

# The Uxbridge Cosmos

Vol. 19 No. 6

TheCosmos.ca

Thursday, February 9, 2023

Please build it so they come! • Why Uxbridge is a challenging destination • Bruins keep a tight hold on second place

## Industrial citizens: the stairway to success

Conrad Boyce, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

There is a dramatic black and white poster in Jesse Morra's office that says: "There is no elevator to success. You have to take the stairs."

That maxim applies to many aspects of any business, but it certainly pertains to the growth of Deluxe Stair and Railing, one of many intriguing residents of the Uxville Industrial Park west of Goodwood. The company had its humble beginnings in the mid-90s in the Ajax garage of Giuseppe Morra, Jesse's father, and has now grown to a bustling factory with 30 employees, whose products are in strong demand for residential and commercial projects across Ontario.

"I was just a small boy in those early days," Jesse recalls. "Dad would often build those stairs from beginning to end all by himself, but he could always find a little job for me to work on. He'd get me to pop out the dowels he used to hide the fasteners, as an example. What I remember most is the wonderful smell in the garage; our shop floor still has that smell, even though it's 26,000 square feet."

Giuseppe is a first-generation Canadian; his parents emigrated from southern Italy in the late 50s. He was introduced to the world of stairs and railings by a close friend, and eventually found himself working at a stair shop in Newmarket. The intricacies and special skills required in building stairs fascinated him - the math required in designing a long spiral staircase, for instance - and by his early thirties, he

...continued on page 6



**MEASURE TWICE, CUT ONCE** - Daniel Sawers sizes a stair tread using a straight line rip saw. Deluxe Stair and Railing Ltd., located in Uxville, specializes in custom stair work. Submitted photo

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## Township property taxes to increase 5.93 per cent

Roger Varley

Concluding budget discussions with a final meeting last Thursday, finance committee chair Councillor Willie Popp announced that Uxbridge will see a 5.93 per cent increase in property taxes for 2023.

The final meeting was devoted to discussing 16 items that were not included in the budget

but were up for "consideration." Those 16 items, with a total value of close to \$1.3 million, included such things as a pavilion for the pump park at the Fields of Uxbridge, safety measures for the toboggan hill at the arena and playground swings for Campbell Drive. Of the 16 items considered, council supported 10 and deferred six.

Commenting on the final tax rate, Mayor

Dave Barton said "it's unbelievable how well we've done on this," noting the increase is less than the current inflation rate, which sits at 6.3 per cent. Regional Councillor Bruce Garrod said the rate is "a reasonable number," adding that township staff are doing what they can to keep costs down.

If all the items for consideration had been

...continued on page 3

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# Uxbridge at a Glance

The Corporation of The Township of Uxbridge  
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## The Township of Uxbridge

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### Council & Committee Meetings

- Meeting Schedule for February, 2023**
- CANCELLED - Thursday, February 9, 1:00 p.m.  
FINANCE COMMITTEE (Budget Meeting)
  - Monday, February 13, 10:00 a.m.  
COUNCIL MEETING
  - CANCELLED - Wednesday, February 15, 7:00 p.m.  
COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT
  - Thursday, February 16, 7:00 p.m.  
VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION FOR THE SOUTH BALSAM STREET STORMWATER POND RETROFIT
  - Tuesday, February 21, 9:00 a.m.  
COUNCIL EDUCATION SESSION (Closed to the Public)
  - Thursday, February 23, 7:00 p.m.  
PUBLIC MEETING – ZBA 2022-06 and OPA 70 – Wooden Sticks Golf Inc.
  - Monday, February 27, 10:00 a.m.  
COUNCIL MEETING
- Proclamations for February**
- February - Black History Month
  - February 17 - Random Acts of Kindness Day
  - February 20 - World Social Justice Day
  - February 22 - Pink Shirt Day to support anti-bullying

**Road Closures**  
Visit [Uxbridge.ca/roads](http://Uxbridge.ca/roads) for up-to-date notices.

**Outdoor Burn Permits**

2023 Fire Permits can be purchased online at <https://bit.ly/3V2dFWP> or in person at the Uxbridge Fire Station



### Uxbridge BIA Board of Directors Wanted!

The Uxbridge BIA Board of Directors is a Committee of Council for the Township of Uxbridge that are appointed for the Term of Council. As a result, we are welcoming **NEW DIRECTORS** to **join our team!**

Do you own a property or operate a business within the BIA district and have ideas on how we can improve our BIA area, please consider this opportunity to help shape our business community and make a difference to the vitality of our community. Our mandate is to promote 'shop, savour, unwind, explore Uxbridge'!


BIA Board meetings are held on the 1st Wednesday evening of each month, at 7:00 p.m., and are held virtually on Microsoft Teams. Interested candidates who wish to help plan, evaluate and vote on projects to support our BIA member businesses are encouraged to **JOIN OUR BIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS.**

Applications will be accepted until Friday, February 10, 2023, by the undersigned.

Debbie Leroux, [dleroux@uxbridge.ca](mailto:dleroux@uxbridge.ca)  
Director of Legislative Services/Clerk  
P.O. Box 190, 51 Toronto Street South, Uxbridge, Ontario L9P 1T1  
Phone 905-852-9181, ext. 228 Fax 905-852-9674



**Virtual Public Information Centre**  
**South Balsam Street Stormwater Pond Retrofit**  
**Thurs., February 16th**  
**7:00-8:00p.m.**  
Learn more or join the meeting at <https://bit.ly/3wpully>




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### Winter Ice Conditions

- Elgin Pond**  
The Township of Uxbridge will be testing the ice conditions at Elgin Pond throughout the winter. A flag notification system is in place:
- No Flags** – Testing has not begun
  - Red Flags** – Ice is not safe. Please stay off
  - Yellow Flags** – Skate with caution
- Flags are located at the north end of Elgin Pond, beside Mill St. Please keep away from water inlets and outlets on the pond, as ice thickness is compromised.
- Storm Water Management Facilities**  
Please keep off of all storm water management facilities. Water levels fluctuate at these facilities and as such are not safe for skating or other activities.

**2022 Accomplishments**

Learn more about our 2022 accomplishments at [www.uxbridge.ca](http://www.uxbridge.ca)



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# Uxbridge at a Glance *continued*

## From the Tax Office

**FIRST Tax Installment is due on February 24, 2023.**

**SECOND Tax Installment is due on April 26, 2023.**

2023 Interim Property Tax Bills have been mailed for all properties, with the exception of properties enrolled in the Monthly Pre-Authorized Payment Plan or tax bills paid by mortgage companies.

The taxes due are based on the billing date. If your account is currently in arrears, the February 1 interest charge on "Past Due Taxes" is not included on this bill and will need to be paid in addition to the February installment.

### Tax Payments Options:

- In person at Town Hall during regular business hours of Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Accepted payment methods are cash, cheque, or Interac debit.
- In an after-hours drop box located in the Municipal Office front parking lot. – DO NOT DEPOSIT CASH Post-dated cheques are accepted.
- By Mail - Payments must reach the Municipal Office by the due date.
- Through internet or telephone banking.
- At most financial institutions.
- Credit cards and e-transfers are not accepted for tax payments.

### Penalty/Interest Charges:

For non-payment of a tax levy on or before the respective due dates of each installment, a penalty of 1.25% shall be imposed on the first day of each calendar month and thereafter in which the default continues. Failure to receive a Tax Bill does not excuse the taxpayer from responsibility for payment of taxes nor liability of any penalty or interest due to late payments.

**The penalty/interest charges cannot be waived or reduced by the Tax Department or Council for any reason.**

If a reprinted tax bill, receipt or Statement of Account is required for any year's taxes, a fee of \$15.00 will apply.

If you did not receive your 2023 Interim Tax Bill, please call the Tax Department at 905-852-9181.

### Tax hikes, from page 1

approved, the tax hike would have been 6.24 per cent. Councillor Zed Pickering's motion that all be included and the rate set at 6.24 per cent failed to find any support.

One of the items approved was \$10,000 for "safety requirements" at the township-sanctioned toboggan hill next to the Uxbridge Arena. Amanda Ferraro, director of community services, said those requirements would involve putting up fencing at the bottom of the hill. She could not say what type of fencing would be used, but added that there would have to be measures to prevent sleds from crashing into the fence. However, Ferraro did tell council that the hill is safe for use right now.

The pump park pavilion was listed as an expenditure of \$150,000. This was on top of \$175,000 set aside for pump park inspection. The Campbell Drive playground swings were priced at \$30,000.

Two items on the list elicited questions from the *Cosmos*. One saw a

payment of \$16,761 for an assistant training officer for the fire department for a total of 48 days. Yet, a manager for the downtown revitalization project would be hired for six months for \$17,625. When asked for an explanation, Chief Administrative Officer Kristi Honey said one is a contract position and the other is part-time, adding that the rates were set by an external evaluator.

Last year's municipal tax increase was 3.89 per cent.

Council is expected to ratify the 2023 budget with the next couple of weeks.

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## Employment Opportunities

Complete details and qualifications required for these positions are available at [uxbridge.ca/careers](http://uxbridge.ca/careers)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Clerk's Dept – Deputy Clerk</b><br/>Closes Friday, February 10, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Community Services - Summer Camp Supervisor, contract</b> - Closes Friday, February 10, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Community Services - Summer Camp Program Coordinator, contract</b><br/>Closes Friday, February 10, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Community Services - Facility Custodian, contract</b><br/>- Closes Wednesday, February 15, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Public Works and Operations Dept. - Operations and Capital Project Manager</b><br/>Extended – Closes Friday, February 17, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Public Works and Operations Dept. - Operations and Capital Project Technologist</b><br/>Closes Friday, February 17, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Development Services – Building Inspector/Plans Examiner, part-time – 2 Positions</b><br/>Closes Friday, February 24, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Uxbridge Public Library - Facility Custodian, contract</b> - Closes Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 8:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Community Services – Summer Camp Counsellor (Ages 16+)</b> - Closes Friday, March 31, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.</p> | <p><b>Community Services – Assistant Summer Camp Counsellor (Ages 15+)</b><br/>Closes Friday, March 31, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Parks Department – Summer Student – General Labourer – 3 Positions</b> - Closes Monday, April 3, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Parks Department – Summer Student – Horticulture – 2 Positions</b> - Closes Monday, April 3, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Uxbridge Historical Centre - Collections Associate, contract</b> - Closes Friday, April 14, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Uxbridge Historical Centre - Community Engagement and Programming Associate, contract</b><br/>Closes Friday, April 14, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Uxbridge Historical Centre - Interpretive Guides, contract</b> - Closes Friday, April 21, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Uxbridge Historical Centre - Community Museum Technician, contract</b><br/>Closes Friday, May 19, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Crossing Guards</b><br/>Resumés accepted on an ongoing basis</p> <p><b>Box Office Volunteers – Uxbridge Music Hall</b> - Interested parties accepted on an ongoing basis</p> |
|--|--|

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### NEED TO REACH MILLENNIALS?

New survey results show that **nine out of ten** Millennials read newspapers weekly in print or digital formats.

|            |             |         |
|------------|-------------|---------|
| 87%        | 90%         | 82%     |
|            |             |         |
| Adults 18+ | Millennials | Boomers |

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# Our two cents

## We'd like to book a room, please?

This column featured all things Groundhog Day last week, and this week's column might appear to have the same theme.

It appears that a hotel *might* be coming to Uxbridge.

Yes, yes, this carrot has been dangled in front of our noses before, hence the Groundhog Day reference. (For clarity's sake, we're referring to the Bill Murray movie *Groundhog Day*, where one man's day just keeps repeating over and over until he gets it right). Maybe, just maybe, this time we'll get it right, and approve the building of a hotel.

The plan for said hotel will be presented a little more fully at a public meeting at the township offices on Thursday, Feb. 23, at 7 p.m. (it will also be accessible online). The public meeting will address a proposed Official Plan amendment, as well as a zoning by-law amendment, all applied for by Wooden Sticks Golf Inc. If Wooden Sticks moves forward with the application - and if the town is for it - then we *could* see a five-storey hotel that features 79 rooms, as well some office space and a small restaurant area.

There's apparently already been a bit of a sulk raised online regarding the five-storey aspect of the plan. And some want to ensure it all gets incorporated into the current club house/restaurant that is Wooden Sticks right now. Those making these comments online had better be present at the Feb. 23 meeting so they can find out the specifics firsthand, and make their judgements afterward, if necessary.

We don't care if the proposed building is five storeys or 50 (ok, maybe we care if it's 50) - just get it built. This town - heck, all of North Durham - is hungry for, *aching* for accommodation for visitors. Our "Destination Uxbridge" series speaks directly to this (see page 8 for more). The only ask we would have of the project is to please not make it an exclusive boutique hotel that is priced way out of reach of the average Uxbridge visitor. Perhaps offer various price points so that everyone who visits has the option to stay.

Look at us, already plumping those crisp white hotel pillows. We'll be at that Feb. 23 meeting, we can't wait to hear more about what's proposed. We *so* hope it's positive, because we *need* a hotel.



## Letters to the Editor

February is a special month for the Kinsmen Club of Uxbridge in that we celebrate two special dates - one this month, and one in August.

February 20, 1920, was when the first Kinsmen Club was formed in Hamilton, Ontario, by Hal Rogers. The All Canadian Club soon grew from coast to coast in Canada. The Kin Club of Uxbridge was formed in August, 1943, and one of its first projects was raising funds in support of the National Milk for Children Campaign in Great Britain during the Second World War.

Our local club is now celebrating 80 years of service club work for the town and Township of Uxbridge.

As we look forward to these important historical dates, we invite any male or female age 19 or over to join us, along with any former Kin members, or Kin members who have recently moved into the Uxbridge area to join us as we continue our journey of community service. Our motto is "Serving our community's greatest needs."

Anyone interested in joining our historic club is invited to call 905-

862-3678 for further information and ask for Jim.

As a thank you for the support of our many fundraising events over the years, we will be providing two hours of free ice skating at the Uxbridge Arena on Family Day, Monday, Feb. 20, from 12:15 to 2:15 p.m.

Looking forward to seeing a large turnout!

*LM Jim Campbell  
Club Secretary  
Kin Club of Uxbridge*

## Destination Uxbridge

# Uxbridge tourism: the challenges

Conrad Boyce  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

*This article is the second in a series which focuses on the various facets of tourism in the Township of Uxbridge.*

naugural article on tourism in Uxbridge revealed that the township has abundant resources on which to build a prosperous industry. Even without a lake, Uxbridge still has numerous outdoor amenities, including trails, ski hills, golf courses, and municipal recreation facilities. It has historical attractions like a museum, a heritage railway, a national historic site dedicated to a world famous author, and Canada's largest mausoleum, an architectural wonder. It has numerous restaurants and intriguing shops. It has a beautiful concert and theatre venue, and a number of unique special events held both in-

doors and outdoors throughout the year. It has numerous farms willing to open their gates to visitors, everything from a bison ranch to a maple sugar plantation.

In a survey of 50 local residents conducted last month, the *Cosmos* asked three questions. First, what did respondents think were Uxbridge's top three attractions? Almost every attraction made it onto someone's list, so people's perceptions obviously vary, although the three most often mentioned were the trail system, the railway, and the Fantasy of Lights. That assessment matches what Township officials have said.

Second, what are Uxbridge's top three 'undiscovered gems', attractions that could bring in more visitors if marketed more aggressively? Again, there were many candidates, but the three most mentioned were the Fos-

ter Memorial, the Lucy Maud Montgomery site in Leaskdale, and the Historical Centre - three attractions with a historical bent, although the first two also frequently come with an entertainment component. So perhaps Uxbridge needs to focus more on its colourful past in its tourism marketing.

The third question was what are three important factors limiting Uxbridge's development as a tourist destination? Even among just 50 respondents, there was a wide range of suggestions, from something general like a need for more marketing funds, to a specific lack for the travelling public: no charge ports for electric vehicles. Turn to page 8 to discover a few of the common themes that were discovered through this unofficial survey.

*...continued on page 8*

When one of these disappears, A LOT disappears.



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## Am I Wrong?

column by Roger Varley

### Thankful for small mercies?

Unless there are some last-minute changes, homeowners in Uxbridge township can look forward to a 5.93 per cent increase in their property taxes this year. But property owners should not be too upset because, as Mayor Dave Barton said, that hike is lower than the current rate of inflation of 6.3 per cent.

In other words, be thankful for small mercies. However, when faced with increasing prices for food, gasoline and other essentials, homeowners might just argue that an increase in property taxes just adds to the inflation we're all dealing with.

To further assuage homeowners' feelings, Regional Councillor Bruce Garrod offered that the 5.93 per cent increase is "a reasonable number" and that staff is doing everything they can to keep costs under control. If that is the case, why did staff come up with requests for money to build a pavilion at the pump park, to install a fence at the bottom of the "township sanctioned" toboggan hill at the arena, and hire an assistant training officer for the fire department at \$350 a day for 48 days?

Everyone has been hit hard over the last three years, with COVID-19, skyrocketing prices, weather events and the like. Many homeowners have had to cut back on their spending wherever they could. The Corporation of the Township of Uxbridge has also been hit hard by COVID-19, skyrocketing prices, weather events and the like. On top of that, the township is facing reduced revenue from development charges, thanks to the Ford government's Bill 23. Yet staff came forward with a bunch of budget suggestions that could reasonably be described as "wants," not "needs."

A pavilion at the pump park might be a nice addition to that facility but, at a proposed price of \$150,000, is it really necessary at this time? Someone might think a fence at the bottom of the toboggan hill at the arena would be a good thing, but at a cost of \$10,000? It would be interesting to know whether there have been any injuries reported at the hill this year. Last year? The year before? Amanda Ferraro, director of community services, indicated that the \$10,000 would not be for a chain-link fence, but something a

little less substantial.

Then there's the assistant training officer for the fire department. Since the request is for an "assistant" training officer, one has to assume there already is a training officer. Is that person's schedule so full that an assistant is required?

Another \$30,000 was added to the budget to extend library hours on Sundays. The reasoning was that it would provide locals and tourists with washroom facilities to encourage them to visit downtown on Sundays. That's a heck of a price to pay for a bathroom convenience.

Are these all examples of staff trying to keep costs under control? The only attempt I have seen of trying to keep costs under control is at the Uxbridge Bruins games at the arena, where the heaters are seldom turned on.

Having attended most budget discussion sessions over the past number of years, I understand it is not an easy task, and difficult decisions have to be made. However (and it's a personal observation) it seems the difficult decisions rarely involve saying "no" to something. Occasionally something might be deferred, as were six of the 16 items considered at the final budget meeting, but that only means they're going to come back at a later date. Just recently, there was a less-than-emphatic "no" to a new swimming pool at the Fields of Uxbridge, given the difficulty in receiving funding from the other three levels of government, but the idea of a new pool is not entirely off the books.

As an aside, we still have not had a final accounting of the Brock Street culvert project. I realize that there are a number of litigations in the offing regarding that project, but it has been a considerable amount of time since council gave us the last update on the costs. If memory serves, what was originally touted as a \$10-million project had reached \$23 million. One wonders what horrendous figures are going to come out eventually.

It seems to me that instead of congratulating themselves and telling homeowners how fortunate they are that the tax increase isn't even larger, council should be saying: "Sorry, but we tried."

Tell me, am I wrong?



## The Barris Beat

column by Ted Barris

### The art and chemistry of survival

It happened kind of like choosing a partner at a high school dance, where the girls all lined up on one side of the dance floor and the boys on the other. Only in this case, during the Second World War, the Commonwealth airmen gathered in a hangar in England – pilots in one group, navigators in another, gunners in another, etc. As RCAF gunner Ron Moyes told me the other night, bomber pilot Don Walkey first picked a navigator, Hugh Ferguson.

"Then, Fergy picked the rest of us," said Moyes, just shy of his 97th birthday (Feb. 11). In other words, the haphazard instincts of Ferguson, a 20-year-old former miner from Manitoba (by 1944 a trained RCAF navigator) chose bomb aimer Stu Farmer from Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., radio operator Jake Redinger from Bashaw, Alta., and gunners Alvin Kuhl and Ron Moyes from Tara, Ont., and Coquitlam, B.C. respectively – all men he'd never met before – to form a bomber crew. All six survived a full tour – 29 combat operations over Germany – and came home safely to Canada in 1945.

Last Friday, I travelled to the Canada Aviation and Space Museum in Ottawa for the screening of *Above and Beyond*, a documentary about the famous Lancaster bomber in WWII. The Vintage Wings museum in Gatineau, Que., sponsored the event, and asked if I would interview a Lancaster rear gunner they'd invited to the screening – Warrent Officer (Retired) Ron Moyes. I jumped at the chance.

Over many years of contact with thousands of Canadian veterans, I've almost always asked how it was they survived. Most say, fate or chance or just plain luck. The odds did not favour volunteers such as Ron Moyes making it home. Between 1939 and 1945, 125,000 Allied airmen served in those nighttime raids over Europe. Of every 100 airmen in Bomber Command, 52 were killed on operations, nine were killed in accidents, 12 became prisoners of war, three were wounded, and one POW would manage to escape and make it back to England. Of all wartime services, Bomber Command suffered the highest attrition rate – 44 per cent – meaning that 55,573 were killed, 10,500 of them being Canadian. So, how did Moyes dodge the bullet? "We engaged in a lot of horseplay," he told me in front of that Ottawa audience. "But on

operations it was all extremely professional."

As a rear gunner in a Lancaster, Moyes had no heat in his turret; in addition, so that he could see enemy fighters clearly at night, the Perspex (glass windshield) was also removed exposing him at 20,000 feet to an outside temperature of -40 to -60 degrees Fahrenheit. Moyes described how he dressed against the cold. "First, I put on wool stockings up over my knees and a long turtleneck sweater. Then, my battle dress uniform and an electrically heated suit with slippers and gloves. Then, my teddy-bear suit of one-inch thick padding. Next, my Mae West life preserver, my parachute harness, flying boots, helmet, mask, goggles and three pairs of gloves." He couldn't wear his parachute because the turret was too cramped, so he sat on it for the full trip (seven hours) to the target and back.

Their objectives were industrial sites at Munster, Essen, Duisburg and other industrial sites along the Ruhr River, a.k.a. "Happy Valley." On Dec. 31, 1944, Moyes' crew was sent to drop mines at low level up the fjord leading to (Nazi-occupied) Oslo, Norway. "There was a full moon, no clouds ... Stu (Farmer) dropped the mines. Then, all hell broke loose. A couple of barges were loaded with guns and (the Germans) opened up on us. Don (Walkey) immediately put the aircraft in a dive, while we fired back. My guns were white-hot when Stu called out, 'Skipper, pull up! I can't swim!' Don pulled the bomber out of the dive and we were only 75 feet above the water."

Because it was New Year's Eve, cooks had prepared a special meal for everybody back at RCAF 429 Squadron air base. But Ron and his crew were so exhausted when they returned, that they slept right through the turkey dinner. "So, at 2 p.m., we (got up), had a few beers; then, feeling pretty good, we tried playing some basketball on roller skates. But we quit before we killed ourselves."

When the wartime crew reunited in 1984, pilot Don Walkey remembered, the day they'd crewed up in 1944, that he'd had an inoculation and wasn't feeling well. That's why he left the job of picking a crew to navigator Hugh Ferguson.

"He did a good job," Ron Moyes said. "We all survived."

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*Stairway to success, from page 1*

felt confident enough to strike out on his own. After only a few years in his garage, he was able to lease a small unit in Pickering, and then moved two more times to larger shop spaces there. Finally, in 2019, built the present factory in Uxville.

While they were in Pickering, son Jesse gradually began to play a larger part in the business.

"I initially wanted a career in the police or the military. I've always had great respect for our men and women in uniform," he admits, "but I always worked for Dad on the weekends, in the summers - I liked driving the trucks best of all. I went to college and then university for business administration, and I eventually realized there would be plenty of challenge and satisfaction in helping build this business, considering the sacrifices my dad made to start it. So here I am."

Stair-building is a special niche in the construction industry. You can't go to school for your papers in the field. So the Morras are pretty much obliged to do all the training themselves. The business has three stages: designing the stairs, constructing

them, and installing them.

The designers and drafters work in offices with windows overlooking the shop floor, so they can watch their drawings coming to life. With the latest computer technology, they're able to show the client exactly what the final product will look like when installed. If the design needs tweaking, it doesn't require a whole new set of drawings, just a couple of strokes on the keyboard and everything magically changes.

Out on the shop floor, Deluxe builds all its own stairs and railings, almost exclusively from hardwoods like oak and maple; certain softwoods don't have the durability required for most elements of a stairway. There is a huge computer-driven machine called a CNC (which could never have come close to fitting in Giuseppe's garage) which cuts treads to the precise size required. It saves a lot of time, and a second one is due to arrive later this month.

Although the Uxville shop works only in wood, the designs often include other materials. So if metal or glass components are required, they are sourced to other partners who have developed a strong working re-

lationship with Deluxe over the years. Then they join the other components at the job site.

Which leads to the final step in the stair-building process: the installation. The Morras will not entrust that final stage to anyone else but their own teams.

"Stairs are usually designed to fit precisely into a very limited space," says Jesse. "And when it comes to the railings, it's a safety issue as well as an aesthetic one. Our reputation is on the line, and we've built that reputation because our installers are the best at what they do."

That last crucial step is the chief reason that Deluxe has resisted the

temptation to expand its operations beyond southern Ontario. They've had offers to build stairs in other parts of Canada, and in many parts of the U.S.

"We probably get three opportunities a month from New York alone, but the red tape involved in sending an installation crew down there is a bit intimidating to say the least," sighs Jesse. "Right away, we would be seen as taking work away from New York craftspeople. Maybe eventually we can figure it out, but for now, we're happy and very busy here."

That busy-ness can often mean a few weeks delay in getting a set of stairs delivered, so Deluxe is usually involved very early in the planning of a high-rise or multi-unit housing development.

"If your familiarity with construction comes from watching HGTV, you might think that the builder or contractor, or even a DIY renovator, designs and constructs the stairs himself," says Jesse. "But unless it's the very simplest of designs, that almost never happens. It's smarter and safer to get a company like ours involved in the project from the beginning."

Near the end of the Cosmos's visit to Delux, Jesse reveals that he's a rabid reader, and that he collects rare books. Any particular genre or author?

"I specialize in first-edition Charles Dickens," he says, "from about 180 years ago. He's fascinating."

Dickens. Complex, intricate, and beautiful. Kind of like creating a fine stairway.



A craftsman at Deluxe Stair and Railing assembles a custom curved staircase.

*Submitted photo*

## Bruins split two on weekend

*Roger Varley*

Facing two teams locked in a battle for third place in the seven-team PJHL Orr Division on the weekend, the Uxbridge Bruins lost to one and thumped the other.

Last Friday night, playing in Keswick instead of their home ice because of a scheduling blip, the Bruins were downed 5-2 by the surging Georgina Ice. The Ice scored the only goal of the first period, but the Bruins tied the score in the second when Quinn Meek notched a power-play marker, assisted by Josh Czajil and Matt Gordon. The Ice responded with a power-play goal of their own, but Meek scored again with just 15 seconds remaining in the period. Assists went to Peter Kerr and Anthony Lamanna.

However, in the third period, it was all Georgina as they scored three unanswered goals.

The following night, up in Little Britain, the Bruins and the Merchants engaged in a little tit-for-tat in the first period. Kerr opened the scoring with a power-play marker, assisted by Alex Hyde and Meek, only to see Little Britain respond with their own power-play goal. Meek, assisted by Kerr, re-established the lead but the Merchants tied the game again as the period wound down.

In the second, the Bruins lowered the boom, outscoring Little Britain 4-1. Lamanna scored two and added an assist, Hyde scored one and had two assists and Meek had two assists. The other goal was scored by Nic Colangelo. The onslaught led the Merchants to swap goalies at the start of the third period. Starting goalie Oliver Webster had allowed six goals on a total of 13 shots.

Czajil closed out the scoring with the only goal of the third period, assisted by Sam Davis and Cohen Mackie.

After the weekend, Little Britain and Georgina were locked in a tie for third place, 11 points behind the Bruins. The Bruins are five points behind the Clarington Eagles, but the Eagles have two games in hand. The Bruins host those same Eagles at the arena tomorrow (Friday) at 7:45 p.m.

After that tilt, the Bruins will have five games remaining in the regular schedule. Two of those match-ups will be against Georgina and Little Britain, while the other three will see the Bruins face the floundering Lakefield Chiefs, Port Perry Lumberjacks and North Kawartha Knights.

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*Hello World!*

My name is Vanessa. I couldn't wait any longer, so I arrived three weeks early at Lakeridge Health Oshawa Hospital, January 28th, 2023 at 10:13 p.m. Weighing in at 6 lbs. 3oz. First born child of excited, thrilled parents, Michael and Liliana Lee of Brooklin, Ontario. First grandchild for my tickled-pink grandparents, Helen Lee (née Leask) and the late Jim Lee of Uxbridge, and second grandchild for Jose Cuellar and Marleny Novoa of Acacias, Colombia.

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Light For Your Path

*"Where, O death, is your  
victory? Where, O death,  
is your sting?"*

1 Cor. 15:55

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## CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are \$15/week up to 25 words; \$0.20 per additional word (plus HST). Payable in advance by cash, cheque, debit or credit card. Contact Lvann@thecosmos.ca or 905-852-1900 Deadline: Tuesday, 12 noon.

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### EVENTS

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**MEDITATION** is holding in-person  
meetings at 10 a.m. every other Sunday.  
Whether experienced or new to  
meditation, all are welcome. Location is:  
2 Campbell Dr., Ste. 201. Email Gail:  
ghorner550@gmail.com

**SPAGHETTI DINNER** Friday, Feb. 24, 5 -  
6:30 p.m., St. Paul's Anglican Church.  
Free! Served in the lower hall. To  
volunteer, contact church office by email  
at stpaulsuxbridge@yahoo.ca or by phone  
at 905-852-7016.

**DOCUMENTARY VIEWING** See the  
documentary "Superspreader" about the  
#LetUsWorship movement in the US. Hear  
about how people of faith reached out to  
those in need during a difficult time.  
Saturday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m., Family  
Worship Centre, 15 Medd Rd. Childcare  
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**REGISTER YOUR RENTAL:** If you have a  
rental available (apt., or room), call 905-  
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**Friday, February 10**  
**7:45 p.m.**

against Clarington  
at the Uxbridge Arena





# NOTICE OF PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE AND PUBLIC MEETING

## DRAFT NEW DURHAM REGIONAL OFFICIAL PLAN

### PURPOSE OF THE DRAFT NEW REGIONAL OFFICIAL PLAN

The Regional Municipality of Durham has released the Draft New Regional Official Plan (ROP) which is the culmination of work completed through Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) of Durham's existing ROP. The Draft New ROP addresses a wide variety of strategic land use planning and development matters. Envision Durham also represents the Region's provincially mandated exercise to ensure that the ROP conforms with Provincial Plans or does not conflict with them; has regard to matters of Provincial interest; and is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. Once adopted by Regional Council, the amendment will be submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for approval under Section 16(6) of the Planning Act, RSO 1990

You are invited to participate in the following events:

| Public Open House (In-person)   | Public Meeting (Hybrid)   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>When:</b> March 6</p> <p><b>Time:</b> 6 to 8 p.m.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Main atrium, south of the west entrance, on the first floor of Durham Regional Headquarters (605 Rossland Road East, Whitby).</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The purpose of the Public Open House is to provide the public with the opportunity to ask questions, discuss the Draft New ROP and provide comments and information to staff.</p> <p><b>To Participate:</b> Any person may attend that is interested in discussing the Draft New ROP.</p> <p><b>To Register:</b> Visit the Envision Durham web page for more information and to complete the registration form:<br/><a href="http://durham.ca/EnvisionDurham">durham.ca/EnvisionDurham</a></p> | <p><b>When:</b> March 7</p> <p><b>Time:</b> 11 a.m.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Council Chambers, Durham Regional Headquarters (605 Rossland Road East, Whitby). Participants may also view the meeting remotely via live stream below.</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The purpose of the Public Meeting is to provide interested parties with an opportunity to make a submission to Durham's Planning and Economic Development Committee relative to the Draft New ROP.</p> <p><b>To Participate:</b> Any person may attend the hybrid Public Meeting, whether in-person or remotely, and make submissions concerning the Draft New ROP.</p> <p><b>Live Streaming:</b> <a href="http://durham.ca/Live">durham.ca/Live</a></p> <p><b>Written Correspondence:</b> Send in your written correspondence to <a href="mailto:clerks@durham.ca">clerks@durham.ca</a> by Noon on Monday, March 6, noting the submission is related to "Envision Durham".</p> <p><b>Oral Delegations to Committee:</b> Members of the public who wish to delegate at the Public Meeting in-person are encouraged to register in advance by emailing <a href="mailto:EnvisionDurham@durham.ca">EnvisionDurham@durham.ca</a> advising of your name, address, telephone number, email address and who you represent. However, in-person delegations shall be permitted to speak without prior registration.</p> <p>Those who wish to delegate electronically must register in advance by submitting your request in writing to <a href="mailto:delegations@durham.ca">delegations@durham.ca</a> by Noon on Monday, March 6.</p> |

**Comments or questions?** An information report outlining the details of the Draft New ROP may be obtained from the Durham Region Planning Division. Contact Jonah Kelly at 905-668-4113 ext. 2538, or at [jonah.kelly@durham.ca](mailto:jonah.kelly@durham.ca).

If you wish to be notified of subsequent meetings or of the decision of Regional Council on the Draft New ROP, please email Envision Durham at [EnvisionDurham@durham.ca](mailto:EnvisionDurham@durham.ca) or submit a written request to the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, c/o Envision Durham, at the following address:

605 Rossland Road East, Box 623  
Whitby, Ontario, L1N 6A3

Please include your address, telephone number, email address and the Regional file number.

Personal information from those who make either oral or written submissions on the application is collected by the Region of Durham under the authority of the Planning Act and will become part of the public record.

### Destination Uxbridge, from page 4

**1** Lack of accommodation - In its early history, Uxbridge had plenty of inns, but the last motel closed down more than three decades ago, and the number of bed and breakfast options has decreased to only a handful in recent years, perhaps due to COVID. Currently, visitors have three options: stay with friends or family (if they have any here), stay in a nearby town (then *that* municipality gets the economic boost), or make it a day trip (which limits the range from which people can be attracted). There are rumours of hotels on the horizon, but that's been the case for many years.

**2** A less than attractive downtown - Downtown Uxbridge is prettiest at night, with all the fairy lights on the trees, but particularly in the summer, no shops are open after dark. The light of day reveals an architectural hodgepodge and a number of shuttered storefronts, particularly in the lower, eastern part of Brock Street. Several respondents mentioned the need for a parkette along Brock somewhere. A future article in this series will discuss the Township's plan for downtown revitalization, which addresses some of these concerns.

**3** A need for a greater diversity of restaurants and shops - If a visitor is not in the mood for fast food, or pub food, there are few sit-down options in town. With the nation's most culturally diverse city only an hour away, this is a lost opportunity. Recently opened shops are reportedly doing well; the word needs to spread to a diversity of small business owners in order to fill the vacancies.

**4** A need for greater cooperation among tourist-oriented businesses - An example of this would be more marketing of downtown shops, restaurants and other attractions on the heritage railway, so passengers can broaden their Uxbridge experience before or after their train ride. But it works both ways - if the railway promotes them, the shops should be open after the passengers disembark. The Township, since it first hired a tourism coordinator several years ago, has made great strides in this area, the Leaskdale Loop (a monthly tour of rural attractions that was initiated by a small group of varied businesses) being a prime example. But the municipality can't take all the initiative. What are the Chamber of Commerce and BIA's role in promoting tourism? Should local businesses form a Tourism Industry Association? Another article will explore the current promotional framework, while another will dive into the Township's tourism strategy.

**5** Build on what's working - Several respondents questioned the decision to begin charging for parking at several attractions, in particular several southern trailheads and the skatepark at the Fields of Uxbridge, wondering if this was a step back after all the work that's gone into the trail system over the last two decades.

**6** Need for more events - Attracting more events to downtown (which would inevitably help in its improvement), as well as to Elgin Park and perhaps the rural parks as well, such as those in Goodwood or Zephyr, is necessary. Two popular events in Elgin Park, the Highland Games and Ribfest, have disappeared in recent years. Why? Perhaps it is rooted in the next concern...

**7** Need for more volunteers - A great number of the tourist attractions in Uxbridge, particularly the history-oriented ones or the short-term events like the Fall Fair or Fantasy of Lights, are run or strongly supported by non-profit organizations. Those attractions need a regular infusion of new blood (and new ideas) to thrive. Pre-COVID, the Township ran a registration fair in the fall; perhaps a volunteer fair early in the new year, where non-profits, charities or service clubs could make their pitch to Uxbridge citizens old and new, might help.

**8** Think outside the box in marketing - The 'undiscovered gems' list uncovered with the second question is perhaps a clue that not all the bases are being equally covered. A frequently mentioned attraction, for example, is the Uxbridge Music Hall. Theatrical runs in the venue have the potential to attract 2,500 patrons over two weeks, and it was a pleasant surprise that coming out of the pandemic, the first two large musicals in the Hall, VIP's *Frozen, Jr.* and On-Stage Uxbridge's *Rent*, played to near capacity. If those patrons come from out of town - and box office analysis suggests that for *Rent*, the tourist proportion of the audience was well over 50 per cent - chances are they'll spend even more on food, drink and shopping than they do on tickets. Community theatre isn't traditionally seen as a tourist draw. Perhaps it should be.

There were a number of other concerns listed: better signage, better transit, more activities for kids and seniors, more networking on social media. The *Cosmos* survey respondents amply demonstrated that Uxbridge collectively needs to do a lot more work to realize its tourism potential.

*The next article in this series will discuss how Uxbridge is currently getting the word out on why everyone needs to visit Uxbridge.*