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Dan Pearce/Metroland

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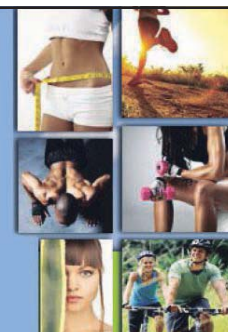
FRANCESCO BORI IS HELPING THE LOCAL LEGION BRANCH 286 OPEN AN INNOVATIVE
'EXPERIENTIAL' MUSEUM IN TIME FOR REMEMBRANCE DAY /P3

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MUSEUM CAN HELP EDUCATE STUDENTS, BROADER COMMUNITY

TAMARA SHEPHARD
tshephard@toronto.com

A Royal Canadian Legion branch in North Etobicoke is creating a unique new experiential museum it hopes to have open to the public by Remembrance Day.

The Legion Experience Museum is a labour of love for Francesco Bori and his team of 10, who've spent the past nine months painstakingly researching and cataloguing nearly 800 significant artifacts.

Uniforms. Weapons. Writings. Model ships. A paratrooper's award.

"This will be the first experiential legion museum in Toronto that does not affiliate itself with war," said local resident Bori, 35, who is the museum's co-ordinator, team leader and curator. "When it opens, it will be the first of its kind."

Branch 286 Legion president Ron Gregory stressed it is not a "war" museum.

"We call this room 'memory lounge,'" Gregory said. "It's a place for vets to go and remember. I want to open it up to schools, cadets. We get items from families because they trust me to look after it."

Bori's vision: to engage all museum visitors' senses.

"The Legion Experience Museum will transport people, hopefully, back in time using the senses to try to entice their curiosity," Bori said. "Asking questions, that's what I think education is."

Bori is also an internationally awarded filmmaker.

This Sunday, Bori's third annual Film Only Film Festival will screen 12 short films and one trailer on themes of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), LGBTQ stories and conflict from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the 11 Irwin Rd. legion. Attendees get a sneak museum preview.

The pay-what-you-can festival supports interna-



Top: Francesco Bori with a book of poetry written by a soldier fighting overseas during the Second World War, one of hundreds of artifacts that will be featured in the museum. Above: Ron Gregory, president of Legion Branch 286, points to a wall of archival photos and artifacts.

tional marginalized film and video storytellers.

Bori considers himself a "storyteller."

"It's not the medium, it's the story," Bori said. "I wanted to be more in touch with those telling a story. I wanted to use multimedia to reach kids."

After volunteering at a London museum, Bori moved to Canada, then graduated from a museum and culture management course, as did most of his team.

Fundamental to his storytelling is welcoming people of all abilities.

"The hope is that people come and feel welcome from all generations and all abilities and have an emotional connection to a moment in history they didn't know or forgot," said Bori, who has ASD. "It creates an intimate connection to something they've

"For me, it's about the sacrifices the men and women made to preserve democracy. Not just their sacrifices, but those made by families left behind."

— Branch 286 president Ron Gregory

been through or their relatives have been through. I want people to experience something."

An archival-gloved Bori carefully opens "Rhyme and Reason," a small book of poetry written from the front in the 1940s.

He said he feels a per-

sonal connection to the servicemen's words.

"One of my grandfathers wrote limericks. It really reminds me of some of his poetry," he said, noting both his British and Italian grandfathers served in the Second World War. "It became very personal to me. The more I delved into it, the more I realized how small a world it is."

Bori said he felt "completely wowed" when branch president Gregory first showed him the legion's collection.

"Ron had done the first piece of magic when he saved decades and decades of history" from a century flood, Bori said.

A "godsend" is how Gregory described Bori and his team.

"I could have all the ideas in the world, but I don't have the expertise," Gregory said. "For me, it's about the sacrifices the men and women made to preserve democracy. Not just their sacrifices, but those made by families left behind."

Gregory's great-grandfather William Gregory was killed on Aug. 17, 1917 in the Battle of Passchendaele. Henry Gregory, his grandfather, served in and survived the Second World War.

Both his grandfather and his father were 10 when their fathers went off to war: "Everyone had to make sacrifices to do what needed to be done."

Gregory is eager for the opportunity the museum provides to educate students, scouts, guides and the broader community.

"The more history is discussed, the more it's remembered," Bori said.

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: Reporter Tamara Shephard wanted to learn more about Francesco Bori's Legion Experience Museum at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 286 and its impact on students and the broader community.

PUBLIC SURVEY OPENS ON EGLINTON ELEVATED GUIDEWAY

ELEVATED SECTION INCLUDES JANE AND SCARLETT STATIONS

TAMARA SHEPHARD
tshephard@toronto.com

Metrolinx has released preliminary design renderings of the 1.5-kilometre elevated section of the future Eglinton Crosstown West Extension (ECWE). The 9.2-kilometre ECWE, which is not projected to open until at least 2030, is an extension of the 19-kilometre Eglinton Crosstown which is slated to open later this year with 25 stops between Kennedy and Mount Dennis stations. The ECWE adds seven stops from Mount Dennis to Renforth in the west. Most of it is underground with a small portion at-

grade at the end-of-the-line Renforth stop and the elevated section encompasses essentially the first two stops — Jane and Scarlett stations (the other stops, all underground, are Royal York, Islington, Kipling and Martin Grove). At a virtual open house on Jan. 26, David Panici, ECWE project sponsor for Metrolinx, said the provincial transit agency continues to hear a lot of public feedback on the elevated guideway. In response, Metrolinx created an online survey, currently live, to enable community input on the design principles for the elevated section of the line, and on aspects of it, such as the space around the portals, guardrails, and lighting.

See — page 5



This rendering of the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension shows one of the options for the area around the tunnel entrances — transparent panels showing a pattern, like Morse code, that has symbolic meaning, while still allowing people to view the trains entering and exiting the tunnels. Metrolinx rendering



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Metrolinx renderings

A winter rendering, left, and nighttime view of the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension elevated section, which will be kept low so that passengers on the train can take in the views, while also ensuring community safety.

Continued from page 4

The survey will close on March 31. Visit metrolinx.com/ECWESurvey. The online survey asks for ideas for the area un-

derneath the elevated section, such as:

- Using the space to showcase public art;
- Creating open spaces around the station for the public to use;
- A more typical boule-

vard with mowed grass;

- Areas for low growth habitat/pollinators;
- A series of information plaques at points to showcase Indigenous historical significance, ecology, and geology of the Humber Riv-

er.

The ECWE elevated section will run along the north side of Eglinton Avenue West and be built as close as possible to the road and maintain access to Ferry Brown, Eglinton Flats and Pearen parks, Metro-

linx said on its blog.

Tunnelling starting at Renforth and heading east to Scarlett is on schedule to begin this spring, a Metrolinx spokesperson confirmed.

Construction of the headwalls, which are underground support walls, is set to begin on schedule in April at the future Martin Grove and Kipling Stations, the Metrolinx spokesperson said.



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TORONTO'S LONE BLACK COUNCILLOR 'A BEACON OF HOPE'

MICHAEL THOMPSON'S NAME HAS BEEN FLOATED 'AS A POTENTIAL MAYORAL CANDIDATE IN THE PAST,' WRITES VONNY SWEETLAND



VONNY SWEETLAND
Column

for all. Especially in Ontario's capital city, Toronto.

Of Toronto's 26-member city council, Michael Thompson is the only Black man and Black person elected to govern. For a city as diverse as Toronto, this comes as a surprise to many.

The pandemic's initial year in 2020 was emblazoned with tragedies, heartache, anxiety and fear. The death of George Floyd in the U.S. sparked a movement and the start of a long-awaited uprising for marginalized people and the Black community. Even in Toronto. Remnants from these events still linger in 2022 today.

Gun violence in Toronto is a real problem. Last month, a community in Scarborough was left dev-

astated after an 18-year-old student was shot to death at David and Mary Thomson Collegiate Institute. This wasn't just a hard hit for Toronto, but for Toronto's Black community as well, of which the victim was a part.

City councillor Michael Thompson, Toronto's only Black City councillor, who represents the area where the homicide took place, said he was so shaken by the shooting that he had to pull his car over to the side of the road when he heard the news. His offer of support and condolences for the families affected and the community was met with great warmth and acceptance.

Thompson has long been fighting to tackle issues like gun violence in Toronto over his nearly 20-year tenure. His presence on council is unique because he is the sole voice that can authentically represent Toronto's Black community. Toronto has long been a mosaic of different cultures, races and beliefs, but the question still remains: is Toronto's



Mike Adler/Metroland

Michael Thompson is Scarborough Centre councillor and Deputy Mayor.

city council diverse enough to represent the community it serves?

Regardless, Thompson knows that his presence is not only meaningful to his community, but to Toronto as a whole. Raised in Scarborough, Thompson is Jamaican-Canadian. He is also deputy mayor, a role he serves in proudly.

Thompson's name has been floated as a potential mayoral candidate in the past, but he's always made certain those inquiring knew his focus was on his local ward. That being said, imagining a Toronto led by

its first Black mayor, especially post-BLM movements, is appealing to many, especially those who feel their voices haven't always traditionally been represented in modern politics.

Thompson isn't just a local councillor, but a beacon of hope for young Black Torontonians who want a voice and seek to be a voice for their communities.

Vonny Sweetland is a Toronto-based journalist and political activist. Follow him on Twitter at @vonnysweetland.

UNITED WAY HELPING AGENCIES ON THE FRONT LINES

SLIM, STRAINED SAFETY NET HELPING TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES AFLOAT, WRITES DANIELE ZANOTTI



DANIELE ZANOTTI
Column

overdoses out of the headlines.

Outreach workers connecting mothers and children fleeing violence to the nearest shelter.

Volunteers delivering meals to seniors and winter clothes to those living on the streets.

Our safety net has helped keep our region afloat since the pandemic

began. It works as a network of care: loose enough to be fast, flexible and fiercely local; connected enough to be co-ordinated and collaborative.

The Omicron variant has stretched this network well beyond its limits. More people are reaching out in dire need, with fewer on the ground to assist.

We're ramping up our support at United Way Greater Toronto, providing immediate help to those facing the greatest barriers.

We've launched a new emergency fund to provide critical in-person or in-home services for the most vulnerable — from food to PPE to addressing service interruptions.

We've ramped up our community planning tables with local governments to help identify and tackle staff shortages and maintain essential services.

Also, because the issues our marginalized communities face are complex and deep-rooted, we're also continuing our work on longer-term solutions for affordable housing, good jobs, mental health supports, plus services to help older adults and people with disabilities stay well and safe at home.

We know more is needed for our community sector to thrive — such as predictable, long-term funding from governments at all levels, and adequate wages

for staff.

Right now, we need to step up to help meet our communities' immediate needs.

Agency staff and volunteers have been on the front lines throughout and are determined to keep going.

But they need your help: please consider supporting our efforts so we can help blunt the effects of this wave. Research shows communities with a strong network of care respond to crises faster, recover stronger and rebuild more equitably.

Care: something we all have the power and potential to give so freely, needed now, more than ever.

Daniele Zanotti is president and CEO of United Way Greater Toronto.

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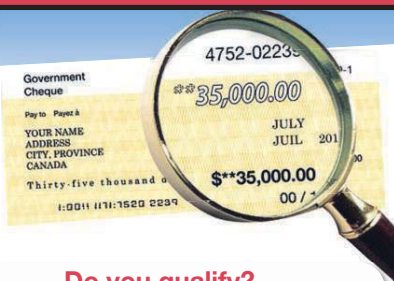


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OPINION

FIVE TIPS TO HEART HEALTH

'SHOW YOUR HEART A LITTLE LOVE,' SAYS DR. MASUD KHANDAKER

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, each year more than 350,000 Canadians are hospitalized for heart disease or stroke.

Up to 80 per cent of premature heart disease and stroke cases are preventable by adopting healthy behaviours. Show your heart a little love and do something healthy by implementing these tips:

ONE: Cut down on sugar. Eating too much sugar has been linked to cardiovascular disease and several other health issues. Sweeten homemade smoothies, cereals, muf-



MASUD KHANDAKER
Column

ins or salad dressing with fruit instead of table sugar. Keep an eye out for hidden sugars by checking ingredient labels. Choose products with the least amount and try cutting back by using less dressing or putting one sugar in your coffee instead of two.

TWO: Add an extra veggie and olive oil to lunch or dinner. Studies have found that diets low in fruits and vegetables can increase the risk of heart attack. Sneaking an extra vegetable in at lunchtime or dinner can help you reach the recommended daily servings of

vegetables/fruits, and help reduce your risk of many chronic diseases.

THREE: Eat more meatless meals. Try substituting protein-rich foods for meat in your favourite recipes. Beans and legumes are packed with protein, fibre, are lower in saturated fats than most meats and can help improve cholesterol levels. Beans, nuts, chickpeas or lentils and other whole grains are also great in casseroles and salads, and tofu or fish can be a good addition to stir-fry dishes.

FOUR: Add 10 minutes of physical activity to each day. If you can't find the time during the day for exercise, implement it into your routine by parking farther away, taking the stairs rather than the elevator, change a meeting into a walking meeting, or try adding a 10-minute walk into your lunch hour. Exercise often improves the blood fats by de-

creasing triglyceride levels and raising good cholesterol levels.

FIVE: Quit smoking. This is one of the biggest risk factors that contributes to heart disease. The incidence of a heart attack is greatly increased among smokers compared to people who never smoked.

Dr. Masud Khandaker is a cardiologist and William Osler Health System's chief and medical director of cardiology. The health system includes Etobicoke General Hospital, Brampton Civic Hospital and Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness.

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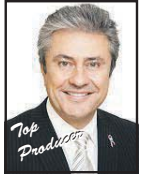
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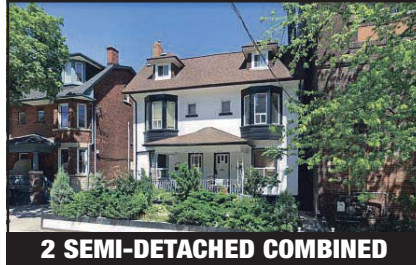
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4 types of interior doors

Interior doors come in a wide variety of styles. Here's an overview of four types you may want to consider for your home.

1. Panel doors are a classic choice. They're affordable, durable and often feature stylish square or oblong panel configurations. They're most suitable for high-traffic areas such as bathrooms and bedrooms.

2. Bi-fold doors fold outward and tuck in close to the wall to save space. Consequently, they're a great option for tight areas such as closets, laundry rooms, pantries and storage rooms.

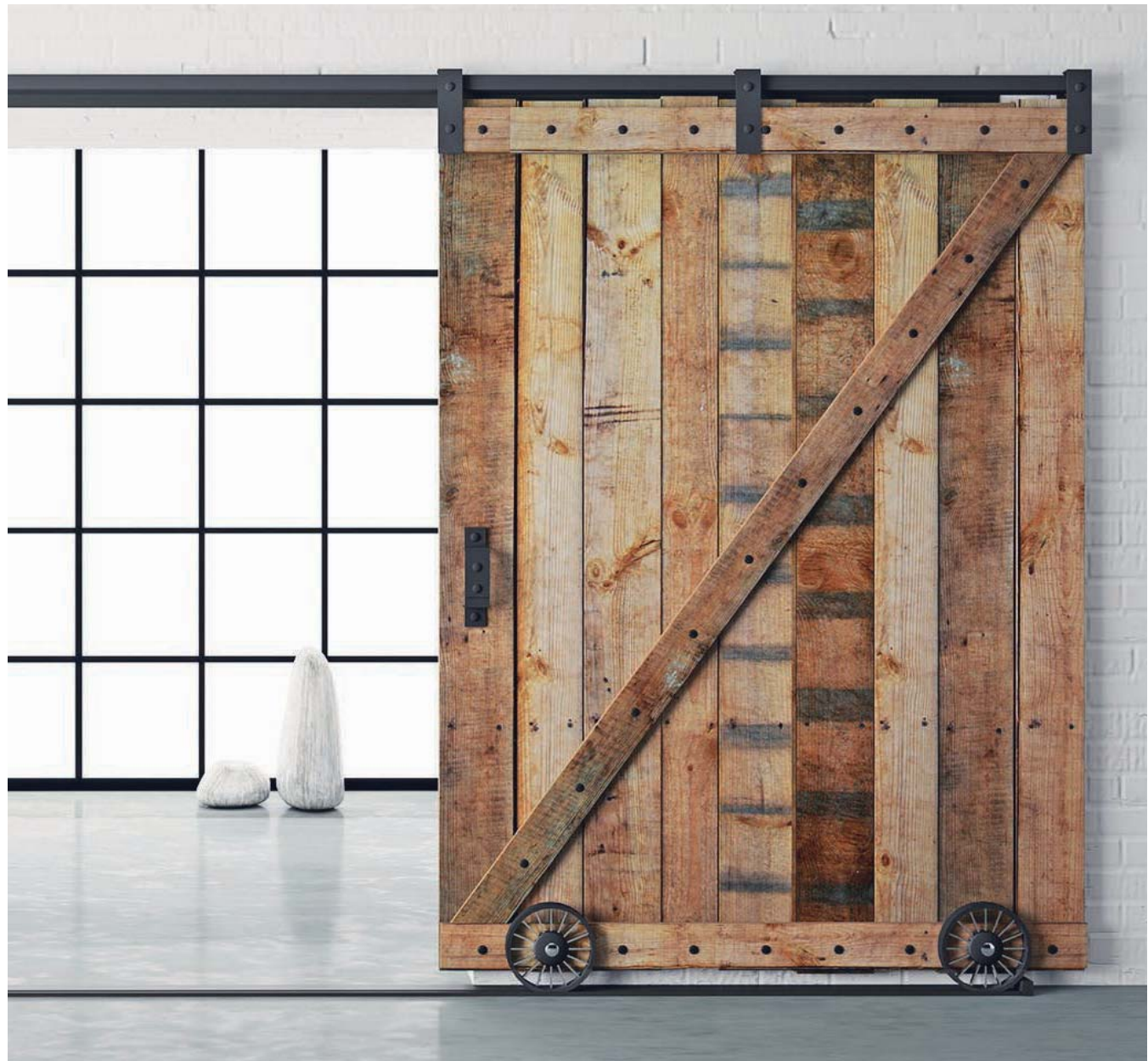
3. Barn doors are the perfect complement to a home that has a rustic, industrial or farmhouse design. They hang from a top rail, allowing them to slide over large openings. Consequently, they're great for dividing spaces like offices and playrooms.

4. French doors instantly add charm and sophistication to your home. They come in a variety of sizes, materials, styles and glass pane configurations. The double door design is perfect for cordoning off living rooms and formal dining rooms while still allowing in plenty of natural light.

You can also choose between different types of cores for your interior door to increase privacy and effectively block out sound.

For personalized advice about what style of door would best suit your home, reach out to an interior designer or the sales staff at your local stores.

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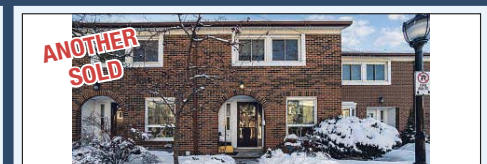
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OPINION

UKRAINE SUFFERS AS PUTIN TRIES TO REWRITE HISTORY

'THE SUCCESS OF UKRAINE ENRAGES PUTIN,' WRITES HUMBER COLLEGE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HRYHORII KONDRATENKO



HRYHORII KONDRATENKO
Column

Stories from the current situation in Ukraine have got the whole world glued to the newsfeed. Be it reports of rocket missiles hitting civilian areas, saboteurs prowling the streets of Kyiv or the military capture of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant—each of these stories could be a script for a thriller about the horrors of war.

However, the rocket missiles are not the most horrifying aspect of this invasion. The real horror lies at the roots of this war, the

reasoning used to justify it. Inevitably, it will become a prologue for more Russian aggression in the future and it will put tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of lives at risk.

It's hard to get rid of the harrowing feeling left by Vladimir Putin, in a speech delivered on the eve of the invasion, that there is no such country as Ukraine and that it should not exist; that there are no such people as Ukrainians, as their history and culture are fabricated. In Putin's opinion, these are just Russian peo-



Paige Taylor White/Toronto Star photo
The Ukrainian Canadian Congress organized a rally at the Russian Consulate that closed down St. Claire Avenue from Yonge Street to Avoca Avenue March 6.

ple with a funny southern dialect who should merge with their northern brothers.

If we were to follow Putin's strain of logic, unfounded in reality and his-

tory, then none of the former Soviet republics — Moldova, Kazakhstan and Belarus — have a right to exist either. Yet these countries, just like Ukraine, do exist and their people have

no desire to join Russia. On the contrary, they are reinvigorating their cultures, building up their economies and looking for their own place in this free and diverse world.

So why is Putin blatantly manipulating historical facts? There is only one reason for this: the existence of these countries and their success on the path of building a democratic and free society is a death sentence for him as a politician.

During his reign, spanning more than two decades, Putin spent his time subjugating profitable businesses and building a vertical power — his special brand of a totalitarian system.

The process of slowly boiling the frog started from smaller affairs, such as forcibly acquiring the Yukos Oil Company in 2003 and breaking up independent news media in Russia. Now, after the recent case of a teenager in Russia being sentenced to five years

See – page 13



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Continued from page 12

for blowing up the FSB building in Minecraft, the frog can be officially declared as cooked.

Repression alone will not solve all of Putin's problems. Images of the Bolotnaya Square protests of 2012, when the Russian people demanded he resign, and the recent mass protests in Belarus which almost ousted president Alexander Lukashenko, a dictator similar to him, give the Russian leader nightmares.

It's not surprising. Despite occupying his post for a long time, Putin has failed to create a modern economy in Russia, as the country has to rely on its natural resource exports, similar to how its predecessor, the Soviet Union, did. The ruble, Russia's currency, fluctuates in tandem with the cost of oil, and food prices in Russia are rising by 30 per cent per year, far outpacing wage growth.

Under these circumstances, the success of Ukraine, a country deprived of oil and gas and a country which had five presidents during the length of Putin's rule, enrages him, as it shows democracy to be a better system than his totalitarian regime ever could be. This is the cause behind the eight years of fanning the flames of the Donbas conflict, which bled Ukraine's economy, and it is the cause behind the attempted blitzkrieg of Kyiv.

The world calls on Putin to negotiate. Even if it comes to that, will the potential non-bloc status of Ukraine and its disarmament be enough to guarantee the end of this conflict? As a Ukrainian citizen, I don't think so.

I am convinced that Putin will not be satisfied until he turns Ukraine into a puppet state and a buffer zone between Russia and NATO. More attempts will be made to push Ukraine away from the West, until

it becomes a copy of Russia, only a lot smaller and a lot more sadder.

It is unlikely that Ukrainians will accept such a turn of events. Today's conflict will just become frozen, ready to heat up as a response to Putin's repressions. How can we be certain that there will be repressions? Look no further than Crimea, a territory Russia annexed from Ukraine eight years ago, where local Tatar activists are being arrested for speaking their language and protecting their cultural identity. If Russia gets its way at the negotiation table, where is the guarantee that Ukrainians won't be similarly repressed for celebrating our history and culture?

Hryhorii Kondratenko is an international student from Kyiv, Ukraine, currently in his second year in Humber College's journalism program and living in Etobicoke.

CRIME

POLICE LOOK FOR VEHICLE IN HIT-AND-RUN

TORONTO POLICE APPEALING FOR ANYONE WITH INFO, VIDEO TO CONTACT INVESTIGATORS

Toronto police are appealing for information after a cyclist was seriously injured in a hit-and-run in Etobicoke's Eatonville area last month.

Police were called to Burnhamthorpe Road and Highway 427 at 8:16 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 26.

According to police, a 64-year-old woman was cycling east on Burnhamthorpe, approaching the on-ramp for northbound Highway 427, when she was hit by a vehicle. The woman was taken to hospital with serious injuries. The driver of the vehicle fled without stopping,

police said.

Police have released an image and description of a suspect vehicle. The vehicle is described by police as a dark-coloured Honda Accord or similar model.

DEATH INVESTIGATED

A person is dead after being pulled from the Humber River in Toronto's west end. At 12:23 p.m. on Tuesday, March 8, Toronto police tweeted that emergency services responded to a report of a body in the river in the area of Old Mill Road at 10:06 a.m. Police said a person was pulled from the river and transported to hospital, where they were pronounced dead.

VEHICLES VANDALIZED

Toronto police's hate crime unit is working to identify two males who allegedly damaged several

vehicles at an Etobicoke movie theatre.

This incident, which investigators are treating as a suspected hate-motivated offence, happened on Saturday at Cineplex Cinemas Queensway and VIP, located at 1025 The Queensway at the corner of The Queensway and Islington Avenue.

Police said they responded to a call for damage in progress at that address shortly before 10:30 p.m.

According to investigators, two males in the parking lot of the Cineplex theatre plaza reportedly used a sledgehammer to damage several parked vehicles that had Russian flags displayed in their windshields.

Police said both suspects fled the scene in a dark-grey Acura.



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CARNIVAL 'IS FULL STEAM AHEAD': ORGANIZER

CITY GIVES GREEN LIGHT FOR 2022

MIKE ADLER
madler@toronto.com

Louis Saldenah is probably the greatest Caribbean carnival band leader Toronto will ever have.

People can dispute that, but he's won Toronto Caribbean Carnival's Band of the Year crown 20 times, a number unlikely to be matched.

His creations live on YouTube and in countless memories, but little of their artistry remains in this world.

Saldenah's winning King in 2019, one of the towering individual costumes paraded by male and female dancers at Lamport Stadium, was no exception.

Saldenah said his Mas-K Club spends \$7,000 making such costumes. The 2019 entry, propelled by its designer Nicholas Guy, was a two-sided vision in blue, white and gold.

It wasn't preserved. There was nowhere to store it.

"We build a costume (like that) for three minutes on stage," Saldenah said in an interview last week.

After 37 years in the carnival, the Scarborough man has almost nothing of the festival left over.

"If you come to my place, you would never know I was in the parade," he said.

"I don't look back. My mindset is I'm doing it for the first time."

At 68, "the Michael Jordan of carnival," as fellow Scarborough band leader Michael Williams calls him, predicts, after two years of seeing only virtual and patio-scale events, the 2022 festival will be the city's biggest.

"People are just ready to go, man," Saldenah said, smiling.



Metroland file photo



Mike Adler/Metroland

Above: As Toronto's Caribbean carnival returns after two years of only virtual events, Scarborough's Louis Saldenah, the festival's most celebrated band leader, predicts it will be bigger than ever. Left: Pat Horsham is dressed as the Mythical Lion Warrior Goddess for the band Louis Saldenah Mas-K Club during the 2016 Toronto Caribbean Festival's annual King and Queen Showcase at Lamport Stadium.

Like his siblings, Ronny grew up hearing his dad and grandfather praised as "mas royalty." Summers with the pandemic felt weird, he added, like "fish out of water" for a family that's always spent the warmest months in a mas camp.

The city gave the festival a green light for 2022, said Laverne Garcia, chairperson the Festival Management Committee (FMC) that has run the carnival since 2006.

"So far it's full steam ahead, COVID willing," Garcia said. "We are just really excited to be back on the road again."

Since the pandemic began, FMC tried securing more government support, said Garcia. "Obviously, it's a struggle. We've pursued all possible avenues."

The son of a revered band leader in Trinidad, Harold Saldenah, Saldenah was born into mas. "It came automatic," he said.

His father — a six-time Band of the Year winner — broke his masqueraders into sections. He introduced metal to mas, short skirts and the two-piece costumes now standard in Toronto's carnival as well as Trinidad's.

"In my dad's days there was a lot of cloth involved," said Saldenah, adding that revealing costumes replaced carnival's story-telling characters because

that's what younger revelers wanted.

After emigrating in 1970, the younger Saldenah took seven years to launch a band at what was then called Caribana.

For the first 15 years, Saldenah lost money or broke even.

In 1982, after winning Band of the Year a third time, he quit. "I said, 'Enough is enough.'"

He returned in 1986, after his dying father made him promise to continue the Saldenah tradition in mas, he said.

His success is a team ef-

fort coming from having outstanding people around him, he said.

Saldenah hasn't forgotten the losses he took, and often talks about how many sectors — airlines, hotels, restaurants and most of all, government — benefit from Toronto's carnival while bands and others producing it get what he considers a minimum of financial support.

"A lot of bandleaders in this parade now are losing money," he said, stabbing the table with a finger.

He hopes two years of COVID-19 — the pandemic

gave Saldenah his first summer off in 32 years, and then the second — finally showed politicians how valuable carnival is.

Saldenah's band launches April 23. He said only problems with his health would make him retire.

His three sons and daughter are leading band sections and serving in other roles. "If anything happens to me, the name will still go on," Saldenah said.

Son Ronny Saldenah agrees. "As long as there's a carnival, there will always be Saldenah," he said.

GRATEFUL CLIENT NOW RUNS MS SUPPORT GROUP

MS SOCIETY OF CANADA IN MIDST OF ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

ANDREW PALAMARCHUK
apalamarchuk@toronto.com

Toronto resident Sogol Saeidi began experiencing symptoms of multiple sclerosis (MS) in 2001 with tingling fingers while she was a university student in Iran. But it wasn't until nearly a decade later that she would be diagnosed with the neurodegenerative disease.

Saeidi, now 41, had many symptoms in the years before her diagnosis. In 2006, for instance, she said, her leg became numb, causing her to limp. Months later, she experienced blurry vision. "It comes and goes," Saeidi

said of the symptoms.

In 2010, the North York resident had an episode of high fever, bladder dysfunction, numb legs and chest pain, and an MRI revealed she had MS. "I totally was depressed," she said.

Shortly after her diagnosis, Saeidi moved to Canada and reached out to the MS Society of Canada for support. "They gave me back my confidence," she said, adding that "they just gave me energy."

Now Saeidi is providing support to others living with MS. She volunteers with the MS Society of Canada and worked with the agency to create a Farsi-speaking peer support group for people living with MS in the Greater Toronto Area. The support group, which started several years ago with just a handful of members, now consists of more than 40

people.

MS Society of Canada senior director of community fundraising Kyla Arsenault suggested that running support groups in various languages is one way her organization strives to be more inclusive.

She said the organization is working toward providing support groups and information in "many different languages."

The MS Society of Canada is in the midst of an annual fundraiser, the MS Read-a-Thon, that it hopes will generate \$150,000 to fund research and support programs to help people who have MS.

"We're feeling quite hopeful that in our lifetime we'll find a cure," said Arsenault, noting Canada has one of the highest rates of MS, in the world with more than 90,000 Canadians liv-



Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada photo
Sogol Saeidi, a Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada volunteer, created a Farsi-speaking peer support group for people living with MS in the GTA that has grown year after year.

dition" that started in the late 1970s.

"It was a paper and pencil type (of event) where kids went door to door and got pledges and donations for the books that they read," she said. "Now it's a completely digital platform ... and people feel so nostalgic about it, for those of us who remember it from when we were kids ourselves, so introducing our kids to it has been really fun too."

The MS Society of Canada generates about \$10 million annually from community fundraising events like the Read-a-Thon. "We started it (digitally) just at the start of COVID. It's been a slower start than we would have liked, but we really do hope to grow it into one of our larger portfolios over the years as we connect with more schools," Arsenault said.

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OBITUARIES

VENNERI, Hope Banisch

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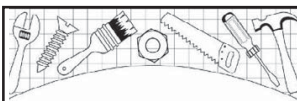
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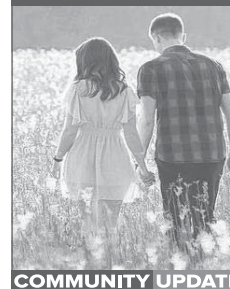
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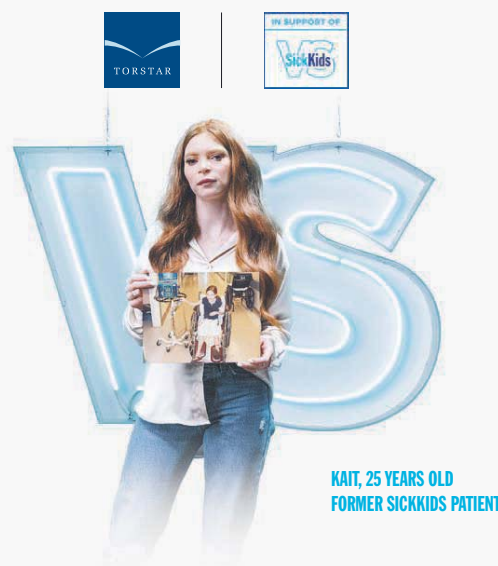
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DIVERSIONS

Crossword puzzle answers use American spelling

CROSSWORD

- ACROSS
1. Birthday number

4. Walking rhythm

8. Some vipers

12. Cured salmon

13. Female singer

14. Dog's pest

15. Prune

16. Tacky

18. Impolite look

20. Extinct birds

21. Scram!

23. Craze

26. Shredded

27. Like some popcorn

31. Sight in a Tarzan flick

32. Dazes

34. Dead ____ Scrolls

35. Marks down

37. Examine

38. Window components

40. Listen!
41. More strange

44. Ship bottom

46. Common pet: 2 wds.

49. Fire residue

52. Pore over

53. Aircraft part

54. Make a knot

55. Room extensions

56. Young woman

57. Make a mistake
- DOWN
1. Every

2. Moo ____ gai pan

3. Searched

4. Entry

5. Siren

6. " ____ Not Unusual"

7. Kindergartner

8. Cruising

9. Snow vehicle

10. Mexican coin

11. Back talk
17. Corrects copy

19. Timespan

21. Heavenly body

22. Famed diamond

24. Mistreat

25. Convent denizen

28. Intensify

29. Behind

30. Tug

32. Unnerve

33. "The ____ Commandments"

36. Flips over

37. That lady

39. Pelts

41. Fairy-tale giant

42. Combat of honor

43. Radio knob

45. Hens' output

47. Puncturing tool

48. Ms. Zadora

50. Term of respect

51. The girl

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| 31 | | | | 32 | 33 | | | | 34 | | | |
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| 41 | 42 | 43 | | | | 44 | 45 | | | | | |
| 46 | | | | | 47 | 48 | | | 49 | 50 | 51 | |
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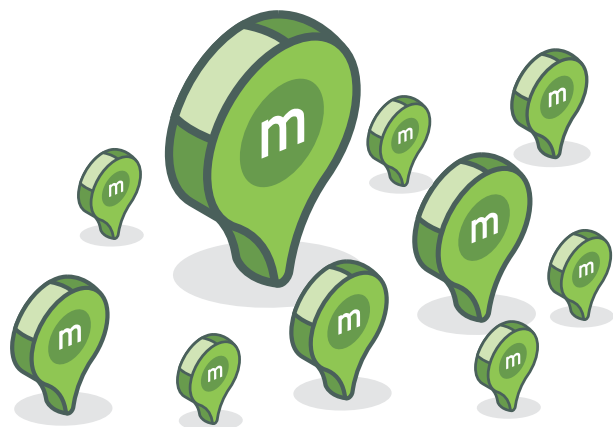
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THIS WEEK'S ANSWERS

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| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 2 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
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| 3 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 2 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

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