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Brooklin's Pop Up Parking Study

Parking Study

The Town of Whitby is reviewing current and future residential parking needs.

whitby.ca/parkingstudy

WHITBY
ONTARIO • CANADA

Read more on page 3.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS BTC:

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Less than Half the Picture *By Richard Bercuson*



From the department of kerfuffles

Some kerfuffles are best left to flounder till they expire. They are the obvious result of needless whining about non-issues, the proverbial mountains from molehills.

Others though are worthy of investigation since they address a community problem that affects more people than the small number of voices who bring it up.

To wit, parking around the Brooklin Post Office. It's ugly and has rightly caused a kerfuffle. Here's why: with the advent of the development on the corner of Way and Baldwin, infrastructure needed to be built, which meant that Price St., where the post office resides, required up-grading. The result was that five angular parking places were replaced by one accessibility spot (by law)

and three regular parking spots, which translated to less parking.

This post office and its community mailboxes serve an entire subdivision of homes. Despite Mister Trudeau's campaign promise, community mailboxes still exist and will not be removed, though the feds have promised not to add any more. That doesn't help the good burghers in the area who stop by the post office on their way in or out to collect mail. But where to park when the three spots are occupied?

Councillor Mulcahy says Whitby staff have asked Canada Post for an encroachment agreement so

that angular parking can be put back on Canada Post property or something similar to what it was. She says, "The sidewalk inclusion (as mandated through Provincial accessibility policy) meant we didn't have the space to do so without an agreement. Staff asked Canada Post for one but it has yet to be received. When we get one, we will put it back with the sidewalk."

However, there's an easier and quicker solution. All it requires is for Whitby to look at the paid lot across the street and admit, "Gosh, it's mostly empty. Why not?"

continued on page 3.

Town of Whitby

March 16, 2018

UPCOMING EVENTS

March Break in Whitby

Now through March 18 at various Town facilities. Skating, swimming and drop-in programs available. Youth Rooms are hosting free, daily activities. Register at whitby.ca/getactive

Free Public Skate

Saturday, March 17, from 3 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. at Iroquois Park Sports Centre. Sponsored by: PEO/OACETT whitby.ca/skating

Cycling Workshop for Seniors

Tuesday, March 27, from 10 a.m. to noon, at the Whitby Seniors' Activity Centre. Learn about cycling safety, rules and regulations. Live demos on how to repair your bike will also be provided. Register at whitby.ca/getactive

Whitby in Bloom Garden Seminar

Wednesday, March 28, at 7:30 p.m., at the Brooklin United Church. Topic: Charlie Dobbin presents "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly". Learn tips and techniques for your garden. Space is limited. Register for this free event at whitby.ca/whitbyinbloom

Living Well, Being Well

Active Living Fair

Thursday, March 29, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Abilities Centre. Free admission. Learn about meditation, safety, improving immunity and more! Geared to residents 55+ abilitiescentre.org

whitby.ca/calendar

Council Meetings

Council

March 19 at 7 p.m.

Planning and Development Committee

March 26 at 7 p.m.

Operations Committee

April 9 at 7 p.m.

These meetings will take place at Town Hall, 575 Rossland Road East. For a full listing, visit whitby.ca/civicweb

For more information, contact the Clerks Department at clerks@whitby.ca or 905.430.4315

News

Spring/Summer Program Registration Hits Record High

On February 28, the Town launched the 2018 Spring/Summer program registration. Nearly 7,300 registrations were received for programs, representing both a record high for initial enrollment and a more than 20 per cent increase over the nearly 6,000 program registrations received in 2017. It's not too late to register! Check out the Town's 2018 Spring/Summer Activity Guide or register for a program today at whitby.ca/getactive

Notices

Help Keep Our Town Clean

Did-You-Know: Once a year, residents can schedule a free curbside pick up (or special collection) of up to twelve large, bulky items – such as mattresses, couches and appliances – that are too big to be included with their regular garbage. Additional special collections can be scheduled at a cost of \$25 each.

whitby.ca/specialcollection

Road Weight Restrictions

Each spring, the Town and Region implement weight restrictions on designated roads to help prevent thawing roads from being damaged by heavy vehicles. These restrictions are enforced from March 1 to April 30 (based on weather conditions). Signs will be erected on Town roads where these weight restrictions apply.

whitby.ca/roadrestrictions

All 2018 Community Development Fund Applications Due by March 31

Community groups in need of financial support for initiatives and projects this year are encouraged to apply to the Mayor's Community Development Fund and Performing Arts Community Development Fund. The final deadline for all 2018 applications is March 31.

whitby.ca/communityfunds

Holiday Waste Collection Schedule

Waste collection will be bumped one day forward starting Friday, **March 30**. Please ensure your waste is set out by 7:00 a.m. Check out your Whitby Waste Collection Calendar, download the Whitby Waste Buddy app, or go to whitby.ca/waste for more information. Questions? Call 905.668.3437 or email pw.operations@whitby.ca

■ Indicates Holiday Collection Change

Blue Collection - Areas 1, 3, 5, 7, 9

	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
	26	27	28	29	30	31
					Bump a Day!	
	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Bump a Day!					

Yellow Collection - Areas 2, 4, 6, 8, 10

	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
	26	27	28	29	30	31
					Bump a Day!	
	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Bump a Day!					

Local Swimmer Wins Double Gold

Swimming to the theme from "Beauty and the Beast" that she'd picked, Mary Guy finished first in figures, routine and first overall at the Eastern Regional synchro championships in Ottawa.



The 26 year old special needs athlete switched to synchro six years ago because, says her mother, she was spending more time playing in the pool when she was supposed to be racing. "She a pretty strong swimmer," says Darlene Guy. "She can go across the pool and back underwater."

swim alone. The next step for Mary is the Ontario finals in May in Etobicoke where she'll be using the same routine.

Special needs athletes in synchro

continued from page 2

Take 10 of the 80-plus spots which are hardly used (10% usage according to a town employee) and make them free for, say, a half hour? This requires nothing more than a bit of signage and doesn't require waiting for Canada Post approval.

would be a good deal more attractive if some of the spots were free for a bit.

As Brooklin expands, our cozy little downtown runs the risk of becoming a shadow of its former self. To encourage residents to visit the shops and eateries, those from beyond walking distance need to park somewhere. Street parking is limited. The municipal lot on Vipond

A few free spots won't make a dent in Whitby's parking income since the lot is greatly underused already. It would however have a positive impact on local residents who need to access the post office. A free period would give folks time to not only do their post office business but also perhaps visit a local business. Everyone wins.

It's also one less kerfuffle.

Whitby Pop-Up Looks For Parking Feedback

Alison Albrecht has spent a lot of time in her job as Whitby's Supervisor of Parking Services fielding complaints. So when she set up the pop up at the Brooklin Library last week looking for feedback on local parking issues, she couldn't have been surprised at the comments stuffed into the plastic box.

consider parking as a key issue when they move to an area. Often, they just tell her to fix it for them.

Whitby has three full time parking agents and two part time as well as a contractor for evenings and weekends. One parking agent is dedicated to Brooklin.

"There's been a wide range of feedback," she says diplomatically with a trace of a grin. "People are certainly upset when they have to pay for parking, no matter how cheap it is.

In her previous job in Clarington, she was one of those ticket agents and knows from personal experience how emotional it can be for people. Still, Whitby's initiative to hear what people are saying has been an interesting one. There have been similar pop ups at the Brock St. Seniors Centre, Celebration Square downtown, and at Brooklin's Christmas tree lighting event.

"It's a utility," she goes. "As such, we want it to continue to be user funded."

She adds that people don't often



"Proud to be a Brooklinite"
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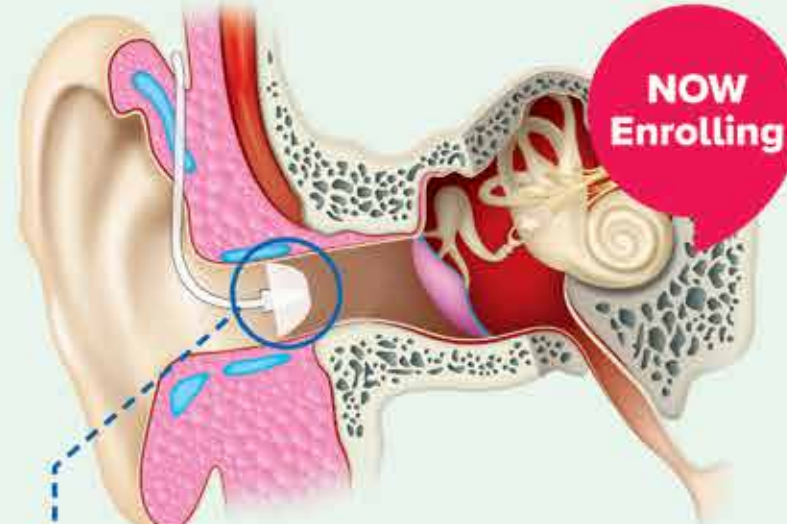
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Next Issue: Thursday, March 29, 2018
Deadline: Friday, March 23, 2018

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Apply today - Candidates are being selected.
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Call a local clinic below or book your appointment online at: HearingLife.ca/Wanted









<p>Ajax 235 Bayly Street West Call Samia at 1-877-503-5977</p>	<p>Pickering 1848 Liverpool Road Call Jennifer at 1-877-501-8725</p>
<p>Oshawa 470 King Street West Call Lyndsay or Abigail at 1-877-534-2111</p>	<p>Whitby 604 Garden Street Call Karla at 1-877-504-2654</p>



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* Offer valid until March 29th, 2018 and is subject to change without notice. Hearing tests are provided free of charge for adults ages 18 and older. Candidates must be private sale, or eligible for ADP or AADL. Some conditions may apply. Please see clinic for details. Offer not valid in Quebec. (1) <https://www.oticon.ca/solutions/opn>

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Our Brooklin Kids By Leanne Brown



Are January babies destined for greatness?

(Part Three of Three)

Kindergartener Vikas is born on January 3 and his best friend Daniel on December 29. The boys, who are in the same class, love that their birthdays are just days apart. Vikas seems to do better in school than Daniel who struggles. Why? Because Vikas is benefitting from a 20% relative age advantage at this level since there is actually almost a full year age difference.

"Older children within the same grade tend to do better than the youngest, who are less intellectually developed," according to a study from University of British Columbia finance professor Maurice Levi.

January advantage

A 2011 study of B.C. students who entered kindergarten in 1995 found

that compared to those born in January, kids with December birthdays were 12 to 15 per cent less likely to meet reading and numeracy standards in the elementary grades and 12 per cent less likely to graduate from high school. In Canada, the cutoff date for children starting school is Dec. 31, which means they can be in the same class as students born in January the same year. Older kids might be able to get more out of the curriculum than the younger, less mature students. This may be related to cognitive development as well as an increased ability to regulate behaviour.

In another 2011 study, this one of 48,500 British children and teenagers, researchers at Britain's Institute for Fiscal Studies reported that kids

born in August have less confidence in their academic abilities and are less likely to attend top universities. In Britain, the school cutoff date is Aug. 31, which means kids learn with classmates born in September of the previous year. The research discovered that children born in September are 20% more likely than August kids to attend top universities.

Teacher labeling

The younger ones are at a disadvantage from the day they start school. Teachers are 30 per cent more likely to label them as "problem" students, according to that UK Institute. The findings showed that teachers were 2.5 times more likely to assess the younger students as having a learning disability.

Older children in the class are more likely to be identified as gifted students compared with their younger peers and benefit from additional advantages as a result of receiving specialized and/or extra instruction. In a study by the Office for National Statistics, scientists found that "Early success is often rewarded with leadership roles and enriched learning opportunities, leading to future advantages that are magnified throughout life," says Levi.

Some parents try to give their December child an advantage by delaying their entry into school. But the Government of Ontario has found that students with two years

of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) are more successful in school and have accelerated development. Reading, writing and math grades were 5% higher regardless of the birthday.

If you're worrying about your December baby, keep in mind there are many other factors that contribute to their success, not just birthdate. Some December babies you may have heard of include: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Jim Flaherty, Walt Disney, Stephen Spielberg, Elizabeth Arden, Ray Bourque, and Taylor Swift.



A Brooklin Toddler's Random Thoughts

"When I'm a big girl can you buy me goggles...and I need a pool."

Community Calendar

If you have a community not-for-profit event you would like included in the calendar, please email it to editorofBTC@gmail.com with the subject line "calendar." Priority will be given to Brooklin events. Some editing may occur.

Fri., March 23: 4:00 - 5:00 pm
(4th Friday of each month)
Teen Leadership Council
at Brooklin Library

Whitby Library's Brooklin Branch seeks Teen Leadership Council members to share ideas & assist with special events and programs. Grade 9-12 students earn community service hours. Snacks provided. No registration required. For information, email teenservices@whitbylibrary.ca.

Sat., March 31: 10 am- 2 pm:
Brooklin Scouting Easter Egg & Scavenger Hunt

Brooklin Kinsmen Park (behind the Brooklin Community Centre on Vipond Rd)
Kids 7 and under can look for eggs in the forest
Youths 8 to 13 can participate in the Scavenger Hunt
\$5 per participant. Loot bags for all paying participants.
Prizes for the top 3 Scavengers and Egg Collectors

Sat., March 31: 10:30 am- 12:30 pm:
Easter Eggstravaganza

Optimist Club of Brooklin will host Easter Eggs-travaganza.
The Easter Bunny will arrive during the program. Please bring a basket for your child to participate in a good old fashioned Easter Egg Hunt in Luther Vipond Arena. Every child will receive a treat and other special surprises.
ADVANCE TICKET SALES ONLY:
brooklinoptimist.org

Sat., April 7: 10-11 am: "How to wake up your garden" seminar
Presented by a representative from Sheridan Nurseries
At the Renaissance Baptist Church, 40 Vipond Rd, Brooklin

Mon., April 9: 7-9 pm: Shine On: An Exciting Event for Women
"Real Women - Extraordinary Circumstances - Inspiring Stories"
\$15/person - \$100/person for VIP tickets
Deer Creek Golf and Banquet Facility
2700 Audley Rd. N., Ajax
Email: shineonindurham@gmail.com

Sat., Apr. 14: 11 am:
Big Bucks Euchre
Odd Fellows Hall, 42 Bagot St., Brooklin
Regular progressive euchre. No partner

required.
\$10 includes lunch and excellent prizes.
Advance tickets only.
Proceeds to Camp Trillium camps for kids with cancer and their families.
Call **905-655-4652**

Sat., April 14: 7-11 p.m.: Mayor's Community Fundraiser

Central Library, 405 Dundas Street West, Whitby
Join Mayor Don Mitchell for an evening of food, friends, entertainment and music in support of the Mayor's Community Development Fund, benefiting local community groups, events and initiatives. Tickets on sale now!
mayorscommunityfundraiser.eventbrite.ca
\$85 per person or \$150 per couple.
For more information, contact:
WhitbyMayorsFundraiser@gmail.com

Sun., April 22: 1-3 pm:
Spring Fashion Show
featuring fashions by Alia (of the Oshawa Centre)

St. Leo the Great Parish Hall
130 Watford St. (off Winchester)
Tickets \$15.
Lunch and beverages provided
Doors open at noon to shop vendors
Door Prizes.
Call **905-620-0724** for tickets or info

French Family Storytime: Children and their caregivers can join Madame Sue for weekly French Family Storytime! A half hour of French stories and songs, with a dash of English!
Drop in at Central Library's Children's Program Room

Tuesdays: 7:25 pm:

Brooklin Toastmasters Club
Practice public speaking at Brooklin Community Centre & Library. Contact John Johnstone at jajhj@sympatico.ca or phone **905-683-4439** or Patricia Romano at promano257@outlook.com or phone **905-626-7055**.

1st & 3rd Tuesdays
Community Care Durham (CCD)
Basic Foot Care at St. Thomas' Anglican Church. **905-668-6779**

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CCD delivers hot or frozen meals.
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Brooklin Men's Hockey League
Optometry Giving Sight
Outdoor Movie Night to End Hunger
The Refuge Youth Outreach Centre
Durham Quarter Marathon
Sloane's House Respite Care
Whitby Eagles Softball
Whitby Wildcats Hockey
Oshawa Shamrocks Softball
Special Olympics

Brooklin Players
Immanuel Christian School
Possibilities House

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Wednesday 10:00 a.m.
Communion and Healing Service
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www.stthomasbrooklin.ca

Brooklin United Church

19 Cassels Rd. E.
Sunday Services at 10:30 am
Sunday School & Nursery Care
www.brooklinunited.ca **905-655-4141**
Come catch the Spirit!

Renaissance Baptist Church of Brooklin

40 Vipond Road (Just West Of Library)
Sunday Worship & Kids Program 10:30 a.m.
905-655-4554 www.brooklinrbc.ca
We're here for Brooklin!

McKinney's New Electric Zamboni



As part of its commitment to sustainability and operating in an environmentally friendly manner, the Town has purchased its first electric ice resurfacer (also known as a Zamboni) to replace one of its natural gas powered machines that had reached the end of its lifecycle.

The Town's switch to an electric machine will not only result in a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions

but is also expected to generate an average annual cost savings of up to \$7,000 over the machine's lifetime. Electric ice resurfacers are easier to maintain than natural gas powered machines, lasting, on average, five years longer. Each resurfacing with an electric ice resurfacer also costs approximately 20 per cent less than resurfacing with a natural gas machine.

Durham Transportation Master Plan Notice of Completion

The Durham Transportation Master Plan is complete and open for comment for a 30-day period, ending April 3. Residents can download the TMP at durham.ca/tmp. Copies are also available for viewing at the locations listed below.

What: The TMP will be on public record and open for comment for a 30-day period, ending April 3.
When: March 1 to April 3.
Where: Town of Whitby, Office of the Town Clerk, 575 Rossland Road East, Whitby

Switch Off Lights for Earth Hour On March 24

On March 24, between 8:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., residents are encouraged to join the Town of Whitby in turning off all unnecessary lights and electronics in recognition of Earth Hour.

Earth Hour, an annual event first launched in Australia in 2007, is a global campaign that promotes energy conservation and awareness for climate change. For one hour a year, Earth Hour encourages communities around the world, including Whitby, to turn off all unnecessary lights and electronics.

Whitby has participated in Earth Hour, reducing its energy consumption, since 2008. This year, as has been done in previous years, the Town will switch off all unnecessary lighting and electronics at all Town facilities - including Town Hall, recreational facilities and more. Individual Town staff members will also

be participating by turning off their computers at their workstations and unplugging appliances in common areas.

Six continents, more than 170 countries and 24 Time Zones will participate in this year's hour-long event. Whitby residents are encouraged to join in and reduce their electricity energy use in their own homes during Earth Hour by:

- Turning off lights and televisions;
- Powering down computers;
- Unplugging unnecessary electronics and small appliances; and,
- Not using cooking appliances during the hour.

Residents are reminded to stay safe and never leave lit candles unattended.

For more information, visit earthhour.org.

Wednesday, March 28, 2018, 7-9pm
Annual Brooklin Service Club Meeting
Upstairs at Brooklin Pub
 If you are involved in a local service group or would like to learn more about how to become involved in the community, please join us.
 For more information contact
905-442-9828 or mulcahy42@rogers.com

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Plant-Based Eating by Sheree Nicholson



Getting into super foods

It's easy to get into an eating rut. We all do it whether we're plant-based or not. We begin to rely on the same foods because the recipes are familiar and therefore easy for us. To really meet our nutrient needs though, we need a variety of foods as there's no one miracle food.

These foods, classified as super foods, are such because they're nutrient dense and therefore provide high elements of something our body needs, such as antioxidants, vitamins, protein, and minerals. Super foods in general tend to be plant-based although salmon is often categorized as a super food.

Blueberries are considered a super food as is kale. Almonds, too,

since they are the most nutritionally dense "nut," meaning they offer the highest concentration of nutrients per calorie per ounce. An interesting fact about almonds is that while they are often called a nut, they are actually a seed of the almond fruit. When I was a kid, I hated almonds. I'd bite the chocolate off the covered ones and hide the almonds in the couch. But today I enjoy this nutritious nut in a variety of ways, including as almond butter.

One of the greatest side benefits of being plant-based is that it forced me out of my comfort zone and I began exploring new foods and recipes. There are many cultures that consume little or no meat which has led me to make and eat great Indian, Thai, and Moroccan foods. Many Asian-inspired sauces use

almonds rather than peanut butter. I've always been an adventurous person so I love to try new things.

Dinner bowls are an amazing way to combine super foods. You can top quinoa with chili lentils, chopped kale, roasted broccoli, beans, seeds such as chia or pumpkin and then drizzle a sauce such as the one below over the bowl for a fantastic super food meal.

Easy almond sauce

- 3 tablespoons almond butter
- 1/4 cup, plus 1 tablespoon water

- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 1/2 tablespoons tamari
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- Juice of half a lime
- 2 teaspoons rice wine vinegar

Combine all the ingredients in a mini chopper and blend until smooth. Alternatively, you can whisk all ingredients together until smooth. This great recipe is from the One Green Plant blog.

Sheree's Hack: Double the sauce recipe to use as a pasta sauce or salad dressing.

Our Councillor's Report by Rhonda Mulcahy

North Ward Councillor, Town of Whitby • mulcahyr@whitby.ca



Lighting things up

Many of you have noticed the conversion happening throughout Whitby to LED lights. This has been a long time coming.

The public consultation began in 2012. The Light Pollution Awareness Committee of the Durham Region Astronomical Association (DRAA) worked closely with the Town of Whitby on the adoption of the new lights. There was an LED street light project run in 2012 and lighting guidelines for any new site plans were developed. We are in the final phases of converting the remainder of all street lights throughout Whitby.

Light directed down

Notice that the new lights are FCO (full cut off), meaning that they direct light 'down' where it is needed, not sideways or up causing significant light pollution and wasting energy. As well, they don't cause significant glare to pedestrians and drivers, which increases safety.

An interesting lighting observation: next time you are driving north on Thickson coming into Brooklin as you come over the 407, take a look at the Esso and Petro gas stations on the corner of Winchester and Thickson. Notice that Esso does not use FCO, and Petro does. Petro is much more pleasing lighting for drivers as it has less glare. It's also safer because the drivers' night vision isn't affected as much. Esso has glaring lights which cause driver vision issues, such as when you first shut off a bright light at night and you can't see well for a brief time. That station was built before the site guidelines came into effect. Any new commercial properties must now use FCO.

Some have wondered about the aesthetics of the lights with the coach-style lanterns being converted to cobra heads in the Watford area. I can appreciate the concern as I live in that area myself and will soon watch the lamp post outside my window be converted to the modern style, too. Not exactly what I would have preferred. However, these particular lamp posts could not have been converted to the coach lantern style.

Health concerns addressed

I've also heard the concern for health. This is something that came up early in my tenure as North Ward Councillor. I asked staff to review all the material with concern to health. They did a thorough vetting and the report came back last June with updated information. I am satisfied, as was council, that we are operating within safe levels as far as lighting pollution and colour of light is concerned.

Overall, the lighting is better for pedestrians and vehicles as it's more focused on the area where it's needed. The cost savings is enormous. We are saving over a million dollars a year on energy. This translates into about 1% of property taxes in operational costs. It's one of those efficiencies we look for that simply could not be passed up. I'm hoping over time we will see the benefits realized and that the lights will be something we no longer even notice being different.



Come join us for a Farm Open House!

Luther Vipond Memorial Arena
67 Winchester Road East, Brooklin, Ontario

Wed., April 4, 2018
4:30pm to 8:00pm

Free Admission
Food Bank Donations Accepted

Farm Animals & Tractors on Display

Demonstrations every 15 minutes

Activities for kids

Cow Milking **Sheep Shearing**
Cheese Making
Meet a Large Animal Veterinarian

For more information: www.durhamfarmconnections.ca
info@durhamfarmconnections.ca



Meet Your Local Merchant

Sense of Space

Is your home ready for the season?

With winter almost done and spring ahead, many are thinking about refreshing their spaces after a long period of indoor cooing. As a homeowner, you want to optimize outdoor space for backyard BBQs, that perfect garden oasis you've always wanted, or just to create a quiet hideaway retreat. As to indoors, it may simply be a day of spring cleaning to experience a sense of renewal or re-organizing and refreshing the kitchen, garage or bedroom.



Really what you need is some professional advice to make better use of your space. Franca and her team at **sense of space** can help with these tasks and more.

As a new Brooklin resident and with over 10 years experience beautifying outdoor spaces, Franca looks forward to serving her community, creating meaningful gardens and wonderful indoor spaces.

She has now added In-Home Staging and Organizing to her list of services, a must if you're planning to move. So, no matter if you need indoor or outdoor solutions,

Franca's passion for space optimization is at your service. Her clients say she's personable, professional and resourceful, someone who takes on the challenge to work smartly so clients can spend their valuable time and money focusing on more important things.

"A home should be a sanctuary," Franca says, "where the senses can be satisfied

solid track record in project management make **sense of space** the ideal choice for any creative challenge. They skillfully build beautiful environments to create the mood you want, whether it's a soothing hideaway, an eco-friendly garden or an invigorating, organized space. They also promote sustainable practices and offer services for every need and budget.

Consider a consultation to discuss how to make better use of your outdoor space or help your garden thrive. Indoors, the **sense of space** team can help organize it so you can breathe a little easier.

in the space that surrounds them. It's not about an idealistic photo in a magazine. It's about what works for you and your space and what both bring to the table. It's personal."

Her approach coupled with a

sense of space
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Blooming in Brooklin By Ken Brown

Of blooms and the heralding of spring



We've almost survived the school spring break, a week that separates people and their interests. For years it was a chance to spend quality time with my brood of teenagers as we encamped to a distant ski hill. They're now taking their own offspring on similar trips and I think about joining them. Meanwhile, in the basement, there are dozens of seeds that need sowing. Can it wait till after skiing?

The week's main feature has been Toronto's Canada Blooms Festival which ends on March 18 so there's still time to see it. I spent time last week organizing a meeting there of my Garden Writer's Association because it's always fun to gather with people who share your work and passion. Now it's on to my spring speaking engagements.

The Brooklin Horticultural Society partners with Whitby to bring you great speakers in their spring meetings. The fourth Wednesday of March, April and May will feature three great garden speakers on a variety of topics, so mark those days on your calendar and head over to the United Church for some horticultural inspiration.

Snowdrops

Back to my garden: I have snowdrops blooming and they've been

there for a couple of weeks. There's a brown-coloured stone in my back garden that came home with me from Newfoundland's Gros Morne National Park and the dark colour draws the sun which heats up the soil around it. That's why it's always early to have a necklace of bright white snowdrops around it before they appear anywhere else. Think about such a spot in your garden and try to remember to plant snowdrops there next fall.

Wonderful displays of tulips, crocus and narcissus that are about to unfold should remind us to plant more of those in our own gardens next September. One problem is remembering where you already planted some so that the next batch are placed in a different location.

Much of my garden is looking particularly grubby just now. The receding snow leaves behind a fine collection of detritus so I yearn for that first sunny warm day when I can get outside and attack the mess. The trick, of course, is not to be too eager. Walking on your lawn or gardens when they're still wet and soft will do more damage than good.

Walk softly

Wait till the soil is firm enough that you don't leave a footprint everywhere. Once that day arrives, then give your sad looking grass its first fertilizer application. The late fall one

should have been the most important one. But we never quite get around to applying it, so let's compensate by being as early as possible in the spring. An early supply of nutrients is a bit like your morning cup of coffee; it wakes up the grass and gives it the energy and impetus to turn green and start growing.

By the end of March, the garden

centres will be filled with brightly coloured pansies. Go plant some in your planters and containers to help bring you the colour and joy of spring. They're quite cold tolerant. For years mine have been covered with a late snowfall. I just water them with warm water. That melts the snow and thaws out the frozen soil. Then they perk right up and carry on heralding spring.

Plan Your Garden With Free Seminars

The Whitby in Bloom Committee, in partnership with the Brooklin Horticultural Society, invites residents to take part in three free gardening seminars being offered this spring.

The seminars, being held on March 28, April 25 and May 23 at the Brooklin United Church, will contain information on gardening tips and techniques, container plantings and floral art – helping residents to plan and create their perfect care-free garden to grow and enjoy. The seminars will be presented by master gardeners Charlie Dobbin, Denis Flanagan and Lizzie Matheson.

Residents are invited to take part in one or all of the following seminars:

March 28 – Charlie Dobbin presents "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"

Charlie will share unique gardening tips and techniques, and how to choose the best specimens for your garden.

April 25 – Denis Flanagan presents "Shrubs & Trees for the Ur-

ban Garden"

Denis will share trendy garden design tips and explain how to use clever container plantings and low maintenance and dwarf plants to create a colourful care-free garden.

May 23 – Lizzie Matheson presents "Floral Design – Tips and Tricks"

Lizzie will design and answer questions about three pieces of floral art. The flowers and foliage used to create the three art pieces will be given away as draw prizes at the end of the seminar.

Each gardening seminar begins at 7:30 p.m. and will take place at Brooklin United Church, 19 Cassels Rd East.

Space at each seminar is limited. Interested residents are encouraged to register and reserve their spot early at whitby.ca/whitbyinbloom.

In lieu of a registration fee, non-perishable food items will also be collected at each event to be donated to local food banks.

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