



Photo by Annie Duncan

Family Day fun

Ethan Tulsen helps his son Tripp Tulsen-Gauweiler remove his skates after spending time skating on the East Hill Park skating rink. Ethan explains that Tripp has been on skates since the time he was six months old with help and has been skating on his own since he was two and a half. The father and son duo frequent different skating rinks throughout the city to meet and play with new kids. For another photo story and video on Family Day, see page 4.

Visitors told to stay away from area

By Madison Ladouceur
 — With files from Ron Lavoie

As the Quinte region moved into

the “Green-Prevent zone” last week, Hastings Prince Edward Public Health implemented additional protection for residents across the two counties.

With the lockdown being lifted early last Wednesday in Hastings and Prince

Edward, questions arose about how the opening would affect the local area. Hastings and Prince Edward was one of three Ontario regions where stay-at-home orders ended on Feb. 10, allowing many businesses to reopen.

A new additional protocol called a Section 22 order was also issued by the local health unit.

Dr. Piotr Oglaza, the Medical Officer of Health at Hastings Prince Edward Public Health, says the reason the order was

issued is to prevent outside visitors from accessing open businesses in our Green-Prevent region, as the stay-at-home order still applies to some regions outside of Hastings and Prince Edward.

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Photo by Luke Best

In support of essential workers

Members and supporters of Local 907 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE 907), which represents frontline workers for the City of Belleville, held a social distanced rally Wednesday afternoon at City Hall to show support for frontline workers and send a message to the mayor and council to negotiate a fair contract with city workers. CUPE 907 has been without a contract since March 31, 2019, when their four-year agreement expired. Both parties are meeting with a provincially appointed mediator today. If a deal cannot be reached, a strike or lockout could begin as early as Feb. 22.

Kingston's third crossing progressing

By Daniel Geleyn

The third crossing, a significant infrastructure project for Kingston, is making serious progress towards its completion at the end of 2022.

For Kingston, a third crossing across the Cataraqui River is a project that has been discussed for over half a century. The first real transportation study, which proposed the current location for the additional bridge, was developed in 1980. The need for additional crossing capacity was again justified in a follow-up report in 1992. But, due to affordability issues, the project was put on the shelf until 2007 when it started to gain traction by the city again.

“I suppose you can say that there has been third crossing fatigue for quite some time up until the funding was secured and the final phase was initiated in 2017,” says Dan Franco, the third crossing project manager for the city of Kingston.

The project is important for Kingston as traffic modelling has consistently shown that there is a deficiency in crossing capacity, especially the mid-town, east-west link in Kingston. The two existing crossings of the Cataraqui River are Hwy. 401, which is owned by the province, and the LaSalle Causeway near Lake Ontario, which is owned by the federal government.

“While there will be several benefits once the crossing is completed, from our personal point of view, the major impact will be the improved, and much quicker and safer access (no 401 travel), to the north and west parts of Kingston,” says Jim Petryk, a resident of the east end of Kingston.

“In the short term, the benefits of the construction are needed. In the long term, we hope that the crossing will provide an opportunity to bring both sides of the river closer together,” says Russ Phin, a long-time Kingston resident from the west side of the river.

The LaSalle Causeway is over a century old and it needs regular maintenance. This results in occasional closures that bring significant congestion and inconvenience to Kingston. It also incorporates a lift bridge and its capacity is limited.

“The new crossing will provide active transportation linkages and access to employment lands that are currently expanding on the city’s east end. It will also help the city reach its goal of reducing its carbon footprint by reducing the amount of travel and time by 63 million kilometres per year and 3.4 million hours per year,” says Franco.

„See Crossing, page 2



Photo by Daniel Geleyn

The third crossing bridge in Kingston viewed from the east side of the Cataraqui River.

Crossing...

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The cost of the project is \$180 million but a cost benefit analysis conducted by the city concluded that the cost savings over a 30-year period would amount to \$1.2 billion, or 6.7 times the cost of the project. The cost analysis included the benefits to non-users as they will also benefit by having less congestions on the roads to get downtown. Based on this, the city decided that it was cost-effective but it could still not afford it.

It was not until the three levels of government agreed to share the cost that the project was made possible. The

federal and provincial governments have both agreed to fund \$60 million for the project, leaving the city to fund the remaining \$60 million.

Although the residents of the east will see the greatest benefits, Petryk points out that “If we have one concern, which will hopefully not come to pass, is that the bridge does not become the Emergency Detour Route (EDR) when there are issues on the 401. To date we have not seen anything that suggests this will be the case, but the thought of convoys of semi-trailers using Hwy. 15 is concerning. Hopefully the EDR will continue to be to the north. Time will tell.”

Like everything else this past year, this construction project was affected

by the current health crisis. However, it was considered an essential project early in the pandemic so construction has continued throughout the past year.

“The foundation was the highest risk because it is hidden, but that is complete now so the biggest risk has been overcome already,” says Franco.

The river is 1.2-km wide at that point but it is quite shallow at about five to six feet. However, the rock is another 40 metres below the bottom of the river so the foundation has to be that deep. The best construction approach was to build a causeway which can be removed once the construction is complete. The causeway was started in January 2020 and it allowed access to complete the foundations by early 2021.

The current phase of the construction, which started on Feb. 1, involves the installation of almost 100 concrete girders that are manufactured in Utopia, Ont.

According to a Global News report on Feb. 1, the girders are about 50 metres long and they weight from 78 to 84 metric tons each. Bruce Cockerill, an escort supervisor with DECAST Ltd., the company that builds and transports the girders, talked with Global and told them “I have been down here about six times previous to today to measure corners, to make sure we’re going to be able to get around the corners.”

The girders are transported from Utopia to Kingston at a rate of about four per week and they are installed

shortly after they arrive on site. The whole process should take close to six months.

“Projects of this size and scope will always have some negative aspects and we feel for the residents who have lost what at one time were pristine views of the river, soon to be marred by a bridge, and also those that are now affected by ongoing work (noise and traffic),” says Petryk. He quickly adds, “We look forward to the completion of the third crossing. We feel that communication has been good, and that the community has been given ample opportunity to participate in the process. The designs we have seen bode well for a functional and attractive site.”

Health Unit...

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“This order was intended to remind potential visitors from regions that are still under the stay-at-home order, to remind them that this stay-at-home order applies and that provide additional deterrent to prevent them from being able to book accommodations in Hastings Prince Edward as well as book services such as in-person dining or an in-person personal services.”

In an online interview, Oglaza says that issuing the order was intended to make sure that the progress made so far as a community will not be jeopardized by having large numbers of visitors from places with higher case rates, as the community has been working hard to keep cases down and unnecessary travel to a minimum.

The Section 22 order implements regulations not only for visitors, but for the Hastings and Prince Edward region community as well, who are not subject to the stay-at-home order. It requires individuals in the region to only limit bookings to businesses in areas not subject to the stay-at-home order. To enforce the order, businesses are required to check that the client or shopper is from within the region.

Richard Courneyea, owner of Signal Brewery, signaled his delight as the region moved to Green-Prevent level of the province’s reopening framework. The additional precautions in place for visitors do not greatly concern Courneyea.

“We’ll ask for identification; I think it’s a responsibility of ours now. If you’re from Toronto, we’re going to encourage you to use the takeout window.”

The Hastings and Prince Edward region has been doing exceptionally with cases during this time, Oglaza says.

“So we have done remarkably well and this was only made possible by efforts of everyone in the community and that’s why when the question, how is this going to be enforced, really all the work that’s been done so far was done out of that intrinsic will of people in the community to do the right thing and adhere to public health measures. It wouldn’t be possible without the efforts of everyone in the community.”

Public Health officials knew that with how well our regions have been working to keep numbers down, the new Section 22 order would be followed properly by the community, business owners and operators. Everyone in the Hastings and Prince Edward regions wants the same thing, says Oglaza.



Photo by Ron Lavioie

The Hastings Prince Edward County Health offices are pictured as the region moves to Green-Prevent level of the province’s reopening framework.

“They want to make sure that their customers are safe, their workplaces and the workers are safe, and these additional measures are intended to provide that extra layer of safety.”

The region’s number of cases is under 400. When you look at a larger region and its numbers of cases, other regions get up to 400 a day. This shows the difference between how well our regions have been since the beginning as the first documented case back in mid-March.

With Loyalist College being a big lead-way to outside visitors, the school and Public Health have been working together throughout the whole pandemic.

“Loyalist College has been a great partner to work with from my perspective in public health. We’ve done a lot of work together, making sure that all the protocols and procedures within



Photo by Ron Lavioie

Signal Brewery’s Richard Courneyea

the school and what makes sense from a public health perspective. So, there’s all that framework that the college is developing in consultation with public health that’s intended to minimize risk for students.”

In the area of vaccines, Hastings and Prince Edward Counties have been the last of many regions to receive the vaccine due to our low case numbers. But recently, within the past two weeks, Oglaza says that all long-term care homes have officially received their first doses of the vaccine, and one organization has received their second dose.

“As of Friday, all of the residents in those settings would have received their first dose, so that’s a significant milestone. They will be getting the second dose depending on the timing of the first within the set time. I estimate that once we’re done with the second doses and two weeks from that point, when you finish with the last resident in the statics, we will be looking at a much better position and be much better prepared for any inadvertent spread.”

When Public Health looks at mental health, officials realize that with

the restrictions due to the pandemic, the different coping mechanisms and strategies to ensure the safety of others with mental health challenges can be restricted with the lockdown. They still encourage that people reach out to others and to get out as much as possible.

“There are some things we don’t have control over, but what we can do is we can look after one another. We can try to connect with our friends, see how they’re doing, see if there’s any change. If someone expresses any signs of distress, that person may need some help and helping them a link with resources.”

Despite the news of the region go back into the Green-Prevent zone, people are still encouraged to follow social distancing guidelines. That means wearing a mask, limiting close contact to people in your household and many other physical distancing protocols to keep our numbers down.



Photo by Daniel Geleyn

Officer-Cadet Drew DeBruin, a third-year student at Royal Military College, Kingston, leads Navy Cadet Yuki Kwan, second-year, and officer cadets William Lee and Darian Mayer, both first-year, to lower the flags at exactly 5 p.m. Despite the fact that the campus is almost empty, with only 84 students living on campus as opposed to the normal population of 1,200, those that are there carry out the essential military duties such as raising and lowering the flags each day.

Double crisis for Royal Military College

By Daniel Geleyn

The Royal Military College of Canada, or RMC, in Kingston, Canada's military academy, was not only hit by the current health crisis, but also by a cyber attack that took its computer network down in 2020.

Like other institutions, RMC had to significantly modify the way it was delivering its programs this past year. But in addition, and in the midst of the pandemic, RMC was also hit by an attack on its computer network in July that left the college scrambling for solutions. The attack affected RMC in a significant way as it was counting on this network to help deliver its many academic programs remotely.

"This was a crisis within a crisis," says Dr. Harry Kowal, the RMC principal.

"This was worse than the pandemic," says Brigadier-General Sebastien Bouchard, the commandant of RMC. "The network is still being rebuilt now."

"The silver lining in this case was that because of COVID, a lot of the faculty had been teaching from home and much of their material was at home, so it scopped the problem down a bit," says Kowal.

RMC is known as a university with a difference because its mission extends far beyond academic education. Its mission, as stated in its Strategic Map 2023, is "As a military university, The Royal Military College of Canada educates, develops, and inspires bilingual, fit, and ethical leaders who serve the Canadian Armed Forces and Canada."

To meet this mission, RMC has developed four pillars to prepare officers. In addition to academics, which are required to meet the same standards as any other Canadian university, RMC expects its graduates to meet a high standard of fitness, bilingualism and leadership capability. This is accomplished with a strict regimen of military training and sports, in addition to the academic programs required to attain each cadet's chosen study discipline and the required level of bilingualism.

For the majority of undergraduate students, this requires that they live on campus as most of the hours of the day are occupied with some form of training and education. That means the campus normally accommodates up to 1,200 in-residence students, plus the many graduate students who pursue advanced degrees at

RMC.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, RMC, like most other educational institutions, decided to start delivering its programs online and send most students home. RMC is now left with 84 students still living on campus because of a variety of personal reasons.

"One of our biggest challenge was to maintain communications when we couldn't gather together," says Kowal. "We started using multiple platforms, but we all needed to learn how to use those."

It was understood that sending the students home would have some impact on their development, but their health and well-being was paramount and the goal became to minimize the impact of this decision on the quality of the graduates.

As the students come from all parts of Canada, sending them home across the country also added to the complexity of teaching in all the Canadian time zones. This was accomplished by manipulating the schedule and adopting a blend of synchronous and asynchronous classes.

"Some accommodations have been made for students to opt for a late withdrawal of a course as it was done in most

Canadian universities," says Kowal. "The hands-on lab requirements for engineering students were able to be pushed back and only a few of them will be required to come back before graduation," adds Kowal.

"The standards for graduation requirements have not changed," says Bouchard. "The students are still expected to maintain a rigorous fitness regimen, as well as their academic programs while at home," he adds.

As the pandemic dragged on into the summer and fall, it affected the whole of the Canadian Armed Forces including most of the basic military qualification training.

"The Canadian Armed Forces decentralized basic military qualification training to various bases across Canada in an effort to continue this important training while maintaining all public health measures recommended," says Pascal Guindon of the Military Personnel Generation Group in National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa.

This meant that the new cadets arriving at RMC in August, about 220 of them, who would normally have undergone some basic military training before arriv-

ing at RMC, were now completely fresh off the street.

"This was an additional challenge for us, but we developed a program where we brought in some senior cadets, who isolated for two weeks, and then brought in the new cadets and isolated them in small groups," says Major Robert Curtis, one of the division commanders responsible for military training at RMC.

The new RMC cadets were able to complete some basic military training plus the normal challenges thrown at them to become members of the RMC family, like the obstacle course, before entering their full-time academic programs. Then, around Thanksgiving, they were sent home to complete their first academic semester, but not before they had the chance to bond together and develop that unique sense of community at RMC.

Officer-Cadet Nicole Strickland, a fourth-year aerospace engineering student who is planning on becoming a pilot says, "RMC did an excellent job at reacting quickly to this crisis. It's not ideal, as we would all like to be on campus to get the full experience but this is good, given the circumstances."

Changing COVID protocols keeps ballet school on its toes

By Olivia Ashopenace

With the recent lifting of lockdowns for Hastings and Prince Edward Counties, the Quinte Ballet School was one of many businesses to reopen its doors last Wednesday.

When the provincial government issued the lockdown for a second time to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in late December, the Quinte Ballet School closed the doors of its facility. Teachers and students reverted back to using Zoom to do their classes.

These new changes have brought a glimmer of hope to the ballet school.

"We are so lucky that we've been able to reopen the school. You should see the faces of our rec students who just came in for the first time last Wednesday. They've been at home. They've been Zooming their classes. People we're really happy to be able to come in and do class," said Jane Gardner, the general manager of the ballet school.

Students and staff alike were happy to be able to return to in-person classes.

"We were very excited to be reopen," Gardner said about the second lockdown being lifted.

The plan to reopen the Quinte Ballet School follows the safety and health measures provided by public health. Students and staff are required to wear masks and social distance themselves when they are inside the building

"So, we followed the plan that we

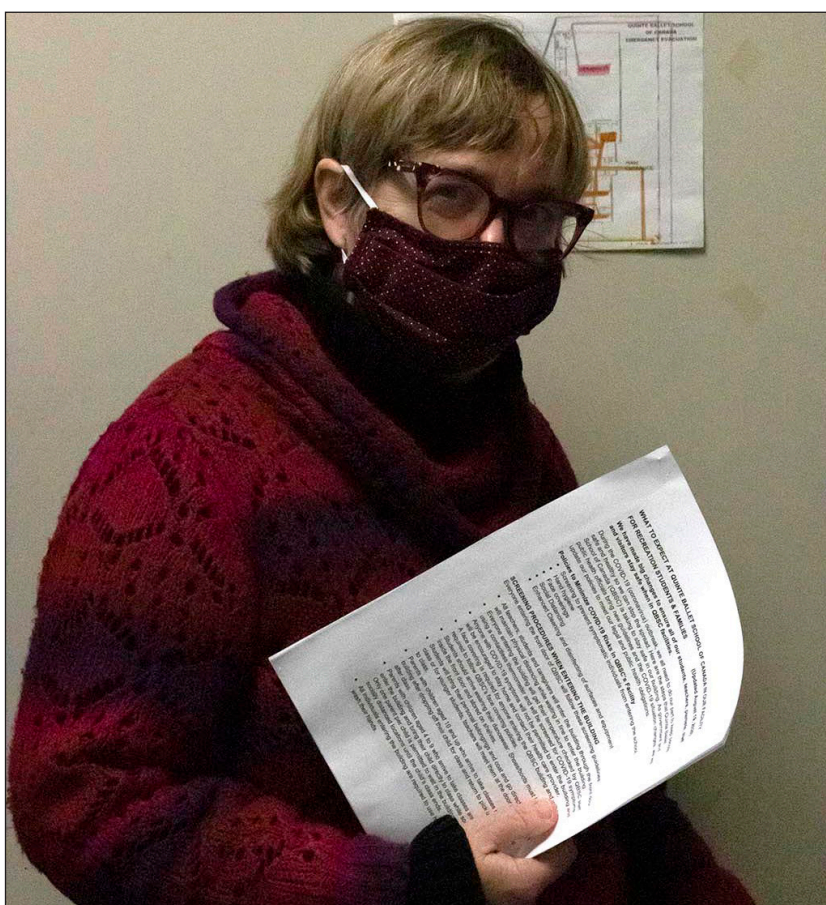


Photo by Olivia Ashopenace

Jane Gardner, the general manager of the Quinte Ballet School of Canada, with the document of health and safety guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

had back in September. We were able to just see if all the rules still were in effect. And so, we just did what we did in September again, which was a four-page document that has all our rules," Gardner said.

The document explains screening procedures when entering the building, hand hygiene, face coverings, social distancing, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces & equipment.

When the school reopened, there was just one challenge to reopening the school which was learning about what the new health and safety rules were from public health.

"Just knowing what all the new rules were. Just figuring out what public health, rather anything had changed or rather we had to have everybody masked in class, that was the question. Since all of the kids next door, even in their Phys. Ed classes, I think they're masked," said Gardner.

So, we had to verify with public health if they could take their masks off. They said that only if it's really difficult to continue with your exercises in your class can you take your mask off, but you always need to be six feet apart. So, that's what we told people and so they were able to take off their mask if it was just too difficult for them to get through the class," Gardner said.

The school has placed markers on the floors in their classrooms to help people keep socially distanced while in class.

"So, you can see all the boxes on the

floors where we can keep people six feet apart from each other. On the barres there's always a little hook as well, where people take off their mask during class and then they put it back on as soon as they finish their class."

We have hand sanitizer everywhere, we have disinfected wipes, so after class the barres are all wiped down so that people are safe, and anybody who comes into the building is screened. We have arrows in the halls, so that there are not people hanging about," Gardner said.

"We always have under 50 people in the building and that we screen and we follow all the public health guidelines to make sure that and we let people know what the plan is. So, when we reopened, we just said that the same plan will take effect and that a copy of it is on our website and we e-mailed it to people so that they're aware of that."

For the Dance of Spring show, the school is hoping to use the theatre at Centennial College. Last year for The Nutcracker, the school decided to film the show in their studio because they were not allowed to rent the theatre. The dancers had to be re-choreographed to maintain social distancing.

"We are hoping that we'll be able to either go to Centennial College and use the theatre in the spring for shows. If not, we're looking at the Empire Theatre to see if we could film our Dance of Spring show there and if not, we will film it here."



Photo by Daniel Geleyn

Despite the warnings from the city to avoid the ice on Lake Ontario in Kingston, there were many families enjoying activities on the lake during Family Day. The cold weather of the last few days and the warmer temperature of family day encouraged many families to spend time outdoors.

Day of fun for Ontario families

By James McAlpine

Introduced in 2007 as a provincial holiday, Family Day 2021 looks a lot different for Ontario residents than they're use to.

Following months of rolling lockdowns in response to COVID-19, the day coincides with the end of the latest series of restrictions for Hastings and Prince Edward Counties - and people were glad to be able to get out for a bit. "It's crazy this year. It feels a

little bit different. Because it seems like we've had 11 months of family day," says Belleville resident Barbara Davis. "But you know, for me, it's always been an extra day to spend with my kids not having to worry about work or school, just really connect as a family with some one-on-one time or four-on-one time. I work from home so it's nice to actually be able to take the time."

Davis isn't the only resident that's glad for a break from the monotony. "Well, it's good because it kind of

breaks up the year," says resident Melissa Barrett. "I mean, between January and March, there was no holiday before. Right? And it makes for a longer winter. So it's nice to be able to get out and spend some time with the kids."

And I mean, family day, even though we've been with our family, for many months, it's just nice to have that day where you actually do celebrate the family. I have four kids and we're outdoors people," adds Barrett.

Barrett's young children are excited

as well, one of them expressing that he was very scared by the lockdown, as he wasn't used to not being able to go outside as much, but that he's glad he was able to spend Family Day outside with his mom and siblings. "That's what it's about, spending time with them," he adds. Barrett's children are part of a new generation of Canadians that will have grown up with Family Day and won't remember a time without it.

In the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick and Sas-

katchewan, Canadians are observing the same holiday, while in Manitoba they're celebrating Louis Riel Day, in Nova Scotia they're celebrating Heritage Day, and in Prince Edward Island it is Islander Day. The holiday is not observed in Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, or the territories.

For more on Family Day, click on this link:

<https://vimeo.com/loyalistphotoj/familyday2021>

Vintage diner adapts to modern issues

By Bec Gauvin

Melanie Pringle's diner has got its groove back amidst the harsh pressure the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed upon niche restaurants of its kind.

The Whitby-famous location will have been in operation for 34 years this June and is a popular location for tourists and photographers as well as a pillar of dining experience in the Durham area.

Serving up delicious food with a side of 1950's nostalgia, Pringle has owned and operated the establishment since its founding and is a beloved and active member of the community. The time since the pandemic began has been trying for long-standing establishments like the diner, and Pringle notes the struggles she has faced translating the experience of a sit-down family diner to adhere to provincial guidelines.

"Who knew COVID would last a month let alone a year? When it first started, we shut down until around April and then decided to switch a full-service restaurant to takeout which was a bit overwhelming."

The question became how do you pack the dining experience into a box? The answer was simple: give the customers what they love. The diner is still serving up its notoriously stacked burgers and delicious soups, and with almost everything made in-house, it is providing a homemade warmth that is helping to comfort the community through such a difficult time.

The restaurant got a taste of what is to come with the gradual reopening phases of the Durham area before the second provincial lockdown.

"When we had gradual outdoor dining and then inside dining, there were still a lot of cautious customers, and takeout still remained a solid 25-30 per cent of our business," says Pringle. Melanie Pringles has introduced new take-out specials to adapt their usual experience, like their "Superbowl Halftime Heat-Up special" where instead of coming in to be waited on while you watch the game,



Photo by Bec Gauvin

Melanie Pringle, owner of Whitby's favourite vintage diner Melanie Pringles, stands by the bar that since the pandemic has become the takeout epicentre of her restaurant.

customers can take home platters of pre-assembled food and cook it themselves to have the same fresh food and football experience while staying COVID safe.

One of the main reasons Melanie Pringles is able to continue is its loyal customers. "We are absolutely blessed to have a multi-generational fanbase,"

says Pringle.

"I think that was what helped us stay on our feet while we were still open, because a lot of our regulars came back during that time, and they seemed excited that we were going to open back up," says Kate Teunissen, an employee at the diner for three years.

The need to adapt during this time

has helped the business to experiment with what would happen when it was time to re-open fully. Pringle definitely plans to return to the tried-and-true dining experience post-pandemic, but says she has learned a lot.

"I definitely think we're going to be better for business after the pandemic. We've been able to change around

so many things and improve upon so many things during this time," says Teunissen.

Pringle says she plans to incorporate things like take-out specials and an increased social media presence going forward to widen the outreach of her already cherished establishment.