Joseph Catholic School (east side) – August 11 to 18 – sidewalk and driveway closed and ongoing lane restrictions
- Centre Road at Brock Street West/Arena at Parking Lot (east & west side) – August 11 to 18 – sidewalk, ramps and arena pathway closed and ongoing lane restrictions

Road Closure
 Railway St. will be closed between Albert St. and Spruce St.
 Aug. 21st - Sept. 3rd, 2023

July-September 2023
Notice of Road Closure
 Planks Lane from Marietta St. to Main St. S. is closed except for local traffic. Sidewalks are also closed.
 Ongoing road work is occurring in this area.

UXBRIDGE HISTORICAL CENTRE
AUGUST EVENTS

Monday 19	Spoon Carving Workshop	Wednesday 23	Volunteer/Donor Night
Monday 26	Sip & Dip: Tea and Painting	Monday 27	En Plein Air Painting

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Toronto St. accident, from page 1

from the vehicle, and checked on the status of the family inside the house.

"None of us were injured," says Shannon, "but it was pretty scary. My baby son, Kai, cried at first, because he could feel how upset I was, but before long he was just fascinated with the firetrucks and flashing lights."

Meanwhile, in the house to the south, Katie Bottomley was the only one of her four-member family at home.

"I was working when it happened," she recalls. "I did hear a noise outside but assumed it was a garbage can falling over or something of that nature. I went upstairs about 10 minutes later and saw out the window that my car was at an angle in the driveway. I saw the truck when I went outside; it had hit my car, the neighbour's car and their house. Paramedics were already there and assisting the driver when I came outside."

Because the house at #60 was showing signs of instability, police and firefighters urged Duke and Dayrit to get some things together and prepare to stay elsewhere for a while. So they packed several suitcases and backpacks with clothes and other necessities, and put them on the Colborne Street sidewalk (the house is on the corner) while they continued to talk

with first responders.

"We only looked away for a few minutes," Duke remembers, "and when we looked back, our stuff was gone. There was too much of it for someone to walk off with it, they must have quickly loaded it into a car. Who would do that? I have no words for the kind of person who would rob someone else in their darkest hour."



The truck and car buried into 60 Toronto St. S. *Cosmos file photo*

"When I found out that Shannon's possessions were stolen, along with everything she needed for her baby," says Bottomley, "I started to cry and can only imagine the distress that it caused for them. It was shocking; I couldn't imagine that someone would have the audacity to take those things from what was clearly an emergency."

Despite the theft, Duke and Dayrit were heartened by the response from the Uxbridge community. Township staff across the street found space for them and their dog to stay until a

rental car and alternate accommodation could be arranged. A local service club provided money to replace some of the stolen possessions. First responders were uniformly kind and helpful.

"It was a silver lining," says Duke. "We know Uxbridge is a good place."

Duke and Dayrit moved north from Toronto four years ago, they have no family in the area. So until the house is liveable again, they're living in a hotel in Whitby. Police say both the accident, and the theft, are still under investigation. The truck driver, who suffered a medical episode that led to the accident, is recovering.

Another issue arising from the accident: the safety of the street.

"Being that Toronto Street is so busy," says Bottomley, "we definitely have had safety concerns. The new crosswalk that went in near the township hall has helped when crossing the street with my kids, but many cars do not slow down or stop

for us. Despite the new 40km/h speed limit, we get many vehicles speeding through at all times of the day. Our biggest concern is the large trucks. This is not the first time that vehicles have driven into houses on our street, and we would really like

to see some changes so that we can feel safe. We are grateful that no one was hurt - this time - and we hope that this incident might be a catalyst for change on Toronto Street."

Rachel, from page 1

mental health or addiction counselling. She has had most of her day to day needs met by well-meaning residents and local businesses providing food, cash, blankets or clothing, but I feel the best approach with very complex individuals is to link the day to day needs with this envelope of professional sup-

ports. The best way to support individuals experiencing homelessness is to support the organizations who are providing these wrap around services."

The mayor mentioned that Durham Region is opening two new facilities in the coming months to help those experiencing homelessness: the Beaverton Supportive Housing Unit and the recently purchased former

Sunnycrest Long Term Care building that is being converted into housing supports in Whitby.

"Smashing the windows was the last straw; economic status is not an excuse for vandalism," said Barton. "I just hope the arrest leads to her getting the professional help that she desperately needs."



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Our two cents

Facebook wants us to starve

As you may have heard, Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, has started blocking Canadian news from its social media platforms. Even the little ol' *Uxbridge Cosmos* has fallen victim to this travesty.

Why did one of the world's richest companies decide to take this drastic step? In short, it doesn't like the fact that, after making money from the hard work of Canadian journalists for almost 17 years, they're now required to fairly compensate the content creators. It basically wants to have its cake and eat it too – Facebook wants to make money from news, but is unwilling to provide the financial resources to ensure that reliable, trustworthy news can be created.

But wait, you say. Don't newspapers *choose* to post their content on Facebook and Instagram? Why should they be able to make use of the social media tools for free and then expect payment for items that they themselves chose to share? Isn't this just a case of newspapers not adapting to the times?

What newspapers are doing on social media is the same thing that's been done for decades with print editions. Many titles have long histories of distributing copies, free of charge, to local coffee shops, libraries and seniors' residences in order to improve access to their content and to keep locals informed of the important community news of the week. Now, imagine that those coffee shops, libraries and seniors' residences turned around and sold or rented those copies to patrons and residents and kept all the money for themselves. Doesn't seem right, does it? Well, that's exactly what Facebook, Instagram and Google are doing when they sell ads based on the traffic that quality community journalism brings to their sites.

So, rather than helping to promote democracy and civic inclusion, as well as preventing the growth of unchecked misinformation on their platforms, the online giants have decided to place their bottom lines ahead of what's best for their users. However, despite protests to the contrary, we think they're going to discover just how important the presence of local news content on their sites is to them. Several large advertisers have already pledged to stop advertising on the platforms, and we'd wager that the amount of time Canadians spend actively engaging Facebook will also go down as readers look elsewhere for the news and information they crave.

Fortunately, since Facebook, Instagram and Google don't create news, the news they're hiding from you is still being produced by the same local journalists you've come to know and trust.

If you're searching for the *Cosmos* online, you'll now have to go directly to thecosmos.ca. This contains all the same stories that you would have previously seen on social media or Google, only without the middleman. And of course, you can always get your news from the print edition, which is delivered to you each week!

Those of us who have chosen to make a career in journalism and newspapers understand the duty we have to keep our communities informed, to ensure that those with power don't abuse it and to help promote a sense of belonging and pride in the places we call home. However, we can't do it for free and we shouldn't have to sit by while others earn money from our passion and efforts while contributing nothing to the cost of its creation. It's like believing that as long as we're paying the grocery stores, the farmers can get nothing.

In that world, we'd all starve. In the world that Facebook, Instagram and Google seem to want to create, we'd all be starved for credible, reliable local news.

Gordon Cameron is president and interim executive director of the Ontario Community Newspapers Association. g.cameron@ocna.org



Letters to the Editor

Save the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve

The Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve (DRAP), just south of Uxbridge, was promised to Ontarians to be preserved in perpetuity for agricultural purposes and green-space. The Ford government wants to gift this Durham jewel to its de-

veloper pals. We all know the reasons, as the Auditor General's report makes clear.

The DRAP lands are not needed for housing, the Region of Durham opposes their conversion to housing, and Durham residents are opposed to this theft of Greenbelt land.

MPP Peter Bethlenfalvy should

know that crony capitalism and repeated lies are not Conservative values. They are corrosive to democracy. Tell Bethlenfalvy that the DRAP needs to be returned to the Greenbelt. None of us voted to have Ontario run by an unelected developer cartel.

*David Le Roy
Uxbridge*

Uxbridge MPP silent on Greenbelt report

Conrad Boyce, Local Journalism Initiative

On Wednesday, Aug. 9, Ontario's auditor general, Bonnie Lysyk, released a much-anticipated report reviewing the Ford government's intention, announced last December, to remove some 7,400 acres from the Greenbelt in order to build 1.5 million new homes over the next decade.

So what exactly is the Greenbelt, and how much of Uxbridge is included in it?

In 2005, the Liberal Dalton McGuinty government designated about two million acres of protected farmland, wetlands and woodlands encircling the densely populated Greater Golden Horseshoe region in southern Ontario. It is one of the largest greenbelt areas in the world. It was designed to permanently protect productive farmland and natural features from uncontrolled urban sprawl. Except for the developed communities and the Uxville Industrial Park west of Goodwood, virtually all of the Township of Uxbridge is included within the Greenbelt.

The auditor general investigated the Ford government's proposal because,

in December 2022, the Province amended the Greenbelt Plan and Greenbelt Area boundary to remove (or re-designate) 15 sites, totalling about 7,400 acres, from the Greenbelt, ostensibly to support its goal to build 1.5 million housing units across Ontario over the next 10 years. None of the sites are in the Township of Uxbridge, but a considerable percentage is in Pickering, not far south of Uxbridge. On Jan. 11, 2023, the auditor general received a joint letter from all three Opposition Party leaders requesting a value-for-money audit and an assessment of the financial and environmental impacts of the government's decision to remove lands from the Greenbelt.

The final report revealed the following, to quote directly:

- The way the government assessed and selected lands for removal from, and addition to, the Greenbelt was not publicly transparent, objective or fully informed, and was inconsistent with the vision, goals and processes of the Greenbelt Plan, as well as previous amendments to the Greenbelt boundary.

- Opening the Greenbelt for development was not needed to meet the government's goal of building 1.5 million housing units over the next 10 years. (Planning officials across the GTA, including the chief planner for Durham Region, were unanimous in this assessment).

- About 92 per cent of the acreage removed from the Greenbelt was from five land sites passed on to the housing minister's chief of staff from two developers, including a land site associated with a third developer. (According to MPAC, the value of the lands owned by these three developers could rise by about \$8.3 billion as a result of being removed from the Greenbelt).

- Assessment criteria provided by the housing minister's chief of staff were altered and facilitated the removal of land sites from the Greenbelt.

- The proposal prepared by the housing ministry—signed and approved by the deputy minister of housing and the housing minister, and provided to Cabinet (including the premier)

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The Uxbridge Cosmos

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Am I wrong?

column by Roger Varley

Thanks, but no thanks

Township staff and members of council should have no trouble rejecting at least one of two special event permit applications they received this week, but whether they do so remains to be seen.

Two commercial enterprises made deputations via video feeds Monday to ask for the permits to allow them to put on holiday lighting displays in the township. Both are seeking to place their displays at locations on regional roads in rural areas and both locations are barely inside the township's boundaries.

The first deputation, in which the sound was so distorted that members of council had difficulty understanding what was being said, came from Illuminations Lighting Inc., which wants to set up a Christmas lighting display at a farm at 211 Regional Road 39, west of Zephyr.

The second deputation, the one that, as I see it, should be rejected, came from an outfit called Spooktacular Light Show and Journey Into Enchantment. This commercial outfit already operates similar events in other areas of the GTA at which they charge entrance fees of \$25 a car. They want to set up their lighting show at 1389 Brock Road, south of Pleasure Valley and only a couple of kilometres north of Claremont. That location didn't stop their representative from claiming they were bringing the event to Goodwood!

The proposed location is on the east side of Brock and sits at the end of a slow-curving S-bend. There appears to be only one gate into the property, meaning traffic would enter and exit - on a regional road - through the same gate. Given that the light show would be held after dark, one doesn't have to be a traffic expert to realize that's an accident just waiting to happen.

The spokesman said the company donates some of its proceeds to charity, but as councillor Willie Popp pointed out, the Uxbridge Optimist Club, which relies solely on donations to their Fantasy of Lights in Elgin Park, puts all of its proceeds back into the community.

The Fantasy of Lights, which brings thousands of visitors into downtown Uxbridge

every Christmas, is the only Christmas lighting display in the GTA which does not charge admission. Many of the visitors learn about the Fantasy of Lights via social media or YouTube. It's not beyond the realm of possibility that, if the light show is allowed on Brock Road, some visitors who have never been to Uxbridge might think they've arrived at the Fantasy when they see the display on Brock. In my opinion, both of these enterprises are seeking to cash in on the service club's success and neither one will bring any economic benefit to the township.

However, councillors and staff need look no further than the township's special events by-law. As clerk Debbie Leroux pointed out to me, a special event permit is required for events held on private property and requires various township departments to sign off on the proposal. Two sections of the by-law would seem to have already negated Spooktacular's application. Firstly, a special event permit allows for only one event a year on the same property. But Spooktacular's application said they want to run a Halloween light show late in September and the Christmas light show at later dates. It seems obvious to me that that amounts to two events, which is not allowed. Secondly, the by-law clearly states that "every applicant shall provide in full, within minimum sixty (60) days prior to the proposed Special Event, a complete application, at the time the application is submitted." Since Spooktacular wants to start its Halloween show on Sept. 29, it would appear they have not met the 60-day minimum timeline.

Given that it only took a few minutes on Google Earth to scout the two locations and a couple more to access the special events by-law, I am a little surprised that council did not reject Spooktacular's application immediately. Instead, they sent it off to staff for a report. It seems to me that when the report is delivered to council at its next meeting on Sept. 11, the report needs to contain only two words: "Application denied."

Tell me, am I wrong?



The Barris Beat

column by Ted Barris

What Bethlenfalvy's 100 don't see

He preferred to present the government's first-quarter fiscal results, focus on Ontario's deficit projection for 2023-24. But reporters preferred a response from Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy to the Greenbelt controversy in his riding.

"The 100 people I talked to say 'build,'" he answered. "That's what I hear and that's why we're going to continue on our build."

Eight days ago, Bonnie Lysyk presented what is her final report as provincial auditor general. In its 93 pages, the report reveals that the Ford government's aim to build 1.5 million new homes by 2031, does *not* require the opening up of the Greenbelt. Period. Further, the report illustrated that the Ford government's decision to release those 7,400 acres of Greenbelt lands for housing development was chosen under heavy influence from developers well-connected to the Ford administration.

"More troubling still," Lysyk said at her media conference last week, "the process was biased in favour of certain developers and landowners who had timely access to (Minister Clark's) chief of staff. ... (Those developers) could ultimately see more than a collective \$8.3 billion increase to the value of their properties."

The Greenbelt is 2 million acres of farmland and parkland (larger than Prince Edward Island), that is home to thousands of wildlife species, prime agricultural land, and the natural filtration system for millions of Ontarians' drinking water (not to mention the generator of millions of Ontario tourism tax dollars via its green spaces, hiking trails and farmers' market produce).

Despite the damning evidence of apparent corruption presented by Lysyk's audit, however, Finance Minister Bethlenfalvy preferred to acknowledge the 100 people he says he's talked to in his Pickering-Uxbridge riding as a bellwether of public sentiment. Might I suggest, in addition, that voters in Pickering-Uxbridge consider evidence tabled by investigative journalists at *The Narwhal* and *Toronto Star* newspapers. Since Premier Ford's release of the so-called "More Homes Built Faster Act" Bill 23 to open up the Greenbelt and remove fees to developers for the provision of sewers, roads and transit lanes, reporters have learned that certain developers had connections behind closed doors (i.e. like inside trading) about Greenbelt lands to be opened up for business. Indeed, Lysyk's report specifically illustrates that it wasn't government who tipped off developers but vice versa.

"A small group of developers," reporter Fatima Syed told podcast *Front Burner* this week, "was able to deliver to the minister of municipal affairs chief of staff, the senior most non-elected political staffer in that ministry ... Ryan Amato, a bunch of packages about lands that they owned and wanted opened for development."

Amato collected all these packages, Syed continued, and then hand-delivered them to a team of public servants, called "the Greenbelt Project Team," who covertly determined whether these lands should be opened to development. *The Narwhal* learned, for example, that this team told Amato some of these Greenbelt lands don't have appropriate infrastructure (sewage and electricity lines or transit and emergency services). And Amato told them to disregard those issues.

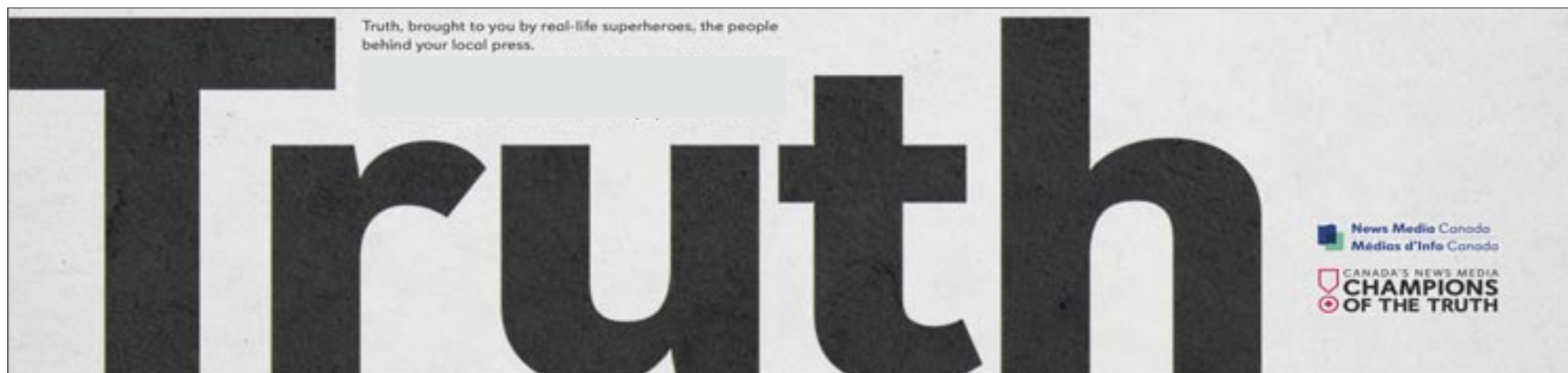
"The fact that this non-elected political staffer was able to do all of this and his actions resulted in an \$8.3 billion property value increase minimum to developers who own 92 per cent of the Greenbelt lands opened up is wild," Syed said. "In addition, it wasn't just members of that (Greenbelt Project) Team that (were) made to sign NDAs (non-disclosure agreements), but literally anybody who had anything to do with the Greenbelt ... 93 in total were signed, according to the auditor general's report."

Even more important, the suggestion that decisions of such environmental and financial magnitude - again, made by this non-elected political staffer - were *not known* by his boss, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark, nor his boss's boss, Premier Doug Ford, nor for that matter Minister of Finance Peter Bethlenfalvy, defies imagination. \$8.3 billion goes unnoticed in all three provincial minister's offices? That's like saying the premier doesn't listen to the news each day, or the housing minister doesn't see lumber price hikes, or the finance minister missed a Bank of Canada interest rate change.

And so I repeat, instead of recommending the reversal of what his own boss admits was a "flawed process" to unnecessarily release Greenbelt lands for development, the Ontario finance minister has chosen to listen to the 100 people he said he's talked to. Well, Minister Bethlenfalvy, I'd suggest that you might canvass a few more of the 94,124 registered voters in Pickering-Uxbridge.

You might discover that as many or more do not support your government's decision to build on Greenbelt lands, nor the manner in which you determine policy.

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



Orange Lodge Hall coming down, nature areas going up

Roger Varley

What little remains of the Orange Hall on the Uxbridge Historical Centre grounds following last year's tornado will be demolished.

Director of community services Amanda Ferraro presented council with a report on Monday offering a couple of options for the building's remnants. The first option is to build a replica of the original hall. As the

report stated, "it will not be the original building, but it will look very similar to what was on site previously." That option would cost an estimated \$425,960. The second option is to take a settlement from the Durham Municipal Insurance Fund for \$425,795.

Mayor Dave Barton said while the township could "mourn the loss" of the building, it should take the opportunity presented and accept the

settlement. After some discussion about the possibility of moving another historic building onto the site, council voted to go with the demolition and the settlement.

Also during Monday's council meeting, Michael Banh of the Rotary Club of Uxbridge appeared before council to seek support for the service club's proposal to establish a bioswale at Bonner Fields.

As Banh explained, a bioswale is a ditch that has been planted with native species. He said a ditch currently sits on the grassy area west of the multi-sports court. Planting native species would eliminate pooling in the ditch, leading to fewer mosquitoes in the area, as well as making the ditch more attractive. It would also provide a habitat for pollinators and educate the public about the need for pollinator gardens.

Banh said the cost of the project is

already covered by an \$8,000 grant from Toronto-Dominion's Friends of the Environment Foundation and a possible \$2,000 from Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Authority. He said Rotary plans to do the work on Oct. 14.

After praising Banh for his excellent presentation, council voted in favour of the proposal.

On a related issue, parks and facilities manager Courtney Clarke proposed allowing some areas of municipal properties to revert to natural states. Clake noted the township spends an estimated \$165,000 a year on grass cutting operations. She said allowing some areas to return to their natural state would result in cost savings on maintenance, help re-establish native plant species and support wildlife.

Regional councillor Bruce Garrod said council needs to "tread carefully" on the issue.

"There's a fine line between naturalization and looking unkempt," he said.

Councillor Willie Popp said he has never had a resident ask for an area not to be mowed.

Council moved that Clarke's report be referred to budget discussions later this year, that ward councillors be included in any discussions regarding naturalized areas and that an information packet be prepared for residents.

Uxbridge and the Greenbelt, from page 4

to inform the decision to change the Greenbelt's boundary—did not clearly and correctly explain how the proposed land sites had been identified, assessed and selected for removal.

- The government did not assess financial impacts such as serviceability costs, taxation impacts and land value impacts of Greenbelt boundary changes.

- The 2022 Greenbelt amendments were made without regard for environmental and agricultural risks, were contrary to the Greenbelt Plan's vision and goals of providing permanent protection to key agricultural lands and natural features, and may lead to adverse environmental and agricultural impacts.

- The Province did not make sufficient efforts to consult the public (including municipal or Indigenous leadership) in a meaningful way or to analyze all of the comments received from the public consultation process required by the Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993. No changes were made to the proposed removals to address any of the concerns raised during public consultation.

Despite repeated requests, Pickering-Uxbridge MPP Peter Bethlenfalvy refused to be interviewed for this story. Pickering, which contains a large percentage of the acreage designated for removal.

Uxbridge Mayor Dave Barton said, "The Greenbelt is very important for the protection of farmland and natural areas. Although we're not included in any removals currently, the pressures for more urban and housing development aren't going away, and Uxbridge taxpayers fund infrastructure to support commuters from areas like Lindsay, which aren't in the Greenbelt. This debate is going to continue."

In Loving Memory of Shirley Steward (Card)

June 3, 1930 - August 10, 2023



It is with great sorrow we announce the passing of our Mom, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Shirley Steward (Card) at Uxbridge Hospital on August 10, 2023, peacefully in her sleep at the age of 93.

Mom was born in what was then called Scott Township on June 3, 1930, to parents Leslie and Irene Card, joining siblings Allan Card and Wilma Doucette (both predeceased). She is survived by her children Elaine, Bonnie (deceased), Darlene, Sandra, Brian, Denise, Tanya, Derek (deceased) and Darryl. We remember also her partner in life, Larry, with whom she spent a number of good, loving years. Missing her also will be her little dog companion, Yogi, whom she loved dearly.

Shirley always liked to keep herself busy, usually knitting beautiful blankets and coverlets for her family. Her lovely embroidered work was lovingly made until her fingers got sore and she could no longer hold the small needles. She was a wonderful mother who supported and loved her family through the many highs and lows of our lives, always there for each one of us. A long and beautiful life you had – you will be missed by all those who LOVED you.

"Perhaps they are not the stars but rather openings in heaven where the love of our lost ones pours through and shines down upon us to let us know they are happy."

A Celebration of Life has been arranged at the Uxbridge Legion, 170 Franklin Street, Uxbridge from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Sunday, August 27, 2023, for family and friends to gather in remembrance.

For online condolences please visit www.lowandlow.ca



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LEASKDALE LOOP 'MUSIC HOP' Saturday, August 19. See 8 different musicians. Follow our driving tour for flowers, produce, baked goods, cider, syrup, artisans, historical sites. See leaskdaleloop.ca and FB/IG for details.

A Catch-up Conversation with Jennifer Carroll

Uxbridge actor Jennifer Carroll returns next week to the Historic Leaskdale Church for her annual run as Lucy Maud Montgomery in the solo play *Maud of Leaskdale*, about the formative years 1911-1926 she lived in the village. Anyone interested in Uxbridge heritage should see this powerful performance. To reserve tickets to the Aug. 24, 26 and 27 shows, visit lucymaudmontgomery.ca

Jennifer, our readers are so used to seeing you around town, they might be surprised to learn that you no longer live in Uxbridge. Where have you gone, what precipitated the move, and how are you settling in?

That's true – my family moved to North Bay last summer. We purchased our first home and have enjoyed the year settling into our new home and community. I love North Bay – I always say it's like Uxbridge, just a little bigger and with a few lakes thrown in.

The reason we moved here was that I have been running a touring theatre company called Proscenium Club out of North Bay for the past six years, and eventually the commute started to get to be a bit much, so with the growth and success of the company, we finally decided to make the move.

I know your husband, Davi Aquino, is a musician, and also works in the movie business as a Foley artist. What does that involve? Is it more complicated to do in a remote location?

Yes, Davi is a Foley artist and editor and his career has been built on the outskirts of Uxbridge at Footsteps Studios. Davi has made good connections through the

surprisingly small community of post-production sound and it has been a reasonably smooth transition to a combination of remote work, and traveling into studio when necessary.

As for music, Davi still performs down south with Julien Kelland, and has also recently started to perform here in North Bay, so I'm beyond thrilled for my new town to see how amazing he is.

Tell us about your two growing children. Are they going to be performers like you and Davi? Is your life as an actor and theatre producer flexible enough for you to be a big part of their lives day to day?

Ah, my favourite subject...Oliver (7) and Agnes (4) are pretty much the best humans in the world, yet so, so different. I think Agnes definitely has that magical performer's sparkle in her. She loves to sing and dance and can tell a heck of an entertaining story to anyone who will listen. Oliver has the deepest imagination, is full of sensitivity and has a deep love for reading that takes him to any world imaginable. But he's private. He doesn't love to get up and perform. In fact, for his Christmas concert at school last year, he just didn't understand "why it was any stranger's business" what song he learned and what choreography he had been practicing. It made me laugh. It fills me with so much joy that they are each so utterly themselves, and I'll be thrilled to watch them follow whichever passions move their souls. Being a self-employed artist has many pros and cons, but being

able to tailor my life around Oliver and Agnes is absolutely top of the list.

People often think theatre in Ontario all happens in Toronto and Stratford. How important is it to the life of your new home, and how have you gotten yourself involved in it?

Local theatre is an imprint of the life around it. It is responsive and reactive, and speaks to the heart and soul of the people who live everyday lives in everyday



Jennifer Carroll with her kids, Oliver and Agnes. Photo submitted by Jennifer Carroll

places. Theatre in North Bay is surprisingly vibrant and alive. A trip to a metropolis that has volumes of theatre on offer isn't feasible or available to everyone, so there is a robust community of high-quality artists that can bring the reflection of the human condition right to our door. There is a brilliant fringe festival in North Bay, an acting college, our touring com-

pany, which travels between Cobalt and Toronto up and down the northern corridor, as well as, many high quality community theatre companies. It is an inspiring place to be.

This summer will be your 12th as the star of the one-woman show Maud of Leaskdale, playing at the historic church in the Uxbridge village where Lucy Maud Montgomery's husband Ewan MacDonald was the pastor. How has your own growth as a person changed your performance as Montgomery, and your understanding of what she went through during her 15 years here?

I was told at the tender age of 24 that this could be a role I played for decades. I may have quietly rolled my eyes, being sure that nothing could hold my attention for that long. Surely, a single character and a single show couldn't provide that many years of artistic challenge, and surely not capture an audience for that long. I have yet to scrape the bottom of the well that is Maud. I have actually had the unbelievable gift of walking through my life hand in hand with her. Since starting this show, like Maud I have married, travelled, been pregnant, had children, reared them while trying to balance and accomplish my artistic ambitions...weathered a global pandemic...things I never imagined would help me understand her perspective, her joy, her struggles and triumphs. I am a better human and artist for knowing her.

What do you enjoy about playing Maud in that play? If you look back near the ending of your acting life, how important do you think that role will have been in shaping your career?

I love how she was just, a real person trying to do her best with the mixed hand she was dealt. She reached some unbelievable highs, but also handled some unimaginable blows. She was just...human. Granted, a human who had some acute, stunningly beautiful and funny insights, but a human nonetheless. A woman, a wife, mother, friend, artist,

a whole person. Perfectly imperfect. I think that's what I find so compelling about her. Yes, her accomplishments, but more so her imperfections. Her daily foibles. Her humanity.

Next year will be a special one to me – I will finally be the age Maud was when she arrived in Leaskdale. I have performed this play, hundreds of times, in 10 cities across two provinces. I think, in the years to come, I will be grateful that I could meet her, time and again, with the same suitcase in hand, and she will have taught me something new about myself each time. As an actor, that type of deep commitment, the unrivaled intimacy, the sheer length and breadth of time spent together as actor and character, has taught me stamina, given me a sense of never ending play and discovery, and allowed me to share and connect with people I never imagined I would. To hear how Maud has touched the lives – directly or indirectly – of so many people, and to hear the joy in learning about who she was, in the deepest, darkest, most intimate moments, is a gift and a debt I shall never be able to repay to the beautiful people who created this piece and who continue to support it.

How did growing up in Uxbridge influence your perspective as an artist?

I grew up with the ability to try anything, to be anything and to safely nurture a sense of dreaming without being knocked down or discouraged. It has never occurred to me that I couldn't fulfill my greatest dreams, because I lived in a town where there was always space to do so – to dream. Maud dreamed here, and so did I.

Can you share any exciting projects you have in the offing?

I am currently keeping busy with touring this show and developing a multi-year road trip with Proscenium Club's current play Happy Jack's Motel.

By Conrad Boyce, Local Journalism Initiative



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