

OTR

FEBRUARY 2021

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WALKS
PULL-OUT**
Pg 11



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CROXALLS PG.6**

**JUMP INTO 2021
WITH 21% OFF PG.10**

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Dennis Hristovski

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JUMP INTO
2021 WITH
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FROM THE EDITOR

On the Road in Whitchurch-Stouffville (OTR) is the Monthly magazine of the Town. The purpose of it is to communicate with residents, promote local businesses, support agriculture, develop tourism and, most importantly, **build community.**

In this issue, we learn about more shop local initiatives, we celebrate the great outdoors, and visit the Croxalls. This will be the last issue with Jake MacAndrew, who has been involved as the OTR Journalism Student - we thank Jake and have enjoyed his participation.

Just a reminder, all the businesses, citizens and events featured in OTR are done so on a pro-bono basis. The Town loves the community, and OTR is one way to re-invest. If you want to advertise in the only every-door magazine in Whitchurch-Stouffville, you must contact a 3rd party, Bruce Stapley at bstapley@sympatico.ca. If you have a story - and everyone has a story - contact me, below.

This issue brings awareness to thirty-six businesses, outdoor recreation and three matters of community importance. This appears to be our 4-year OTR anniversary, with 48 issues printed. (1)

David Tuley, Editor & Designer
Economic Development Officer
david.tuley@townofws.ca



BRIAN
MCFARLANE
PG. 21

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Council opposes Main St. cannabis store

Tax and water bill deferral; new telecommunication tower; Highway 48 vision on agendas

Glenn Jackson, Contributor

This is a monthly column summarizing recent Whitchurch-Stouffville Council decisions. Subscribe to our eNewsletter for more detailed information: eepurl.com/eKPNgg

Cannabis Store Application Opposed.

An application for a cannabis retail store has been submitted to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) for 6134 Main Street. The store is located on the north side between Albert Street North and Edward Street.

The location is within 100 metres of Tiny Bubbles Daycare at 6128 Main Street.

Provincial regulations do not permit cannabis retail locations within 150 metres of a school as defined by the *Education Act*, however, daycare centres are regulated under the *Day Nurseries Act* and therefore are not specifically restricted from the prohibited distance separation.

As outlined in a Report before Council on January 19, staff is of the opinion that having a cannabis retail store in such close proximity to a daycare is not acceptable.

As a result, Council took immediate action and will advise the AGCO that the Town does not support the application.

The AGCO has final say in cannabis store applications in Ontario.

Tax and Water Bill Due Dates. On January 19, Council approved a COVID-19 deferral policy for water and tax bill relief. There is now a 60-day grace period for upcoming tax and water payments to relieve property owners requiring financial support due to the pandemic.

The grace period applies to any tax or water bill with due dates between January 27 and June 30. Property owners wishing to request deferral of payments for the bill due date of January 27 have until February 3 to make such requests providing payment has not already been made. All subsequent requests need to be received at least one week in advance of the payment due date if payment has not been made during that application period.

Requests can be made at townofws.ca/deferrals. However, submissions will also be accepted in writing or email to deferrals@townofws.ca. To apply, the applicant is



ABOVE: Corebridge's vision for the northeast corner of Hoover Park Drive and Highway 48 includes a hotel, library, marketplace, conference center, innovation centre, live/work townhouses and apartment units. Collectively christened "Stouffville Commons," this area was once contained within the Highway 48 Visioning Study. Council elected to merge the study with two other land use policies on January 19.

required to have account authority and must indicate name, address of the property, the tax and/or water billing account number(s) and the nature of the financial burden.

In addition, interest charges and penalties will be waived if payment of all outstanding amounts is received on or before the revised due date as outlined in the decision letter issued to the applicant.

More information can be found at townofws.ca/deferrals

Cell Phone Tower Application.

At the January 19 meeting, Council approved Freedom Mobile to submit an application to erect a telecommunications tower at 5061 Bethesda Road. The land is owned by the town and is the current site of the Operations Centre.

Upon completion of the application process, a recommendation report will be brought before Council to either direct staff to issue a letter of concurrence or a letter of non-concurrence to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

Highway 48 Development. At the January 19 meeting, Council approved the re-scope of the Highway 48 Visioning Study.

The Study, initiated early last year, looked at the potential scenarios in which the Highway 48 corridor south of Stouffville Road/Main Street could be planned and developed.

Late last year FLATO Developments, the primary landowner in the area, was granted a Minister's Zoning Order which would pave the way for them to build an 1800-dwelling subdivision on the land west of Highway 48 near Walmart.

As a result, the Visioning Study is no longer needed. Council therefore approved the merging of the Study with two other land use policies: The Western Approach policy and the Gateway policy, both of which oversee development close to Highway 48. (1)

COUNCIL MEETINGS:

Under the current COVID-19 situation, meetings are generally 1 p.m. every other Tuesday via teleconference. Detailed information at townofws.ca/COVID19
Listen live: townofws.ca/cm livestream.
Live tweets: [@ws_townhall](https://twitter.com/ws_townhall)



Photographer Julie Williams
REFLECTIONS
 on OTR, E-Commerce, and
 Chemical Engineering

Jake MacAndrew, OTR Journalism Student



In school, Julie Williams was always interested in science. Specifically, her favourite subject was chemistry. So naturally, she was bound to become a photographer? Well, not exactly. After studying Chemical Engineering at the University of Waterloo and working as a chemical engineer for a decade she decided to go from science to the art of photography. Here is part of Julie's photography journey.

We start our story on the soccer field. Always inspired by photography, Julie took photos at her kid's sports games. She was a school volunteer for many athletic games. At this time, Julie was off work as a chemical engineer raising her kids' (of which she has two). Once the parents cheering their kids from the sidelines noticed Julie's photographs, they were interested in obtaining copies for themselves. That moment was when her future career started. Julie says, "It all happened quite innocently."

From then on forward, Julie was the person in charge of taking photographs for all her kids' sports teams and events. With this spark came a flame fueled by her passion for photography. Julie started a service-based photography business called Pretty in Pictures. As a photographer, Julie calls herself a "visual storyteller" and rightfully so. Her testimonials and experience have grown over the years. Family shoots and business portraits led her to make a shift into freelance corporate work. In 2016, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville was looking for a photographer to document events around town. Julie submitted her tender to become the "Town Photographer" and got the job.

For three years, Julie worked with the town on various occasions. She would take photos of public events, create visuals for town advertising, and work with the very magazine you are reading right now. David Tuley, our editor, and Julie worked together on stories featured in OTR Magazine. She started working on the publication back when it began in 2016. She reflected on how the magazine has gone from an 8-page newspaper to a 24-page full-colour magazine issue. While working with the publication, she loved being a part of the interview process. Julie mentioned, "It's important to connect with your client and to make them feel at ease. That's when the magic happens." The rush of looking forward to which new business David would find for every issue was an exciting part of the job. Julie's favorite assignment? An interview at the Holy Theotokos Convent (just north of Stouffville in Cedar Valley) where the nuns sell beeswax candles. "I have been told stories where people would come in [to their store] with OTR and tell the nuns, 'we read about you!' It's all about the community."

Although there was no "official town photographer" title within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, the name spawned courtesy of Mike from Most Excellent Productions. Julie mentioned, "At every event, he would announce me as the official town photographer and the name stuck."

When Julie's contract with the town expired in late 2019, she focused more on her photography business. Julie works out of a studio constructed on the second level of her garage -known in the Williams family as "the barn". In 2019, she created an

exhibit at 19 On the Park featuring 11 influential women from town. This event was a central moment in her photography career as "It was magical to see my work in print on such a large scale. The support and encouragement of my community means the world to me."

Julie says her biggest photography achievement is working with the town as it has helped her build credentials. When speaking about her notable photography works, Julie mentioned, "Success leads to other successes." One of Julie's most notable accomplishments is winning 3 Hermes Awards for Marketing after having her hat thrown in the ring for her photography work with the town.

After a few months of freelance work on her own, the pandemic hit. Not being able to do photoshoots, Julie started an e-commerce site to sell her photos and prints. A key feature of her new site is the ability to use AR (Augmented Reality) capabilities. This feature enables customers to see Julie's artwork on their wall at home through their phone camera. "You hold up your phone to the wall, select the photo and size you want, and you can see it on your wall." You can purchase many of Julie's pieces at julie-williams.ca

Since leaving OTR in 2019, Julie has continued to "get a kick out of it when art resonates with people." She continues to work in the town she has lived in for 25 years. You can find her prints and portraits on her website at julie-williams.ca. (1)

FINDING
safe Spaces by David Tuley

We are coming up to the one-year anniversary of the original lockdown. We took it very seriously back then. Highway 404 was so empty that it appeared to be a post-apocalyptic scene. York Region hit a peak of 109 cases April 2, which wasn't to be matched and surpassed until October 15. By November 30 we doubled it, and by January 7 daily cases more than quadrupled. At the original peak, non-essential businesses were forced shut, but 4x past the post, these are open. Stay at Home Orders issued, but curbside pick-up allowed. What?

Government policy during COVID-19 has been a confusing business. We can't blame the government so much, as pandemics – thankfully – do not come around very often. This has been as unnavigable as a Class VI rapid. How much practice have we had?

The current policy, which may have changed by OTR press time, is weighing needs: we must keep people at home, but we must help businesses survive or our economy could collapse. On the one hand is a lockdown Stay-at-Home, while shopping continues at non-essential businesses. It makes little sense. This is a true lose-lose situation, and no policy can navigate it well.

In Whitchurch-Stouffville, we want our businesses to survive and our populace to be safe. The best we can do is to encourage you to shop locally in a safe manner, and to spend outside time as far from other people as possible. Yep, use the gas pedal and the brake at the same time. We used both pedals intentionally as teens, now we get to do it again.

Let's shake off the nostalgia around February – who doesn't like the combination

of the Super Bowl, Groundhog Day, Chinese New Year, Mardi Gras, Valentine's Day, Family Day, Lent, the Stouffville Spirit, International Polar Bear Day, Black History Month, and sometimes, a Leap Year? Sadly, you have to reinvent all of these events in your own unforgettable way, with no more than 5 people - outside. This may be the greatest challenge in our lifetimes – an iconic period. Will COVID match up to World War I, The Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, World War II and the Cold War in the timetables of history? It may be a blip in historical comparison, but it's damaging for sure. One day we will look back on this with wisdom and reflection. It hasn't been a simple year of i-dotting and t-crossing.

If any of this commentary falls very short of your experience, I apologize. I have lost two uncles and family experiences, yet many people have lost much more than me. It is horrible. Our thoughts are with you. Excusing this, we have supplied the following recommendations based on the polar opposite idea of Stay-at-Home. Venture out, safely. Conquer that forest, but do it off-peak and pick the less popular spots. Shop locally, but do it with curbside pickup or delivery. Take advantage of the 21% off program; you will get a deal and our merchants will hopefully survive. Take advantage of What's for Dinner – and then pick up your own meal.

These resources, Forest Walks, What's for Dinner and 21% off are all available on L4A.ca. The Town created this website to help local merchants during the pandemic. Now, you can help too! Choose your own comfort zone and be safe. (1)

[below] An example of one of the many specials presented in the 21% off program on L4A.ca.



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MEET THE

CROXALLS



[above] Rob Croxall and [right] Kathy Croxall behind the pharmacy counter at Stouffville I.D.A.

Jake MacAndrew, OTR Journalism Student

Around 100 years ago, a man by the name of Milt Storey started a pharmacy in the small town of Stouffville. Down the road at the other end of Main Street stood another pharmacy known as “Houston’s Pharmacy”. Over the past century, pharmacies in Stouffville have changed, just as our town has morphed into the urban area we see today. Inside the establishments where we get our prescriptions, medical-related supplies, and essentials, there is history to discover.

Meet Rob Croxall, a pharmacist of 40 years who is the current owner of Stouffville I.D.A. Rob grew up in Uxbridge - a town north-east of Stouffville. After completing his post-secondary studies at the University of Toronto for Science and Pharmacy, he returned to his Uxbridge roots where he worked for his family friend, Gord Davie, at his pharmacy. Rob reflected, “Mr. Davie was a good role model, I got started at his pharmacy.” Rob worked in Uxbridge for a few years before encountering an opportunity to run his own store, so Rob and his university classmate bought a pharmacy in Maple, Ontario as a start to their business ownership. As Rob said, “Over the

years we went around buying pharmacies.”

In 1984, Rob and his partners bought Cliff Aiken’s pharmacy located at 6284 Main Street. Present day, you will find a spa occupying the space. Back then, the pharmacy was referred to as Aiken’s I.D.A. Rob purchased the business knowing he made a smart choice “Aiken’s I.D.A. was a well-respected name,” says Rob. “We wanted our customers to have a sense of comfort at the pharmacy,” and so they did! The pharmacy continued to be referred to as “Aiken’s I.D.A.” for over a decade...and to this day a few customers still know it that way.

In 1996, a new business development was set to open at the corner of Freel and Main Street. Rob and his team decided it was time to move into a larger space. As current store manager Kathy Croxall (Rob’s sister) stated, “It was an opportunity to have a larger store and to be located with other health-related businesses. The building at the time had doctors, dentists, physio, x-ray and ultrasound, and a blood lab.” Kathy goes on to say that before Rob made his final decision to move, he surveyed his current customers to

make sure they were okay with making the move up the street and to a building that was slightly above street level.

In 1996, Rob and his team moved into the newly renamed “Stouffville I.D.A.” where it stands to this day.

Eventually, Rob brought in his sister Kathy to run the front of the store full-time. Fifteen years ago, she became the general manager of the Stouffville I.D.A. Since starting full-time, Kathy has brought in the gifts and fashion sections that may be her true passion. “We have a sizable gift section where I try to focus on Canadian made products,” says Kathy. “Before I was here full time we did have a small gift section which, for the most part, our mother and another staff member looked after. I would come in on weekends and work in the section as well. Once I came here full time, we did a renovation which allowed me to expand and diversify the section a lot.”

Meanwhile, at the other end of Main Street stood another pharmacy with a lot of town history. According to archived Stouffville Tribune articles, Houston’s Pharmacy was

the first pharmacy in town; it started in the 1880’s. Over the years, Houston’s changed ownership multiple times. Around the time Kathy started in 2006, it was owned by a local pharmacist, Farid Wassef. Currently, Chic Thrills occupies the space.

Farid worked with his father at Houston’s pharmacy for years but decided he wanted to focus on nutritional counselling. So, in 2006 Rob bought Houston’s pharmacy and amalgamated Farid’s counselling to the repertoire of Stouffville I.D.A. services. According to Kathy, “Farid melds traditional medicine with holistic supplements for optimal health.” To this day, Farid and Rob work together at the pharmacy counter.

Since Rob took over the Stouffville I.D.A. 37 years ago, the pharmaceutical industry has changed in town. In the words of Rob, “Stouffville is no longer a small town. Back when we started, there were only three pharmacies in town.” With many more choices now in town pharmacies, it is crucial to stand out. Rob says the personal service aspect is important. He prides himself on providing quality relationships with his patrons and staff. In a town of growing pharmacies, Rob believes the personal service his business offers is important to maintain. As he said, “Personal service is important. Eventually, you get to call customers by name. Some of the pharmacists have been here for 20 years!”

Kathy goes on to say “We happily participate in all downtown Stouffville events, like the annual Moonlight Madness. We feel that

it’s important for downtown businesses to work together to strengthen the appeal of the downtown core.”

Recently, Stouffville I.D.A. has adapted to current times and started offering products online. Kathy mentioned, “It was a result of the pandemic as we didn’t know what was going to happen.” Adding, “It was really important to make our products accessible.” Although the online store mostly drives people to their physical location to buy the products, when York Region shifted

to lockdown, “the community of Stouffville doubled down and really shopped local.”

It seems to me Stouffville I.D.A. loves being a part of the community. They have become a collection of multiple local pharmacies all wrapped into one. Whether you were a customer at Aiken’s I.D.A, Houston’s Pharmacy, or are currently a regular customer at Stouffville I.D.A, you may know who is behind the counter, and they may know your name. [\[1\]](#)

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OTR FOREST
walks Pull-Out

THE
SPACE
between
US



cont. on page 15

[photo] Pond at Scout Tract



[above] The wonderful pond at Scout Tract, [below left] The entrance at Scout, [below right] a snow covered trail in Mitchell.

SCOUT-MITCHELL LOOP

by David Tuley

You must approach these forest tracts from Vivian Rd. as McCowan is cut at a creek valley. For this reason, these tracts are less frequented. Park on the side of the road, and be respectful of the quiet neighbourhood. These forest tracts have appeal year round.

On this January 19 day, the trail was hard-packed snow-ice with 2cm of snow on top. If it weren't for the fresh snow, sections would be impassable without assistance from microspikes; crampons and snowshoes would probably be awkward on such a hard surface.

For 1 pm on a Tuesday, the trail traffic was light - I spotted eight other hikers and only passed two. There was one car alongside the road on arrival, and six when I left. I attempt

to choose trail alignments to avoid the view of houses (and fence-line barking dogs). On this hike, I saw about ten homes, including a couple of horse farms.

Winter is a challenge, because of impromptu trail development by snowshoers. It is easy to get confused, so I used a trails app to stay on course.

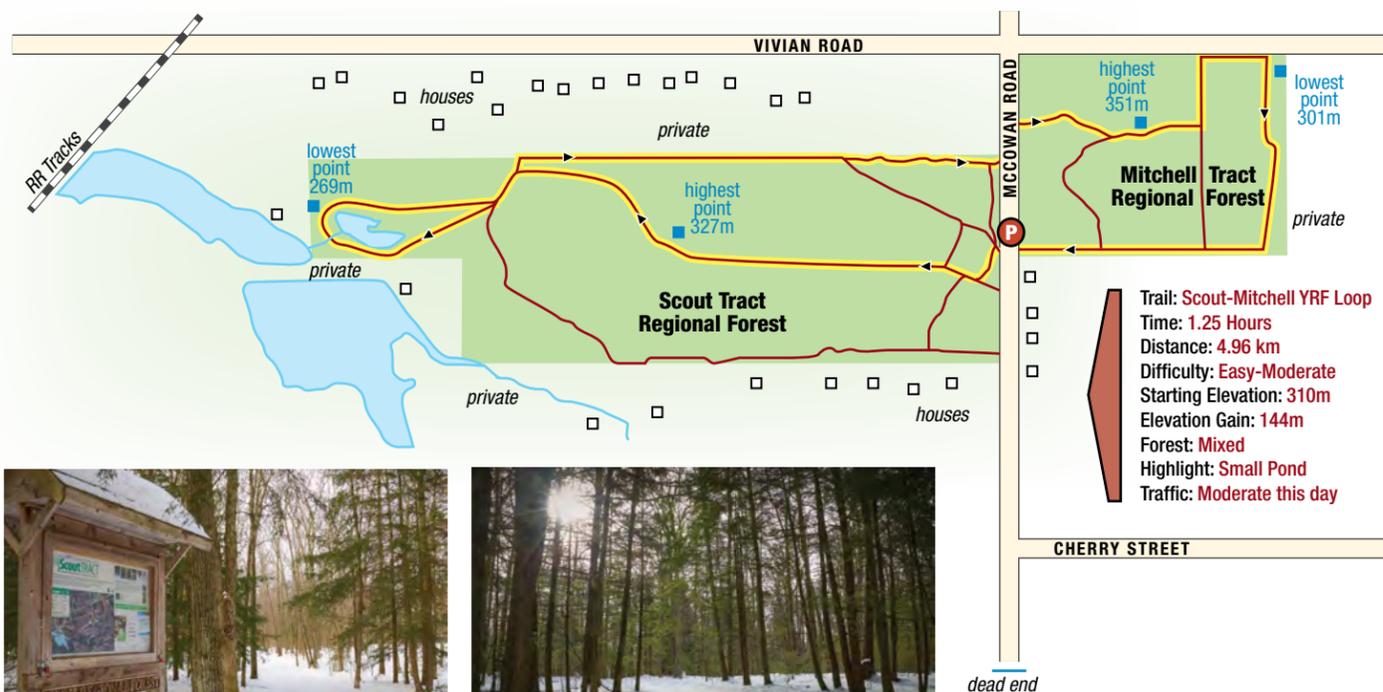
A pristine pond is located at the west end of Scout Tract. On this day, the south leg of the pond loop was closed, either due to icy conditions on the hill, or the requirement to jump a creek at the outflow of the earthen damn. Regardless, you have to walk down to the pond one way or another. Obviously, it would be foolish for you or your dog to walk

on untested ice. Also, you may detect the presence of larger lakes nearby, but sorry, those are on private property.

There's hardly a hill big enough to get your blood flowing on either forest tract. Mitchell has the highest point at 351 meters - enough to feel it, but not enough to pant up the hill.

I saw two squirrels, but no large animal tracks, other than cross country ski tracks. All pets were on a leash except for two dogs with one individual, and he disappeared as soon as he saw me in the distance.

This is the perfect trail plan for a family - if Scout tires them out you can re-route back to the car. But if all is well, you can cross over to Mitchell without being tempted by the car. (U)



Trail: **Scout-Mitchell YRF Loop**
 Time: 1.25 Hours
 Distance: 4.96 km
 Difficulty: **Easy-Moderate**
 Starting Elevation: 310m
 Elevation Gain: 144m
 Forest: **Mixed**
 Highlight: **Small Pond**
 Traffic: **Moderate this day**



[below left] Bench at a trail intersection, [below right] "Luge Track" section of trail, [above right] a walk through evergreens.

HALL TRACT LOOP

by David Tuley

On a cold January 20, I ventured into Hall Tract York Regional Forest for the first time. Each forest has its merits, but this is a new favourite. There is a decent-sized parking lot. Even though there were nine cars when I arrived, I only spotted three people.

This forest has a lot of capacity and a crazy amount of side trails. My map below is good (as a proud geographer), but it will get you lost. There are twice as many impromptu trails. Plus, the streams shown are under snow, so these aren't much help for navigating.

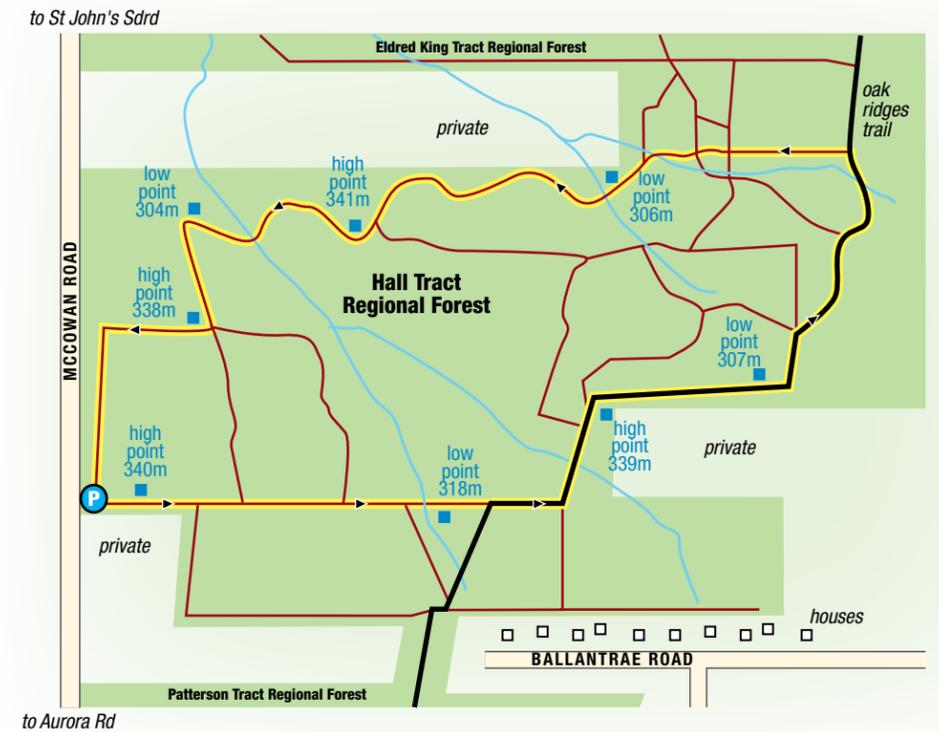
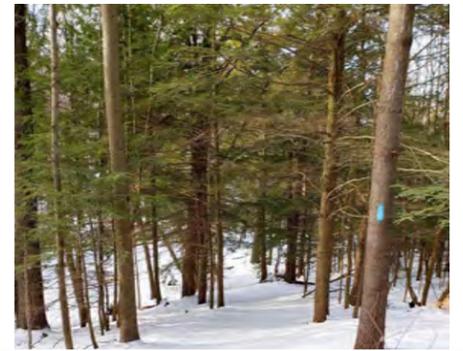
The trail starts next to a wrecking and recycling yard, with accompanying metal clanging sounds. However, you get past this quickly. The trails on the south side are wide enough for trucks to pass. As you approach the east, the trails narrow.

The best trails are on the north side, adjacent to the archery range (wear a blaze orange hat). These trails are single track and in some areas, resemble a "Luge Track".

There is a lot of hilliness in the east and north, but thankfully - these warmed my hands after being numb for 2.5 km. The overall hike is a beginner-to-moderate level of difficulty. There is an accessible trail in the southwest

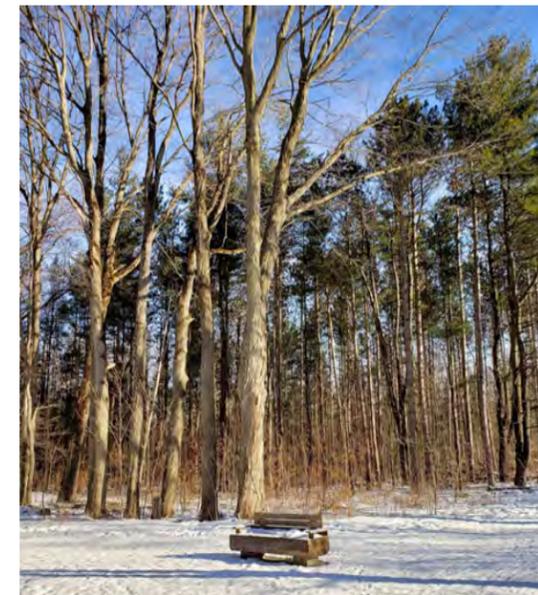
near the parking lot. I couldn't see what the surface was constructed of under the snow, but probably gravel screenings.

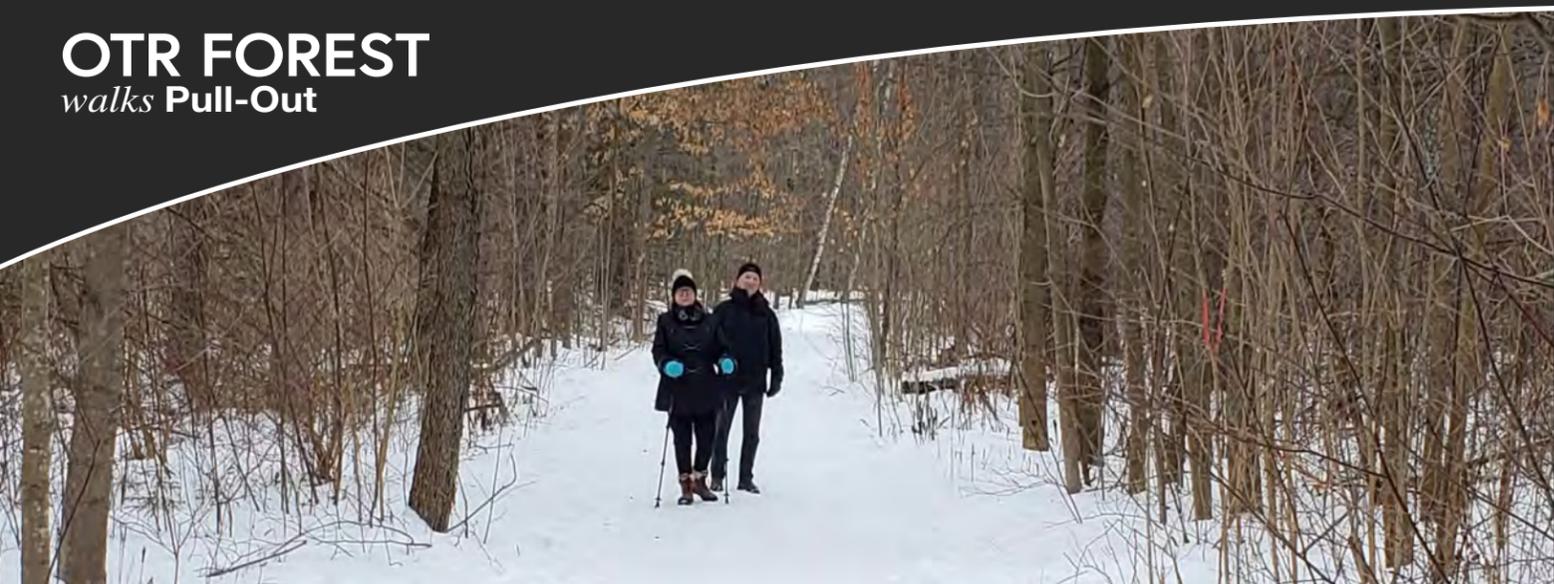
Caution must be taken with navigation. There are adjoining forest tracts to the north and south - it would be easy to walk out of this one and into another. At least you know, McCowan is always on the west side, so how lost can you get? I recommend a trail app of sorts. Have fun. This is a good one. (U)



Trail: **Hall Tract Loop**
 Time: 1.0 Hours
 Distance: 4.4 km
 Difficulty: **Moderate**
 Starting Elevation: 340m
 Elevation Gain: 132m
 Forest: **Mixed**
 Highlight: **"Luge Track"**
 Traffic: **Light this day**

[below left] Bench at a trail intersection, [below right] "Luge Track" section of trail, [above right] a walk through evergreens.





cont. from
page 10

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CLARKE TRACT LOOP

by David Tuley

This forest tract, combined with Dainty Tract across the street, should have enough capacity to provide few interactions of any kind. But on this day, with only seven cars parked, all the walkers had leash-free dogs. Many of the dogs charged me and other hikers, and the German Sheppard was downright mean on approach.

I have friends from countries that would seize up if the tiniest dog took a run at them. But, on this day all the dogs were big. Happy dogs or not, it is not cool. This behavior could result in forest closures for all people and pets.

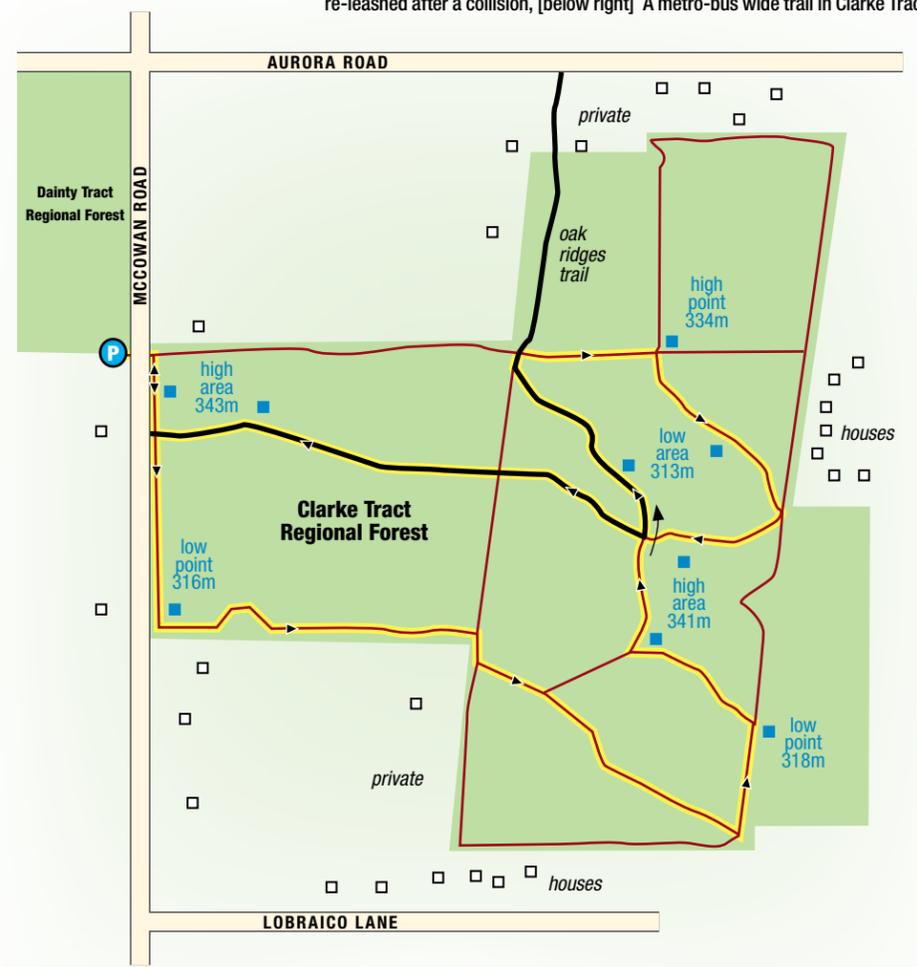
The Clarke Tract Forest is a good forest. There are some impressively large trees and little background noise. I chose a route to avoid close contact with neighbouring houses, and was successful. However, the loops are tight, and in this case - I ran across our unleashed friends multiple times within the span of an hour.

The trails in Clarke Tract are all metro-bus width. If it weren't for many little blind hill-locks and turns, there would be little left to the imagination. The ice pack on the trail was thicker than in other forest tracts, which is an indication of high traffic volumes.

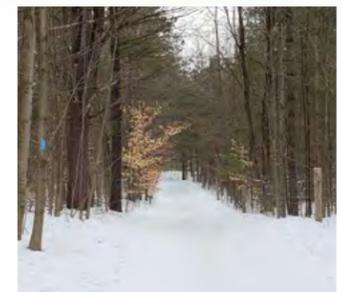
This forest has the advantage of being absolutely family-friendly. It is beginner level walking with gentle hills and room for a large group to walk together. I haven't seen it in summer, but a 3-wheel drive stroller would probably do just fine. Horses and bicyclists also enjoy the trails in Clarke Tract.

My highlight on this trip was meeting a very friendly couple from Newmarket. Their enthusiasm for the forest carried the day. Although I didn't enjoy this forest tract much, 76 reviewers have given it 4 out of 5 stars, so maybe I'm all wet. (u)

[above] Wonderful walkers from Newmarket, [below left] Dog mayhem - 6 dogs re-leashed after a collision, [below right] A metro-bus wide trail in Clarke Tract.



Trail: **Clarke Tract Loops**
Time: **1.0 Hours**
Distance: **4.2 km**
Difficulty: **Easy**
Starting Elevation: **321m**
Elevation Gain: **105m**
Forest: **Mixed**
Highlight: **Kind Strangers**
Traffic: **Moderate**



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STOUFFVILLE SENIOR OF THE MONTH

Helen Bartolic

AGE: Helen is 82 Years old

A STOUFFVILLE RESIDENT SINCE: She and her family came to Stouffville from Toronto in 1968. In 1973 their property was expropriated for the Pickering Airport and so they moved to their present home.

FAMILY: Helen's husband passed away in 2014. They have four daughters. As a direct result of the family moving to Stouffville when the children were very young, three of her daughters are now involved in agriculture. She also has six grandchildren and one great grandson.

CAREER: She was primarily a homemaker but, once the children were older, Helen worked at James White Florist next door to her farm and later at Richters Herbs in Goodwood. She has always enjoyed working with plants, but her true passion is baking. Helen still does a lot of baking for family and friends who say it is the best they have ever tasted.

LIFE'S HIGHLIGHT(S): The Bartolic's were refugees from Hungary in 1956. They came to Canada not knowing the language or having a lot of money and built a life for themselves and their children. Hard work brought its rewards and when they moved to the farm in Stouffville it was the fulfillment of her husband's dream. Helen considers herself very lucky to have lived the last 50 years of her life on a farm.

WHAT'S LIFE ALL ABOUT GRANDMA! Trust in God, put your family first, and work hard.

WHAT'S BEST ABOUT LIFE IN STOUFFVILLE! Even though it has grown incredibly since Helen moved here, Stouffville still has a small town feel with friendly people.

IF YOU KNOW A SENIOR THAT IS WORTHY OF SENIOR OF THE MONTH GIVE US AN E-MAIL AT FARMERJACKS@ROGERS.COM



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Susan's TIP-OFF

with SUSAN TUCKER



STEER FRIENDS Day Program for Adults

Have you heard of the wonderful organization in town called Steer Friends? Let me introduce you if you haven't, and let me share some info even if you have.

Steve Wilkins and Maureen Hall's daughter Stephanie was born with cerebral palsy... they were told she would never walk or talk and she would have a life expectancy of only 13 years. Well, through the wonderful support and her loving family, Stephanie has thrived and is still keeping things lively at the age of 26. The family was dedicated to providing Stephanie with the best care and programming possible but ran into a roadblock when she finished high school... there were no programs available, no where for special needs students to go once they reach the age of 21. She had simply aged out of the system.

Not knowing which way to turn to provide for Stephanie's needs, and continue her journey, they searched for something and found nothing. So, out of necessity came innovation. Steer Friends was born. Steve and Maureen started their own program and opened it up to other families in the same boat. They currently have approximately a dozen clients enrolled in their day program, some travelling from Toronto 2-3 hours per day because there are no other options available.

Steer runs amazing day programs for disabled adults. All but one of their current clients requires a wheelchair and they all require help with feeding, personal care and other daily needs, so it takes patience, compassion and very caring staff and volunteers to see to all the details of their daily programming. The centre provides lessons in art



therapy, sensory therapy, culinary, pet and music therapy as well as community outings.

The programming must be customized and designed around the capability of the clients and that's where Stephanie's big sister Jacqueline Hall-Fusco comes in. She runs the day to day operations at their location here in Stouffville, she is everything...an advocate for the clients, the supply purchaser, the program designer, the go-fer, the executive...an all around fire cracker, and she makes sure that all clients receive the best care and programming available.

Jacqueline shared this quote with me, and I think it really puts things in perspective for those in our community that are unaware of the need for such programs:

"Every parent plans to raise their child for about 18 years, set them free for 30 years and then hope they come back to help them face the final years of their own life."

A Special Needs parent can sometimes plan to raise their child for 65 years and while doing so, they also have to prepare for the other 20 or so after they themselves are long gone...Let that sink in for just a moment and you will begin to understand the drive and determination that many of us have while we are on earth."

If you have never thought about that, don't be sorry...be thankful."

Steer Friends is a registered charity and as such, relies on the generosity of friends, neighbours, and the community to fund their operations, and with "the pandemic that shall not be named" their fundraising events have been seriously curtailed, and to add to the financial

burden, their cost of PPE has gone sky high due to all the new requirements. Please visit their website steerfriends.org and see some examples of the incredible work they do. If you're able to support them, I know it will be very much appreciated. [1]

CONTACT Susan Tucker, otripoff@outlook.com



THE JOHN COOPER LEARNING CENTRE

One of the impacts of the pandemic is the ability of charities and non-profit organizations to raise money through fundraising as they normally would have. From golf tournaments and community initiatives to music and cultural events, there have always been many ways for these organizations to raise money.

Well, all that has changed, and some are finding it increasingly difficult to raise the necessary funds to keep things running. I recently spoke to Linda and Phil Hurren of John Cooper Learning Centre about how they are surviving these unprecedented times.

First a little about the John Cooper Learning Centre. "In November of 2015, after many conversations with my father on my drive into work, we discussed the possibility of starting a not-for-profit learning centre," said Linda, "I did not realize that this would be the last topic of conversation that I would have with him." Hence the John Cooper Learning Centre Charity was founded.

"My passion was encouraged by my father when he visited as he would sit and watch me work with a smile on his face," said Linda. "This has given me the drive to continue and pursue my dream. To set up a learning centre for the youth that are falling through the cracks in today's education system."

Who is the John Cooper Learning Centre for?

Students that are not learning in the current education system they are in; that are working several years below their grade; who have not successfully achieved their high school credits; who have issues with self-regulating in a learning environment; who have social skills issues; or, who suffer anxiety in a learning environment.

I asked Linda and Phil how has the John Cooper Learning Centre adapted to the COVID pandemic. "In March 2020, we had to close the centre and successfully pivoted to online tutoring within 2 weeks," said Linda. "The staff had to quickly establish a framework for remote learning, including using zoom and other online resources. Staff had to convert hard copies of materials to online version for Students to use while they learned to use zoom and adapt to the challenges of remote learning."

Instead of being able to offer full days, they had to resort to a few hours a week 1:1 which greatly impacted their business cost model. In July they pivoted to launch summer camp: "Camp in a Bag". They planned online daily activities, experiments, social lessons, games

and challenges with the students all working together online.

In September they were able to open the doors but following the many pandemic health and safety guidelines and reduced student intake they had incurred additional expenses to purchase PPE materials. It was a challenge to teach the students to wear masks on their return to the centre and to teach them to wipe down and clean everything they touch throughout the day! This was short-lived as the next lockdown came and they have remained online since Christmas break.

"However, now with the online skills and knowledge the teachers had acquired, we have been able to offer online group sessions including fitness workouts in groups and include social lessons," Linda said. "Also, as staff have been trained in a life skills program provided by ASDAN, we have also adapted some of the courses for online tutoring."

I asked them about how fundraising, donations and grants have been affected.

Phil explained, "Our main fundraiser is the annual HoeDown held at Meanwhile Blueberry Farm, unfortunately, this was not held in 2020 due to COVID pandemic and as a result, we missed out on approximately \$30K fundraising & donation support." Phil added, "We have received a grant from Unity for Autism over the last couple years. Unfortunately, there was no grant in 2020. The grants went towards building self-regulation rooms as well as funding the new Life Skills Program for older youth."

Phil, Linda and their team are very excited to announce as their primary fundraiser this year, an online-only version of Catch the Ace lottery. 50% of all ticket sales will go towards continuing education for students whose educational needs cannot be met in the traditional school teaching system.

Get your tickets for a chance to win and contribute to an amazing charity. Visit jclccatchtheace.com or Donate to their GoFundMe charity at <https://gofund.me/4fo216c6>

I asked Linda and Phil what areas they need assistance. Phil told me that the building lease is up for renewal in May and they are starting to look for a new location for the charity. "Any assistance on finding a location that keeps our operational costs to a minimum would be greatly appreciated," he said.

Having access to a building/house where we can have a space for a kitchen, a mock bedroom and a lounge so we can teach life skills

Giving BACK

with DAVE MILLS



CONTACT Dave Mills, david@stouffville.com

and living alone. Opportunities to link in with businesses, providing work experience would be a great opportunity for students to work and be taught skills that can help with their longer-term work skills.

They use McGraw and Hill for Direct Instruction materials. They need to purchase textbooks and workbooks for each student to help keep both the costs of photocopying down and the fees of the program down as they continue to work online.

"I want to build a legacy centred around the love and support of family that I have experienced and that has encouraged me to reach my potential. To be able to share this with families and the great students that will attend the John Cooper Learning Centre is the start of this legacy."

To find out more about The John Cooper Learning Centre visit them at johncooperlearningcentre.com. [1]



From WHERE I LIVE

with BRUCE STAPLEY



TRASH TRANSGRESSIONS When Waste Disposal Goes Awry

While many of us never give a second thought to what happens to our refuse once we put it out for collection, Lindsay Milne and the people responsible for processing waste for the Region of York must sometimes shake their heads in disbelief at what they encounter in the course of a day's work.

Despite the plethora of direction given residents as to how to dispose of their waste, including Whitchurch-Stouffville's all-encompassing 'Curb side Green Bin, Recycling & Garbage Collection Calendar' sent out by mail to all homes at the beginning of each year, many of us still don't get it, or worse still just don't seem to care.

Lindsay, who is Manager of Sustainable Waste Management for York Region, took time from her busy schedule to share with me some of the more common garbage goofs that regularly add to the workload of her staff. Blue box blunders led the list.

"Blue box materials collected within York Region are sorted at the Region's Material Recovery Facility in the Town of East Gwillimbury," she began. "The top contaminants we are currently seeing are single-use masks, gloves and wipes; plastic bags and bagged recyclables; food scraps left in containers; take out coffee cups and lids; black plastic; styrofoam; paper towels and tissues."

She said the misplaced materials can cause a myriad of problems. "These contaminants are removed from the sorting line, often by hand, but those that get missed can mix in with the good recyclables, impacting their quality and recyclability."

That's not the only snag. Safety for the

recovery facility staff has become an issue with the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in piles of personal protection equipment (PPE) improperly placed in blue boxes. "When masks, gloves and wipes are placed in the blue box, front line workers at the Region's sorting facility are required to remove these items by hand, placing them at greater risk of contracting or spreading Covid-19." She advised that PPE should be placed in plastic bags in the home, tied and placed in a tightly tied garbage bag before placing them at the curb for pick up.



Even though single use masks, gloves and wipes are not recyclable, piles of PPE improperly placed in blue boxes must be separated manually at York Region's recycling facility.

She went on to add that plastic bags mistakenly put in blue boxes can get caught in the recycling sorting equipment, resulting in the sorting process being stopped to clear the bags due to the risk of fire, and how food waste left in containers can spill out and soak the paper products, making the paper difficult to recycle.

"Ultimately none of these materials should be put in York Region's blue box system," said Lindsay, adding that anyone in doubt of what goes where can get the answers online at york.ca/bindicator.

As for what should be left out of regular green garbage bags left at the curb, the list includes clothing and textiles, cooking oil, electronics, scrap metal, shredded paper and tires. "The Region has several waste depots to help manage items that should not be placed in the garbage or are better managed at a waste depot versus the blue box," said Lindsay. "Household hazardous waste such as chemicals, batteries, motor oil and paint should be dropped off at one of these depots."

CONTACT Bruce Stapley, bstapley@sympatico.ca

Covid-19 restrictions have led to these depots temporarily being unable to accept styrofoam, concrete, drywall and untreated wood for recycling onsite. Lindsay suggests residents looking to obtain information about what is currently being accepted at the Region's waste depots visit york.ca/wastedepots.

And now onto my personal pet peeve regarding the improper disposal of waste along the beautiful, well-maintained trails of the York Regional Forest tracts located in Whitchurch-Stouffville, the Town trails, and the Rouge National Urban Park trails that run immediately to the south of Stouffville. Lindsay says anyone seeing a recurring litter incident in the Forest should contact the Region at 877-464-9675. Call the Town at 905-640-1800 or 866-876-5423, ext. 2405, for littering issues on Stouffville's trails.

For me, the prize for the most incomprehensible (moronic?) trails violation goes to dog owners who scoop their pet's waste into a plastic bag, then leave it on the side of the trail... perhaps expecting the resident janitor to pick it up?



Recyclable materials travel along the conveyor belt at York Region's Material Recovery Facility.

I'll conclude by relating a recent littering incident next to the Rouge Park trail parking lot at the corner of Reesor Rd. and Elgin Mills Rd. Those of us who remember the Arlo Guthrie classic 'Alice's Restaurant' will get a kick out of this one. I noticed a park ranger hovering over a slatted wooden crate and approached him to ask what was up. The crate was filled with litter, he told me. I asked why he was so intently examining the contents.

"I'm looking for anything with an address on it," he replied. "Have you found anything?" I inquired hopefully. "Oh yes," he said. "I'm about to pay someone a visit." I love a story with a happy ending. [1]

PANDEMIC COULDN'T SLOW BRIAN MCFARLANE DOWN

Order of Canada, Hockey Hall of Fame broadcaster churns out books and paintings as he approaches 90

When life served up a pandemic, Brian McFarlane turned it into an opportunity.

The 89-year-old returned from Florida a year ago this month, "hunkered down" and finished a few paintings. And a book or two. He's not stopping.

The former host and commentator on Hockey Night in Canada and Joan, his wife of 64 years, have called Stouffville home for seven years after trading in their house of 50 years in Willowdale for a penthouse condo off of Main Street.

Before there was Ron MacLean, Don Cherry or Dave Hodge, there was Brian McFarlane, a fixture on Saturday night hockey broadcasts in Canada – and later on NBC – from 1964-91.

He was synonymous with Peter Puck the animated character created to explain the game to new fans. Mention the name of a former player or coach and the hockey historian will dazzle you with stats or a hilarious off-ice story. McFarlane was an All-American forward at St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY and a member of the NHL Oldtimers team that christened the Stouffville Arena on opening night in 1985 and then called it home for Sunday morning skates.

Inducted into five halls of fame, including the hockey hall in Toronto, McFarlane's latest decoration was his appointment to the

Order of Canada Nov. 27. (Former Stouffville resident and climate change expert David Grimes was also appointed.)

"It's a great honour to have and I never expected it to fall into my lap," McFarlane said. "My first impression was it's too bad my dad didn't live long enough because he certainly was a deserving recipient for all the kids he got hooked on reading. I'll accept it on his behalf."

'Dad' was Leslie McFarlane, better known under the pen name Franklin W. Dixon, who wrote 21 of the famed Hardy Boys books – for \$100 each – during a 50-year career as a writer. A school in Whitby was named after him. Brian's sister, Norah McFarlane Perez, is a writer of short stories and novels. One of three McFarlane children, Brenda, is a playwright and theatre director in New Mexico. "I tell people I'm the fourth best writer in my family," Brian said with a laugh during our January phone interview.

Hard to believe. Brian has written "90-something" books, including "A Helluva Life in Hockey: A Memoir," his third life story, which will be released in October. Approximately 1.5 million copies of his books have been sold. Some better than others.

One of his first books was the biography of Toronto Maple Leafs legend King Clancy. "I think we sold 2,500 copies. King was such a

Hockey legend Brian McFarlane and his artwork at a Stouffville Spirit Jr. A game. Photo by Ray MacAloney of OJHL Images



SportsTown

with JIM MASON



CONTACT Jim Mason
jimmason905@gmail.com

delightful storyteller. How could any hockey fan not enjoy reading this," he said. "Then I'd do a hockey quiz book and we'd sell 100,000. I can't believe people."

McFarlane was a teenager when he created a list of goals: write one book, paint one picture and write one song. The song was the hit "Clear the Track Here Comes Shack", about Maple Leaf Eddie Shack, who died last July. The painting was not a one-off. A hobby in his youth, McFarlane jumped back into art 20 years ago at a community centre near the McFarlanes' winter home in Naples, FLA. That continued in a seniors' art class at Latcham Hall in Stouffville and during weekends at their summer place in Grafton.

His latest paintings are, no surprise, hockey-themed works exploring the childhood joy of pond hockey. It may turn into another book. That love was rekindled when Brian happened upon a shinny game on Musselman's Lake last month. Like the books, the paintings keep selling, even during a pandemic, thanks to Brian's website: www.brian-mcfarlane.com. He's completing one now for a buyer in Alabama.

"Some people might paint a picture, he paints hundreds," Joan told The Toronto Star in 2018. "Or they might write a book. He writes a hundred. He's prolific. It keeps him young."

Brian dropped the puck and chatted with fans at a Stouffville Spirit game three seasons ago. He wore his powder-blue Hockey Night in Canada sports jacket for an NHL themed event at Boston Pizza last season. And when restrictions allow, Brian looks forward to another morning coffee with the gang of regulars at Tim Hortons on Main Street. "There are some characters in town, aren't there?" he said. "I really miss them." [1]

Notice of Council Meetings

Agendas for Council and Public meetings will be available for review at the Municipal Offices, Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library and on our website at 12 p.m. (noon) the Thursday prior to the meeting.

Upcoming Council Meetings:

- Tues., February 2, 2021 - 1:00 p.m.
- Tues., February 16, 2021 - 1:00 p.m.
- Tues., March 2, 2021 - 1:00 p.m.
- Tues., March 23, 2021 - 1:00 p.m.

Upcoming Public Meetings (if required):

- Tues., February 16, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.
- Tues., March 23, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.
- Tues., March 30, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.

As the Municipal Offices (111 Sandiford Dr.) are now closed to the public, residents may listen to the meeting live online at townofws.ca/cmlivestream.

Anyone wishing to submit comments, which will form part of the public record, may write to the Town Clerk at clerks@townofws.ca. Anyone wishing to provide verbal comments may be invited to attend the meeting electronically, please contact the Town Clerk at clerks@townofws.ca for more information.

Follow all council meetings on Whitchurch-Stouffville's official council Twitter account @ws_townhall.

Join our Council E-Newsletter at: eepurl.com/cKPNg9 and receive meeting agendas and summary reports straight in your inbox.



TALK OF THE TOWN

News, events and happenings around town with host Glenn Jackson

New episode every Monday on:
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Town COVID-19 Staffing Announcement

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville announced January 22 that because of shortfalls in revenue as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 19 unionized and non-unionized full-time staff have been temporarily laid off.

The staff layoffs are contained to the Leisure and Community Services Department and will result in the complete closure of all Town facilities, the cancellation of all Town events and the cancellation of all programs and camps, both online and in-person. The layoffs will be for a minimum of 12 weeks and are effective immediately.

"This is a sad day for Whitchurch-Stouffville," said Mayor Iain Lovatt. "This is not something we ever want to do, and this decision did not come without serious contemplation. We must deal with these challenges head-on and make decisions that are best for the taxpayers."

The Town has suffered serious revenue shortfalls since the onset of the pandemic early last year, according to Lovatt.

"Those shortfalls have been exasperated with the current lockdown which has made the providing of Town services even more difficult, if not impossible," Whitchurch-Stouffville Chief Administrative Officer Rob Adams said. "In order to remain fiscally responsible to our taxpayers we must mitigate our losses, which has unfortunately resulted in these cuts."

The temporary layoffs affect the Leisure and Community Services Department which oversees parks, arenas, the museum, special events, downtown viability and the Leisure Centre including aquatics, fitness and recreation programs.

Other Town services including garbage collection, snow plowing, and infrastructure maintenance will continue and are not impacted. The Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library will also remain open for curbside pickup. Outdoor recreation facilities, such as town trails, toboggan hills, Greenwood Park outdoor skating rink and the off-leash dog park will also remain open for the public.

Winter Parking Reminders

As a reminder, vehicles are not allowed to park on neighbourhood streets overnight between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. Violators may be ticketed.

Residents that require parking for driveway repairs and overnight guests may obtain a free parking exemption from the Town for up to 12 times a year per license plate. Visit townofws.ca/parking for more information.

Latcham Gallery News

Check out Latcham Art Centre's NEW WEBSITE at latchamartcentre.ca.

Under Exhibitions, view IMAGES 2021: A Spark in the Dark – an exhibition of work from the graduating class at Stouffville District Secondary School. In addition, view the 33 pieces of artwork in our Annual Juried Exhibition featuring a variety of media and find the video link to our first Latcham Saturdays "virtual edition" under events.

Animal Adaption

Whitchurch-Stouffville shares animal adoption services with Pickering. Their animal shelter is still closed to the public, however, their adoption program is open. Anyone interested in adopting an animal is encouraged to visit www.pickering.ca/petadoption. If you see an animal of interest, complete the online adoption application form.

The application forms are reviewed by staff and a phone interview and/or virtual chat takes place and videos of the animal are sent.

Stormwater Pond Skating

Please do not skate on the Town's stormwater ponds. These ponds are not intended for skating on and the act of doing so can be very dangerous. Stay safe, everyone!



PHYSICAL DISTANCING DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN TOTAL ISOLATION

While COVID-19 has temporarily interrupted the social routine many of us are used to, now is the perfect opportunity to get creative and continue to foster personal interactions. If you are missing your family and friends, here are some ideas to make your isolation a little less lonely.

- **Video chat:** A simple online search for video chat will produce an array of options and apps that will allow you to have face time with your family members and friends in real time, almost as if they were standing right beside you. The only limitation is your own imagination.
- **Pick up the phone:** Sure, physical distancing means you can't sit side-by-side with your best friend and watch your favourite television show, but there is no reason you can't call them while in your pajamas and munching on a bowl of popcorn while you chill in separate houses.
- **Revive the pen pal trend:** Use the mailbox to send grandparents new fridge art, begin a story and ask the recipient to write the next chapter and return the letter, send a handmade card or a simple family update. Keep in mind not everyone has online access
- **Host a virtual game night:** Tap into technology and invite all your family and friends to an online game night. There are plenty of online resources to play traditional board games or you can break out a board game you have at home and play via video chat
- **Start a book club:** Traditional book clubs include sitting face-to-face with a group of people who have read the same book but think outside the box. Pick out a new eBook and send everyone you want to attend an invite to discuss characters, themes and plot twists in a conference call or group video chat.
- **Get active:** Don't despair that your local gym is closed and you are missing your workout buddy terribly. Pick an online workout you both want to try and video chat while you break a sweat.

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

Tax and water bills a mouse click away

- view history of property tax transactions
 - view MPAC assessment values
 - enroll in e-billing or pre-authorized payments
 - pay online with debit or credit card
- vth.townofws.ca





WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE 2020

 AVERAGE SALE PRICE	 DAYS ON MARKET	 NUMBER OF SALES
\$1,059,082	36	814

* stats based on all home sales

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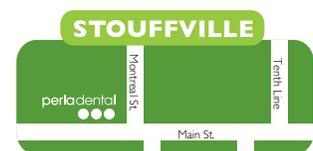


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It is important to focus on your good health and part of that is seeing your dentist. To learn more or to book your appointment call **905.591.6668**



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