



Centennial News

A publication of the Centennial Community and Recreation Association

Get closer to nature this Earth Day



Preparing the Port Union waterfront before monarch butterflies arrive in spring requires a balance of removing debris while protecting crucial habitat. Join ecosystem specialists from Toronto Nature Stewards for an Earth Day Cleanup on April 25. Photo taken at the waterfront by Michelle Cleland.

By Kathy Rowe

Community Earth Day partners with Toronto Nature Stewards

On Saturday, April 25, our community will be celebrating Earth Day at three locations. The West Rouge C.C., at 270 Rouge Hills Drive, will host the annual 2nd Highland Creek Scouts Recycling Drive fundraiser beginning at 9 a.m. The Scouts will be collecting your e-waste, scrap metal, beer bottles/cans and clothing until 2 p.m. in a “drive through” fashion. Please, no tires or hazardous waste! Please enter the property from the north and have your car trunks open and ready!

The Port Union C.C., on Lawrence Avenue East, will host a variety of Earth Day activities for all ages. Free compost, courtesy of Councillor Neethan Shan, will be available by 9 a.m. in the parking lot for those with shovels and pails. Free paper shredding will also be taking place from the Iron Mountain truck in the parking lot laneway on the east side of the community centre.

Inside there will be a children’s workshop where kids can build suet birdfeeders. This drop-in workshop begins at 10 a.m. and continues while supplies last. After making a birdfeeder, please visit the children’s craft room where

kids can create eco-friendly wind chimes and pinecone animals.

Also starting at 10 a.m., there will be a mini-repair café set up in one of the rooms for those who wish to bring in an item for repair.

Learn all about native plants when you stop by the Butterfly Way table. Other display tables will include: the Toronto Zoo, Friends of the Rouge Watershed, West Rouge Sports and Rec, and The Lions rain barrels and installing a raised herb garden bed.

Don’t forget to visit the CCRA table where you can purchase your membership and a Centennial hoodie!

If you get hungry, there will be hotdogs and hamburgers for sale at a nominal cost.

This year, our community clean-up will be happening from 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. along the waterfront trail. We are partnering with Toronto Nature Stewards who will be leading the trail clean-up and we hope to get a big turn out of volunteers for this worthy task. Everyone is welcome to help make the waterfront trail beautiful and ready for the summer. Students will earn volunteer hours and all volunteers are welcome to a FREE lunch back at the PUCC at noon. Gloves and bags will be provided upon arrival by the washrooms at the foot of Port Union Road. We ask that clean-up volunteers register in advance and get important details by emailing earthday@wrsra.org. This is a rain or shine event.

CCRA membership gift basket winners



Kathy Rowe presents Tanya and Greg (and Rayn) Haughey with the winning basket

By: Kathy Rowe

If you visited our CCRA table at Winterfest, you would have noticed the generous over-stuffed gift basket on display. I want to thank a very dedicated community member, who prefers to remain nameless, for putting together such a lovely prize. Residents who purchased a 2026 CCRA membership by February 28 were eligible to win the basket. A random draw was done at our March board meeting and I am pleased to announce that Tanya and Greg Haughey were the winners! Congratulations!

I had the pleasure of delivering the basket to Tanya and Greg. Items in the basket included a \$50 gift certificate for Rouge Kitchen, a \$60 Disney Plus gift card with movie snacks, a Jelly Cat, a knitted throw, a Centennial hoodie and more. Tanya and Greg were thrilled to receive the basket and so was their dog Rayn (despite the fact that there were no dog treats in the basket).

Each year Centennial residents can look forward to a chance to win a gift basket when they buy a CCRA membership on behalf of their household. Memberships always increase with this incentive. Your membership helps fund annual community events such as Winterfest, Earth Day, Summer concerts, Waterfront Festival and more. A membership also helps give us a strong voice when politicians are making decisions that will impact our community.

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CCRA Centennial News

CCRA Executive Team

President – Kathy Rowe	416-283-9987 kathy.rowe@ccranews.com
Vice President & Police Liaison – Kaz Anwar	kaz.anwar@ccranews.com
Treasurer – Rob Elbertsen	treasurer@ccranews.com
Secretary – Shelley Cooke	secretary@ccranews.com
Membership – Denise Bacon	membership@ccranews.com
Distribution – Wanda Wierzbicki	distribution@ccranews.com
Advertising – Jill MacMillan	advertising@ccranews.com
Community Events – Heather Lemieux	events@ccranews.com
Community Events – Karen Dias	dias@ccranews.com
Communications – Sue Anfang	communications@ccranews.com
Transportation – John Murphy	transportation@ccranews.com
Conservation – Pam Collins	conservation@ccranews.com
Planning – R K Cobb	planning@ccranews.com
Social Media – Tracy Forsyth	socialmedia@ccranews.com
Mowat Youth Liaison – Vishy Anandaraj	vishahgan@gmail.com
Members at Large – Jake Forsyth, Kathy Rew	

Newspaper and Web Team

Editor – Kathryn Stocks	editor@ccranews.com
Associate Editor – Shelley Cooke	editor@ccranews.com
Design and Production – Don Lawrence	webmaster@ccranews.com
Advertising – Jill MacMillan	advertising@ccranews.com
Distribution – Wanda Wierzbicki	distribution@ccranews.com

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.

Mailing address:
Centennial Community & Recreation Association
5450 Lawrence Ave. East, Scarborough ON M1C 3B2

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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.

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Editor's Comment

Spring into action

By Shelley Cooke

After the long, cold winter we've endured, signs of spring are finally beginning to emerge. It is a season defined by renewal, as the natural world awakens and new growth takes hold. It also offers an opportunity for a fresh start at home, as many take on the familiar task of spring cleaning, clearing away clutter, and making space for what's ahead.

This spirit of renewal extends beyond our homes and into the community. This issue of the *Centennial News* highlights a number of Earth Day initiatives and activities designed to encourage residents to clean up, recycle, and plant.

It serves as a timely reminder of our shared responsibility to care for the environment in meaningful, collective ways. Simple actions, such as picking up litter along the waterfront, clearing garden beds, and taking pride in our shared green spaces, can have a lasting impact when we work together.

This spring, let's carry that sense of responsibility forward to ensure that our neighbourhood remains a place that we are proud to live in and call home.



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- PAT M,
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President's Message

CCRA supports Fernie Youth Services fundraiser

By Kathy Rowe

On Saturday, March 28, Team CCRA walked in the Coldest Night of the Year event to support local charitable foundation Fernie Youth Services (FYS). There were many teams that participated in this 2 km or 5 km walk and it was a lot of fun. Fortunately, the weather was clear and not too cold.

We all gathered at 4 p.m. at the administrative office on the Scarborough Grace Church property to listen to speeches made by Jeff Johnson (CEO) and Councillor Neethan Shan.

After a tasty cup of hot chocolate, we were on our way. Upon return we were greeted by FYS staff serving complimentary homemade chili (absolutely delicious) and freshly baked donuts from the Port Union bakery.

The funds raised in the Coldest Night of the Year event go to at risk youth who are experiencing every day struggles such as hunger and homelessness.

I want to thank Fernie youth worker Edessa Andrada for her guidance as well as our team walkers and supporters. As I write this article, donations are still coming in and their goal to raise \$25,000.00 is within reach.

Fernie Youth Services provides essential support in the way of employment readiness programs, counselling

and community reintegration for youth in east Scarborough. To find out more information about FYS please visit their website fernienyouth.ca. CCRA looks forward to supporting this important organization next year.

Scarborough Association Leaders United

On March 2, I joined 17 community association leaders across Scarborough to share our community concerns with our six ward councillors. This important forum, organized by Scarborough United Neighbourhoods (SUN), demonstrated that Scarborough councillors must work together on behalf of their constituents in order to achieve success within Scarborough communities.

Each leader made a short deputation before the councillors and many concerns were raised. Different parts of Scarborough are experiencing different problems.

I spoke of concerns regarding an unlicensed care home (a residential home) in our community and the lack of municipal oversight. Other leaders spoke of the lack of youth programs, rec centres in disrepair, crime, food insecurity and the need for tree canopy preservation.

Two topics that were overwhelmingly common across Scarborough were the urgent need for more parking (think transportation hubs and new



Kathy Rowe centre, along with Don Lawrence, graphic designer for CCRA News, join walkers during the Coldest Night of the Year event in support of Fernie Youth Services. Photo credit: Leonardo Yokhana

condo developments) and better transportation. The councillors listened, took notes and they all appreciated our concerns and hard work. As councillors need to be held accountable, SUN plans on following up with more meetings of this nature. Scarborough must speak up for its needs and our municipal elected officials must work together at City Council to solve the important issues that Scarborough faces.

Community Earth Day is on Saturday April 25

Supported by West Rouge Sports and Recreation, West Rouge Community Association and CCRA, our community Earth Day promises to be a day filled with educational activities. Please see more about this event on our front page. We hope to see you there!

Residents are invited to come out on Earth Day and join Toronto Nature Stewards for a waterfront cleanup - 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Kathy



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Community Profile

Coffee with *Kathryn* & Marianne Sawchuk

Inside the life of nurse and actress Marianne Sawchuk

By *Kathy Rowe*

Marianne Sawchuk's energy and bright smile are infectious! After a few minutes in her company, I realized it's no wonder she has succeeded as both a nurse and an actress for most of her adult life.

"I could never imagine a career that would have me sitting at a desk. I had no idea what I wanted to do after high school. My mother, an X-Ray technician, suggested I take a two-year nursing program and she told me that after graduation, I could do anything I wanted. So, I took the course," explains Marianne.

A career in nursing followed. At the age of 25, Marianne was asked to lead orientations in front of big audiences of fellow nurses. This took her out of her comfort zone as she had always been a very shy person. It made her very nervous to speak in front of people.

Determined to keep her job at that hospital in Vancouver and overcome her jitters, Marianne began taking acting classes at a local community

centre. Her acting teacher saw promise and encouraged Marianne to continue with acting.

"I loved it", she exclaimed. "I literally nursed my way through theatre school". Marianne studied acting while working as an ER nurse as she moved from Vancouver to Houston, Texas to L.A. and back again to Vancouver.

One summer in particular, she passed the audition to study at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City. Motivated by the lack of meaningful film roles, in 2006 Marianne created an annual live theatre festival which she named Women

at Play(s). The first three festivals were performed in Vancouver (2006-2008). The idea was to gather a few short one act plays that would be directed and performed by women with simple stage lighting, minimal sets and props. The festival proved to be successful with sold out audiences.

Over the years, the festival has become an avenue for Canadian female novice and seasoned writers to expose their original plays and test their skills as actors and directors. Women at Play(s) just closed its 8th festival on March 15 at the VideoCabaret Theatre in downtown Toronto.



President Kathryn Rowe (left) joins guest Marianne Sawchuk for conversation at Creek Coffee

It's obvious how proud Marianne is of this festival. Her core group of collaborators work hard to deliver interesting original plays to appreciative audiences each year. Every spring/early summer, Marianne accepts submissions of original one act plays by Canadian women playwrights.

Back in 2022, I interviewed local actor Bruno Verdoni and at the time, Bruno mentioned his wife Marianne was also an actor. I asked Marianne how they met. "We met on the set of an audition in Vancouver". Laughing, she added, "I remember Bruno was wearing this big space suit costume and I thought 'there goes someone's knight in shining armor!'".

Marianne's advice to new nurses: "Find an experienced nurse who can be a mentor to you. Nursing is a business and you need to look after yourself in this job". Her advice to young actors: "Get out there and produce your own thing. Don't wait for the phone to ring. Keep your craft alive".

When their daughter was in grade two Marianne and Bruno settled in Centennial. "It's a beautiful community and close to the waterfront. We really wanted our daughter to grow up in a safe community with lots of green. It has been so wonderful for us".

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) Solutions

Using AI to make life easier

By John Murphy

Over the past year, AI has been a topic of conversation at social gatherings I have attended. The realization of artificial intelligence moving from the realm of science fiction into the fabric of everyday life has led me to a simple question: "How are others in my neighbourhood making use of AI?" I have learned that AI can influence how we shop, work, communicate, and make decisions.

There are those of you that are early adopters and are already on the bandwagon with AI, while others have been more reluctant to engage. Regardless of where you are, I think our community can benefit from knowing how residents of Centennial can use AI to navigate rising costs, busy schedules, and a rapidly changing work life.

Improving digital literacy can be a challenge. I think that those who learn to use AI, will gain advantages by learning how to process information quickly, automate repetitive tasks, and make smarter choices with less effort.

I wonder if there are residents like me who do not want to fall behind as AI becomes a standard tool across workplaces, schools, and households. Having said this, I am accepting the challenge and am willing to learn about AI by using it and asking people in our neighbourhood how they use it.

Practical uses of AI

It is easy to assume our Centennial community life revolves around commuting, school routines, and family responsibilities. Did you know that AI can be a powerful time-saver? Parents can use AI to plan weekly meals, draft school communications, or create chore charts.

With food prices rising across Canada, AI is emerging as a valuable budgeting tool. Families can use AI to compare weekly flyers from major grocery chains, identify the lowest prices, and build shopping lists based on current deals.

To try AI out go to copilot.microsoft.com. The base web version of Copilot is free and uses the ChatGPT AI engine. Simply enter your inquiry into the text window. For this example, I entered the following:

"Make me a shopping list based on a seven day meal plan with the lowest cost food items found at my local food stores".

Here is a list of parameters to use to create the results:

- My shopping list is to include, eggs, 2% milk, chicken, rice, bananas, apples, whole wheat bread, margarine, mild cheddar cheese, lettuce, cucumber, celery, hummus, and carrots.
- My family lives in the Centennial neighbourhood in Scarborough, Ontario.

Shopping list with estimated quantities and costs

Item	Qty for 7 days	Est. unit price	Est. total	Preferred store
Eggs	3 dozen	\$4.00 / dozen	\$12.00	Food Basics. foodbasics.ca
2% milk	2 x 4 L	\$6.50 / 4 L	\$13.00	Food Basics or Metro. foodbasics.ca +1
Chicken (mixed: breasts/thighs)	4 kg	\$6.00 / kg	\$24.00	No Frills or Food Basics weekly meat deal. Canada Flyers & D...
Rice (white)	5 kg bag	\$12.00	\$12.00	No Frills
Bananas	14	\$0.30 each	\$4.20	No Frills

- My local food stores are Metro, Food Basics and No Frills.
- My family is two adults and two children.
- My budget for groceries for 7 days is \$325.
- My family eats breakfast, lunch and dinner daily.

The above image shows first lines of the shopping list in response to the inquiry.

Modifying this prompt to suggest recipes can reduce waste, track price trends, or recommend cheaper substitutions—like choosing in-season produce or swapping chicken breasts for thighs. By combining flyer data, meal planning, and smart substitutions, AI can help households save \$20 to \$60 per week without sacrificing nutrition.

The challenges to learn AI

The path to AI literacy is less intimidating than I assumed. I started by experimenting with conversational

AI tools—systems that answer questions, generate ideas, and help with planning. I will continue using AI for small tasks or organizing schedules. I am also planning to research and write about how our local schools and businesses are taking advantage of AI tools and resources available to understand what this means for us Centennial residents. Learning how local professionals are using AI can broaden our understanding of how we are benefiting from it.

Finally, I would like to hear from our CCRA Newspaper readers on how they are using AI. Are you using AI to draft renovation plans, plan vacations or help your children use it effectively for homework, study guides, and project planning? If you have questions about AI or you want to share your experiences and practical usage of AI, please send me a note at transportation@ccranews.com

Decluttering Masterclass Announced April 30th

Moving to a smaller space is a big transition, and for many, the "stuff" is the hardest part. If you've been feeling stuck, join the Decluttering Masterclass where we tackle the number one stressor head-on. You will learn how to stop the overwhelm by making real progress in just 25 minutes a day.

You'll also get help to answer that nagging question: "Is this actually valuable?" You'll get a clear guide on how to find out what your items are worth, what is worth keeping, and what should be sold or donated; and the best places to sell your stuff. Topics included are:

- The 25-Minute Rule: How to clear space without losing your mind.
- Value Assessment: Practical steps to identify treasures versus clutter.
- The Decision Matrix: Simple logic for what stays and what goes.

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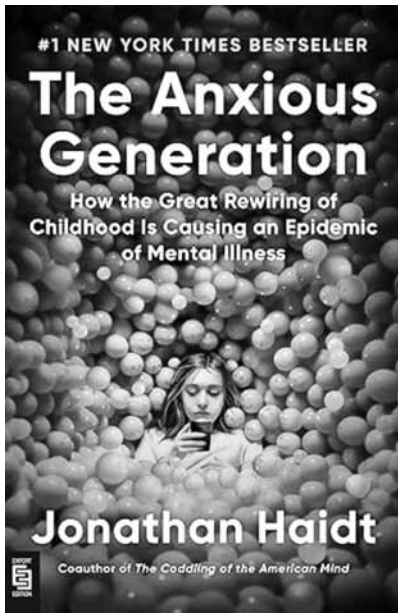
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Book Review

Smartphones linked to mental illness among young people



The Anxious Generation:
How the Great Rewiring of Childhood
Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness
By Jonathan Haidt

healthy development of young minds. In December of 2025, the government of Australia banned social media for minors under the age of 16. Jonathan Haidt had a lot to do with that ban.

The book starts with a one-two punch as Haidt’s research clearly proves that a play-based childhood (up until the 1990’s) transitioned to a phone-based childhood (in the 2000’s). By 2010, the smartphone, along with high-speed internet, had begun to change the lives of most of us.

A play-based childhood is described as children and adolescents learning and developing in the real world through play. A phone-based childhood is described as children and adolescents learning and developing through the non-real virtual world. The author goes on to say that the generation born after 1995 (known as Gen Z) came into this world with easy access to the internet in their pockets.

Haidt explains, “The oldest members of Gen Z began puberty around 2009, when tech trends converged: the rapid spread of high-speed broadband in the 2000s, the arrival of the iPhone in 2007, and the rise of hyper-viral social media. Gen Z teens got sucked

into spending many hours each day scrolling through posts of friends, acquaintances, and influencers. They spent far less time [interacting with] friends and family, reducing participation in ...social behaviours essential for human development.”

The internet became instantly accessible on handheld devices. Instead of real friends and relationships that required nurturing, quarrels and problem resolution, debates and celebrations, teens developed online relationships which could be started and ended with a swipe.

Genuine appreciation of achievement was displaced with a “Like” on a post. Teens started measuring their own worth based on the number of “Likes” they received and on comparisons with posts of other teens who looked cooler and happier than themselves. Teens did not learn critical thinking, resilience, concentration, research or problem resolution. Haidt points to data that indicates a sharp increase in depressive episodes, especially among girls, which is linked to excessive consumption of social media via smartphones.

Girls and boys are wired differently, therefore Haidt explains to the reader how unsupervised heavy use access to social media, gaming and pornography has affected them differently. He highlights the irony and danger of par-

ents’ over-supervision of real play compared with parents having no supervision over their children playing online, a much more dangerous environment.

Thankfully, Haidt claims that there is hope to change the course of the mental health crisis that society is experiencing. The creation and addiction to smartphones, social media and other online sites are collective problems, and were started by companies which quickly learned to monetize their users. Therefore, there needs to be an urgent collective response to this problem with all stakeholders doing their parts. Haidt proposes four key reforms: no smartphones before high school, no social media before age 16, phone-free schools, and more unsupervised real-life play.

Haidt states that adults must act together and lobby governments, policy makers, educators and communities. Finally, the tech companies that have created these addictive platforms have the ability to detect the ages of their users and they must be held accountable.

Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft, describes *The Anxious Generation* as “a must-read for anyone raising, working with, or teaching young people today,” adding that the book provides both “a wake-up call about where we’re headed” and “a roadmap for how we can change course.”

By Denise Bacon and Kathy Rowe

There is a reason why this book has remained at the top of the New York Times best seller list for over 52 weeks. In our opinion, this is a crucial and important book for our times. Parents, grandparents, educators, youth workers – anyone who engages with young people – *please, read this book.*

Backed by several dozen fact-based studies, author and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt illustrates how and why the Smartphone has caused such a dramatic increase in depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicide among young people in many countries around the globe. He examines the detrimental effects of excessive screen time and social media use on the



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Lillian & Shant Wezirian ★★★★★

It can feel like true customer service is rare these days—but working with Jeannie Laverock restored our faith completely.

As a couple with two young kids, a dog, and a move over 400 km away, we had just under a month to sell our home and secure top dollar for our future. It felt impossible. Jeannie made it happen.

From day one, she and her amazing team supported us every step of the way—helping with packing, providing supplies, and beautifully staging our home while keeping it functional for our kids and active dog. What could have been a stressful transition actually turned around to be a fun, smooth and exciting experience all thanks to Jeannie and her team's wonderful personalities. They were fully honest, professional, caring and very supportive. Showings happened multiple times a day, yet our home always felt comfortable and looked immaculate.

The result? Our home sold in just seven days—above asking—and achieved the highest sale price among comparable properties at the time, even as the market began to dip.

Jeannie is not only incredibly knowledgeable about the market and what it takes to sell, she leads with kindness, integrity, and genuine care. Even in the final days before our move, she checked in personally to see how she could help.

We found Jeannie through research, impressed by the quality of her listings. What we didn't expect was to find not just an exceptional realtor, but an exceptional person.

If you're looking for a true gem of a realtor, don't hesitate—choose Jeannie Laverock!

Janet McLellan ★★★★★

" Jeannie Laverock REMAX helped me to downsize after 20 years (and having raised three girls) in my 4 bedroom home.

This process could have been overwhelming but Jeannie made the entire experience feel manageable - and even fun. Her patience and steady support through my moments of indecision were invaluable.

Jeannie listened, asked the right questions, and helped me clearly define (and trust) my goals for this next chapter. There were times along the way when I was veering off track and Jeannie was there to steer me in the right direction.

I'm so grateful for her guidance, professionalism, and kindness every step of the way.

If you are looking for an agent who goes above and beyond then call Jeannie. I highly recommend her for all your real estate needs."



Valerie Romagnino ★★★★★

" Working with Jeannie Laverock as my seller's agent was an exceptional experience from start to finish. I was truly impressed by the level of investment she and her team made to ensure my home showed at its absolute best. From painting walls and purchasing beautiful plants to professional staging, strategic advertising, and well-organized open houses, no detail was overlooked.

Jeannie doesn't just list a property — she elevates it. Her thoughtful preparation and hands-on approach clearly demonstrate her commitment to maximizing value for her clients.

Beyond her professionalism, what stood out most to me was her integrity. Jeannie operates with honesty, transparency, and genuine care. I always felt that she had my best interests at heart and that I could trust her guidance completely.

If you're looking for a real estate agent who combines expertise, dedication, and strong ethical values, I would highly recommend Jeannie Laverock."

<p>Coming Soon</p> <p>7 Delbeatrice Cres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 bed 4 bath w main floor family room • Prestigious street • Large Principal rooms • Lots of upgrades (inc. bathrooms & windows) 	<p>JUST SOLD</p>  <p>Sold in 21 days Feb 2026</p>	<p>Just Purchased</p>  <p>8 Offers. 1 Winner! Feb '26</p>
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RESULTS MATTER 2025

27 Transactions: Representing both Buyers and Sellers.
Lightning Fast: 70%+ of our listings sold in 9 or less days (13 days average).
Top Dollar: 73.7% of our listings sold over asking price.
Proven Value: All remaining homes secured an average of 97% of asking.*



				
34 Port Union Rd Sold in 23 days Nov 2025	6400 Lawrence Ave E # 16 Sold in 10 days Nov 2025	21 Ling Rd # 1209 Purchased Nov 2025		
				
80 Dunstall Cres Sold Over Asking in 9 Days Oct '25	15 Emcarr Dr 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

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Cancer awareness

The changing season: making space for health



By Dawn Bouapha

Birds chirping, longer daylight hours, and early spring blooms are all signs of a changing season. This time of year often encourages us to pause and reflect. For many, it's also a chance for a little "spring cleaning" of our well-being. Sometimes, the most meaningful steps for our health begin with simply noticing, whether we realize something has changed or remember that it's time to follow through on a commitment we made to ourselves.

April is Cancer Awareness Month, often marked by campaigns where daffodils appear alongside statistics. In Canada, where two out of five people will face a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime, those numbers can feel overwhelming. But beyond the yellow ribbons and the data are the real, lived experiences that often go unspoken. We don't have to quiet our voices around cancer. We can create a space where it is safe to talk about it: the importance of early detection, the struggles patients and caregivers face, and the resources and support available. I understand that speaking openly isn't always the norm within certain cultures or religions, in-



Dawn Bouapha turns survival into advocacy as she promotes screening during Cancer Awareness Month.

cluding my own, but if you are navigating those silences, please know that you aren't alone in finding your way through those barriers.

In a busy life, it is easy to overlook a lingering ache or a subtle change. We carry on because pausing feels inconvenient, and because we trust that everything will sort itself out with time. Yet through my own experience with breast cancer, I know that paying attention to our health isn't pulling us away from life. It's an essential part of protecting it.

Early detection often starts with intuition, but for many people, it simply

begins with consistency. Regular screenings, follow-ups, and yearly appointments can identify changes long before symptoms appear. For those with a family history of cancer, staying proactive means remaining diligent with screenings even when everything feels fine. Honouring a proactive plan is just as vital as trusting your inner voice.

Fear can prevent that initial step, yet many people are living longer, fuller lives due to earlier detection and advances in care. Even so, cancer continues to affect our community in both visible and unseen ways. Some families are grieving loved ones lost too soon, while others support friends, neighbours, or relatives living with cancer every day. Not every experience is shared publicly;

many people go through these moments quietly. Regardless, the need for compassion and grace remains constant.

If this month encourages you to book a screening or follow up on a concern, take that step. Don't let the rush of daily life drown out the wisdom of your body or the commitments you've made to your health. The first act of care is simply the kindness of listening when something, or someone, tells us it's time to pay attention.

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A witty tale of love, mischief, and a touch of scandal

When good intentions lead to delightful trouble

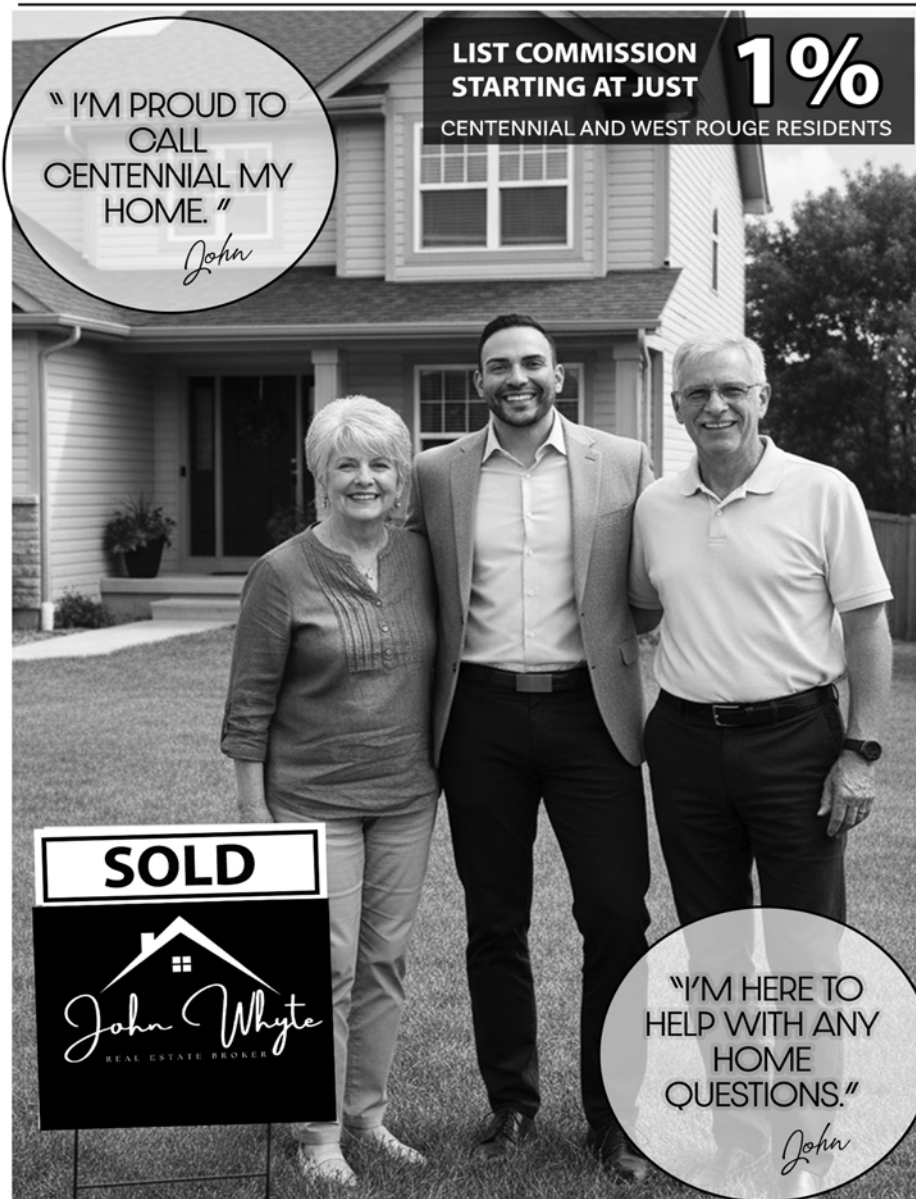
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As a proud resident raising his family right here in Centennial, John understands that selling a home is about far more than a transaction it's about protecting one of your most important investments. John's connection to the community shows through his involvement in youth sports, support of local businesses and schools, donations and support to PUCG 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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CREATIVITY WITHIN THE CENTENNIAL COMMUNITY

Centennial photographer reveals the extraordinary details hidden within the ordinary

Artist Statement

By Michelle Cleland

“My photography is inspired by the quiet beauty of the natural world. I enjoy photographing wildlife, landscapes, and macro subjects, but macro photography—capturing very small subjects up close—is where my curiosity really comes alive. I am fascinated by the tiny details that often go unnoticed in everyday life: the structure of a snowflake, the patterns on an insect’s wing, or the delicate textures of a flower petal.

Through my photography, I hope to invite people to pause and look a little closer at the world around them. Nature is full of intricate designs and fleeting moments of beauty, and photography allows me to preserve and share those moments. My goal is simple: to reveal the extraordinary details hidden within the ordinary.”

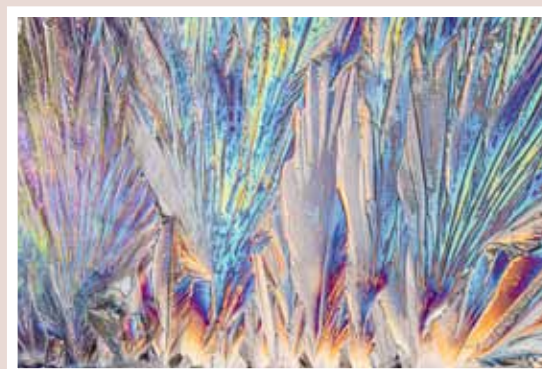
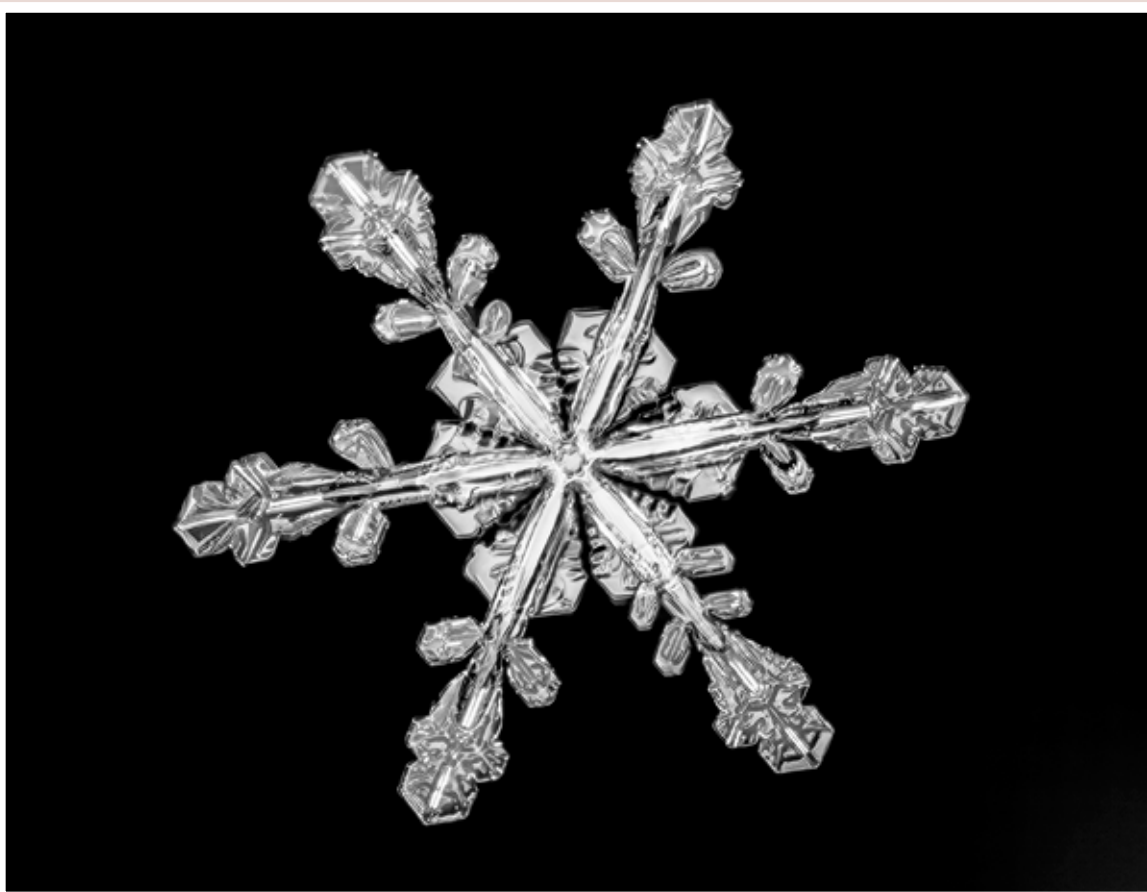
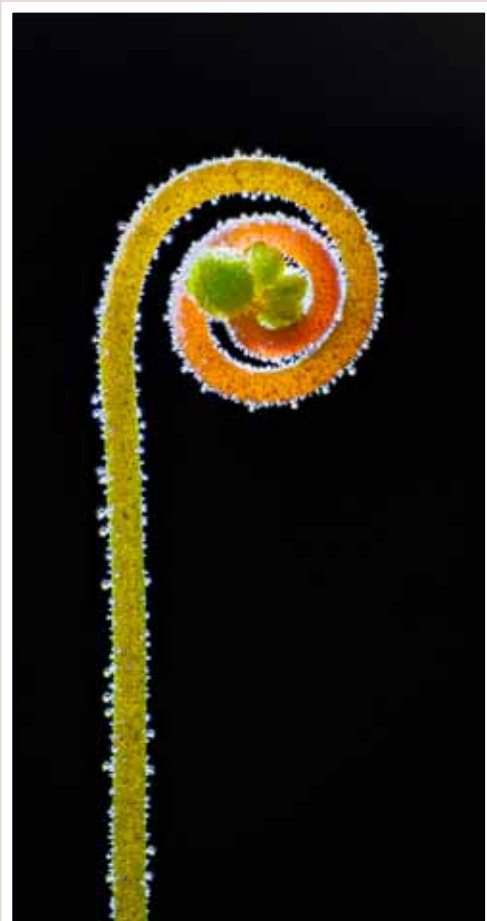
By Denise Bacon

Michelle Cleland spent most of her career as an Intensive Care Unit Nurse at Toronto hospitals where she specialized in cardiac and trauma-based neuro health care. She also shared her specialized knowledge through teaching doctors and nurses how to resuscitate people in cardiac arrest, using all available resources.

After retiring about a year ago, Michelle continues teaching nursing part-time at the Finch and King City Seneca College campuses. Her critical attention to minute details about her patients may have been the foundation of her photography journey!

A Hawaiian vacation in 2005 with her first digital camera opened Michelle’s eyes to the wonder of photography. “Everything in Hawaii is beautiful,” said Michelle, initially downplaying the quality of photographs that she took there. Soon afterwards, she realized there was something special to be appreciated through digital photography. A hobby grew into a passion which was nurtured by course after course to learn and grow in this digital field.

Through trials, experimentation and experience, Michelle narrowed her interest to »



Top left: Frozen bubble dish soap and water solution; bubble created with a straw and placed on the flower. Bottom left: Sundew swirl, approximately 1 cm in size, taken with a 105 mm macro lens. Bottom centre: Mushrooms row composed from multiple original images. Bottom right: Citric acid solution on a microscope slide, allowed to dry overnight and captured with a macro lens. Top: The Snowflake was caught on a black mitten and taken with a 5X macro lens. It took approximately 200 images ‘focus stacked’ together to create the final image.



Shortly after sunrise, the intense fog silently rolled in across the ocean to envelope the harbor at Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia, creating this mystical sense of serenity.



“macro photography with a twist.” She smiled amusedly as she emphasized that she “doesn’t do insects!” Macro photography is extreme close-up photography where the subject itself appears much larger than life and, oftentimes, may be invisible to the naked eye.

Nurse Michelle is now reinvented as a global award-winning photographer! She won the 2024 Guru Award for Macro Photography at the renowned Photoshop World Contest. After much coaxing, Michelle shared that her proudest achievements were recognitions from Professional Photographers of Canada (PPOC) by winning National and Regional competitions for Macro Photography and for winning the 2025 Category Award for Animals.

Michelle shares her passion and continuous improvement journey with photographers from Canada and around the world. She was thrilled to meet Scott Kelby, a best-selling author and one of her early mentors. Michelle’s membership in the KelbyOne Group keeps her connected with about 100 photographers globally. She has enjoyed opportunities to connect with them at annual summits to share and learn from each other.

Another strong influence for Michelle is Don Komarechka, a Canadian nature and macro photographer whose snowflake images are captured on Canadian coins. She has taken many of Don’s courses which have contributed to Michelle’s own fabulous macro photography. “Don has been generous with sharing his knowledge with me,” effused Michelle.

Michelle is active with the West Rouge Photography Facebook group through which she has met other local photographers whom she greatly admires. It’s wonderful that the circle of learning continues to go around as Michelle now shares her expertise with other photographers.

Neighbours, keep your eyes open for Michelle who lives in Centennial and who may be seen with cameras slung across both shoulders ready for the next awesome photographic capture!



Michelle Cleland is a multi award-winning accredited member of the PPOC (Professional Photographers of Canada). She has enjoyed living in Centennial and raising her family there for the past 26 years.

Her online gallery including prints available for purchase can be viewed at: michellecleland.com

Top right: Leopard captured at the Toronto Zoo, just as he was looking right at the camera

Upper left: Rouge Beach taken from the platform in the early morning sunrise

Bottom right: A mating pair of gannets

Bottom left: Early morning, at Cape Spear, Newfoundland

How I photograph snowflakes (macro photography)

One of my passions is photographing snowflakes. It is both exciting and surprisingly challenging because the conditions have to be just right. Temperature, humidity, and the type of snowfall all affect the shape and clarity of snowflakes.

This past January, during one of our major snowstorms, the conditions were perfect. When I stepped outside and saw the beautifully formed snowflakes landing, I actually had tears of joy—I had been waiting all season for that moment.

To photograph them, I first catch the snowflakes on a black mitten and using an extreme macro lens that magnifies the snowflake between 2.5 and 5 times its actual size, take the photo. Because the magnification is so high, only a tiny portion of the snowflake is in focus. To solve this, I take between 200 and 300 images of a single snowflake, each focused on a slightly different area.

Later, I combine those images in Photoshop using a technique called focus stacking. The software blends together all the sharp portions from each photograph to create one final image where the entire snowflake appears in focus. It is a very time-consuming process, but the results reveal the incredible geometry and detail of these tiny crystals—structures that exist for only a brief moment before melting away.

Just For Fun

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Earth Day 
word search

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden

→ ↓ and ↘

- | | | |
|----------|---------|-------|
| Wildlife | Carpool | Reuse |
| Protect | Organic | Green |
| Climate | Planet | Ocean |
| Recycle | Reduce | Plant |
| Compost | Forest | Clean |
| Ecology | Solar | Bike |

Correct solution on page 18

Mowat student reflects on NTS play



Sydney Jacklin & Tyler Goodspeed performing a pivotal moment on stage.

In our March issue, we highlighted two senior students at Mowat Collegiate who co-directed their play, *Smile on Set*, which was entered into the National Theatre School Drama Festival (NTS). On March 3, the play was performed for a professional adjudicator. Tyler Goodspeed, one of the lead actors, reflects on his experience performing in the play and preparing for adjudication.

“Taking part in an adjudicated play for NTS was a really fun experience; it was my second time doing it. It was exciting to perform knowing our work would be judged, but it also felt rewarding to see how much effort our cast put into the show.


In *Smile on Set*, I played Noah Clay, an actor who portrays the character Chadler in the sitcom *Pals*. Noah is mostly the comedic relief of the show, but he also creates some drama when he cheats on his girlfriend, Allison.

Preparing for the role was enjoyable, and rehearsals built comfort and connection. Working with a supportive cast and directors was rewarding. One thing the adjudicator specifically commented on was our volume and projection.

Performing for adjudication felt different from past Mowat plays because we knew our acting, staging, and overall performance would be carefully analyzed, which made us pay closer attention to the small details.

Although we didn’t advance to the next round, the adjudicator’s feedback was valuable. It was nice to finish my last performance knowing that he appreciated parts of it and that I could carry those lessons forward.

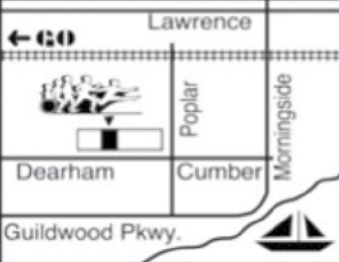
Overall, being involved in *Smile on Set* was a memorable experience. I would definitely recommend participating in NTS to other students interested in theatre, as it is a great way to learn, improve, and still have a lot of fun.”



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Councillor Neethan Shan, Scarborough–Rouge Park

Community connections and local initiatives

Reset, rewind and get set!

It is that time of the year when we have reset our clocks, both on the wall and internally. Nature takes its course to bring us warmer days filled with abundant daylight and sun. And as that happens, don't forget to make the most of the longer days by being outdoors to enjoy spring temperatures. Our office will also be out in the community visiting your homes, listening to your concerns and working together to keep Scarborough moving.

Come join me at my Community Forum

I am committed to working to make our communities better and stronger through dialogue. Building on the success of the interactions during my forums with you last year, I am bringing the Community Forum again to the Port Union Community Centre at 5450 Lawrence Ave East on April 17, from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. It's a great way to hear about upcoming projects in the community and to share your concerns and suggestions with us. Looking forward to the discussions and seeing you there!

Neighbourhood Week to spotlight Centennial neighbourhood

We will be organizing "My Neighbourhood Weeks" for each of our six unique neighbourhoods this spring. "#MyCentennial" campaign will be from April 6 - April 12 where we will be highlighting stories, businesses, organizations, and people that make Centennial a very special place. We will be out in the community during the week and showcasing the neighbourhood on our social media. Please contact our office to share your ideas and more importantly to get involved. We'd love to hear from you.

Community environment day

All of us need to do our part for the environment. I am inviting you to take part in our waste reduction program that supports the City of Toronto's Long-term Waste Management Strategy. We have our two environmental days planned for the Spring. It's a great way to drop off household items for donation or to reuse or recycle. You can also drop off your household waste for proper and safe disposal, including electronics. Please contact us if you need more details. See you on April 11, at 6251 Lawrence Ave East, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Community Earth Day celebrations

Join the community for an Earth Day celebration at the Port Union Community Centre on April 25 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. There will be lots of ac-

tivities like birdfeeder building, wind-chime making and more crafts. We're providing free garden compost as supplies last, so hurry up!

New off-leash park for our dogs

I thank you all for coming out to consultation sessions and for participating in the surveys for the new off-leash area for dogs at Lawrence Avenue East and Starspray Boulevard in the West Rouge neighbourhood. Your feedback in the final phase has helped confirm the preferred design. We are now moving the project into the detailed design and construction stages.

A successful 'Coldest Night of the Year' with active CCRA participation

I thank the CCRA for their generous



Councillor Neethan Shan with some of the CCRA team at the Coldest Night of the Year walk and fundraiser by Fernie Youth Services.

donation and participation in the Coldest Night of the Year walk and fundraiser by Fernie Youth Services. Thanks to active neighbourhood par-

ticipations such as that of CCRA, \$15 million were raised across Canada for very worthwhile causes.

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MPP Vijay Thanigasalam

Science Centre and Ontario Line updates

I hope you and your families are doing well. Our government has prioritized protecting Ontario, ensuring jobs are supported, our public services are strengthened, and ensuring Ontario remains a safe and momentous place to grow. We will continue working to build a province where opportunity, accessibility, and education remain strong for generations to come.

Unveiling Design for New Ontario Science Centre at Ontario Place

I am pleased to announce that our government has unveiled the final design and awarded the contract to build and maintain the new Ontario Science Centre, the next step in the province's plan to transform Ontario Place into a year-round and world class destination. This new state-of-the-art 400,000 square-foot facility will include an integrated pod complex, interactive exhibits and revitalized Cinesphere, with more space dedicated to programming than the previous site.

Once completed as early as 2029, the new Science Centre will support more than 5,700 jobs, contributing \$420 million to Ontario's GDP during construction and welcoming nearly six million visitors annually. For Scarborough, the expansion at this waterfront destination will connect residents to the new Ontario Line at Exhibition Station simply by grabbing the GO train at Rouge Hill



With state-of-the-art facilities that offer more space for visitors, the new Science Centre will continue decades of tradition, inspiring the next generation of young people.

GO, which will further connect families to conveniently enjoy the Science Centre and explore Ontario Place.

We are building an Ontario Place for everyone to create year-round memories and experiences that will last a lifetime.

Breaking Ground on the Ontario Line

Our government has officially broken ground on the elevated guideway and four new stations for the Ontario Line Subway. The Ontario line is at the centre of the province's plan to protect Ontario by creating jobs, while cutting transit time for commuters across the Greater Toronto Area, which will bring nearly 230,000 people within walking distance to public transit.

The continued construction of the subway will support nearly 4,700 jobs per year, while continuing to invest \$70 billion in the largest expansion of public transit in North America, alongside the Scarborough Subway Extension, The Eglinton Crosstown West Extension, and the Yonge North Subway Extension. Once the Ontario Line is complete, it will offer more than 40 convenient connections to other transit services across the region while reducing gridlock and driving economic growth in the face of tariffs and economic uncertainty.

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.

Resident encourages responsible pet ownership



Satchell Boulevard resident attached free dog waste bags container to their corner fence

As the snow is melting, an unpleasant sight has been appearing along sidewalks and in parks: dog waste that hasn't been picked up during the winter months. With the snow disappearing, piles that were once hidden are now clearly visible. It raises the question: did some dog owners assume that their dog's poop would simply melt away with the snow?

Dog waste left on the ground can create health concerns and make shared community spaces less enjoyable for everyone. Just as people are expected not to litter, responsible pet ownership includes picking up after your pets year-round, no matter the season.

One Centennial resident has taken a positive step to help address the issue. They have attached a box of dog waste bags to a small fence for passing dog walkers to use. It's a small gesture, but one that sends a clear message: keeping our neighbourhood clean is a shared responsibility.

With simple actions, like carrying waste bags and taking a moment to pick up, dog owners can keep community spaces pleasant for everyone.

VIJAY THANIGASALAM

MPP - Scarborough-Rouge Park

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MP Gary Anandasangaree

Port Union Waterfront Shoreline Project

Due to ongoing military activity in the Middle East, the Government of Canada has updated its travel advisories for the region. Canadians are advised to avoid all travel to Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, and to avoid non-essential travel to Jordan, Oman, and Saudi Arabia.

Travel advisories may change quickly as the situation evolves, and the Government of Canada urges all Canadians to prioritize their safety and remain informed.

Protecting the Port Union Waterfront: upcoming shoreline project

Port Union Waterfront is one of the most valued spaces in our community — a place where many residents walk, cycle, and enjoy nature. To help protect the shoreline from erosion and maintain safe access to the trail, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) will be undertaking an important shoreline maintenance project this year.

Construction is expected to begin in April 2026 and conclude by winter 2026.

What to expect during the construction period:

- Work will take place along approximately 1 km of shoreline within Port Union Waterfront Park, near the intersection of Port Union Road and Bridgend Street in Scarborough.

- Park and shoreline areas south of the Waterfront Trail will be temporarily closed during construction.
- The Waterfront Trail will remain open, though trail users may experience minor delays during work hours when equipment is escorted to work areas.

We appreciate the community's patience as this important work is carried out to help preserve and protect our waterfront. For more information or if you have any questions, please contact the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority project manager, Whitney Brennan, whitney.brennan@trca.ca or (647) 212-6871.



Accessing 2025 tax packages

Although most tax returns are now filed online, we understand that some residents prefer paper filing. To do so, you can order a paper filing package from the Canada Revenue Agency by visiting the CRA website online, or by calling 1-855-330-3305.

If you need any assistance obtaining these packages, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

TRCA shoreline update

By Pamela Collins

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) held a public information session at the Port Union Community Centre on Thursday, March 12, to discuss a federally funded shoreline maintenance project at the Port Union Waterfront Park.

This project, in partnership with the City of Toronto, will undertake work on existing shoreline control structures and provide long-term protection for the park from future erosion.

The Project Area is within Port Union Waterfront Park, near the intersection of Port Union Road and Bridgend Street. Repairs will be made to approximately 1 km stretch of five damaged cobble shoreline areas between a series of rocky structures called armourstone headlands.

The Port Union Waterfront Park was constructed 20 years ago to create continuous trail and greenspace for public use and to provide erosion protection to nearby neighbourhoods and infrastructure, including the Metrolinx rail line and connections to a larger network of waterfront trails. This shoreline and multi-use trails have since been damaged by high waves, winds and severe storms that have moved materials away from the shore. So, in order to ensure public safety and stability of our beautiful park, these issues must be addressed with long-term erosion solutions.

Natural stone from eastern Ontario will be used, varying in size to better absorb wave impact and changing lake levels; also taking recreational use into consideration.

Per TRCA this is what we can expect to see and hear while repairs are underway:

- Site preparation, including any necessary tree removals/protection, installing Erosion and Sediment Control (ESC) measures and construction fencing, creating staging/stockpiling areas and building temporary barge access docks on two of the headlands
- Delivering the new cobble material by barge. Smaller deliveries and vehicles will access the site through the tunnel at Port Union Village Common Park
- Placing the new cobble material along the shoreline. Cobble size will be similar to material already present on site to maintain recreational use
- Restoring the site including reseed-ing and tree planting

There should be little or no impact on neighbouring homes or properties during the construction.

Barge deliveries will take place on weekdays during work hours where possible. Extreme weather or low water levels may require deliveries to occur outside this window.

Work is scheduled to begin in April of 2026 and be completed by winter of 2026. The trail will remain open and usable throughout the project. Our waterfront park and trails will be safe and beautiful again!

Online go to trca.ca and search: **port union waterfront park major maintenance.**



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Culinary Corner

Stretching your grocery budget

By Kathryn McLean

Many shoppers have noticed their grocery bills getting higher each week. While food costs may be rising, there are still plenty of ways to prepare satisfying meals without spending a fortune. Here are some simple, budget-friendly meal ideas to try.

Pasta meals:

- Try a vegetarian option. Not all vegetables are inexpensive, but a pot of pasta without ground meat or seafood is almost always cheaper than a meat-based version.
- Consider macaroni and cheese, homemade or otherwise.
- If a meatless meal is not appealing, consider using smaller portions of meat to stretch your grocery budget. Using half a package of ground meat or frozen shrimp can still add flavour to a dish while reducing cost.

Tacos, chili, shepherds pie

- Prepare vegetarian versions of recipes that you usually make with ground meat, like tacos or chili.
- For dishes like shepherd's pie or tacos, use less ground meat and stretch the meal with frozen vegetables, leftovers, beans, or lentils.

Creating meals with leftovers:

Fried rice is a great way to use small amounts of leftovers and turn them into a complete meal. Any leftover meat, chicken, turkey, shrimp, or fish will work, and you can add whatever



vegetables you have on hand, including frozen ones—no need to defrost.

1) Cut the meat and veggies into similarly-sized pieces before cooking. This will help to heat everything at the same time and make for easier eating.

2) Start with leftover rice (or cook some for this dish). To make fried rice, heat the rice in a pan or large pot with a little oil. Add some soy sauce or fish sauce and stir well so the rice absorbs the sauce.

3) Then add your leftover pieces of meat, chicken, seafood, and vegetables.

4) Once everything is warmed through, make a space in the centre of the rice and crack in an egg or two. Beat the eggs quickly as they begin to cook, then mix them into the surrounding rice.

5) Finish by adding chopped fresh herbs and green onions if you have them.

How about eggs as a main?

Omelettes, quiche, and frittatas are delicious, budget-friendly meal options.

Egg salad and fried egg sandwiches are also simple and affordable choices.

Speaking of sandwiches, tuna salad, BLTs, and grilled cheese paired with a bowl of soup are simple, satisfying options.

Final suggestions for shopping

Consider skipping the grocery store for a few days. Check your fridge, freezer, and pantry and take inventory of what you already have. You may find enough ingredients to prepare several meals without buying anything new.

For example, a large package of chicken breasts can be divided and cooked in two or three different ways, creating the base for multiple meals. Frozen vegetables can be used in a quick stir-fry or a hearty soup.

Another way to save is to take advantage of weekly discounts. Whether you typically make a meal plan or not, consider buying a few discounted items and building your meals around them. Start by checking the weekly sales before planning your menu.

Finally, try to cook more. Takeout meals and prepared foods are convenient, but they often cost more than homemade alternatives. For instance, a pot of tomato pasta sauce made from canned tomatoes, an onion, and dried herbs costs less and produces more than a store-bought jar.

Rely on items you already have at home and create meals from using more of those before spending at the store. Less shopping will mean less spending, even if it's temporary.

Port Union Library

Library Closed: April 3 – Good Friday, April 5 – Easter Sunday, April 6 – Easter Monday

From Balconies to Backyards: Planning a Successful Vegetable Garden - Tuesday, April 21 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Want to enjoy vegetables you've grown yourself in your own backyard or on your balcony? A Toronto Master Gardener will lead a demonstration and show how to get started to grow your own vegetables. Get some tips and learn techniques for successful growing. At the end of the program, vegetable seeds or seedlings will be shared with attendees, while supplies last. No registration required.

Movie Night: Mondays April 13, 20, 27, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Adults & 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, April 14, 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 *Hang the Moon* by Jeannette Walls. The library will provide 15 copies of the book, or you may order your own copy. Contact the branch for book lists and more details. This is a drop-in program – all are welcome! Space is limited.

Evening Book Club: Tuesday, April 14, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Join us for our Evening Book Club to discuss great books each month! This month's book is *The Women* by Kristin Hannah. The library will provide 15 copies of the book, or you may order your own copy. Contact the branch for book lists and more details. This is a drop-in program – all are welcome! Space is limited.

Family Time: Wednesdays, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 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. This is a drop-in program.

Chess Club: Wednesdays, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Looking for a fun after-school activity? Drop by the Port Union Library and learn how to play or improve your game with members of the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus Chess Club!

No registration required. This is a drop-in program for ages 7-17 years old.

Baby Time: Fridays, April 3, 10, 17, 24, 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. This is a drop-in program.

Knitting Circle: Saturdays, April 4, 11, 18, 25, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Join Port Union's Knitting Circle! You can also share your projects with others! This is a drop-in program but limited to a room capacity of 20 participants. Arrive early to secure your spot!

Family Club: Saturdays, April 4, 11, 18, 25, 11:30 - 12:30p.m.

Come celebrate your Saturday morning at Port Union Library! You can colour your favorite characters or create freestyle Legos with family and friends! This is a drop-in program but limited to a room capacity of 20 participants. Arrive early to secure your spot! No registration needed.

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Safety Awareness

Community safety: Everyday actions that make a difference

By Kaz Anwar
(Vice President, Community
Police Liaison)

Residents of the Centennial community are focusing on safety, awareness, and prevention following reports of residential break-ins. The Toronto Police Service says that most break-ins are crimes of opportunity rather than targeted attacks.

Offenders usually know little about the occupants. They look for homes that appear empty, poorly lit, or easy to access. Recognizing these patterns helps residents reduce risk. Prevention, visibility and timely reporting remain the most effective tools in discouraging property crime.

Understanding crimes of opportunity

Break-ins most often occur during daytime hours when residents are away:

- Entry is commonly through unlocked doors or windows, unsecured sliding doors, or accessible garages.
- Packages on porches, accumulated mail, dark homes, or overgrown landscaping may indicate a home is empty.
- These signs make homes more vulnerable to opportunistic offenders.

Letting potential offenders know someone is home

- Making a home appear occupied is a simple and effective strategy:

- Respond to door knocks through a locked door unless the visitor is known.
- Children should notify an adult if someone is at the door or respond through a locked barrier.
- Contact authorities if someone behaves suspiciously or asks for a resident who does not live there.

When away for extended periods:

- Arrange for mail collection, snow removal, or lawn maintenance.
- Ask a trusted neighbour to check the property or occasionally use the driveway.
- Use timed interior lighting to maintain the appearance of occupancy.

Detection and neighbourhood awareness

Community awareness plays a significant role in prevention:

- Watch for unfamiliar vehicles circulating slowly, individuals checking car handles, or people entering backyards without a clear purpose.
- Do not confront suspicious individuals. Record descriptions and license plates and report the information promptly.
- Timely reporting helps police identify patterns and increase patrol visibility.

Strengthening physical security

- The Toronto Police Service pro-

vides specific recommendations to fortify residential properties:

- Solid-core wood or metal exterior doors.
- High-quality deadbolts and reinforced door frames with security strike plates secured by 2 inch screws or longer.
- Secured sliding doors with locks, bars, or dowels in tracks.
- Locked garages and sheds to prevent access to tools.
- Clear yard obstructions and trim branches that provide access to upper levels.
- Motion-activated or consistent exterior lighting.
- Report burned-out streetlights through Toronto's 311 service.

Reducing personal and property risk

Other preventative measures include:

- Lock doors and windows at all times.
- Remove valuables from vehicles and ensure they are locked.
- Avoid hiding spare keys outdoors.
- Verify identification of service personnel.
- Avoid posting travel plans on social media.
- Record serial numbers or keep an inventory of valuables.

These steps make homes less appealing to offenders and help recovery if theft occurs.

If a Break-In is suspected

Call 911 if a crime is in progress or there is immediate danger. If returning home and suspecting a break-in, do not enter the property. Instead, go to a neighbour's home and contact police immediately. It is important not to touch or move anything until officers have arrived.

Reporting and resources

Reporting suspicious activity, even if no crime has occurred, is critical. Timely information allows police to detect trends and allocate patrols effectively.

Contacts

- Emergency: 911
- Toronto Police Non-Emergency: 416-808-2222
- City Services: 311
- Ontario Community and Social Services Info Line: 211
- Crime Stoppers: 1-800-222-8477 or 222tips.com

A preventative approach

Recent incidents show that consistent habits are essential. Well-lit homes, secured entry points, attentive residents, and prompt reporting reduce break-ins. By reinforcing simple security practices and maintaining awareness, Centennial residents can strengthen both household safety and neighbourhood confidence.

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Zoo welcomes baby Masai Giraffe

By Wanda Wierzbicki

The long wait is finally over. The baby female Masai giraffe calf was born on Sunday, February 22, at the Toronto Zoo, to 12 year old mom Mstari. The “little” calf measured about 6 foot 4 inches or 1.95 metres at birth and weighed over 170 pounds.

“This endangered Masai giraffe calf is an incredible addition to [the] Toronto Zoo.” says Dolf DeJong, CEO, Toronto Zoo. “We announced Mstari’s pregnancy on Mother’s Day last year and after 15-months, we are thrilled to have a healthy calf in our care, raising the profile of endangered Masai giraffes and inspiring our community to learn more and stand with us as Guardians of Wild.”

In December 2018, the conservation status of Masai giraffes was elevated to Endangered by the International Union for Conservation and Nature (IUCN). Fewer than 35,000 Masai giraffes survive in the wild, a 50% decline in the past 30 years. Illegal hunting and habitat loss are their primary threats.

“We are overjoyed to share the heart-warming news of this special arrival, and



it carries even deeper meaning as we honour Kiko, the calf’s father, who unexpectedly passed away last month. While we continue to feel his absence, his legacy lives on”, the Toronto Zoo said in their Facebook post.

The female Masai giraffe calf has been exploring her habitat, while staying close to third-time mom Mstari. Her first steps were wobbly, but she is growing stronger and more confident every day. There are several videos on the internet of “BabyLongNeck”, enjoying the ‘zoomies’. The long legged calf has captured the hearts of many.

At the time of writing this report, the Toronto Zoo is holding a contest for the public to name the beautiful giraffe calf. Five names were suggested by the Kenyan Honorary Consulate in Toronto. They are: Binti (daughter), Imara (strong, resilient), Nyota (star), Neema (grace) and Sanaa (Beauty). The winning name will be announced March 23.

BabyLongNeck’s journey as an ambassador for her species is only just beginning! You can follow her progress on the Toronto Zoo’s Facebook page.

Continued from page 12



Correct solution for the Earth Day Word Search on page 12.

. W . P L A N T . .
C L I M A T E C . . I
C . . . C A R P O O L L G R E E N .
L F . M . E D S
E O R P R C L O
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Membership



Centennial Community Neighbours

It is wonderful that hundreds of residents have already purchased CCRA memberships for the 2026 calendar year. Thank you!

Please join your neighbours and buy your household membership for this year and let's have the biggest CCRA membership base ever!

The city faces key issues such as planning, zoning, by-law enforcement, multi-tenant housing, and public transit, especially in east Scarborough. CCRA represents the community at hearings and meetings, advocating on its behalf. The more members we have, the stronger our voice with decision-makers. Every membership matters.

The \$15.00 annual household membership has remained unchanged for at least the last ten years.

Please join today and help CCRA to preserve and protect our little piece of paradise in the GTA.

Denise Bacon
membership@ccranews.com

Distribution



Spring is officially here, although some days it still does not feel like it. Most of the snow has melted and bicycles and

motor cycles have made an appearance in the neighborhood. I have put away my warm winter boots and hope that I don't need to pull them out again.

April means it is time for chocolate Easter egg hunts (yum), beautiful tulips, daffodils and crocuses, and Earth Day. The melting snow has revealed an opportunity for some much needed community clean up. This year the CCRA Community is celebrating Earth Day on Saturday, April 25. Come join your neighbors at the Port Union Recreation Centre.

Last month, I wrote that I was still looking for a distributor for part of the townhouse complex at 121 Centennial. Mowat student, **Jared DeLeo**, volunteered to take on this route. Join me in welcoming Jared to the distribution team.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and thank the over 100 volunteers that distribute this newspaper every month. Thank you for keeping us connected and informed. We couldn't do it without you.

Wanda Wierzbicki
distribution@ccranews.com

Join our Centennial community

CCRA 2026 Membership Form

It's easy to join or renew your membership. Complete this form, then mail or drop off with your annual household fee of \$15. To join online, go to www.ccranews.com and select **Member signup** to pay with credit card or PayPal.

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Mail with cheque payable to: OR Drop off at the main office in the
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