



Photo by Felix Chagnon

Protesters stand on a cargo of tree logs in front of Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Ont. during the Freedom Convoy 2022 protest last weekend. For more photos, see pages 5-6.

# Protesters storm nation's capital

By Felix Chagnon

The final sections of the Freedom Convoy 2022 arrived Saturday morning in Ottawa's downtown core. Thousands of truckers and supporters rallied on the capital's streets, converging in one central area: Parliament Hill.

The initial movement of "Freedom Convoy" was organized by truckers challenging the government vaccination mandate for cross-border workers. The convoy made its way to Ottawa from Brit-

ish Columbia throughout the week, and the movement quickly snowballed into a national protest towards COVID-19 vaccine mandates and other public health restrictions.

The crowd arrived early Saturday morning and kept growing exponentially within the following hours. In the afternoon, Wellington Street was occupied by trucks and protesters nearly reaching the Byward Market, which forced the Ottawa Police to close the streets in the downtown core because of the gridlock.

Despite being loud and disruptive, the day unfolded peacefully, according to the update issued by Ottawa Police Service on its website.

"There have been no incidents of violence or injuries reported," stated the media release from the Ottawa Police Service. "There will continue to be a large presence of police to ensure public safety this evening and on Sunday."

However, some protesters from the crowd were seen placing signs and paraphernalia on the Terry Fox statue on the

corner of Metcalfe Street and Wellington Street, which were eventually removed by the police after images sparked outrage on social media.

The mayor of Port Coquitlam, Terry Fox's hometown, took to Twitter Saturday afternoon, expressing his thoughts on the acts of protesters and demanding the immediate removal of the paraphernalia.

"I'm the Mayor of Terry Fox's hometown. He's our city's hero, national inspiration and a unifier. Whatever your cause, you don't get to appropriate his legacy,

and you don't touch his statue. Ever. This should be removed immediately. [@ottawacity](#) [@JimWatsonOttawa](#)," tweeted Brad West, Mayor of Port Coquitlam, B.C., to the City of Ottawa and Mayor Jim Watson.

The Ottawa Police Service also had to attend to the cenotaph at the National War Memorial, where protesters were seen parking their vehicles, climbing the cenotaph, and dancing on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

...See Protest, page 5-6

# Parents await childcare deal in Ontario

By Christie Leja

Ontario is the last province to sign on to the \$10 per day daycare deal with Ottawa, which will reduce the average cost of childcare by 50 per cent by the end of 2022.

When Sarah Tjernstrom and her husband James relocated with their two children, to Trenton, Ont. from Halifax, N.S., in June of 2018, to be closer to family, they were shocked that the cost of childcare was going to be for them.

"We were looking at \$112 a day for both of them to be in daycare at the MRFC, and that was after having to wait who knows how long on a waitlist," Tjernstrom explains.

At the time, they had two girls, Abigail, 16 months, and Evelyn, just about three, when Sarah started working at CFB Trenton in her role as a supply tech at the Department of National Defence. The family luckily found a space in an unlicensed home daycare and have been there ever since.

"It's great, and all three girls love it, but there are some drawbacks to a home daycare. If she or her kids get sick, I have to stay home with the girls."

Ontario, once considered to be a leader in the childcare sector, has become the most expensive province in terms of the cost of childcare, averaging at \$1,774 for infant care per child per month in Toronto. This is in comparison to Vancouver, B.C., the first province to sign on to the Liberal government's \$30 billion national child-care plan. It has been estimated that families in B.C. will be saving \$6,000 per child by the end of 2022.

Deidre Palmateer, a DSW student at Loyalist College, just moved to Belleville with her husband Jake and their almost three-year-old daughter Alyssa.

"We live in a society where households need two incomes to survive.



Photo by Christie Leja

The Tjernstrom family decompresses at home, after a busy day of work, school and daycare. Sarah and Jim Tjernstrom have three girls, Evelyn, six, Abigaile, four, and Lillian, two, who have all attended an unlicensed, home daycare because the cost of licensed childcare was too high in Ontario.

Families are stuck with one income and one stay-at-home parent because daycare is so expensive...We've been blessed and lucky that Jake has a good job. Others haven't been that lucky. But even with his good job, we just pay bills," Palmateer says.

Currently, Alyssa is not in care, but while they were still living in Northbrook, Ont., the family found the cost of part-time care difficult as they didn't qualify for subsidies to help cover some

of their daycare costs.

"In our small-town daycare, I was paying half the amount I'd been quoted in the city. And for only two days a week, I was paying \$800 a month," Palmateer adds.

For individuals working in childcare, signing on to the federal funding will make a big difference. Ontario has long required that teachers complete a two-year Early Childhood Education (ECE) course, and has also established

a Professional College of Early Childhood Educators. The requirements are clear and yet the rewards have historically been very limited. The industry struggles with recruiting and retaining staff as salaries do not match the education, training, and effort required. Supervisors and directors of childcare programs are most often trained on the job with no formal leadership training. This funding would help change that.

"If the federal funding came through,

it would be a game-changer for everyone: for the families and for staff who would finally get a proper wage grid that matches their level of education and compensates according to their expertise and professionalism. We don't have that right now, we just have a patchwork system where you can make \$15 an hour in Belleville and \$35 an hour in Toronto. The gap is just so extreme," says Amy O'Neil, director of Tree Top Children's Centre, a non-profit childcare centre in Toronto.

During the pandemic, childcare staff have felt forgotten and ignored as front line staff working with the youngest – unvaccinated, unmasked children – and not receiving the same safety measures, protocols, or resources as schools.

"I feel incredibly frustrated that Ontario hasn't signed a child care agreement with the federal government. There have been months of delays and distractions from the Ford government, rather than approaching this with a sense of urgency. The pressure is really on now – if Ontario doesn't sign by March 31, we could lose the first year of funding. Over \$1 Billion could be lost. So I hope that motivates the Ford government to sign on to the plan," says Carolyn Ferns, the Public Policy and Government Relations Co-ordinator for the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

Education Minister Stephen Lecce said at a virtual press conference on Jan. 31 that a deal is "within reach" to sign Ontario onto the \$10 a day program. However, he declined to state a time frame for the deal's completion.

"Families in other provinces are already seeing their fees reduced. Educators in other provinces are receiving new funding for wages. Other provinces are putting together new plans for expansion. Ontario is falling further and further behind," adds Ferns.

# Battle continues against Islamophobia

By Sabah Rahman

Two minutes. That is all that it took.

Alexandre Bissonnette, 27 years old at the time, walked into the largest mosque in Quebec City and fired 48 shots at a sparse congregation gathered for evening prayers. Ten minutes later, Bissonnette made a 911 call to surrender himself to the police. Bissonnette later pleaded guilty to 12 charges, including six of premeditated murder.

The events on Jan. 29, 2017 at the Quebec City Mosque shook the Muslim Canadian community. The news reverberated across major news channels globally.

A total of 17 children, between the men, lost their father that day. Those killed by Bissonnette were Ibrahim Barry, Mamadou Tanou Barry, Khaled Belkacemi, Aboubaker Thabti, Abdelkrim Hassane and Azzedine Soufiane. Five others were seriously injured because of the shooting.

The Canadian government designated Jan. 29 as the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action against Islamophobia.

"Five years after the attack, the Muslim Canadian community is healing but they are still wary," said Shaykh Imran Ally, resident Imam, TARIC Islamic Centre (Mosque), in an email statement.

"I believe that the scarring of the Quebec City Mosque massacre will be with every Muslim who enters a mosque, especially for non-daylight prayers," said Ally.

Exactly five years after the date of the shooting, an in-person vigil in Ottawa to remember the victims of the shooting had to be cancelled. Organizers of the vigil cited safety concerns arising out of the presence of the convoy protest in downtown Ottawa. Protesters covered some monuments around the Parliament Buildings with signs and flags, including a statue of Terry Fox. Neo-Nazi groups that promoted the convoy have called for violence in the past. There were purple PPC party flags, upside down Canadian flags and confederate flags flown by protesters.

In an official statement, Canadian Trucking Alliance noted that a sizable portion of the convoy do not have any connection to the trucking industry and have agendas beyond the cross-border vaccination mandate for long-haul truckers.

David Henry, a Winnipeg-based long-haul cross-border trucker, says the convoy was not organized by truckers. Most of the truckers that Henry knows are vaccinated and out on the roads doing their jobs like him.

According to the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, this is not the first time far-right groups have tried to co-opt movements and protest platforms.

The leadup to the 2022 "Freedom Convoy" follows closely the leadup to United We Roll Convoy organized by oil and gas workers in 2019, so much so that the Anti-Hate Network dubbed it "United We Roll 2.0". Both convoys share many of the same organizers and participants,



Photo by Sabah Rahman

**Shaykh Imran Ally at the TARIC Islamic Centre (Mosque). Ally is the resident imam at the TARIC mosque, and talks about being vigilant and encouraging congregants and colleagues to do the same after the Quebec City Mosque shooting five years ago.**

and according to the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, have been reusing UWR promotional materials.

The UWR convoy was organized primarily by associates of the Canadian Yellow Vest movement. The Yellow Vest Canada Movement was notably promoted by white nationalists, neo-Nazi and known hate groups that extensively used Islamophobic, anti-immigrant rhetoric.

For Ally and many Muslim Canadians, the convoy is the latest reminder that racism and Islamophobia is thriving in Canada. Some of the loudest promoters of the latest convoy protest have openly incited their audience to violent action in the past.

"Sadly, I do not believe the Quebec [City] Mosque massacre is an event in the past," said Ally. Ally is the resident imam of TARIC Islamic Centre in Toronto, which has the capacity to host sizable daily prayer congregations and also the bigger, biannual Eid prayers. "I am more vigilant and have continued to remind all congregants to be vigilant. I have encouraged my colleagues to adopt this

approach," said Ally.

According to Statistics Canada, data shows that criminal gun violence has risen in Canada by significant margin. From 2009 to 2019, criminal use of firearms increased by 81 per cent, and in 2019, there was a nine per cent increase over the previous year.

Violence against the Muslim Canadians have notably increased. There are widespread reports of violence in places of worship across the country. "All places of worship must be safe havens, regardless of religion or ethnicity and not sites of terror," said Ally.

Mohamed-Aslim Zafis, a 58-year-old mosque caretaker, was stabbed outside the Toronto mosque where he worked and died from his injuries. Several mosques across Toronto have been vandalized, including defacing property with graffiti and had windows broken. Ally noted two instances of vandalism at the TARIC Islamic Centre in the past few years.

In London, a Pakistani Canadian family who were out for an afternoon walk were randomly targeted and hit

by a van. Four members, across three generations, died in the attack leaving the youngest son, who was hospitalized with serious injuries, as the only surviving victim.

Rania Lawendy, the national director of the Muslim Association of Canada, said in an interview that anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia did not grow spontaneously in Canada; Lawendy said it is the result of neglect and purposeful escalation by political actors and leaders, which has deeply embedded these racist sentiments in Canada's cultural and political fabric.

Critics have argued that politicians and leaders need to do more to address the rise of far-right movements in Canada.

Henry, a Winnipeg-based long-haul trucker believes that the latest convoy is hurting the trucking cause rather than helping it. Henry, who has had a commercial license since 1988 talks about current working conditions during the pandemic to be the worst of what he has experienced in all his time in the industry. Long-haul truckers on the road

could not find food, use washrooms, or take showers during the pandemic while still under pressure to deliver their loads on time.

Henry remembers his own grandfather who disapproved of Henry's dad dating a woman of Jamaican ancestry. Henry talks about how his father changed these ways when Henry was raised, and now Henry talks about his grandson who is interracial. "I believe that Jan. 29 is also now a day of hope where everyone who wants to build together can do so for the sake of memory and moving forward," said Ally.

The TARIC Islamic Centre is hosting its third annual family summit, a virtual event that will bring together Muslim leaders, elected officials, legal experts, advocates, and youth engagement to speak on the theme of "Countering Islamophobia—Effective Strategies and Resources". Ally adds that "[the summit aims] to talk about Islamophobia, deconstruct narratives, and then reconstruct new, positive and more realistic narratives around Muslims."

## GoFundMe helps those struggling through pandemic

By Annie Duncan

"So many people are suffering, and I can certainly help them. Or I can certainly try," says David Gilbert, president of Bridgefront Tower Corporation.

Gilbert recently started a GoFundMe page to raise money to help support local businesses and residents in the Quinte West area that have fallen through the cracks during the pandemic and the ever-changing restrictions placed on businesses.

Bridgefront specializes in creating rental spaces

that consider the environment, energy efficiencies, and tenant partnership as the core of its business model.

"Although the government has done an exhaustive job of providing financial assistance, there are many business and home owners that are struggling to pay their bills and daily necessities," said Gilbert, after speaking to a number of residents in the area.

Many people don't qualify for government funding or haven't made adequate sales the year prior, due to the pandemic, to support their business and families, explained Gilbert.

Many businesses shut down and with job losses, inflation and many other factors, it has made it difficult for many people to survive. Gilbert explains that many are just hanging on and could end up losing their homes or businesses.

Describing himself as a business-minded person, Gilbert has lived in the Belleville area for 16 years and would like to help those that motivated him to start this page pay for expenses like food, bills, and commercial or residential rental expenses.

His main objective in starting Helping Others Survive is to help keep a roof over people's heads, food in

their stomachs, and their businesses alive.

Gilbert, amongst many business owners and community members, sits on the board of directors for the Downtown Belleville Improvement Area and assist in growing the city's Downtown.

If you would like to donate to his efforts, you can visit

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/8djwb-helping-others-survive?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=p\\_cf%20share-flow-1&fbclid=IwAR3RFDprnpkVWwoUefcPG2zbY8Z-fBB54ikWE4-TeIXqfodw6jgtcHhKs](https://www.gofundme.com/f/8djwb-helping-others-survive?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=p_cf%20share-flow-1&fbclid=IwAR3RFDprnpkVWwoUefcPG2zbY8Z-fBB54ikWE4-TeIXqfodw6jgtcHhKs)

## Indigenous art featured at Gallery 121

By Bradley Edgley

From Jan. 4 to 29, Gallery 121 in downtown Belleville hosted the First Nations/Indigenous Art Show.

The exhibit, which includes paintings, sculptures, feather-work, quilting, and more, is a biannual show that displays both modern and traditional artwork, by Indigenous artists from the Belleville area. However, as with many things in the year 2022, the exhibit was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Walter Sawron, an artist/member of Gallery 121, since 1996, described the turn-out as "paltry."

"Every two years, we offer the indigenous community the space to show their work," he said. "The last time we hosted this exhibit was in 2020, and on opening night, there were about two hundred people crowded in here. A month ago, when we opened the exhibit again, only six people. And of course, that is our limit."

Following the opening of the First Nations/Indigenous Art Show, Ontario moved into step two of the Roadmap to Reopen. Additional public health measures were put in place to combat the transmission of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 and prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed. As a result, there are the beginning signs of stabilization in public health and health system indicators. Over the coming weeks, these trends are expected to continue, allowing public health measures to ease. If these



Photo by Bradley Edgley

**A sculpture by Iris Casey, from Stonedragon Studio, was on display at Gallery 121 on the final day of the 2022 First Nations/Indigenous Art Show.**

trends in public health and health care indicators continue to stabilize, Ontario will follow a phased approach to lifting public health measures, al-

lowing for 21 days between each step.

Despite the limitations on in-person numbers, the First Nations/In-

igenous Art Show was still a success, with the gallery managing to sell multiple art pieces.

"There have been some major

sales," said Sawron. "Just this morning, the last day of the show, someone bought one of the feather pieces by Linda Maracle."

The restrictions put in place may not be ideal for drawing large audiences, but the small, intimate gallery setting is made all the quieter and more reflective by the lack of a crowd. When viewing the art, traditional flute music by David Maracle played softly in the background. Art is therapeutic. It is the baring of one's soul for the world to see and connect to. The art on display in Gallery 121 through the month of January displayed more than the feelings and emotions of a collection of artists; it painted a picture of why a sense of community and togetherness can be so powerful and so necessary, especially during difficult times.

David Maracle, an artist from the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, commissioned an honour art installation this year, an orange tricycle, in honour of Truth and Reconciliation, along with this statement: "It embodies the grief we are feeling as a Nation across Turtle Island after the findings of our Indigenous children who suffered or went missing and died due to residential school atrocities. For the children who were never able to have a bike, and for those who never made it home, we honour you. This is my action, for my father who was a survivor, and for all our Indigenous children."

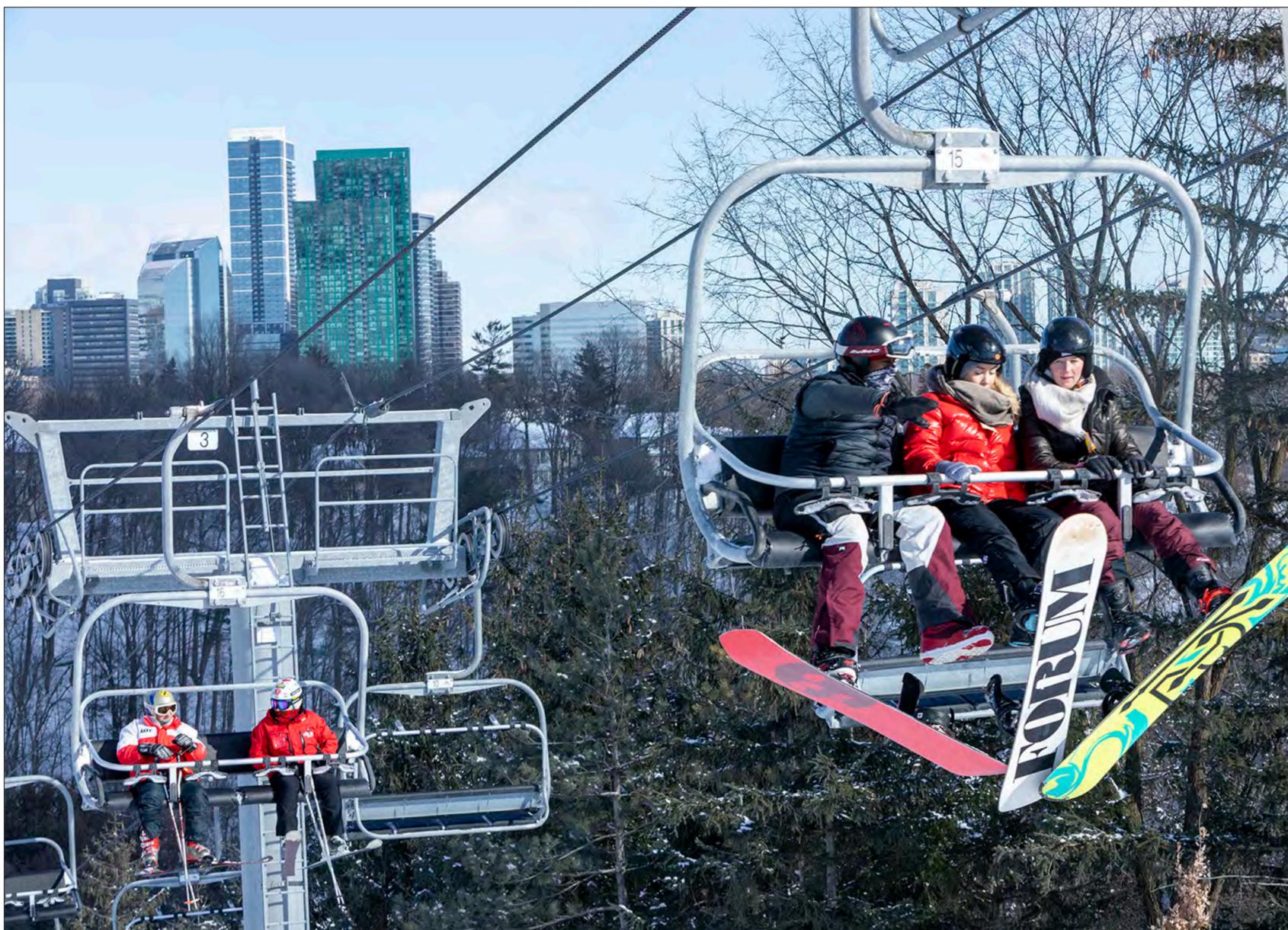


Photo by Sabah Rahman

Natom Woldemichael (left) accompanies his snowboarding students, the Shulaeva sisters, Natasha (centre) and Katy (right) during their lesson at the Earl Bales ski and snowboard centre in northern Toronto. The chairlift offers an impressive view over the North York skyline. A few days after this photo was taken, the chairlift had to be shut down for maintenance.

## Warming winters impact outdoor events

By Sabah Rahman

The record snowfall over the holiday season has led to a bustling skiing and snowboarding season in Toronto. The Earl Bales Ski and Snowboard Centre, at the southeast corner of Sheppard Avenue West and Bathurst Street, opened on Jan. 15 with 50 per cent capacity for drop-in programs.

The ski and snowboard centre in northern Toronto is one of two alpine ski slopes located within the Greater Toronto Area. The opening marks the beginning of 2022 ski season for Canada's largest metropolitan area and home to a diverse 6.4 million people.

The city park is part of the Don River watershed and spreads out across 127 acres in the North York area of northern Toronto. Visitors can enjoy a beginner area with a rope tow for all ages, and three runs with a chairlift at the main hill.

The slopes offer city dwellers an opportunity to learn winter sports that are within transit distance. The Shulaeva

sisters, Natasha, and Katy, came out on a sunny day mid-week to try out snowboarding for the first time after the city saw massive winter storms.

The snow cover from the storm has been good for the slopes. Natom Woldemichael, a snowboarding instructor with the city, who is giving the sisters their lessons, talked about the budget crunches over the years that have impacted the programs he has taught at the centre.

There have also been ongoing maintenance challenges with the centre's iconic chairlifts with a view of the North York skyline in the background. Within a week of opening for its 2022 winter ski season, eyewitnesses say that the chairlift suddenly stopped working, stranding a dozen people midair for over an hour in frigid temperatures. Toronto Fire Services used rescue ropes to bring people down to safety.

There have been multiple incidents with the chairlifts over the years. In 2012, the city invested \$2.2 million in the renovation and upgrade of the ski centre,

including replacing the older two-seated chairlifts with quad-seats.

Miriam Davidson, a long-time resident of North York, was visiting the ski centre on Sunday, Jan. 30 with her husband and two children when the chairlifts were shut down for maintenance. Davidson said, "The kids are really disappointed that [the chairlift] was closed," adding that they were too young for the main hill, but wanted to ride the chairlifts as a family.

Although municipal recreational facilities are not-for-profits by nature, shutting down the chairlift for maintenance impacts ongoing leisure ski activities and lessons that require the lift. Frequent maintenance closures impact program registrations and drop-ins with the added challenges of COVID and shorter seasons, which have kept getting warmer.

In 2018, the city announced shorter seasons for the ski centres starting in January and ending with March break. The season used to begin in December, but the ski and snowboard centre has

had to deal with fluctuating temperatures and snowfall impacting the opening and closing dates over the years.

The centre has a snow-making machine but requires low enough overnight temperatures to prepare the downhill slopes. With warming climate trends, the future of winter sports in a city like Toronto looks dim.

A 2019 study by a Zurich-based research group called Crowther Lab showed what cities will feel like in 30 years. The report shows that global temperatures will rise across the globe in over 70 per cent of cities included in the study.

In more than 20 per cent of the major cities across the world urban residents are expected to experience warmer climates in addition to weather conditions that do not currently exist in those locations.

According to the report, Toronto could feel like Washington, D.C. by 2050, with a temperature increase of 5.9 degrees Celsius above the city's current average, and an overall 3 degrees Celsius

increase of mean annual temperatures.

At the slopes, Davidson's six-year-old son, Ben, tried out the tow rope on the pony hill with his dad, which remains open. The beginner's slope comes with a tow rope open to all ages, which means cautious parents like Ben's dad can follow closely behind the little one, equipped in their skiing gear.

For now, the snow-covered slopes of the main hill are expected to remain closed until maintenance work on the chairlift is completed.

In any case, the still chairlifts are not an unsightly change. The chairlifts usually hang still in midair in the summertime when the city ski hill becomes covered in a carpet of grass turning lush green.

The ski and snowboarding centre at Earl Bales Park is also surrounded by a Holocaust memorial, scenic walking trails by the Don Valley River and its network of ravines, family picnic sites, fire pits for barbecues, children's playgrounds, a dog park, and an outdoor amphitheater space.

## Quinte Conservation celebrates anniversary

*Watershed area includes several rivers and Prince Edward County*

By Bradley Edgley

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Quinte Conservation, a conservation authority established in 1947 which encompasses a 6,000 square kilometre watershed, within 18 counties in Ontario and includes the Moira River, Napanee River, Salmon River, and all of Prince Edward County.

A watershed is an area of land that catches rain and snow and drains or seeps into a marsh, stream, river, lake, or groundwater, and as part of the 75-year anniversary, the conservation authority is running a number of special projects including, guided walks at conservation areas, highlighting the natural and cultural history of the area.

One major project underway at Quinte Conservation is the landowner stewardship outreach and shoreline re-naturalization.

"We have a fairly large stewardship program where we work with waterfront property owners and municipalities, planting thousands of trees across the watershed every year," said Maya Navrot, outreach and stewardship co-ordinator at Quinte Conservation. "Last year, we did 23,000 trees, should be the same as this year. All of this is connected back to protecting property from flooding, preventing natural hazards, and creating a more resilient watershed."

Quinte Conservation is also conducting a large water testing program across



Photo by Bradley Edgley

**Maya Navrot, outreach and stewardship co-ordinator at Quinte Conservation. "The pandemic has really increased people's interest in looking at their yards and then going to do something more for wildlife, and they're starting to see and understand you don't have to get in your car and drive, just see and experience nature. You can have it where you are."**

the watershed this year, to monitor the health of the local lakes.

"Right now, in the winter, we are doing snow and ice sampling so that we can forecast how much water is going to be flowing off into our rivers and lakes and

then be able to warn municipalities when flooding may occur, so that they can head out to the landowners and help them prepare," said Navrot.

In addition to the ongoing conservation efforts being made by the team at

Quinte Conservation, the public walking trails are also getting a face-lift. New interpretative signage, updated floodplain mapping, and improvements to walking trails and parking lots, are all in-store for the 75th-year celebration. The walking

trails in the conservation area, are always a popular destination for nature lovers and in snowy weather, it becomes a hot spot for cross-country skiing. However, Quinte Conservation is making an effort to remind visitors that the trails are for wildlife first. During the winter months, Quinte Conservation is home to many beautiful species of wildlife including songbirds, rabbits, deer, and red foxes, which means while walking the trails, ensuring that dogs are leashed, and any waste or garbage is removed, which are the most effective ways to keep the conservation area clean and safe for all animals.

"The pandemic has really increased people's interest in looking at their yards and then going to do something more for wildlife, and they're starting to see and understand you don't have to get in your car and drive, just see and experience nature. You can have it where you are," said Navrot.

Environmental conservation is not something you can only read about or see when you hike along a trail. Quinte Conservation is also promoting at-home conservation efforts that anyone can start doing to help positively impact their environment. Planting trees and wildflowers that are native to the area in your yard or garden, to support pollinators such as bees. Also, implementing a rain garden, especially if you live in a city and storm water runs off your yard and driveway into a storm-drain. This can help reduce the impact of flooding, as well as conserve and protect water by recharging the groundwater instead of flowing directly into lakes and rivers. For more information on conservation efforts in the Quinte region, you can visit Quinte Conservation's website [quinteconservation.ca](http://quinteconservation.ca)



**Arac Aguonie, owner and operator of Earth Haven Biodynamic Farm, and colleague Emily Vanderwey open up registration for their Community Supported Agriculture Program 2022 season. The program designed to provide members direct contact with the farmer who grows their food, as well as access to fresh, organic produce throughout the growing season.**

Photo By Christie Leja

## Agriculture program supports community

By Christie Leja

Earth Haven Farms, located in the hamlet of Thomasburg, is reopening registration for its Community Supported Agriculture Program, in an effort to link local residents with sustainable, organic farming while supporting the next generation of organic growers.

A biodynamic organic farm that is certified by Demeter Canada, Earth Haven is family-owned and operated, covering 200 acres of land about 30 kilometres north of Belleville, Ont. Arac Aguonie, the general manager of the farm, oversees all the operations and has been doing so since he moved to the farm with his mother, Kathryn Auinger, the farm's business manager, in 2006. After earning a degree and spending some time in British Columbia, Aguonie interned through WWOOF, or Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms, at a biodynamic farm in Ontario. During his time there, he was mentored on the principles of biodynamic farming, leading him to where he is now.

"Here at Earth Haven Farm, I utilize all plant and animal waste to create healthy compost which is spread out on the land and used to start my seedlings. Healthy soil feeds the pastures that feed my cows and the gardens that feed my customers,"

**'I think it's a really nice way to get local people interested in the farm and our farming methods, and build up a local food system.'**

CSA co-ordinator Emily Vanderwey

Aguonie states on the farm's website.

By using permaculture and biodynamic farming practices, Earth Haven emphasizes the use of manure and compost, and excludes the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. The farm works with nature, instead of against it, by developing an ecosystem that can regenerate on its own and become self-sustaining.

"It is an ecosystem – a very delicate ecosystem that I honour and respect. In biodynamic agriculture, the whole farm is considered. Everything is connected. It is part of the same, delicate ecosystem. The whole farm is my responsibility. I am it's caretaker," Aguonie adds.

Since becoming Demeter certified in 2008, Aguonie has built up the farm and

its resources so well, that by 2016, they introduced a Community Supported Agriculture Program, or CSA, a program designed to provide members direct contact with the farmer who grows their food, as well as access to fresh, organic produce throughout the growing season.

"I think it's a really nice way to get local people interested in the farm and our farming methods, and build up a local food system. It's a lot more sustainable to know your farmer and buy it directly from him, than the grocery store," CSA co-ordinator Emily Vanderwey comments.

Vanderwey has always had a passion for the environment. Growing up on a farm in Thomasburg, that has been in her family since the 1950s, helped her make the choice in attending Trent University for environmental studies. While she was in the program, she felt there were learning gaps in her program, which, in her opinion, was focused more on surface level policy than meaningful environmental change, and became more and more enticed by the Indigenous environmental studies program.

"In Indigenous studies we're looking at our relationships to the land and each other and how we are suffering from a disconnection of that original relationship with the land. All our environmental

issues are really a symptom of that."

In 2014, while attending a biodynamics course, and looking for an organic farmer to do their hay, Vanderwey met Kathryn (Arac Aguonie's mother) who was running the course, and the rest was history. By 2017, after interning and being mentored by Aguonie, Vanderwey was asked to take over the co-ordination of the CSA program and has been doing it ever since.

The 2022 season is now open for member registration, and is looking to get customers signed up while the ground is still frozen. By doing so, Earth Haven can purchase the seeds and equipment needed to begin planting in the spring. The harvest season begins in mid-June, and depending on the package chosen by the member, they harvest fresh vegetables and fruit for your CSA box every week or bi-weekly, until mid-October, when the farm is closed for the year.

Freshly harvested organic produce, containing seven to 12 items, will be provided to members based on the size of the box ordered at sign up, with the produce changing throughout the growing season. If you are a single person or a couple with minimal produce needs, the small box size is for you. A regular size box is said to be ideal for vegetarians, couples, and small families. Additionally, large boxes can be pre-ordered for specific weeks, for

an extra fee, which is good for families who like to eat their produce, cooks and people who like to entertain.

Eating locally is easy, convenient and gratifying, with Earth Haven's CSA program. At sign up, members do agree to share in the potential risks as well as the rewards of the harvest, but that's not the only benefit of joining this program. In addition to having the opportunity to try new foods, you can be proud to contribute directly to sustainable, organic farming within a short distance of your home, reducing your environmental footprint, all the while learning about the intricacies of biodynamic farming. Vanderwey encompasses the ever present learning opportunities associated with working the land.

"There is a lot of learning in any part of farming. It's never-ending. I love farming because you can choose to do so many different things, whether you focus on the animals, the flowers, the bees or the vegetables. It's really cool to be part of that co-creation process with the land and rebuilding that relationship with the earth."

For more information on Earth Haven's CSA program, and instructions on how to register for this season, you can email Emily Vanderwey with your contact information at emilyvanderwey@gmail.com.

## Passion and curiosity leads veterinarian to become oncologist

By Felix Chagnon

Last September, Dr. Charles Boisclair joined the Animal Emergency & Specialty Hospital team, becoming one of only two animal oncologists in Ottawa.

"The hospital is fortunate to have him, and I can't overstate how great it is for the pets in Ottawa-Gatineau," said Brandon Zweerman, managing director of the Animal Emergency & Specialty Hospital.

"It has been a great experience since I joined the team here," said Boisclair while discussing his arrival at the Animal Emergency & Specialty Hospital.

"I am just starting my service and position at this hospital. There is a place to grow in terms of what I can offer to this establishment and the patients, but I am excited for what is to come in terms of building my service," added Boisclair.

Getting referrals or appointments with a medical specialist for animals in the Ottawa region can be tricky as they are limited. He hopes to establish himself as a specialist in the area and build better relationships with the general practitioner to improve their service to pets affected by cancer within their practices.

Curiosity has always played a considerable part in the life of the 30-year-old medical oncologist veterinarian from Sherbrooke, Que.

"I consider myself a very curious individual. Whatever the topic of interest it may be, I am always looking for ways to extend my knowledge," said Boisclair.

He remembers discovering a passion for biology and striving for a career in human medicine. Unfortunately, his application for medical school was rejected, which allowed him to take a step back and find his true calling: being a veterinarian.

"During that whole process, I felt that it was not where my heart belonged. So, if you think about it, not being accepted in med school was a blessing in disguise because it allowed me to put things in perspective," said Boisclair as he reminisced on his educational pathway. "I loved medicine, biology and helping animals, so I decided to apply for veterinarian school. Call it faith or des-

tiny, but now I couldn't see myself doing anything else."

While completing his five-year doctorate in veterinary medicine at the University of Montreal campus in Saint-Hyacinthe, Que., Boisclair's eagerness to learn more about animal medicine created a desire to become a specialist.

"I wasn't sure initially which specialty I wanted to do, but I realized, soon after, that I wanted to specialize in cancer treatment because of its complexity and challenges," said Boisclair. "Creating a better life for pets and their owners is the cornerstone of a veterinarian and allowing them to receive better help when it comes to cancer is the way I wanted to do it."

Following his doctorate, Boisclair completed a rotating internship in Lachine, Que., which was followed by a specialty internship at the University of Guelph's Animal Cancer Centre, in Guelph, Ont., where he oversaw the radiation service for over a year. He completed his 10-year academic journey, in July 2021, by completing a residency at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Sask.

If there is something that Boisclair learned in all these years is that as a specialized veterinarian, you need to work with the owners and listen to them as much as the pet.

"In this field, you have to be able to detach yourself a little. My goal is always to find solutions to the problem, but unfortunately, sometimes, those solutions aren't feasible for the owner. So, it is my job to work with them to provide the best outcome for them and their pets," said Boisclair.

His passion for animals is reflected in his work.

"I have always had an ease when interacting with animals. When it comes to pets, they just love you for who you are and will give you the same amount of attention that you give them," said Boisclair. "They can't talk to us with words, so it is interesting to be the voice for the speechless. I find it somewhat instinctive, like a sixth sense, to be able to help the owners understand what their pet is going through."



Photo by Felix Chagnon

**Dr. Charles Boisclair, an oncologist at the Animal Emergency & Specialty Hospital, is seen during a check-up with his patient Musket, an 11-year-old Silver Labrador with lung cancer.**



Protesters gathered in front of the National War Memorial during the Freedom Convoy 2022 protest, which took place in the core of downtown Ottawa, Ont. Earlier that day, the Ottawa Police Service had to remove vehicles parked on-site of

Photo by Felix Chagnon



The statue of Terry Fox is seen covered in signs and paraphernalia placed by protesters early Saturday morning. The Ottawa Police Service eventually removed it and deployed security to guard the statue.

Photo by Felix Chagnon



### Protesters...

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Many public figures, including the Chief of the Defence Staff General Wayne Eyre, expressed their disappointment towards the actions of these protesters. "I am sickened to see protesters dance on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and desecrate the National War Memorial. Generations of Canadians have fought and died for our rights, including free speech, but not this. Those involved should hang their heads in shame," tweeted Eyre Saturday evening. Numerous stores and restaurants were forced to close for the weekend as protesters sought open businesses to escape the cold weather, which dropped to -25 with wind chill. Even the Rideau Centre had to close mid-day as crowds gathered inside, many without a proper face-coverings. The protest could go on past the weekend as the organizers of the Freedom Convoy 2022 said that they would not leave the capital until changes in the COVID-19 mandates are removed.



A protester holds a sign that reads #justsayno to the prick as trucks gridlock the streets of downtown Ottawa and thousands gather in front of Parliament Hill as part of the Freedom Convoy.

Photo by Ethan Cairns



(Above) Man walks the streets of downtown Ottawa as part of the Freedom Convoy 2022 carrying an upside down Canadian flag with "We Want Freedom" written across it.

Photo by Annie Duncan

(Left) A trucker reaches out for a handshake with a protester during the Freedom Convoy 2022 protest.

Photo by Felix Chagnon

(Bottom) Truck parks horizontally across Wellington Street blocking a lane of traffic as part of the "Freedom Convoy 2022" that gridlocked the streets of Downtown Ottawa.

Photo by Annie Duncan



The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is taped in the window of a transport truck parked on Wellington Street in front of Parliament Hill.

Photo by Ethan Cairns



Thousands gather along Rideau Street to protest against vaccine mandates. Many people held signs and flags while trucks lined the street to block traffic.

Photo by Ethan Cairns