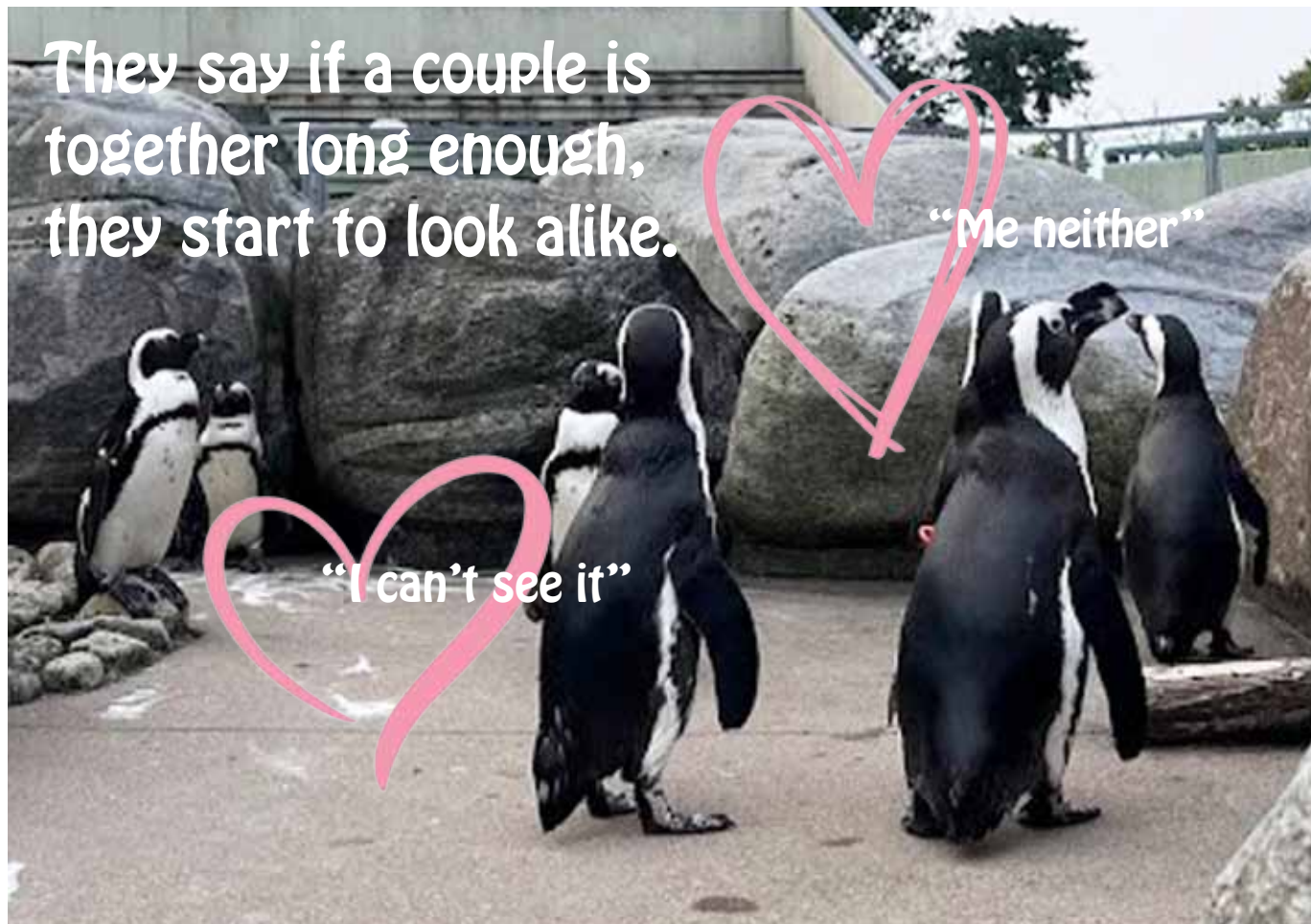




Centennial News

A publication of the Centennial Community and Recreation Association

Waddle I do without you?



The Toronto Zoo's African penguins are located in a special habitat designed to support the colony and keep them active with swimming and diving.

By Don Lawrence

Who doesn't love an African penguin? With their comical Charlie Chaplin waddle and slightly clumsy charm, African penguins keep guests at the Toronto Zoo smiling for hours.

Did you know that many African penguins are true romantics? They're often monogamous, forming strong lifelong partnerships with a single mate. Together, they build nests, take turns incubating eggs, raising their chicks, and protecting their home. Because of this devotion, African penguins are often featured on Valentine's cards as symbols of love, loyalty and partnership.

But in a busy colony full of look-alikes, how do they find their special someone? African penguins have unique black dot patterns on their chests – just like fingerprints – which help them recognize their mates. At the zoo, guardians also use coloured flipper bands to help tell who's who.

According to a Toronto Zoo Facebook post in December, they were thrilled to welcome four new African penguins. Since arriving, Charlie, Nina, Sophia and Big Red have brought personality, romance and a little drama!

Charlie and Nina have clearly found love and are rarely seen apart. Sophia is still exploring her options, and occasionally sneaks fish from older penguins when she thinks no one is watching. Big Red has certainly made waves by spending time with the youngest penguin, Matilda, much to the dismay of her current mate, Sparkles.

Behind the scenes, the Guardian Care team gets to know each penguin's unique personality, favourite fish and funny quirks. Some love attention and have been known to flirt shamelessly with guardians during feeding time.

Sadly, African penguins are now listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List, meaning they face an extremely high risk of extinction. Scientists estimate they could disappear from the wild in fewer than 4,000 days without urgent conservation efforts.

The Toronto Zoo supports African penguin conservation through a long-term partnership with SANCCOB. Through the Wilding Endangered Species Preservation Fund, the Toronto Zoo Wildlife Conservancy is committing \$50,000 over five years to support SANCCOB's Penguin and Seabird Rangers Program.

Get a membership and you could win an awesome prize!

By Denise Bacon

Centennial community residents, get your CCRA membership for 2026 by February 28 and you could win this amazing gift basket! The prize draw will be made at the CCRA Board Meeting on March 3 at the Port Union Community Centre. The meeting starts at 7:15 p.m. All Centennial residents are welcome!

Please see the Membership Form on the inside of the back page of this paper. You can pay by cash, cheque, e-transfer or PayPal. It's only \$15 for your household to become a member and to support YOUR community association this year.

Much gratitude is extended to Rouge Kitchen, an anonymous Centennial resident and CCRA for the generosity that filled the gift basket! Goodies inside:

- \$50 Rouge Kitchen gift card
- \$60 Disney Plus gift card
- Off-white knitted throw
- Family board game Dixit
- Jellycat - Collette Heart Macaron
- Power bank charger
- Bicycle Special Edition card deck
- Tostitos and Smartfood popcorn
- Centennial Community hoodie
- CCRA mug and pens



Here's the gift basket that will be won by a Centennial resident on March 3.



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Publishing Policy

CCRA Centennial News invites submissions of articles, signed letters, art and photography from Centennial community members and all elected representatives. We will consider all submissions for publication that are information-based and relevant to the community. Not-for-profit and community groups are also invited to submit event listings to be published free of charge, space permitting. CCRA Centennial News reserves the right to decline material considered to be unpaid advertising, politically partisan or likely to offend. CCRA reserves the right to edit all submitted material. The opinions expressed in CCRA Centennial News do not represent the views of the CCRA Executive. All submissions will be considered for both print and online publication unless otherwise instructed by the author. CCRA will notify all authors prior to publication.

To be published in CCRA Centennial News, articles must reach the Communications team by the 15th day of the preceding month. To submit an article or suggest a story, please contact any member of the Executive by phone, or by e-mail to editor@ccranews.com.

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5450 Lawrence Ave. East, Scarborough ON M1C 3B2

Advertising

Advertising in CCRA News

Nearly 5,000 copies of CCRA News are delivered, for free, to homes and businesses throughout the Centennial community and surrounding neighbourhoods. In addition, all ads appear in the online version of CCRA News, so you know your ad will reach customers.

Ad choices available include full page, half page, quarter page, banner and business card sizes. Ask about premium placement. To get your Ad in an upcoming issue, email Jill MacMillan at advertising@ccranews.com.

Notice to Advertisers

Advertising copy must reach the CCRA no later than the 10th day of the preceding month for publication. Files should be in high resolution PDF, TIF, EPS or JPG format for best results. Please e-mail your advertisement to Jill MacMillan at advertising@ccranews.com. Cheques in the correct amount are to be addressed to “CCRA” and deposited in the CCRA mailbox at 5450 Lawrence Ave. East, in the Port Union Recreation Centre. **It is the advertiser’s responsibility to advise CCRA of any problems with an advertisement before the 20th of the month in which the ad appears.** For more about advertising, visit www.ccranews.com/advertising

Facebook.com/ccranews - Instagram: ccranews - Youtube@ccranews.

Calendar

Key dates in February

By Kathryn Stocks

For a short month, February has a lot packed into its 28 days. First of all, it’s **Black History Month**, which celebrates events that honour the legacy and contributions of Black people and their communities in Canada. See page 5 to read more about it.

Then we have a long weekend in the middle that’s totally full: February 14 is **Valentine’s Day**, February 15 is **Flag Day**, and February 16 is **Family Day**. It sounds like a good time to plan some fun, and to fly your maple leaf to support Canada in these uncertain times. The day after that we have **Lunar New Year** and the beginning of **Ramadan** on February 17. Lunar New Year, also called Chinese New Year and Spring Festival, is the event that celebrates the beginning of a new year on the traditional Chinese calendar.

Ramadan is a month of fasting, prayer, giving and self-evaluation observed by Muslims.

Later in the month on February 25, we have **Pink Shirt Day**, which raises awareness about bullying and the importance of kindness. Pink Shirt Day is held on the last Wednesday of February each year.

Local Homes. Local Expertise. Local Giving.

Jill’s Team believes in giving back to the community we call home. That’s why we donate \$250 from every house we sell to a local non-profit chosen by the seller, \$2500 every year through our team sponsorship program and \$100 from every house bought or sold to the Royal LePage® Shelter Foundation.

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In 2025, Jill’s Team donated over **\$11,000** to local schools, food programs, community centres, shelters, rescues, and youth sports organizations across West Rouge, Scarborough, and Durham through our donation and sponsorship program. The full list of donations in 2025 is below:

Royal LePage® Shelter Foundation
Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities
Scarborough Food Security Initiative
St Paul’s Community Foodbank
Scarborough Health Network
Herizon House
Charlottetown JPS
Juliette’s Place
Fernie House
St Malachy CS
Port Union Community Centre

West Rouge Community Centre
Feed the Need Durham
Southern Ontario Sheltie Rescue
Operation Backpack Durham
Salvation Army
Canadian Cancer Society
Whispering Hearts Horse Rescue
Scarborough Sharks Girls Hockey
Ted Reeve Thunder Hockey Team
Durham West Lightning Lacrosse
Team Chelsea

For more information on our buying, selling or downsizing services or for a complimentary home evaluation, reach out to Jill’s Team at 416-417-5828 or info@jillsteam.ca.

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Not intended to solicit those already under contract with another Brokerage.

Clarification

In our January issue, we said that **B&C Aquatics** was closed. This wasn’t exactly true. They did close their location at Ravine Park Plaza, but it was done to streamline their operations under one roof at their facility in Pickering. We apologize for any confusion this might have caused.

President’s Message

Winterfest fun on a frigid but sunny day

By Kathy Rowe

Winterfest 2026 will likely be remembered as one of the snowiest and coldest Winterfests on record. Thankfully, the sun was shining, the wind was minimal, and the event was a great success.

I want to thank the Winterfest committee members, led by Jake Forsyth, who invested their time and energy, which resulted in a fun day for the community. CCRA is a proud partner with Winterfest each year and our financial support is key to the success of the event. The funding from sponsors and area community associations was hugely appreciated and we couldn’t have held the event without their generous support.

Big thanks to the students and Port Union Seniors volunteers. From the ticket sales, food servers and barbecue to the games and live entertainment, the volunteers were crucial to the success of Winterfest. Toon Goons, a new attraction this year, proved to be a popular feature. Attendees lined up for their chance to have their caricatures drawn and there were many smiling faces to be seen!

A special thanks to the talented performers who took to the stage. They also volunteered their time

and we were so pleased to have them perform for our community. The vendors added great variety to the event and it was fun to have them take part. Families enjoyed the free apple cider provided by Councillor Neethan Shan and the free tasty hot chocolate provided by the Heather Lemieux Group. Thank you to the staff from the offices of MPP Vijay Thaningasalam and MP Gary Anandasangaree for being there to engage with residents.

Once again this year, CCRA displayed a terrific membership gift basket at our table. (See details and photo on the front page.) This incentive always helps to boost membership sales. All Centennial households that purchase a 2026 CCRA membership up until February 28 will be eligible to win the gift basket. The winner will be drawn on Tuesday, March 4 at our board meeting. Please join and good luck!

If you were unable to attend Winterfest this year, mark your calendar for the last Saturday in January next year when the event will return. Check out our colourful centre spread for photos of some of the Winterfest fun.

Sign up for CCRA E-blasts

Every month our communications chair, Sue Anfang, sends out an excellent electronic news item to those



The CCRA team at Winterfest. From left: Shelley Cooke, Pam Collins, Rob Elbertsen and John Murphy.

who have subscribed to receive them. These “e-blasts” are an excellent way to discover community information that comes to us between our newspaper publications. Our paper is distributed at the beginning of each month, and the e-blast is sent out about a week later. Don’t miss out ! It’s easy to sign up and your information is not shared with anyone. Go to our website ccranews.com and scroll down to the bottom of the home page. Fill out your contact information under the heading “Email Updates” and click submit.

“Winterfest success was once again proof that our community loves to come together to celebrate the spirit of winter with family and friends.”

Kathy

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UPCOMING
EVENTS

FEBRUARY
2026

**SUNDAY
8
FEBRUARY**

SUPERBOWL WATCH PARTY
Tickets in advance at the Legion!
\$10 members, \$15 non-members
Includes wings served from 5 pm to 6pm.
Chilli & dogs while supplies last. 19+

VALENTINES Romance & Dance
with "Roller Coaster" classic rock band
Doors open: 6:30 pm Band at 7pm.
\$10 members, \$15 non members.
Tickets available in advance at the Legion!
Champagne for the ladies. 19+

**SATURDAY
14
FEBRUARY**

**SATURDAY
21
FEBRUARY**

POP UP KARAOKE with PIPER
It's your turn to be the star.
7pm to 11pm.
FREE for everyone 19+

PUB SUNDAY
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3pm to 7pm. Free for everyone 19+

**SUNDAY
22
FEBRUARY**

**SATURDAY
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Community

Join Team CCRA in support of Fernie Youth Services

By Kathy Rowe

Just beyond Centennial’s eastern border sits a residence that was once known as Fernie House. Now called Fernie Youth Services, it is a nonprofit charitable organization that operates a four-bed transition house as a safe home for young at-risk men.

With the help of caring youth workers, the young men learn the crucial life skills needed for a brighter future. They go to work or school or work preparation programs without the stresses of an unstable home.

By the end of their stay, these residents will be ready to return to their communities where they will contribute positively to society as they enter adulthood. The program boasts a 99 percent success rate in keeping youth housed and out of the justice system.

On Saturday, February 28, Fernie Youth Services will host a walk-a-thon fundraiser named Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY). This event is a wonderful opportunity to spotlight the urgent issue of youth homelessness in Scarborough.

Fernie Youth Services is hoping to raise \$25,000 and the CCRA will be supporting the initiative and taking part in the walk-a-thon! Area resi-



This walkathon is a wonderful opportunity to spotlight the urgent issue of youth homelessness in Scarborough.

dents are encouraged to register for CNOY to raise funds for this worthy cause. You can join Team CCRA and we can walk together!

More details about CNOY can be found by visiting en.cnoy.org. Type in Scarborough East in the location field and from there you can donate to a team or set up your own team.

Let’s join together and help make a difference to the vulnerable youth in east Scarborough.

Nature

Why deer shed their antlers

By Pamela Collins

Living on a ravine property, we see many deer ambling through our back garden, but what we saw on Christmas Day was truly awesome! Two bucks were trying to remove each other’s antlers.

Every winter across southern Ontario something remarkable happens: male deer drop their antlers. It’s a natural cycle that repeats each year, and it’s driven by hormone changes, not by injury or stress.

According to AnimalWise, during the mating season (or rut) the bucks experience a rise in testosterone that stimulates the growth of antlers. Antlers can take up to 150 days to grow, and they are made of real bone. But unlike horns, they aren’t permanent. Deer grow a fresh set every year as part of their reproductive cycle.

In late summer and fall, rising testosterone levels help harden the antlers in time for the rut, when bucks compete for mates. Once the mating season ends, those hormone levels drop, triggering a weakening at the base of the antler allowing it to loosen and eventually fall away.

Antlers play an important role in displays during courtship and combat for mates among males. The larger antlers are seen by females as more attractive as a sign of good health.



Two bucks helped remove each other’s antlers in the writer’s back garden on Christmas Day.

In our region, shedding, also known as antler regeneration, usually happens between late December and March. Older bucks, who expend more energy during the rut, often shed earlier while younger deer may hold onto theirs a little longer.

Almost as soon as the antlers drop, new growth begins. Through spring and summer, the next set grows quite quickly under a velvety layer filled with nerve endings that supply nutrients until the bone hardens again.

Growing and maintaining antlers is an energy-intensive process that requires substantial nutrients, especially in winter. By shedding their antlers, deer conserve energy and these nutrients when food is scarce.

Deer will assist each other to lose their antlers, but they will also rub against trees to help get them off. I lost two birch trees as the bark was rubbed clean off by the deer attempting to shrug off their antlers.

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Black History Month

National Flag Day

Honouring Black brilliance across generations

By Kathryn Stocks

February is Black History Month, and this year's theme is: "30 Years of Black History Month: Honouring Black Brilliance Across Generations – From Nation Builders to Tomorrow's Visionaries." The idea of honouring Black brilliance across generations reminded me of Rella Braithwaite, a Black woman who lived a remarkable life in this community, and died here in July 2019 at the age of 96. Here is a shorter version of the story we had about Rella in September 2019, which was a combination of a piece by Janice Bennink along with words from Rella's obituary.

Rella and her husband, Bob Braithwaite, a World War II veteran, purchased their property on Centennial Road in 1946. They were one of the first Black families in Scarborough. Rella and Bob became very active in school, church and community groups in Scarborough, while raising their six children, Bryan, Victor, Valerie, Cecil, Diana and Charlane. Rella was a member and supporter of CCRA right from the beginning.

The Braithwaites' six children attended Centennial Road Public School, where Rella would later receive a Lifetime Achievement Award for her involvement with the school for over 25 years. She also wrote a column entitled "Scarborough Board Happenings" for West Hill News.



Rella Braithwaite's writing and research recorded the history of Blacks in Canada.

Rella's passion for writing grew after recognizing the need to share her rich cultural heritage with her children. Born near Listowel, Ontario, Rella was one of the last surviving elders who had grown up in the Wellington County Black community, the first African-Canadian Black pioneer community in Upper Canada. It was formed in the late 1700s.

Since the 1960s, Rella's research and writing recorded the history of Blacks in Canada. Her publications made significant contributions to the existing body of work available here today. She wrote for Contrast newspaper for 10 years, producing columns on Black history and she co-authored a booklet, Women of Our Times, for the first Black Women's Congress.

In 1975, she published a book on outstanding Black women, The Black Woman in Canada; and in

1978, worked with teachers at the Ontario Ministry of Education on a Black Studies Guide for students. She played an important role in the formation of the Canadian Negro Women's Club and National Congress of Black Women.

Although a humble and soft-spoken woman, her writing is powerful, fueled by the belief that sharing Black history benefits all Canadians. In a 1976 presentation, she wrote, "For any race or nation to achieve recognition, it has to have an identity. This identity will become a source of pride, because a country without a history is a country without a future."

For her well-respected work, Rella was honoured with inclusion in Who's Who in Black Canada (2002 and 2006); Hall of Fame Award, ACAA (1998); Scarborough Bicentennial Civic Award (1996); Kay Livingstone Award, Congress of Black Women (1989); Accomplishment award, Association of Black Women (1983); Black Woman of the Year, Negro Colour Guard (1973). She was also selected for inclusion on Scarborough's Walk of Fame, but declined as she was unable to attend the ceremony.

If you'd like to learn more about Black history in Canada, here's the link to Rella's foundation: rellablack-historyfoundation.ca



Get your flags out to show your pride

By Kathryn Stocks

Canada's distinctive red-and-white maple leaf flag was raised for the first time on February 15, 1965, on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Thirty-one years later, the day was declared National Flag Day in Canada by Jean Chretien in 1996. Since Canada's sovereignty is being threatened regularly by our closest neighbour, it seems like we should continue to fly our beautiful flag this month.

There was a wonderful display in Centennial last year as hundreds of residents proudly flew their Canadian flags on their homes and in their yards in February. That was at the beginning of the threats of tariffs and annexation. Well, those threats haven't stopped. In fact, you've probably noticed they've been gaining strength over the past year. Flying the flag won't change the bullying behaviour, of course, but it does make you feel good about your country and shows your pride in being Canadian. And that's really important right now.

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Advertisement by Sue Anfang, Realtor

The dream many downsizing clients have is to find a wonderful bungalow. Imagine, all your living on one level (bedroom, bathrooms, kitchen, laundry) with some outdoor space to enjoy.

The problem is ... that most of the nearby bungalows were built in the 1950's and 1960's so don't have 'modern' conveniences like a main floor laundry room, ensuite bathroom and larger closets.

And since people tend to live in these homes until they can't; they either need a complete renovation (or if they're renovated and may cost more than the home you want to sell!)

The good news is there are some wonderful bungalow communities nearby. I've done the research so you don't have to!

Centennial & Highland Creek: There are a few bungalows tucked into the waterfront development. Because they were built fairly recently they have nice layouts - open concept main floors, ensuites & walk in closets. Did you know there's an enclave of newer bungalows in Highland Creek off Morrish Rd, behind

the shops? The downside with both those local options is they don't come up for sale very often and, they can be pricy.

Durham: Not too far from home you'll find a few communities in Durham region. In Pickering, there are main floor condos on the Esplanade. They have indoor parking (no shovelling!) but you have a private ground level patio & separate entrance. Inside, they are like living in a bungalow. Great for people who don't like elevators but want the amenities of a condo. They are quite reasonably priced.

In Ajax: Henderson Place is a complex of about 48 bungalows that are condo townhomes. Snow removal and lawn maintenance is done for you & you have a yard, main floor laundry, garage and basement. The community is gated for security. They cost less than detached homes. **Lynde Creek Village in Whitby** is a sizeable community of bungalow townhomes that are life leases at Taunton & Garden in north Whitby.

Wilmot Creek is popular with golfers. In Newcastle on the shores of Lake Ontario, Wilmot Creek is a large land lease community where all the homes are bungalows. They have superb recreational amenities including pools & a golf course. There's also a wide variety of social activities and clubs. Unlike homes in other golf course communities like Ballentrae, the cost of ownership is very reasonable. I have lots of information on my blog about buying land lease properties, so check it out!

Markham & Stouffville. A bit north there is Swan Lake Village - a gated condo community in Markham. My mom enjoyed living here for over 20 years. There are bungalows, bungalofs and low rise condos sharing lots of recreational facilities & a dynamic social calendar. Swan Lake prices can be higher than similar homes Durham, but there's a lot of home styles (and price ranges) to choose from. In Stouffville, you'll find Ballentrae a golf course community of luxury bungalows starting at well over \$1,000,000.

Of course there are lots more communities further afield - near Barrie, Bobcageon, Port Perry & Coburg. If you have questions about those, feel free to give me a shout at 416-562-5002

I have a ton of articles on these communities & more on my blog! The QR code will take you there where you can scroll through the articles without any annoying sign in required.



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Children's Books

Being a mother helped local author write stories for kids

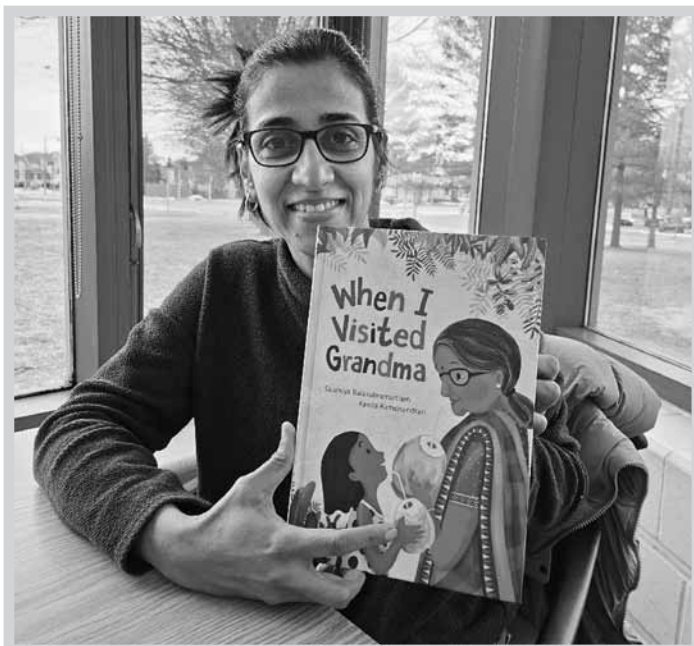
By Pamela Collins

Saumiya Balasubramanian is an author in the Centennial community who is best known for her children's books. She earned a PhD in Computer Science at McMaster University but after a time in that field she knew it was not her niche. Although the work grounded her and sustained her for a while, she wanted to write and explore her creativity.

She is now the Mabel Pugh Writer in Residence at McMaster where she mentors creative writing students through workshops and one-on-one consultations. She also works in the community and in libraries reading and writing with children.

Saumiya has always loved to read and explores a wide variety of genres and topics. Becoming a mother and reading to her own children, she found she wanted to write stories of her own. “I didn’t start out as a children’s writer; it just worked itself out because I felt very strongly about the stories I wanted to tell,” she said.

After she immigrated to Canada from India, her mother spent a summer with her and her family in Toronto. Watching the dynamic between two generations of different cultures inspired her to write her first children's book, *When I Found*



Saumiya Balasubramanian has written three children's books: *When I Found Grandma*, *Two Drops of Brown in a Cloud of White*, and *When I Visited Grandma*.

Grandma. It was published in 2019.

"I saw the play between a 5-year-old and a 70-year-old person living in the same household," she said. It's a story about the intergenerational and intercultural experiences of a grandmother and a granddaughter who don't really get along at first because they come from different places."

The book was nominated for an

**"I saw the play
between a 5-year-old
and a 70-year-old
person living in the
same household"**

Ezra Jack Keats Award and a Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award. It won the 2019 Spirituality and Practice Award and was featured in The Globe and Mail's "Seven books to help e of the world."

Saumiya has since published two more children's books: *Two Drops of Brown in a Cloud of White* in 2020, a heartbreakingly endearing story of

a little girl and her mother adjusting to life in Canada, and *When I Visited Grandma* in 2024. Here's a brief review of that book.

When I Visited Grandma

Maya and her family travel to India for a visit. Grandma wants to take Maya to the market to see the sights. Maya comes out dressed in her jeans with rips in the knees and Grandma tells her she can't go to market in torn pants because people will laugh at her and want to sew them for her, but Maya explains they are supposed to look like that.

The market is loud and noisy and lots of Grandma's friends were there to chit chat and some even came to the house after with sweets for Maya and Grandma. But Maya is overwhelmed and goes to her room, exhausted by the busy day.

The next morning, she finds out that Grandma was sent to hospital with a heart attack and is in ICU. On the way to the hospital, Maya insists on stopping at the market for a special coconut drink for her grandmother. Maya can't sleep worrying about Grandma and prays for her to come home. A sweet surprise ending awaits you.

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CLIENT EXPERIENCE

"It was a distinct pleasure selling our house through our agent, Erin Gregory. Her experience and talent in relationship building and project management made all the difference. Erin's communication skills are unparalleled. She promptly answered every question, anticipated the next steps with honesty and accuracy, and guided us through the entire process with confidence. Her commitment to the Centennial community was evident and very much appreciated."

Thanks for your effort on our behalf."

- MADELYN & JOHN REYNOLDS

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Mark S ★★★★★

"Jeannie was simply amazing! She prioritizes clients' needs and guided us expertly through both buying and selling. Her knowledge, coaching through fine details, and advocacy made her a dream to work with. From home searching to staging, purchase agreements and everything between, she was timely, thorough, and friendly. After such a wonderful experience managing these major life transactions, we couldn't imagine working with anyone else. Highly recommend!"

Jade Downey ★★★★★

"Jeannie and her REMAX team helped me sell over asking and find a perfect condo! After 25 years of accumulation, her full-service team (painting, plumbing, electrical, staging, contracting, deep cleaning) transformed my house beautifully. Don't know where to start downsizing? Call Jeannie - she makes the overwhelming process completely manageable!"

Alex Marks ★★★★★

"After our long, unsuccessful search, we found Jeannie and soon discovered our dream home in the perfect area. She guided us through every step—from searching and multiple offers to the home inspection and final purchase of our forever dream home. I highly recommend working with her; she's become not only our real estate agent but also a good friend."

Akhil Kejriwal ★★★★★

"Seeking a realtor in Port Union/GTA? Choose Jeannie for her deep area knowledge, exceptional listening skills (perfect for our remote search), and valuable contractor connections. Truly "A-Mazing!"

Sara Razmavar ★★★★★

Jeannie goes above and beyond - she's more like a friend than a real estate agent! Her meticulous, caring, and fun approach makes property hunting joyful. Even months after our commercial deal closed in May, she's still following up on construction and ensuring everything runs smoothly. Her exceptional client care truly sets her apart!

Dave Graham ★★★★★

"Jeannie's exceptional dedication and expertise made selling our home smooth and successful. Her professionalism and personal touch - from expert property showcasing to securing a fantastic deal - truly set her apart. Her invaluable guidance made this a positive, memorable experience. Highly recommend this outstanding realtor!"

Neil D'Souza ★★★★★

"Amazing experience with Jeannie and her team! She handled everything - from open houses and video shoots to social media marketing and staging - securing an over-asking price in a tough market. She even helped us find our dream home! Her knowledge, thoughtfulness, and incredible work ethic make her truly amazing for any real estate needs!"

Anne-Marie Avgerinos ★★★★★

"From our first meeting, we fell in love with Jeannie's amazing spirit and bubbly personality! Her caring yet professional approach made selling our home flawless. We couldn't be happier with the outcome and would choose her again in a heartbeat. She continues to maintain her exceptional service to this day - we're forever grateful!"

Penny Bell ★★★★★

"JEANNIE is the best rep out there! One of the kindest, most patient people I've met in years, her patience, expertise, and kindness made selling my family home stress-free. She also has the best sense of humor—we had some great laughs, and I've made a friend for life. I love Jeannie!"

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Sold Over Asking in 7 Days - Oct '25



65 Tudor Glen Cres
Sold in 9 days over asking Oct 2025



6 Ivanhoe Court
Sold over asking in 7 days Aug 2025



149 Clappison Blvd
SOLD over asking in 7 days July 2025



304 East Avenue
Sold over asking July 2025



3 Ivorwood Cres
Sold over asking in 7 days July 2025



6 Langevin Cres
Just Purchased July 2025



14 Eastport Dr
Sold over asking in 2 days June 2025



2 Wichey Road
Sold over asking in 7 days June 2025



64 Invermarge Dr
Sold in 7 days June 6 2025



72 Charlottetown Blvd.
Sold Over Asking in 7 Days May 2025



565 Rouge Hills Dr
Purchased May 2025



West Rouge Beauty
Purchased April 2025



9 Delbeatrice Cres
Sold Over Asking in 7 Days April 2025



20 St Magnus Dr.
Sold in 7 days April 2025



51 Eastport Ave
Purchased March 2025



74 Bathgate Dr
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224 Beechgrove Dr
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The Arts

Three theatre companies dazzle Scarborough audiences

By Denise Bacon and Kathy Rowe

A magical venue in Scarborough is calling to all of us. One can enter and be transported to a different place and time, and be made to laugh, cry, gasp, grip the edge of one’s seat, tap one’s toes or to stand up and cheer. This place is Scarborough Village Theatre, a gem waiting to be discovered, treasured and often revisited.

Theatre Scarborough is the organization that fills this space with wonder. It evolved from Playhouse 66 and moved to its current home in 1982 within the Scarborough Village Recreation Centre at 3600 Kingston Rd. at Markham Rd. This unique theatre thrives through the close collaboration of three distinct companies that share space, resources and talent: Scarborough Theatre Guild, Scarborough Players and Scarborough Music Theatre.

The uniqueness of this theatre lies in the passion and commitment of every single person involved. Everyone is a volunteer, including board members, set designers and builders, stagehands and managers, producers and directors, actors, box office, and front and back of house staff. Their dedication to the art of theatre is on display with each performance, which is delivered with a level of professionalism that belies the fact that this is amateur theatre.

The theatre showcases a thrust stage so there isn’t a bad seat in the house. Free parking, mobility and hearing accessibility make this theatre experience welcoming to all. And there’s more than performances. Do you have or know of a child who has a flare for acting, singing or dancing? Scarborough Music Theatre offers camps during PA days, March Break and in the summer. Check out smt-theatre.com for more information about theatre camps.

Scarborough Theatre Guild, now in its 67th season (wow!), brought



Above: Val Lusted was the producer of the play “Witness for the Prosecution” at Scarborough Village Theatre in January. Right: Val with actor Kevin Shaver.

“The Full Monty” to the stage last fall to great reviews. Agatha Christie’s gripping courtroom drama, “Witness for the Prosecution,” was performed last month. The Jane Austen classic comedy of manners, “Emma,” will be on stage in April, and “A Streetcar Named Desire,” a Tennessee Williams classic, will shock and thrill audiences in July.

Scarborough Players, also in its 67th season (wow again!), had an awesome lineup of plays for the 2025-26 season. “Lunenberg,” a Maritime-set comedy mystery by Norm Foster, played in September, and the classic “A Christmas Story” by Jean Shepherd delighted audiences in December. Coming up, “Good People” by Pulitzer Prize-winning David Lindsay-Abaire will be on stage in March, and Tom Stoppard’s story, “Arcadia,” will have comedy, romance and tragedy in June.

Scarborough Music Theatre evolved out of the Church of the Master Senior Choir’s concerts in the early 1960s. Those who love musicals need to travel no farther than Kingston and Markham to get their fix. “Hello Dolly!” by Thornton Wilder was pure fun in November, “Anne of



Green Gables,” adapted from L.M. Montgomery’s beloved story, was a family favourite also in November. “She Loves Me,” based on a play by Miklos Laszio, is on stage this month, and it has inspired many love story adaptations like “You’ve Got Mail.” And “Legally Blonde The Musical,” based on the novel by Amanda Brown, is sure to be a sellout in May.

To check out shows, buy tickets, discover how to audition or how to get involved, visit the theatre website at TheatreScarborough.com. Be careful though, you might get hooked!

UPCOMING SHOWS



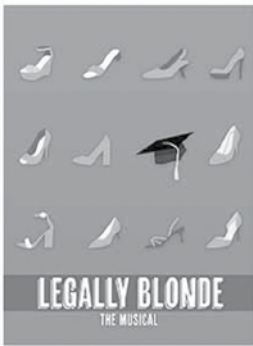
February 5 to 21



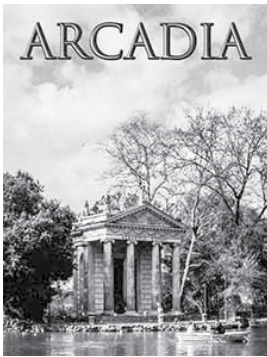
March 6 to 21



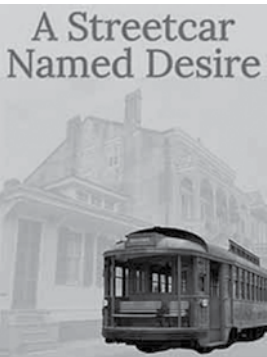
April 10 to 25



May 7 to 23



June 5 to 20



July 3 to 18



NORSOWEA by local artist Mario Dimain will be part of an exhibit of his works at the Morningside Library in February.

Mario Dimain’s art is on display this month

Throughout the month of February, the works of local artist Mario Dimain are on display at Morningside Library as part of TPL’s Art Exhibit program. Mario is an accomplished visual artist and avid storyteller. In addition to photography, he paints and writes. Here is one of the paintings that will be in the exhibit and Mario’s description:

NORSOWEA

“The axes radiating out of the centre are the four points of the North, South, West and East of our planet. Coined together as NORSOWEA. The quadrants merging into one fully painted square embody the very essence of global diversity in artistic expression. The dual face is a portrait of unified souls speaking of equality regardless of gender, age, race or beliefs. The white layers in the background promote harmony and understanding among nations. Created as a gift for my grandson, Trey, who was born of Filipino and Jamaican roots, the painting honours the beauty of blended identity. Two cultures, two histories, two colours of heritage meeting in one face, one spirit, one future.”

Community

Convenience store on Port Union is back!

By Denise Bacon

Amy and Jacob are absolutely thrilled to reopen the doors of their newly branded convenience store for their customers after going through a nightmarish experience followed by months of uncertainty and waiting.

On June 23, 2025, criminals stole an excavator from the Port Union Road construction site and broke through the roof of the plaza, apparently trying to rob the bank machines at Scotiabank. This criminal act created a huge, jagged hole in the roof of the plaza with most of the damage above and inside the convenience store.

Amy and Jacob have come a long way since that horrific experience, which threw their lives off-kilter for more than six months. Their source of income suddenly and violently came to an abrupt halt that day. Yet, Amy, Jacob and their son, Jason, persevered right into mid-January when most of

the renovations were complete for the store to reopen.

Last fall, Amy was quoted in *Centennial News* saying, “We want to let our customers know that we’re not going anywhere. We will be back!” And they are back!

Amy’s warm smile spoke volumes as she said gratefully, “I feel connected to my community now. People showed that they cared so much!” After their story was published in the September issue of the paper, residents would stop Amy in the community to

Jacob, Amy and their son, Jason, are delighted to reopen their convenience store, which was severely damaged by an excavator last June.

empathize and to offer help. They were happy to know Amy’s name and her family’s story. Amy said that all these interactions warmed her heart and had the extra benefit of improving her English language communication skills. Meeting so many caring people was a silver lining to the cloud that hung over their closed business.

Now, the convenience store at the northeast corner of Port Union and Lawson is sporting a big red and white sign heralding that Convenience and Vape is back in business.

Jacob specifically mentioned that the Vape side of their business is highly secure and accessed through a separate door. Customers must produce age-appropriate identification to be served. He said that vape products are replacing cigarettes for customers with nicotine dependencies and these products help with income in the challenging convenience store industry.

Blue bin update

As of last month, Ontario residents have been able to recycle more materials than before and recycle the same materials no matter where they live in the province. Circular Materials is now responsible for operating the new recycling system for packaging and paper products as the province transitions to an extended producer responsibility (EPR) system.

Under EPR, the blue bin program will be fully funded and operated by producers of packaging and paper products. Materials are being collected, recycled and returned to producers for use as recycled content in new products and packaging.

Last year, Circular Materials announced a pilot for the recycling of both hot and cold beverage cups. This pilot marked the first step towards incorporating these materials in recycling systems across all cities and communities in Ontario by 2026.

Ontario residents are now able to recycle coffee cups and other hot and cold paper-based and plastic-lined beverage cups. Other new materials allowed in blue bins will include:

- Deodorant
- Toothpaste tubes
- Ice cream tubs
- Black plastic containers
- Frozen juice containers

For recycling inquiries, including missed collection and bin service requests, call 1-888-921-2686 or visit circularmaterials.ca/toronto.

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As a proud resident raising his family right here in Centennial , John understands that selling a home is about far more than a transaction it’s about protecting one of your most important investments. John’s connection to the community shows through his involvement in youth sports, support of local businesses and schools, donations and support to PUC youth programs and volunteering at community events. John understands what makes our neighbourhood special and how to attract the right buyers and maximize value.

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PORT UNION WINTERFEST 2026



Port Union Winterfest packed with family activities

By John Murphy

The 27th Port Union Community Winterfest has come and gone. It was chilly but the bright sun encouraged many to come out and enjoy the activities, entertainment and bargains to be had. I talked with families and their friends from our neck of the woods and Pickering, and all enjoyed the coming together of our great community!

As I approached the centre, I could see families enjoying the colourful outdoor hockey, basketball and throwing games, and visitors browsing the vendors' beanies, clothing and baked goods. Once inside, the smell of homemade mac and cheese and samosas was in the air as people wandered by handmade jewelry and community booths to talk about the Rouge Butterflyway, the Toronto Zoo or the CCRA.

Bookending the indoor activities were artists creating caricature faces and wolf masks. It was fun to watch Selina and Chelsea from Toon Goons create the delightful images of attendees. It only took minutes to draw and watch the joyful expression forming as kids viewed their exaggerated image and exclaimed, "That's me!"

For those who didn't want to see their faces on paper, they could hide it behind a self-coloured wolf mask at the other end of the hall. As they worked away, Ann Brokelman from Coyote Watch Canada and student volunteer Kara Flynn talked about wild animal awareness, which is important information for all of us living so close to wilderness areas. If that

wasn't enough, the library made it fun to colour or create with Lego.

From either end of the hall I was easily drawn back outside to where the 2nd Highland Creek Scouts were making s'mores. It was bright and sunny out back where one could roast a marshmallow and make a personalized sweet treat. I am always impressed with the good-natured character of Scouts and their leaders. It was easy to jump into conversations around the campfire they had ready for all.

I got a bit chilly and went back inside for a bargain-priced BBQ lunch. I chose samosas and could have had a free hot chocolate from Heather Lemieux, but the apple cider from Councillor Neethan Shan was my pick. It is good that local politicians and businesses are interested in supporting their communities.

From there, I was drawn into the big hall by the sounds of music. It was a great place to have a bite to eat, rest your feet or just relax and enjoy the varied entertainment of the choir, local musicians, and the return of The Precious Kupuna Hawaiian Dance Troupe. They calmed your heart and reminded me of warmer times with their bright colours, rhythmic movements and lyrical melodies. Other entertainers like Shayne Ireland, Neil Bennet and Tyler Forkes rounded out the day with their solo routines of original and traditional songs that all could hum along to.

As much fun as Winterfest was, it would not have been possible without the volunteers who set up tables and microphones, served lunch, and ensured the festivities ran smoothly. Thank you to all those who made this year's celebration a wonderful community experience!



Photo 1: A tasty s'more. Photo 2: The 2nd Highland Creek Scouts served up the s'mores by the campfire that was set up behind the community centre. From left to right around the campfire: Kyrian, Ryhs, Arie, Bruce (leader), Delyla and Angus Photo 3: Derek is ready to put it on the top shelf at the colourful outdoor hockey area. Photo 4: Ball Toss was one of several inflatable interactive games that were set up outside. Photo 5: Winterfest gave Mowat students, Jordan, left, and Gavin, the opportunity to get some volunteer hours and have a little fun. Photo 6: Shopping local at the booth of Athena's Diaper Cakes. Photo 7: Musician Shayne Ireland was one of several entertainment acts in the gym. Photo 8: Outdoor shot of the back courtyard.

WINTERTIME FUN



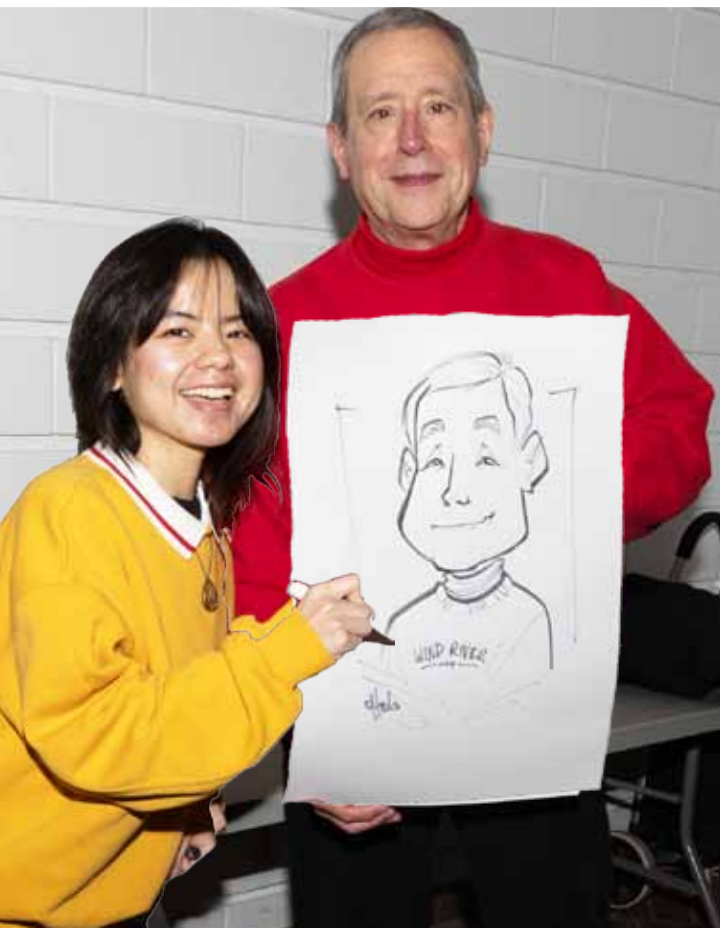
Live caricatures capture attendees

Caricatures (clockwise from top left):

Theresa was happy that the Centennial community provides grandparents with these wonderful family events.

Brother and sister Melia and Emory sat still without a fuss as their mom watched her kids come to life on paper.

Owen and Nancy Jones had a special day with their 6-year-old grandson and they have the caricature to remember it later.



Toon Goons artist Chelsea shows one of her delightful caricatures.

“Great food, fun games and delicious hot chocolate! Winterfest is such a great opportunity to catch up with neighbours and friends in the colder months.”

Owen Jones



Gaya, Nima, Kuhan and Kirea get to experience what it's like to sit up high in a fire truck.



Barbecue Master Rudy Kirpal served up a delicious lunch.



The HulaLa Aloha Toronto dance group charmed the crowd.

Just For Fun

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S F D F D D U N P I N K L R S K P U
R Y H E T Y M E W Z U J A I E H B P
L T O S A A D M I R E Y T E C B Q I
C X X O A R G H A L X B E N E A K D
K A R R O W C I Y M C C M D W U R N
U D F Z U K I S S E S X S J I R G D
F G F H U G S P M K Y V Q A W H A M

Valentine’s Day
word search

Find the following
words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden
→ ↓ and ↘

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| Chocolate | Candy |
| Romance | Crush |
| Friend | Love |
| Admire | Rose |
| Be Mine | Card |
| Kisses | Gift |
| Cupid | Dear |
| Arrow | Hugs |
| Heart | Pink |

Correct solution on page 18



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It’s coyote time again

By Kathryn Stocks

This is the time of year when coyotes are most often seen in our community. This is because they don’t hibernate, they aren’t hidden by foliage, and their mating season starts in late January and continues until March. Right now, young coyotes are looking for their lifelong mate. They do not usually pose a danger to people, but they can pose a danger for pets.

So, here are a few tips on what to do if a coyote approaches you:

- Loud noises scare them so be loud and yell at them to go away.
- Do something assertive like flapping your jacket or a large garbage bag.
- Be aware when walking your dog and either pick the dog up or draw the leash in close to you.
- If you do all these things and the coyote doesn’t leave, you may be near its den or food source. Do not run, just back away slowly while maintaining eye contact and leave the area.

Understanding coyote behaviour and knowing how to respond helps ensure our shared spaces stay safe and enjoyable for everyone.



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Councillor Neethan Shan, Scarborough–Rouge Park

Investing in our neighbourhood in 2026

As we begin 2026, there’s a lot happening in Scarborough–Rouge Park. From City budget decisions to neighbourhood park upgrades, my focus remains on delivering practical improvements while making sure residents’ voices continue to shape our community – especially here in the Centennial neighbourhood.

City Budget and Local Priorities

Each year, Toronto’s City Budget determines how we fund the services people rely on every day, including road repairs, transit, parks, libraries, and recreation programs. This budget cycle, I worked closely with Mayor Olivia Chow and City staff to keep property taxes as low as possible while protecting the services our neighbourhood depends on. By listening to residents and advocating for local priorities, we were able to support responsible investments that strengthen Scarborough–Rouge Park without placing unnecessary pressure on household budgets.

Improvements to Local Parks

Our neighbourhood parks continue to see meaningful investment. The Royal Rouge Tot Lot is set for improvements that will make the playground safer, more accessible, and more enjoyable for families. Planned upgrades include replacing older equipment, improving pathways, and exploring new seating and outdoor fitness features. Feedback from local residents has played a key role in shaping these plans.

Dog owners can also look forward to a new off-leash area planned for the north side of Lawrence Avenue East and Starspray Boulevard. By advocating to move this project forward ahead of schedule, we are working toward an opening in spring 2026. The design includes accessible pathways and seating, shaped directly by community input – a great example of what we can accomplish together when neighbours speak up.

Thank You for a Wonderful New Year’s Levee!

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us at this year’s New Year’s Levee at the Port Union Recreation Centre. It was a pleasure to welcome 2026 together – meeting neighbours, connecting with families, and seeing children enjoy the arts and crafts activities. Events like these highlight the warmth and strong sense of community in Centennial. A special thank you as well to Kathy Rowe, president of the Centennial Community Recreation Association, for joining us.

Staying Connected

Staying connected with residents remains a priority. Through community events and conversations, I continue to hear directly from neighbours about what matters most and bring those priorities to City Hall. If you need help navigating City services or want to raise a local issue, my constituency office is here to help.

Constituency Office

382 Old Kingston Rd.,
Scarborough
Phone: 416-338-3771
Email: Councillor_Shan@toronto.ca
Website: councillorshan.ca



Councillor Neethan Shan attending a community consultation for an off-leash dog park.

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Persistent snowfall blankets Centennial again



January 15

While walking around the neighbourhood during the snowstorm on January 15, cars were struggling on snow-packed roads, and on Centennial Road, packages were left on cars instead of at the front doors.
Submitted by Don Lawrence



January 25-26

The neighbours on Closson Drive decided to clean as a team after the huge snowstorm on January 26. It was more fun and easier, they said. “Bring the next one on, we are ready!”
Submitted by Anthony Bresky

MPP Vijay Thanigasalam

Building Ontario’s first underwater transmission line

I hope you and your families are doing well. Our government continues to make meaningful progress on the issues that matter most to people, including improving access to primary care and investing in modern, reliable infrastructure.

Strengthening Primary Care

For more than a year, our government has been moving forward with the \$2.1 billion Primary Care Action Plan to strengthen local health care across Ontario. This plan is already making a difference by helping more residents access primary care close to home and when they need it. So far, more than 275,000 people have been connected to a family doctor.

Our goal is simple: to make sure everyone in Ontario has access to a family doctor by 2029. The progress we are making shows we are well on our way.

Underwater Transmission Line

I’m excited to share that our government is building Ontario’s first-ever underwater transmission line, a project that is a total game-changer for our community. For too long, moving electricity meant building massive steel towers through our parks and backyards here in Scarborough. By moving this 900-megawatt line under the lakebed, we are delivering clean, nuclear-generated power to new homes and transit projects in a



We are planning ahead and powering Toronto’s future with Ontario’s first-ever underwater transmission line.

way that is cost-effective and completely invisible.

This allows us to secure a reliable energy future for our families without breaking a single sidewalk or disrupting our local neighbourhoods. I am proud to be part of a government that is thinking outside the box to build the infrastructure we need while keeping our local green spaces and residential streets exactly as they should be.

Preparing for Ontario’s 2026 Budget

It was great to host the 2026 pre-budget consultation in Scarborough, providing an opportunity for local stakeholders and community orga-

nizations to share their ideas and priorities. These consultations are an important part of the budget process, ensuring local perspectives are heard and helping inform how our government can deliver on our shared priorities.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to our office at 8130 Sheppard Ave. East, Unit 105, by email at vijay.thanigasalam@pc.ola.org, or give us a call at 416-283-8448.

Carbon Monoxide alarms required on every level

With the start of 2026, many Centennial homeowners have an important new item on their to-do list: install carbon monoxide alarms.

Updates to the Ontario Fire Code now require a working carbon monoxide (CO) alarm on every level of any residence with a gas-burning appliance. CO is known as the silent killer because it is an invisible, tasteless and odourless gas that can be deadly.

Carbon monoxide is produced when fuels such as propane, gasoline, natural gas, heating oil or wood do not burn completely in fuel-burning appliances and devices such as furnaces, gas or wood fireplaces, hot water heaters, stoves, barbecues, portable fuel-burning heaters and generators, and vehicles.

This new legislation is a vital step in protecting homeowners. In Ontario, more than 80 per cent of injuries and deaths from carbon monoxide occur in the home.

Exposure to CO can cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea, dizziness, as well as confusion, drowsiness, loss of consciousness and death. If your CO alarm sounds, and you or other occupants suffer from symptoms of CO poisoning, get everyone out of the home immediately. Then call 9-1-1.

For more information on this topic, visit toronto.ca and search for “carbon monoxide alarms.”

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THANIGASALAM
MPP - Scarborough-Rouge Park

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MP Gary Anandasangaree

Revitalizing Rouge Beach and Marsh

Work is now underway at Rouge Beach to restore sensitive habitats, improve visitor facilities, and protect the area’s ecological integrity. In January, I was pleased to announce a \$9.47 million contract awarded to Greenspace Construction Inc. to begin the Rouge Beach Improvements Project.

- This work includes:
- A new, accessible 2.3-kilometre formalized trail connecting Rouge Beach to the Mast Trail.
 - An improved entrance with an accessible ramp to the new trailhead, beach and marsh.
 - Upgrades to the upper beach parking area, including a new permanent washroom facility.
 - Restoration of degraded wetland and forest habitats, and measures to address shoreline erosion and flooding.
 - Decommissioning and re-naturalization of the lower beach parking lot.

Construction is expected to take approximately 18 months, with completion anticipated by mid-2027. To ensure visitor and worker safety, Rouge Beach and Marsh are currently closed. For more information, please visit Parks Canada’s Important Bulletins page or contact rouge@pc.gc.ca. Thank you to residents, visitors and the Centennial community for

your patience as we work together to protect this treasured landscape for generations to come.

Youth Crime Prevention
Preventing crime before it happens is one of the most effective ways to keep our communities safe. That’s why \$1.16 million from our government’s Crime Prevention Action Fund is supporting the Malvern Family Resource Centre (MFRC) in its work to prevent crime and help youth in Malvern and Scarborough.

As part of a five-year project, the MFRC will provide comprehensive support to youth aged 9 to 30, offering counselling and school-based prevention programs in TDSB and TCDSB schools, youth hubs, and recreation spaces. Mental health resources and community-based supports will also be provided through partners like Strides Toronto and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Programs like this help youth build resilience, create opportunities for a better future, and reduce the risk factors that can lead to crime.

Statistics Canada Hiring for 2026 Census
Statistics Canada is now hiring approximately 32,000 people across the country to support the 2026 Census of Population. Applications are



Top: Announcing \$9.47 million for the Rouge Beach Improvements Project alongside Julie Dabrusin, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Nature. Bottom: Investing in youth and safer communities through the Crime Prevention Action Fund and the Malvern Family Resource Centre (MFRC).

open for both supervisory and non-supervisory roles, with staff assisting residents in completing their census questionnaires.

Enumerators will earn \$25.87 per hour, while crew leaders will earn \$31.32 per hour, plus authorized expenses. Employment is expected to run between March and July 2026, depending on the position and location.

For more information or to apply, visit census.gc.ca/jobs.

Expanding Access to Student Loan Forgiveness

Great news for essential workers and

local communities: more professions are now eligible for the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness program, helping reduce student debt while strengthening access to vital services.

The program has now been expanded to include 10 additional professions: dentists, dental hygienists, early childhood educators, midwives, personal support workers, pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologists, social workers, and teachers who work in eligible communities.

Please find more information at tiny.cc/CSLF



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Food

A sweet treat for those special days

By Kathryn McLean

February is very much still winter according to the calendar and as far as the weather goes. We continue to experience days that get dark early – at least they feel that way – and cold mornings that don’t really warm up. Snow is piled at the curb. At all the curbs. Sidewalks and paths are slushy or icy, and the wind is blowing cold every day. But midway through this (short!) month we have both Valentine’s Day and Family Day: the perfect opportunity to bake something sweet to share with friends or family. Or to treat yourself.

How about a batch of chocolate-cinnamon cupcakes? This is a quick, simple recipe for a dozen modest-sized cupcakes. They have a beautiful soft interior, and are not too sweet. The addition of cinnamon is subtle, but you can leave it out if you prefer classic chocolate. And you can top these cupcakes any number of ways. Simply spread buttercream over each one. Enjoy them like that or go ahead and add sprinkles, Smarties or other small candies. Or use a piping bag to add a swirl of icing. You could also cut each cupcake in half, spread some jam in between and then top each with a sprinkle of icing sugar. Serve these on their own, alongside a warm drink or with a side of berries or ice cream.



These delicious chocolate-cinnamon cupcakes can be topped in a variety of ways.

Choose large-sized paper liners for these cupcakes. They are not very big, but I’ve found that medium-sized paper and/or smallish muffin trays are just not big enough. Don’t use jumbo-sized or the popular tall folded paper styles, as the cupcake papers will look empty once baked and it will be very difficult to add any icing. This recipe is straightforward with no special ingredients or tools. The last time I made a batch I used just a mixing bowl and fork for mixing and they came together with no problem. So, if you wanted to share the task with anyone like kids for Family Day, it’s an easy project to do together. Enjoy!

Basic Chocolate-Cinnamon Cupcakes

- Ingredients:**
- ½ cup soft butter (room temperature)
 - ½ cup white sugar
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 cup + 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
 - 4 tablespoons cocoa
 - 1 teaspoon baking soda
 - 1 teaspoon baking powder
 - 2 teaspoons cinnamon
 - Pinch salt
 - ¼ cup milk

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 400F. Mix the butter and sugar together until smooth. Add the eggs and mix thoroughly. Add the remaining ingredients except the milk. Stir until flour is mostly incorporated, then add the milk and stir until smooth. Distribute the mixture between 12 muffin cups with a large spoon. It may look like there isn’t enough batter, but start with one spoonful of batter per cup and even them out if necessary once all the batter has been used. Remember the cupcakes will rise as they bake. Bake for 14 minutes. Enjoy them plain and warm from the oven or wait for them to cool and add icing or jam.



Port Union Library

Library Closed on Family Day:
Monday, February 16

Early ON Music & Movement: Mondays, February 2, 9, 23 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. This is an interactive program for families with children ages birth to 6. Music brings the community together, families will have the opportunity to hear and sing songs, rhymes, and musical activities. Drop-in program. No registration required.

Movie Night: Mondays, February 2, 9, 23 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Adults and older adults are welcome Monday evenings for Port Union Movie Night. We will screen a variety of films from golden oldies to later releases.

Afternoon Book Club: Tuesday, February 3 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Join us the first Tuesday of each month to have an engaging book discussion. This month’s book is *Behind You* by Catherine Hernandez. The library will provide 15 copies or you may order your own. Contact the branch for more details. Drop-in program. Space is limited.

Evening Book Club: Tuesday, February 10 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Join us to discuss great books each month. This month’s book is *The Very Marrow of Our Bones* by Christine Higdon. The library will provide 15 copies or you may order your own. Contact the branch for more details. Drop-in program. Space is limited.

Family Time: Wednesdays, February 4, 11, 18, 25 from 10:30-11:00 a.m. Enjoy stories, songs and rhymes at a staff-led story time for the entire family. For children 5 years and under with their parents or caregivers. Drop-in program.

Baby Time: Fridays, February 6, 13, 20, 27 from 10:30-11:00 a.m. Introduce your child (18 months to 3 years) to sounds and actions at a staff-led story time with rhymes, songs and stories. For toddlers with their parents or caregivers.

Toronto Public Health – Parenting Workshop: Friday, 11:00-11:30 a.m. Join us for Parenting Workshops facilitated by Toronto Public Health Nurses. Workshops will be from 11:00-11:30 a.m. following our Baby Time programs. February 27 – Question & Answer

Knitting Circle: Saturdays, February 7, 14, 21, 28 from 9:30-11:00 a.m. Join Port Union’s Knitting Circle. This is a drop-in program but limited to a room capacity of 20 participants. Arrive early to secure your spot!

Family Club: Saturdays, February 7, 14, 21, 28 from 11:30 -12:30 p.m. Celebrate your Saturday morning at Port Union Library! You can colour your favourite characters or create freestyle Legos with family and friends. Drop-in program with limited space. No registration needed.

Family Club: Sundays, February 1, 8, 15, 22 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Celebrate your Sunday afternoons at Port Union Library! Will you colour your favourite characters or show off your building skills with LEGO and KEVA? Maybe it will be Snap Circuits or Board Games? Drop-in program.

Book-a-Librarian Sessions Are you unsure how to use the library’s on-line resources? Contact library staff at 416-396-8885 to reserve a one-on-one session.

Submitted by Seema Datta, Senior Library Assistant, Port Union Library www.tpl.ca

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Community

Things to do in the neighbourhood for Valentine’s Day

By Amanda Pompilii

On Saturday, February 14, thousands of Canadians will be celebrating Valentine’s Day. But how did this holiday come to be? The two common legends around the day’s origins remain up for debate, with both focusing on the third-century priest, Saint Valentine.

In one story, the tradition of sending valentines to loved ones began with Saint Valentine signing a letter to his jailer’s daughter with “Your Valentine.” Another legend suggests that the day’s association with love is tied to Saint Valentine’s efforts to marry soldiers in secret, despite the emperor’s ban on soldier marriage.

Celebrations of Valentine’s Day are said to have begun in the 1500s and became popular in the 1700s with the advent of commercially printed cards.

If you’re looking to do something special on February 14, here are a few



Saint Valentine was a third-century priest. He is portrayed healing epilepsy in this illustration by Dr. František Ehrmann, c.1899.

activities that will be going on around our community:

For those looking to beat the cold while enjoying a charming show, **Scarborough Village Theatre**, lo-

cated at 3600 Kingston Road, will be performing “She Loves Me” throughout the month and at 8 p.m. on Valentine’s Day. Based on a play by Miklós László, “She Loves Me” is a romantic comedy musical about rival coworkers who fall in love. You can book your seats online at theatrescarborough.godaddysites.com

If you are in the mood for great conversations, music and dancing, the **Royal Canadian Legion Branch 258**, located at 305 Morrish Road, will be hosting a Valentine’s Day Dance from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. The dance will feature the live band, Rollercoaster. Tickets are \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. They are available for purchase at the bar.

The **Toronto Zoo** will be celebrating love for our magical and wild feline friends from Saturday, February 14, to Family Day on Monday, February 16. Families can come visit Gabby from Gabby’s Dollhouse at the Special

Events Centre in the Discovery Zone from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on all three days. Meet-and-greets are free with admission. There will also be special Valentine’s giveaways on Saturday, as well as Guardians of the Wild talks featuring the zoo’s resident Amur Tiger, Mazy, at 1 p.m. all weekend.

For those who enjoy the idea of a romantic nighttime ice skate without the winter chill, **Heron Park Community Recreation Centre** offers a drop-in leisure skate at their indoor rink every Saturday from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., including February 14.

In addition to these local activities, Valentine’s Day is the perfect holiday for a cozy night in with yourself, your significant other, or your friends and family. Enjoy a movie or board game marathon, a favourite homemade or takeout dinner, or show your love with a craft that brings out everybody’s creativity (i.e., DIY paint kits). Have a safe and fun Valentine’s Day!

Mental Health

Holding mind and spirit together: a community conversation

By Rev. Graham McCaffrey

On January 31, St. Dunstan of Canterbury opened its doors to a timely community presentation on the intersection of mental health and spirituality. It was an afternoon marked not by easy answers, but by honesty, compassion, and a shared desire to understand one another more deeply.

Our presenter, Kyro Maseh, a registered pharmacist and owner of Rylander Pharmasave, guided us with clarity through a subject that is too often cloaked in silence or misunderstanding. Kyro helped to demystify mental health, reminding us that struggles of the mind and heart are neither rare nor shameful. As many as one in five Canadians will experience challenges with mental health in any given year, a statistic that underscores how close to home this is.

Kyro offered a thoughtful primer

on a range of mental health conditions, their possible causes, and the ways treatment, support and community care can make a real difference. What was especially powerful was the reminder that mental health is not solely a medical concern, nor solely a spiritual one. It lives at the crossroads of biology, experience, relationship, faith and hope. To tend to mental health faithfully is to attend to the whole person.

Equally important was the emphasis on community. Healing rarely happens in isolation. It happens when people are seen, believed and supported. In that spirit, we were grateful to welcome representatives from the Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities, who shared about the wide range of services they offer to support those in our area. Their presence was a reminder that help is available and that partnership matters.

Donations were collected in support of SCHC, an expression of our shared commitment to the wellbeing of our wider community.

The event left many encouraged and reflective. It reminded everyone that caring for mental health is not an optional add-on to our life together,



St. Dunstan of Canterbury held a presentation on the intersection of mental health and spirituality.

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Community

Whether you celebrate with kin or friends, Family Day is appreciated

By Shelley Cooke

This year, February 16 is Family Day, a day to hug our loved ones a little tighter and encourage Canadians to prioritize family time.

This holiday was started in Alberta in 1990 by Premier Don Getty as a way to celebrate family values and spend a day off with their loved ones. The next province to adopt Family Day was Saskatchewan in 2007, then Ontario in 2008, British Columbia in 2013, and New Brunswick in 2018.

While we affectionately term the holiday as “Family Day,” other provinces call this day by a different name. For example, Manitoba refers to it as “Louis Riel Day,” PEI calls it “Islander Day,” and Nova Scotia refers to it as “Heritage Day.” Regardless of its name, the holiday is recognized on the third Monday of February so people across the country can celebrate it on the same day.

The reason Family Day was established was to give hardworking families a day off between New Year’s and Easter. As January and February are often seen as challenging months with harsh winter weather patterns, shorter days and seasonal depression, Family Day, which equates to a three-day weekend, gives people something to look forward to.

While most of Canada observes Family Day, Newfoundland, Quebec and the territories do not celebrate it. This makes Family Day a regional statutory holiday and not a federal one.

Although most people love an extra day off work or school, the idea of making Family Day a holiday has sparked discontent among some Canadians. Accord-

ing to a couple of featured comments on statutoryholidays.com/familyday, which is an information site that compiles dates and descriptions of national and provincial holidays in Canada, Family Day can be painful. One commenter named Barry describes how “[m]any people, including myself, don’t have a ‘happy family’ and/or we have ‘family relatives’ who don’t speak to each other anymore, and never get together for any holiday, including Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Years... Family Day is a painful reminder that I am all alone!”

A woman named Flora shares that Family Day upsets her because she has no family left: “[M]y parents were immigrants to this country who came by themselves so I grew up without grandparents, without cousins, without knowing any relatives. The rest of my family has passed and as a single person I find it depressing... [C]hange the name at least to Friends and Family day or something to do with togetherness but not necessarily family.”

Another source of bitterness stems from the fact that all federal workers, including post office employees, have to work on Family Day since this is not a federally mandated holiday.

Despite these negative sentiments, Family Day is widely anticipated and appreciated by most working Canadians and students, especially because it results in a long weekend. Whether we celebrate it with our blood family or chosen family, there are so many fun and exciting things to do! However you decide to spend Family Day or Family long weekend, enjoy this gift of spending time with loved ones and making some great memories. Happy Family Day!

Happening at the Toronto Zoo this month

Move Your PAWS For the Polar Bear Cause – a 5K/1 K Run/Walk taking place on Saturday, February 21. This event is open to runners and walkers of all ages and abilities. Bundle up and bring the whole family for a day of outdoor fun, fitness and fundraising. Money raised will go for new enrichment items for the polar bears and Arctic wolves as well as supporting conservation.

Canadian Blood Services Blood Drive – takes place at the Toronto Zoo Special Events Centre on Friday, February 6. Appointments are available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Complimentary zoo access and parking is provided to all those with a valid confirmation of Blood Donation Appointment. Experienced donors and first timers are welcome.

Zoo Camp – registration for Zoo Camp opened on January 13. Zoo Camp is available for children aged 4 to 16. It includes indoor and outdoor activities, unique animal

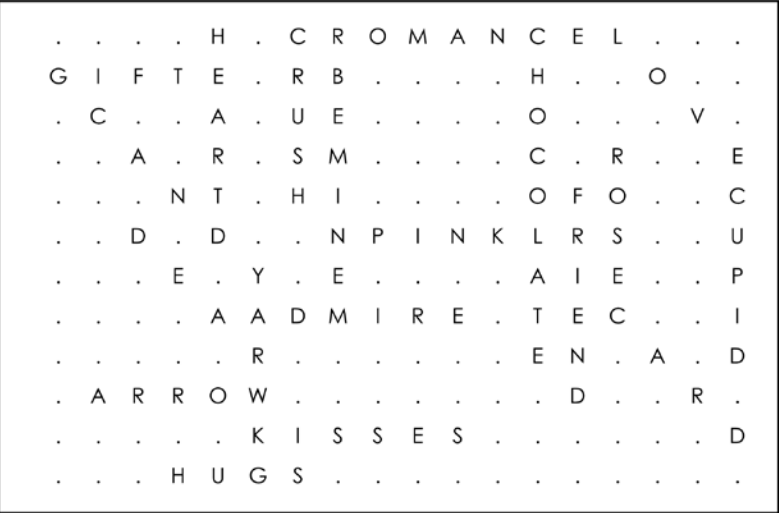
experiences, games, crafts and lots of fun. There are 10 one-week sessions. The first session runs June 29 to July 3 and the last session runs August 31 to September 4. Camp hours are 9 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. Before and After Care available. Registration includes one week of camp, zoomobile ride, a Zoo Camp t-shirt and Thursday pizza lunch.

Serengeti Bush Camp – Registration for Bush Camp opened on January 27. The overnight experience includes accommodation in authentic African bush tents, a behind-the-scenes opportunity on the African Savana, guided tours, zoomobile ride and an evening adventure. Dinner and breakfast are included as well as a campfire (weather permitting), complete with s’mores. The Serengeti Bush Camp is offered from the May long weekend to September Labour Day long weekend to families, youth groups and adults.

For more information please see torontozoo.com

Continued from page 12

Correct solution for Valentine’s Day Word Search on page 12.



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CCRA NEWS

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Membership



One more month until the prize draw

By Denise Bacon

As you might have read on the front page, we're having another membership incentive to start the new year. If Centennial community residents get their CCRA memberships for 2026 by Saturday, February 28, their names will be entered in a draw to win the amazing gift basket that's shown on page 1.

You can pay by cash, cheque, e-transfer or PayPal and it's still only \$15 for your household to become a member and to support your community association this year.

The prize draw will be made at the CCRA board meeting on March 3 at the Port Union Community Centre. The meeting starts at 7:15 p.m. and all Centennial residents are welcome!

membership@ccranews.com

Distribution



Student steps up to deliver paper

By Wanda Wierzbicki

Have you noticed that we now have an hour more of daylight every day? Increased daylight supports higher energy and mood. The 10 darkest weeks of the year are officially behind us, and I'm looking forward to longer, brighter evenings.

Last month I mentioned that Jeff Forsyth was retiring after distributing the CCRA Centennial News to homes on Acheson and Byford for almost 50 years. Within a couple of days, Ingrid Hall suggested I speak with **Carolyn McIntyre** and her son, **Benny**, a student at Mowat. Benny immediately offered to distribute the January issue of the newspaper. Today I want to officially welcome Benny as the new distributor on Acheson and Byford. Thanks for volunteering.

During this time of the year, many distributors head to warmer climates. While these lucky snowbirds are enjoying sand and sun, their routes are distributed by a wonderful team of people who volunteer to deliver the newspapers to another street – in spite of cold, blustery temperatures and snow drifts. Thank you all for helping out!

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