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05



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Richmond councillors adapting to video-conference meetings

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Richmond city council has been largely meeting via video-conference. Only Mayor Malcolm Brodie and Coun. Chak Au have been physically present for the last several council meetings, with the remaining councillors attending virtually.

This change has been a big adjustment, and hasn't been without technical glitches. But overall, councillors say, it's working for the time being.

"I think that we're still able to get through the business fairly efficiently," says Brodie.

He notes that meetings are still live streamed via the city's website, allowing members of the public to view them as they happen.

Technological changes

Live-streaming technology was championed by Coun. Harold Steves in the 1970s, when he requested that the BC legislature use TV to make meetings accessible to the public, who could then respond.

"I was told that was pretty far out, but now it's not far out any longer," says Steves. "Things that a lot of us have thought about for a long time, we were told we couldn't do this, and now we have to do it."

Steves is also an advocate for streaming major conferences to avoid unnecessary travel, even when restrictions are lifted.

"The communications are there, but the politicians aren't using them," he says.

Agenda items

While most current agenda items are related to COVID-19, this doesn't mean other issues are being put on the back burner.

"It's not so much a matter of putting things on the back burner as it is focusing on the issues that are urgent and important, and those are the pandemic related ones, whether it's finances or facilities or budget," says Brodie.

"It's important that some of the urgent issues get dealt with in a timely fashion," agrees Coun. Linda McPhail. "What needs to get through is coming to an agenda. Some of the things that maybe would have



Photo by Jaana Björk

Richmond city council has held meetings via video-conference for the last two months as a result of physical distancing restrictions due to COVID-19.

come to committee for information, we're just getting them as reports—and that's fine."

Coun. Bill McNulty says that agendas have been streamlined—a beneficial result of the video-conference meetings.

"It does allow for full discussion, you've just got to be patient," he says. "There are no issues that we avoided or didn't put on the agenda."

Coun. Carol Day says council has seen a reduced volume of work. She attributes this to people following directions to remain at home and avoid non-essential travel and errands.

"I think that people in life have put their (tasks) on the back burner," she says.

Steves says working virtually has allowed him more time to focus on other city-related issues of interest.

"I've got more time now because I'm not spending so much time going to meetings," he says. "There's time to get more of the things done that I'd like to see done, rather than what's presented to us at council meetings."

Return to physical meetings

When current restrictions are relaxed, some councillors look forward to a return to physical meetings.

"It's harder to have productive discussions when we're unable to see each other," says McNulty. "We let everybody have their say and make their points, but sometimes you limit the debate back and forth because you just want to get on with it."

When physical distancing restrictions were first announced, councillors adapted, adhering to require-

ments and sitting six feet apart. McNulty says they could return to this model, and also limit public access.

"I'm guessing there will be a period of phase-in where we will get back to the councillors and the mayor attending all the meetings using social distancing, certainly initially," says Brodie.

"From my perspective, six feet apart is not that much of a challenge," says Day.

She adds council members are already able to sit nearly six feet apart in their usual seats in chambers or the Anderson room.

Future possibilities for video-conference meetings

McPhail notes that the ability to attend meetings via video-conference presents an alternative for those who are feeling unwell.

"Going forward, there will be opportunities for councillors or staff who are not feeling 100 per cent to give input. People who are immunocompromised would still be able to participate in a way that's safe for their health," she says.

Steves is an advocate for attending via video-conference, even after restrictions are lifted. He notes that many community members who are over 60, and at a higher risk of increased complications from COVID-19, would benefit from the opportunity to attend digitally.

"On the whole I think that it's worked very well," says McPhail.

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Business group helping fight virus

By DON FENNEL

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Determined to help defeat COVID-19, the Canada Asian Pacific Business Association has launched a relief campaign.

Since being initiated in late March, the campaign has generated more than \$100,000 in funds for the VGH and UBC Hospital Foundation, Richmond Hospital Foundation, and Sullivan Urology Foundation.

The campaign is headed by association president Elsa



MLA LINDA REID

Wong, with assistance from Thomas Wu, Sandra Lau and Lawrence Yeung and secretary Jacky Hui.

The team recently hosted a successful virtual conference, which featured many invited guests including advisor and Richmond South Centre MLA Linda Reid, Richmond North Centre MLA Teresa Wat, and Richmond Hospital Foundation CEO Natalie Meixner. In addition to updating the status of the campaign, participants also learned about the newest innovations in ventilators being researched and developed at UBC Hospital.

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Richmond Art Truck becomes essential learning vehicle

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Winding its way to several Richmond schools in late April, the Richmond Art Truck provided a vehicle for expression.

While most students are learning remotely, the children of essential service workers attending programs at Gilmore, McNeely, and Brighthouse elementary schools were recently engaged in special visual and dramatic art activities.

Crafted in part by cultural development manager Camyar Chaichian—one of the drama instructors—the engaging project also includes physical literacy and healthy eating. It aims to engage kids with additional school outreach, and normally travels to six schools per season.

After the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of all schools, the program had to pivot. And with Richmond having just launched the #Richmond-HasHeart campaign, Chaichian thought it was a great time to bring the Art Truck back into play.

At the same time, the school district was looking for a way to expand its arts curriculum.

"One of the most powerful things in all of our lives is the arts," says assistant superintendent Lynn Archer, who is in charge of overseeing the three sites. "It can really help us understand ourselves and help us in our development of community."

Archer reached out to school district fine arts administrator Catherine Ludwig, who suggested the city's art truck. From there, the partnership blossomed.

The Richmond Art Gallery offered additional support. Ludwig worked with art teachers from the gallery and the city's arts centre to access supplies and create individual packages for each student.

The Art Truck ran three sessions in schools between April 27 and May 1. Chaichian credits teachers and staff for creating a safe environment for the program to thrive.

The frustration children are experiencing as a result of the pandemic was helped by drama exercises that allowed them to express themselves. Stu-



Photos courtesy Catherine Ludwig and Camyar Chaichian

A city project, the Richmond Art Truck served as an education vehicle recently for students attending school as part of the essential service workers program.

dents also created visual art pieces that focused on heart and confidence.

"The instructors were engaging, active, informative and fun," says one of the teachers on site. "The dramatists were especially full of energy, breaking us out of our comfort shells. The artists were informative (portrait pointers) and innovative (salt crystals on watercolours). The two days the Art Truck graciously appeared were tremendously welcomed by all."

The activities came together quickly after just a week of planning.

"It just shows how much heart the city has, not just in providing the resources to the Richmond School District, but in contributing full heart, full hands, full spirit," says Ludwig. "Every time I came to watch the students, there was a huge increase of engagement in their activities. The arts can help

people learn to say what they can't say (aloud).

"Following the Art Truck's guest spot in schools, more teachers and staff have been inspired to continue the connection and incorporate similar activities. The district is co-ordinating more arts programs, including three sessions each with a dance, choreography and hiphop instructor and a music teacher.

"We don't want it to stop—we want to do more arts," says Ludwig. "Arts teaches students that small differences can have large effects in life. In walking around and talking to some of the students about art and watching them express themselves, you can see the need and the want to just be able to communicate something. This experience has allowed them to do that and to be seen, to be heard, to be recognized."

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Photo from
Wikimedia
Commons
Vancouver
Airport Authority
has named
Tamara Vrooman
as its next CEO—
the first woman
to hold this post.



YVR appoints new CEO

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Amid a difficult time for the aviation industry, Vancouver Airport Authority has appointed a new president and CEO.

Tamara Vrooman will take the post effective July 1—as the first woman to lead the organization. She has spent the last 13 years in the same role at Vancity, Canada's largest community credit union.

The board of directors conducted a global search for their new leader. During this process, Vrooman removed herself from board activity in order to participate as a candidate.

Prior to working with Vancity, Vrooman was BC's deputy finance minister. She was recognized with the Order of British Columbia in 2019.

While outgoing CEO Craig Richmond—who announced that he would retire this June—expressed his willingness to remain in his position until a replacement was found, he will now be able to retire in line with his original timeline.

"I am honoured to lead the talented team that has made YVR the best airport in North America for 10 years running," said Vrooman. "I look forward to working with them as we reimagine our business and how we operate in this challenging new environment as the world adapts following the COVID-19 crisis."

"I know from experience that crises provide an opportunity for innovation, creativity and renewal. I am eager to get to work as we chart a path forward that supports safe and efficient passenger and cargo travel, while recognizing YVR's important role in the Lower Mainland, BC and the global markets we serve."

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Airport authority will lay off a quarter of workforce

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Vancouver International Airport (YVR) is downsizing due to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following a recent announcement that shared the airport authority's plans to offer voluntary departure packages to all employees, this week they will issue layoff notices to some members of their workforce. Despite newly-announced funding for large employers, the airport authority has explored all other options in terms of cost cutting.

The current workforce has served 26 million passengers per year. YVR now expects to serve between eight and 15 million passengers per year for each of the next three years.

Both management and bargaining employees are affected by the current round of layoffs. Reductions total 25 per cent of the airport authority's more than 500 employees.

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Massey Tunnel to get new lights, other upgrades

Work is underway to improve brightness and visibility in the George Massey Tunnel.

The current work does not affect ongoing plans to replace the tunnel. Existing lights on the tunnel walls and ceiling are being replaced with LED bulbs to increase visibility, save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"Plans for the new, future crossing are underway with a business case expected to be ready for the fall," said Transportation Minister Claire Trev-ena.

Other work includes improving tunnel drainage to prevent ice build-up and water from pooling at tunnel entrances. The ventilation and electrical systems will also be upgraded. These additional safety improvements are already underway and are scheduled to be completed by spring 2021.

Black & McDonald Limited of Vancouver has been awarded a contract valued at \$19 million for this work, which is part of a \$40-million suite of interim safety and reliability improvements.

Most of the work will be done at night to minimize delays. Notification of lane closures will be provided in advance. For up-to-date highway travel information, visit DriveBC.ca.

While highways and roads remain open, the public health officer recommends people stay close to home and avoid any non-essential travel.

For more information, visit: engage.gov.bc.ca/masseytunnel/

**RICHMOND
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OUR COMMUNITY NEWS

Published by
RICHMOND SENTINEL NEWS INC.
200-3071 No. 5 Road,
Richmond, B.C., V6X 2T4

Advertising & Sponsorship
marketing@richmondsentinel.ca
778-1297

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RCRG and partners tackling pandemic together

By **DON FENNELL**
 @rmdsentinel

As Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives and its supportive partners stand united in the fight against COVID-19, they can always use another helping hand.


Bringing people together, the local service agency which in April was designated one of 24 agencies across the province to be a COVID-19 response centre for seniors, continues to step up its efforts. Between March 31 and May 7, RCRG's volunteer shoppers filled and helped deliver 701 grocery orders for the community's seniors.

Helping to fuel the response efforts are partners like the United Way of the Lower Mainland and the Province of BC, providing funds that make RCRG's work possible. Now, two new partners have stepped up—Western Stevedoring and its Richmond-based subsidiary Coast2000.

At the beginning of May, Western Stevedoring launched a fundraising campaign called Tackling COVID-19 Together and selected RCRG as one of 10 agencies to support. Coast2000 is supporting RCRG with \$5,000 of matching funds, which means when anyone gives specifically to RCRG's campaign, Coast2000 will match their donation dollar for dollar.

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Richmond Community Foundation stepping up for charities

By **DON FENNELL**
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In the midst of crisis, the Richmond Community Foundation is stepping forward to lend a hand.

Created in 1990, the foundation has always been dedicated to helping the community be the best it can be. And now, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is providing \$363,000 to support local charities as part of the federal government's new Emergency Community Support Fund.

In partnership with Community Foundations of Canada and the Canadian Red Cross, the aim is to make sure no one is forgotten.

"In these uniquely challenging times, local charitable organizations have stepped up like never before," says Ed Gavsie, executive director of the Richmond foundation. "Through this historic initiative, the foundation will support their inspiring work, helping to ensure that Richmond's most vulnerable residents remain safe and healthy."

The Emergency Community Support Fund was announced by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau April 21, as part of a broad series of emergency response measures introduced by the Government of Canada.

"Canadian charities and not-for-profits are always there to help you, in your time of need," says Families, Children and Social Development Minister Ahmed Hussen. "But the COVID-19 pandemic is bringing real challenges to these important organizations."

The foundation is accepting applications for funding from qualified donors. Grants can be used for such purposes as staffing resource needs, or purchasing equipment.

"Across Richmond, charitable organizations are expanding existing services or developing new ones to meet the needs of children, seniors, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups," says Richmond Community Foundation chair Dave Frank. "We're committed to supporting these local response efforts so that together, as a community, we can overcome COVID-19."

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New measures accompany return of elective surgeries

Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Health Care are implementing new measures to help keep patients, clients, staff and medical staff safe as scheduled elective surgeries resume in the coming weeks.

As part of restart plans, access to expanded health care services such as surgical, ambulatory and community services, diagnostic imaging and lab testing will resume in a safe manner with protective measures in place.

Surgical capacity began increasing across all hospitals. Elective surgeries also restarted, with a plan to implement in stages, so patients have access to the care they need. The plan to restart elective surgeries will be implemented in stages:

- To start, all patients who had surgeries postponed will be contacted.
- Patients who had their elective surgery postponed will be rescheduled with their surgeon.
- Urgent surgeries will be prioritized, and will proceed in a way that maintains patient and staff safety.

- New clinical guidelines will ensure patients are pre-screened for symptoms.

With the gradual restart of additional health care services, patients can expect the following as part of their surgical process:

- When possible, patients will be assessed through a virtual pre-admission clinic by video or phone conference prior to surgery.
- Consistent screening tools and risk assessment guidelines will be used.
- Patients will be assessed 24 to 72 hours prior to surgery, and again upon arrival on the day of surgery.
- Surgeries will be scheduled with time to accommodate additional enhanced cleaning and



Safety precautions are in place as elective surgeries resume.

Photo by Jaana Björk

infection prevention and control measures.

A number of measures are being taken to focus on the safety of patients and clients:

- When arriving at the hospital or clinic site, patients and clients will enter the building from the main entrance—they will be greeted and asked to sanitize their hands.
- The greeter will also ask each patient a few questions to assess if the patient has cold or flu-like symptoms. If so, they will be asked to wear a mask.
- If assistance (mobility, translation, etc.) is required, one family member or support person can accompany the patient.

- As patients move through the hospital or clinic, they will notice new floor decals and signage as a reminder to maintain a physical distance of two metres.

- Staff and physicians will be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks, gloves, gowns and eye protection.

Patients who require urgent, emergent and oncology-related surgeries will continue to receive safe, priority care, as they have been throughout the pandemic.

For more information about the BC government's surgical renewal plan, please visit www2.gov.bc.ca

WORK SAFE BC

Safe re-opening guidelines introduced

As BC enters Phase 2 of its COVID-19 recovery plan, WorkSafeBC has developed an initial set of guidelines to help businesses and organizations make plans to safely reopen in the coming days and weeks.

Businesses in all sectors must use these guidelines and resources to develop their COVID-19 safety plans. Additionally, businesses in sectors under health orders limiting service (like restaurants, pubs, salons and personal services) will not be able to open until those orders are lifted or modified.

For more information on WorkSafeBC guidelines, visit www.worksafebc.com.

Beware unauthorized COVID-19 test kits, government warns

Health Canada is warning Canadians not to buy home diagnostic COVID-19 test kits.

These kits may provide inaccurate or false results. Because they have not been authorized by Health Canada, their safety, quality and effectiveness has not been reviewed.

Authorized COVID-19 test kits are intended for use only by health-care professionals or other trained operators.

Last month, 1,500 unauthorized test kits were seized from a Richmond resident. Health Canada continues to work with the RCMP to take action on the sale of unauthorized test kits.

If you have purchased an unauthorized test kit that claims to diagnose or detect COVID-19, do not use it or rely on its results. Contact your local health authority for recommendations on testing services.

False or misleading advertising or sale of unauthorized products can be reported online.

Richmond Green Team receives national recognition

By **DON FENNELL**
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Greta Thunberg may be the best-known of the young environmentalists, but she's hardly a lone wolf.

All over the world, members of Gen-Z (those born after 2000) are dedicating themselves to finding solutions for a better tomorrow. In Richmond, Wonhee Choi and Edward Zhang are two such individuals.

In Grade 11 and 12 respectively, Choi and Zhang are co-presidents of the Richmond High Green Team—a school-based club recently awarded a \$20,000 grant as winners in a nation-wide contest sponsored by Staples. The team is successfully bringing innovative concepts to fruition.

Among their initiatives was the installing of solar panels at the school, a project that included educating peers and the local community about sustainable energy.

As part of renowned Canadian scientist and environmentalist David Suzuki's Butterflyway Project, the Green Team members also implemented a pollinator-friendly garden to provide habitat and food for bees and butterflies. In collaboration with Richmond High's life skills students, they also weaved nests out of invasive plants, and worked with the school's art club to paint murals spreading awareness about ocean sustainability. Other projects have included Waste Reduction Week; hosting a waste-free pop shop at which reusable bubble tea cups and straws were used; and Meatless Mondays, a collaboration with the school culinary team to provide vegetarian meals. They're also hoping to introduce a laptop cart to support the school's tech education demands.

"Many people are intimidated by the sheer scale of our environmental problems," explains Zhang. "Thus, we try to educate our student body about the simple steps you can do in your daily lives to help—from waste reduction and recycling. With these efforts we can strive for a more sustainable society together."



Photo courtesy Richmond High Green Team

The Richmond Green Team has earned a \$20,000 grant in a nation-wide contest recognizing environmental initiatives by youth.

But both say it's a myth, or at least common misconception, that environmentalism is a niche subject, and only of interest to students hoping to pursue a career in a related field.

And Choi and Zhang fear that as time goes by, the consequences to the climate will only get worse—unless more preventative measures are practiced today.

"We want to show how, no matter what you're interested in, there are many ways to incorporate some aspect of sustainability," they say. "Being environmentally responsible is not only up to certain people, but all of us who live on this planet. We will all be impacted by our human actions one day. Rather than choose to be eco-friendly, everyone should be. There is no excuse why we cannot properly divert our waste, think carefully about consumer choices, and take even small green actions. If we cannot teach our own classmates, how can we teach the world to care?"

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Kwantlen farmers market open for business

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Kwantlen St. Farmers Market opened May 12, providing Richmondites with fresh local produce and other consumables.

Market manager Anne Janzen says the decision to run this year was a no-brainer.

"Knowing that we would have fresh food, and knowing that we have a chicken vendor, an egg vendor—there's great local food that we have access to, so why wouldn't we do a farmer's market?" she says.

Organized by the Kwantlen Student Association and Farm Fresh Events, the market also works closely with the university's agriculture program. It is open to customers Tuesdays from noon to 4 p.m. through Oct. 6 at the Brighthouse Park lacrosse court (7000 Minoru Blvd).

Pandemic restrictions took effect right after the yearly BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) conference, when organizers and vendors were excited about the new season. Kwantlen's growing season was already underway, so Janzen knew they had the means to start.

"One of the first things I did, within a week, is purchased two hand washing stations," Janzen says. "People have to go to the grocery store—why not shop in an open air environment?"

Richmond city council was instrumental in making this year's market hap-



Photo by Lorraine Graves

The Kwantlen St. Farmers Market opened May 12 to provide Richmondites with local food options. It runs on Tuesdays from noon to 4 p.m. through Oct. 6.

pen. The usual location would have been challenging due to its many entrances—so the city suggested the lacrosse court across the road, which has only one entrance and exit.

Customers must also adhere to some strict rules: there is no food sampling or consuming food in the market area, and physical distancing is mandated. As well, vendors are only allowed to sell consumable products, as required by provincial restrictions.

Each vendor can decide if they will accept cash—but most have the technology to accept contactless payments.

The opening day May 12 was a success, with signage reminding people to wash their hands and remain two metres from others. The BCAFm has communicated these requirements effectively to member markets, says Janzen.

"The energy is really positive," she adds. "The vendors were really happy with the turnout, the customers were really grateful. They're really excited about the season this year."

The social media feedback has been positive—more than any other year. Markets across BC are getting similar support, says Janzen.

The Kwantlen St. Market is still accepting new vendors. For more information, visit kwantlenstmarket.ca.

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'Car parade' connects Quilchena students, teachers

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

On May 8, Quilchena elementary students were able to wave to their teachers during the school's "car parade".

"We have a small catchment area and a really tight community here," said principal Kirsten Wallace.

A staff member proposed the parade after seeing something similar at her son's school. During a Zoom staff meeting, other staff members were supportive of the idea—so the school's administrative assistant developed a route through the surrounding streets.

Kids were asked to stay on the sidewalk outside their houses, and staff arrived at the school in cars, some with their own family members. Of the 185 students, Wallace estimates that 50 live outside the catchment area—and those students were encouraged to stand along the parade route to cheer and wave from a distance.

"We'll have a long parade of probably about 20 cars, all with signs, and then we'll go past



Photo by Hannah Scott

Students at Quilchena Elementary connected with staff May 8 during a physically distanced "car parade."

(houses in the neighbourhood)," Wallace explained before the event. "We're trying to create more community connection."

Regular instruction through Zoom has lifted kids' spirits, says Wallace—the opportunity to see and chat with friends is a great tool.

"We can't meet with the kids, but if they see

the important people in their lives, in their circle of support, I think that will make their day," she adds.

"It just gives them another way to see that they're still connected to our community even though we don't see them."

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'WeAreRichmondBC' website launched

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

A new website launched May 14 to connect Richmond residents and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

WeAreRichmondBC.ca is a collaboration between Tourism Richmond, Economic Development Richmond and the Richmond Chamber of Commerce. It aims to drive economic recovery and encourage community support.

Features on the site include:

- available community resources and initiatives
- links to city services
- pandemic supports for businesses
- updates from the chamber
- a full list of restaurants, stores and other businesses that remain open during the pandemic, along with their details

"We felt this was a missing piece for the community," said Tourism Richmond CEO Nancy Small. "Partnering with the Richmond Chamber of Commerce and the City of Richmond's Economic Development team felt like the right way to create a comprehensive hub for Richmond residents and businesses to drive community spirit and support for local businesses during these difficult times."

"Local businesses are essential to the fabric of our



community," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. "Now, more than ever, it's essential to show that we are united in our effort to encourage the return of local businesses and their employees and support them as they recover from this unprecedented situation."

"The Richmond community is incredibly resilient and creative," said chamber CEO Matt Pitcairn. "But from a business perspective, we know how challenging the last two months have been, and how further disruptive the months ahead will be. It is the chamber's hope that WeAreRichmondBC becomes a tool for employers and residents to get through these extraordinary times, and work collaboratively toward a safe and prosperous recovery."

The site will also feature social media posts with the hashtag #RichmondHasHeart, so community members are encouraged to continue to support the campaign.

Richmond-based businesses can sign up for a free listing on the website at WeAreRichmondBC.ca.

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Buddhists donate \$40,000 to hospital

By DON FENNELL

@rmdsentinel

A longtime donor to the Richmond Hospital Foundation has stepped forward yet again.

The Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation of Canada has donated \$40,000 to Richmond Hospital Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund.

Supporting healthcare in the community for the last 14 years, the foundation appreciated the urgent need due to the pandemic. The member funds will be used to help purchase two vital signs monitors.

Earlier this year, members also made a \$28,000 donation to fund the hospital's purchase of an external fixation for the orthopedic team. To date, the foundation has contributed nearly \$500,000 in support of local healthcare in Richmond.



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RAPS COMMUNITY REPORT Caring for the animals who care for us

Reflections on community coming together



**Eyal
Lichtmann**

This year is unprecedented in living memory. The COVID-19 pandemic and its associated health, social and economic consequences have presented everyone worldwide with unprecedented challenges. This includes hardships for animals, especially those caring for hundreds of animals that do not have homes.

Amid all the bad, though, have been so many stories of human kindness, co-operation and stepping up in the best way to help animals and their people.

This year also happens to be the 25th anniversary of the Regional Animal Protection Society. What began in 1995 as a tiny group of dedicated volunteers, has grown into one of Canada's largest and most innovative no-kill animal-serving organizations.

For me and many in the RAPS family, this has been a time of reflection. Just as this unprecedented time of social distancing has demonstrated the best and...not so good...in human beings, looking back at our history as an organization, we remember challenges and unavoidable heartbreaking choices. But what stands out above all are the stories of resilience in animals—and the humanity in people who have stepped up to save and improve the lives of animals.

During these times, we have happy story of resilience and commitment of frontline workers and volunteers. Just last month, 50 cats and kittens were rescued by RAPS from a situation in Richmond. This "springtime surprise" included several pregnant mamas, so the number in the rescue group is now 71... with another litter on the way. Again, the communi-



Photo submitted
Some of the kittens among 71 felines rescued by RAPS in recent weeks.

ty has come together. First, foster families stepped up to care for pregnant moms and babies. Then the adoption applications came pouring in.

Other challenging times, as readers will remember, include the tragic outbreak of rabbit hemorrhagic disease, which swept across British Columbia and elsewhere two years ago. This highly infectious virus leads to a horrific death. When it was detected on the premises of the RAPS City of Richmond Animal Shelter, we were forced to humanely euthanize all 65 rabbits in our care. Particularly because we are a no-kill agency, this tragic event devastated staff and volunteers. A consolation was the outpouring of kindness from members of our community who shared our grief.

Another example of our community stepping up is Isabelle, a beautiful dog who was severely burned in a home fire at Christmastime 2016. In another jurisdiction, Isabelle would have been euthanized. RAPS called on the community for support and provided Isabelle with the medical care and support she needed to recover and go on to live a happy life.

Every time we face a challenging situation—

when dozens of dogs were dumped in our parking lot in the dark of night in pouring rain, when we are alerted to a litter of puppies, kittens or bunnies who have been orphaned and need immediate rescue, when we rescued Donut, a dog who was locked in a suitcase in the middle of the woods, when called to a tragic road accident involving domestic or wild animals—our staff and volunteers do not respond alone. We know that we operate with the support and love of a community alongside us. And for that RAPS is grateful.

Perhaps it is because of the unusual nature of our lives right now that I've been reflecting on the dichotomy of challenges being met with the kindness of our community. As we slowly move into the next phase of this pandemic situation, and as RAPS prepares for our second quarter-century, let's keep in mind the silver linings that inevitably flow from challenges. All of this is possible when—and only because—a community comes together and we are all there for the animals and their people.

Eyal Lichtmann is CEO and executive director of the Regional Animal Protection Society.

MY NAME IS POLAR

Polar is a good, quiet, and low-maintenance boy who avoids causing a ruckus. He enjoys playing with his toys, but also enjoys quiet time hiding out in his hidey house. He would do great in a quiet home where he can learn to socialize well with his new family.

****Due to COVID-19, all meet and greets will be by appointment only. Please call us at 604-275-2036 to set up an appointment.****



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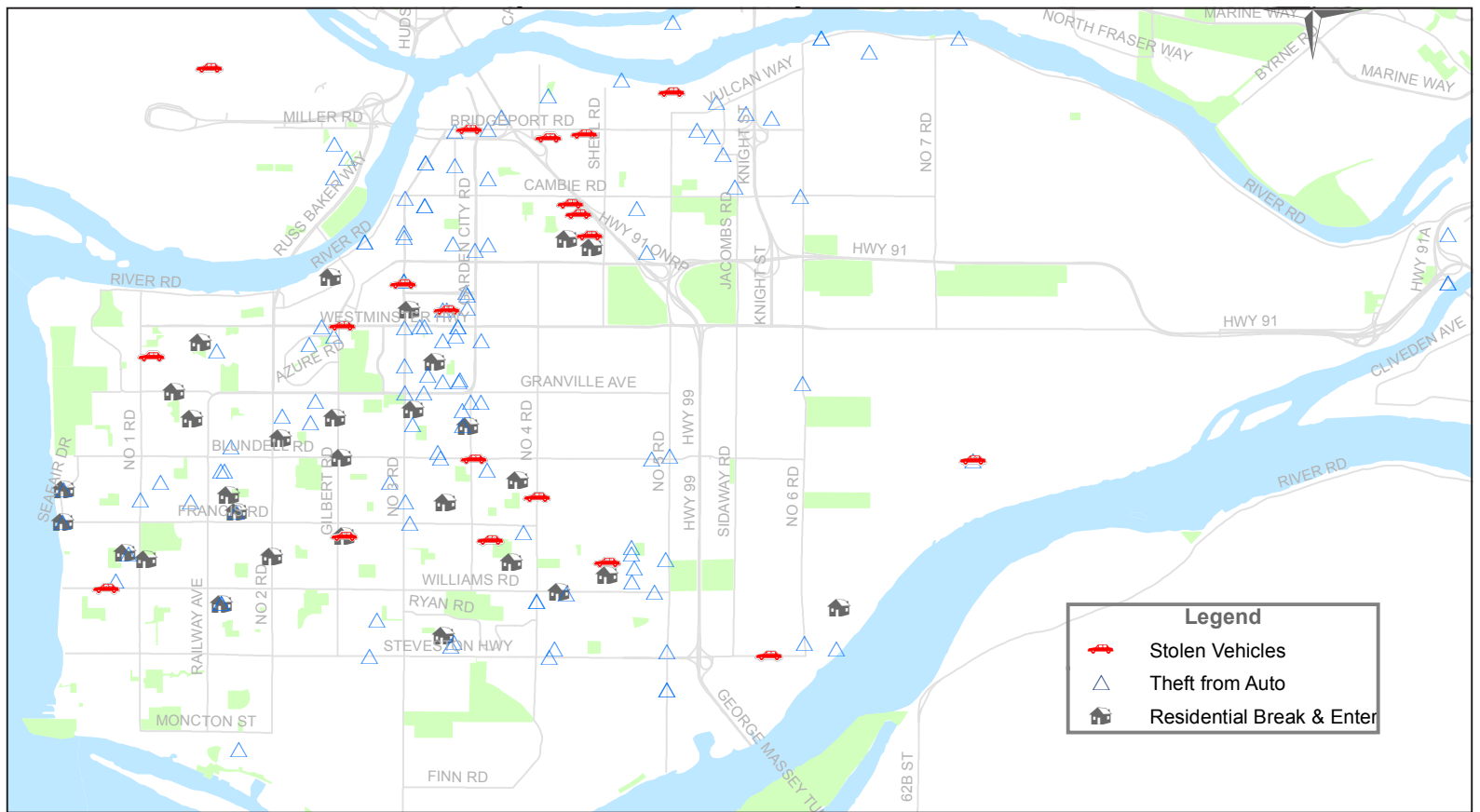
The RAPS Animal Hospital and Animal Ambulance are supported by Applewood Nissan





RCMP

Crime Map April 1 - 30, 2020



Multi-tasking blamed for increase in home fires

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

An increase in house fires is being attributed in part to more people staying home due to COVID-19.

Richmond Fire-Rescue average about 30 "fire situations" each month, says city representative Clay Adams. But since the pandemic, they have seen a 30 per cent increase in incidents.

Fire-Rescue chief Tim Wilkinson says one reason for the increase is people multi-tasking at home—putting something on the stove to cook and becoming distracted by another chore or task.

"Inattention typically leads to additional fires," he says.

Wilkinson adds that outdoor fires are often caused by cigarette butts, particularly with warm weather returning. The city is putting together a public education program to reduce fires called "Stick it, don't flick it."

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Photo by Chung Chow

Richmond Fire-Rescue has seen an increase in house fires now that more people are staying home during the pandemic.

Capulet Art Gallery hosting online exhibition

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

While art lovers are unable to visit gallery spaces in person, there are other opportunities for engagement.

Richmond's Capulet Art Gallery is hosting an online exhibition called Pan-Asian Cultural Connections—a collaboration with explorAsian—until June 30.

The exhibition celebrates Asian Heritage Month in May, and showcases the work of 11 artists from six countries in Asia: China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines and Iran.

Gallery owner Kevan Seng developed the exhibition after a conversation with friend Leticia Sanchez—who is also the current president of explorAsian. While originally intended to be hosted in Capulet's physical gallery, COVID-19 restrictions caused the exhibition to move online.

"At first, I wasn't sure how to do this, as it would be difficult to mix and mingle without the mix and mingling," says Seng.

But the artists who had committed to being a part of the exhibition were happy to continue in an online format—so Seng created an online catalogue with information about each piece.

After the catalogue's initial launch May 1, he plans to schedule social media posts about some works and arrange talks with some of the artists. In one Zoom talk, featured artist Chrissy Cheung discussed her five by nine foot painting "Vermilion" in addition to other works.

Seng was disappointed when he was forced to move the exhibition online. But with Phase 2 restrictions coming into effect recently, Seng hopes that the gallery will be able to open soon and continue the exhibition in-person.

"Viewing the works will be by appointment and wearing personal protective equipment will be mandatory to keep everyone safe," he says.

To learn more about Pan-Asian Cultural Connections and view works online at www.capuleart.com.

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Art by Chrissy Cheung

Capulet Art Gallery is hosting an online exhibition celebrating Asian Heritage Month.



Art by Lauren Brevner



Art by Taka Sudo

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RICHMOND AT A GLANCE

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Recreation facilities starting to re-open—slowly

By DON FENNELL
@rmdsentinel

Richmond is taking the first steps to re-opening its recreation amenities.

Though a return to organized games will have to wait, most outdoor parks, including basketball and outdoor tennis courts, opened May 20 as part of the city's plan to restore services closed or restricted due to COVID-19.

Council approved implementing its program and services restoration plan, a step-by-step approach to opening various city services—all while stressing the need for people to maintain physical distancing and health guidelines.

"This is a carefully-planned and phased approach to restoring many of the amenities and services closed in our community while maintaining and protecting public safety," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. "We know the past few months have brought uncertainty, frustration and even fear and that there is desire to restore services and facilities to where they were before the pandemic."

But Brodie cautioned it is crucial any decisions the city makes in the coming weeks "must not compromise ongoing efforts to flatten the curve of COVID-19."

"That is why this plan is a cautious, step-by-step approach to returning access to the community in a controlled, staged and responsible manner."

The initial phase of re-opening recreational amenities also includes bike and skate, lacrosse and volleyball courts. But the number of users



Photo by Jaana Björk

Richmond is gradually planning to re-open its recreation facilities, starting with most outdoor parks May 20.

permitted at any one time will be limited to eight people. Again, the city stressed there must be no organized games. A second round of recreational openings is being planned for May 27. But, again, no organized competition will be allowed.

The city will be closely monitoring the success of the initial phase of re-opening, ensuring users are adhering to the rules and guidelines. Community ambassadors and bylaw officers will patrol parks and other areas to remind people of the rules and reinforce the need for safety. Signage will also be installed at the sites.

Based on the success of phase one, the city will move to a second phase of expanded open-

ings to include access to outdoor park amenities such as playgrounds and picnic tables, and permitting more players on basketball and volleyball courts at one time.

Outdoor programs such as Walk Richmond will also be restored, and outdoor fitness classes could be offered through some community centres on a controlled basis. A date for commencing a second phase has not yet been determined.

Re-opening of more recreation facilities, outdoor swimming pools, arenas and some registered programs and services could also be considered as part of later phases.

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Community ambassadors continue to enforce distancing in Richmond



Photo by Jaana Björk

A group of ambassadors are enforcing distancing regulations throughout Richmond during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By HANNAH SCOTT
Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Since Easter weekend, "community ambassadors" have been monitoring behaviour around Richmond to inform people of guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initially a pilot program using auxiliary staff lifeguards, the program has evolved and now includes about a dozen individuals, says city representative Clay Adams.

The ambassadors are monitoring parks, community facilities and public areas to identify situations of non-compliance.

After the Victoria Day long weekend, city representatives reported an improvement in group behaviours in Steveston and Garry Point Park. The busiest area that weekend was Minoru Park.

Three small teams of ambassadors roam around Richmond to enforce distancing rules each day. They aren't issuing tickets, but aim instead to educate and inform.

"While some individuals have been disrespectful to the ambassadors, people are generally responsive to their requests and even ask questions about the city's plans for the ongoing restoration of services and amenities," says Adams.

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Photo by
Chung Chow
Richmond's
Carson Bradley
is staying fit,
hoping the
fall will deliver
some good
news.

Bradley staying on track amidst a crisis

By DON FENNELL
@rmdsentinel

Carson Bradley knows the difference a split second can make. At the Canadian Inter-University Sports Track and Field Championships in Edmonton this past March, the 2019 McMath Secondary School graduate helped the Toronto Varsity Blues men's 4x400 metre relay team sprint to silver. It was a result Bradley—who ran the third leg—hoped to build on.

Then, just as quickly, the coronavirus pandemic changed everything.

"I'm still training, albeit in a more virtual way than I'm used to," explains Bradley. "My team has daily Zoom workouts where we continue to do circuits and stretching. And I've been following coach's training plan that he sends to me. I'm running around my neighbourhood, but away from people. My focus is now on staying in shape for when September rolls around."

Like athletes everywhere, he is hoping that by this fall things will begin returning to normal. But if that happens, and what it might look like, is unknown.

A two-time Richmond community high school male athlete of the year, Bradley's earliest memories of track are of trying all the events at Dixon Elementary School.

"I remember it being one of my favourite parts of school, despite not really standing out," he says. "And through high school I also ran cross-country because it was really fun for me."

Bradley found his niche as a sprinter after winning the 100 metres in Grade 6 at the BC Elementary Track and Field Championships, an event hosted annually by the Richmond Kajaks—long one of the country's most successful track and field clubs.

The following season, with that first win behind him, his parents enrolled him in the Kajaks. He remembers vividly stepping up to run with the high school group and training alongside 18-year-olds, intimidating as it was.

"I think it was a critical time for me, as among many things, it taught me to overcome uncomfortable situations," he says. "I really love the pure exertion

of a sprint. You really have to give it your all every time."

Greatly inspired and influenced by his parents, his appreciation grows daily for how they've fought through adversity to accomplish many things in their careers and lives. He also has great admiration and respect for Robert Esmie, the legendary Canadian sprinter who is also his former coach.

"Robert was a mentor who taught me to push beyond what I felt I could do. He taught me how to fight the urge to give up. Today, I understand how valuable his lessons were."

When he's not training or competing himself, Bradley is a big sports fan. Hanging out with friends to watch any of the big sports including soccer, basketball, football, rugby and hockey is a favourite pastime.

But he's also got a studious side, one that includes keen interests in politics, business and the stock market. It's quite conceivable he'll pursue a career in one.

"I have some ideas of what I want to do, but I'm still exploring," Bradley says. "I like the idea of combining stats, economics and politics in some way."

Bradley worked last summer in Richmond-Steveston MLA John Yap's constituency office, and the idea of one day representing the public—perhaps even running for prime minister—intrigues him.

Adhering to a disciplined schedule could definitely prove helpful.

"I try my best to go to bed and wake up at the same times," he explains. "I always plan what I want to accomplish each day, and then do my best to execute it. Staying busy is what helps me adjust."

And since he's been home, Bradley has also made it a mission to keep informed about current events, to read

a book every few days, and to work on honing his programming skills. While these are challenging times to be sure, Bradley believes people need to stay positive and healthy.

"Although people can do their part by avoiding others, we need to take care of our personal health by eating properly and exercising," he says. "The healthier we are, the stronger we're going to be to fight off COVID-19 successfully."

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I think it was a critical time for me, as among many things, it taught me to overcome uncomfortable situations.

— Carson Bradley

Library embraces #RichmondHasHeart initiative

The creative staff at Richmond Public Library has put their collective imagination together to decorate both the upstairs and downstairs windows at the Brighthouse branch in Minoru Plaza.

The effort reflects the staff's enthusiasm and support of the city's #RichmondHasHeart initiative.



Curbside holds pickup debuts

After weeks of closure, Richmond Public Library staff are finding new ways to serve the community.

Following guidelines set out by the province, the Brighthouse branch launched a curbside holds pickup service last week. This service will soon be available at Steveston, Cambie and Ironwood branches as well.

"While we're enjoying connecting with so many community members through online programs, we absolutely miss seeing you and we know you miss coming to the library," said chief librarian Susan Walters. "As we begin to restore library services, I share the library board's perspective that a slow and steady approach is the right way to proceed for our community and the library."

There is no requirement to return books already borrowed. All due dates have been extended to July 31 and no fines are being charged.

The Brighthouse book returns also opened last week and will remain open daily. As of May 25, book returns are open at other branches from 10 a.m. Mondays to 4:30 p.m. Thursdays.

For the curbside holds pickup and book return, a system is in place to ensure physical distancing and safety procedures for returned materials.

"(We wanted to) decorate the windows that face the plaza to show our support for the essential frontline workers," says Stephanie Vokey, the library's public relations officer. "We'd like to tell the community that we miss seeing them at the library, and that even though our doors may be closed, we're here for them."

(This communication is not intended to cause or induce a breach of any existing agency agreement)

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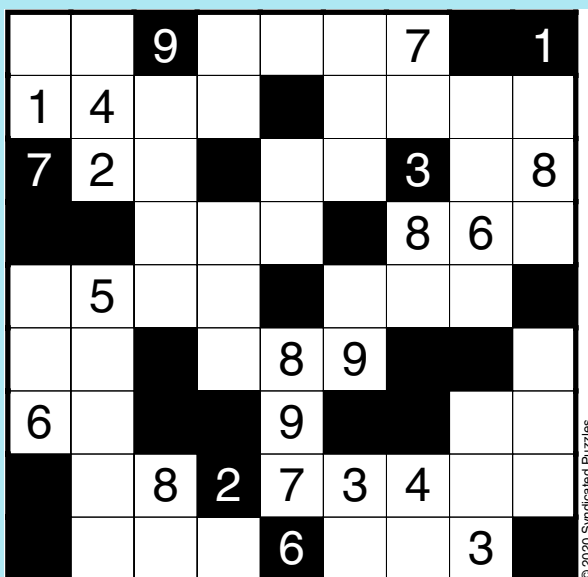
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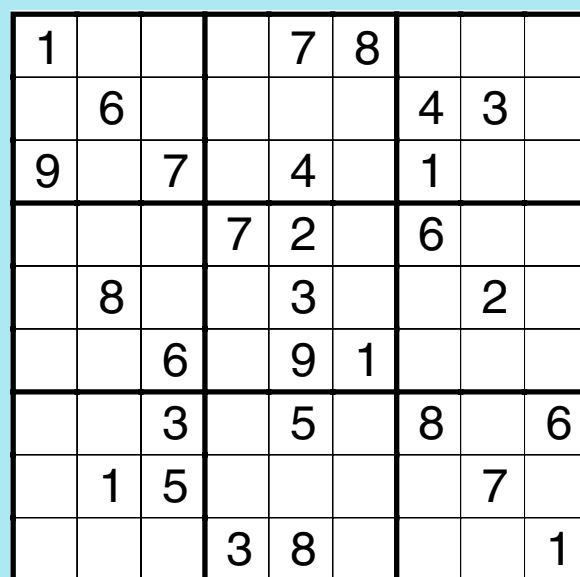
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