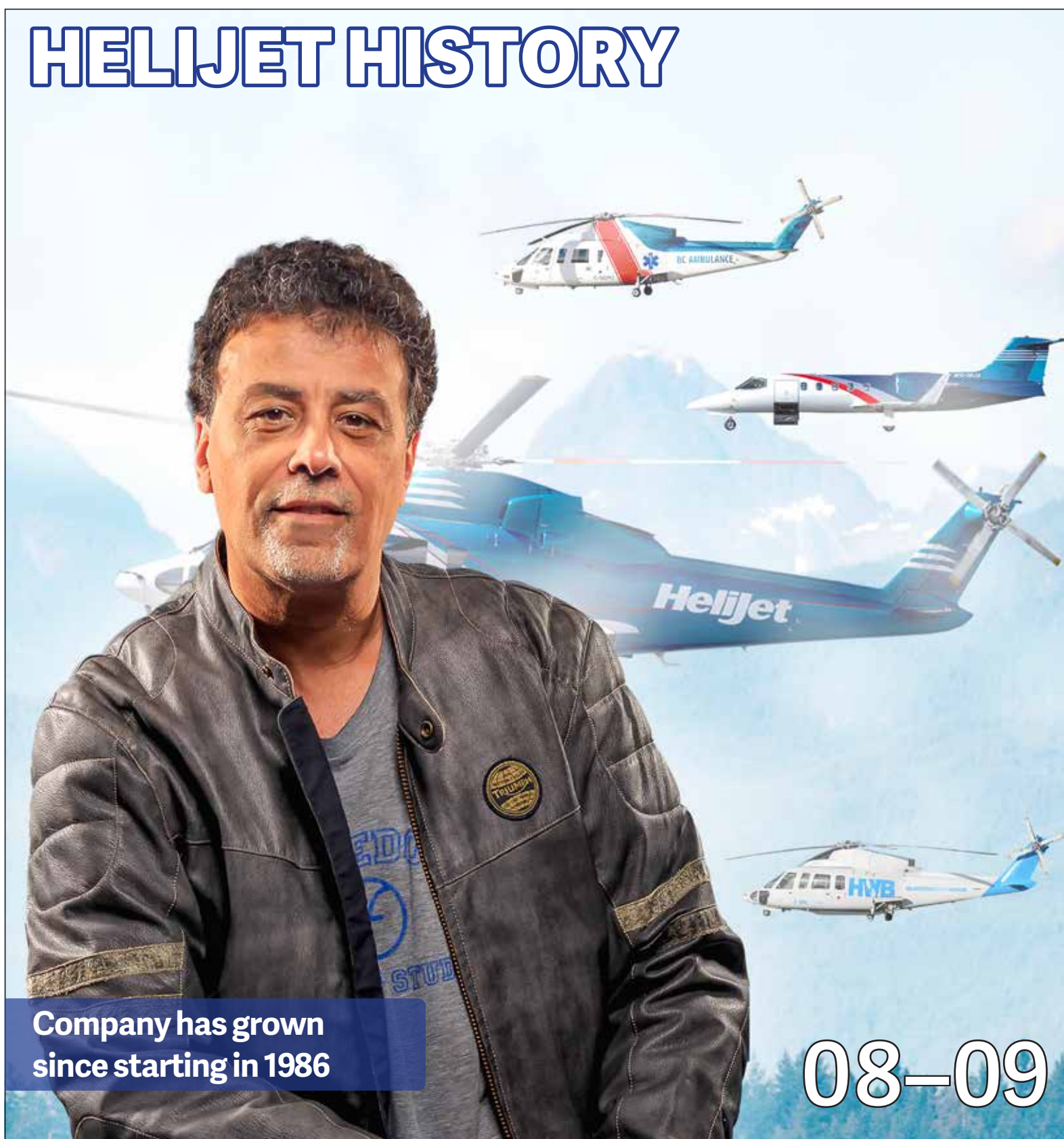




HELIJET HISTORY



**Company has grown
since starting in 1986**

08-09

Danny Sitnam, president and chief executive officer of Helijet, shares the company's journey and how it's grown since starting in 1986 with one helicopter and 14 employees.



**Do you live,
work or play
in Richmond?**



Take a short 10 minute survey

Share your thoughts. Help shape the future of City of Richmond's parks, recreation, arts, culture, heritage and library facilities, services and programs.

2 ways to participate



Telephone Survey

Take time to answer if you receive a call or text from Oraclepoll Research (Ottawa, ON).



Online Survey

www.LetsTalkRichmond.ca/NeedsAssessment

Survey closes Sunday, March 12.

The surveys will be available in English as well as Simplified and Traditional Chinese.

Your input is valuable. We appreciate your time to participate!

For more information, visit:

www.LetsTalkRichmond.ca/NeedsAssessment



Richmond seeks comments on youth strategy

The City of Richmond is asking all youth aged 13 to 24, their family members, and those who work with youth to provide feedback on its Draft Youth Strategy—an important framework to support and meet the unique needs of Richmond youth over the next decade.

There are a number of ways people can comment on the strategy's priorities and action plan. They include:

- Visiting LetsTalkRichmond.ca to review the draft strategy and complete the survey. The deadline to submit the survey is April 2 at 11:59 p.m.

- Connecting with the city's roaming street teams that will be engaging with youth at various locations throughout Richmond. For dates, times, and location, follow @cityofrichmond youth on Instagram or visit LetsTalkRichmond.ca/draftyouthstrategy

- Attending a social night for youth and young adults aged 19 to 24 at a local Richmond venue. Attendees can participate in a discussion about the Draft Youth Strategy, with light refreshments served. For date, time, and location follow @cityofrichmond youth on Instagram or visit LetsTalkRichmond.ca/draftyouthstrategy

The city is also engaging with a number of key youth-serving organizations including community associations and societies, Richmond

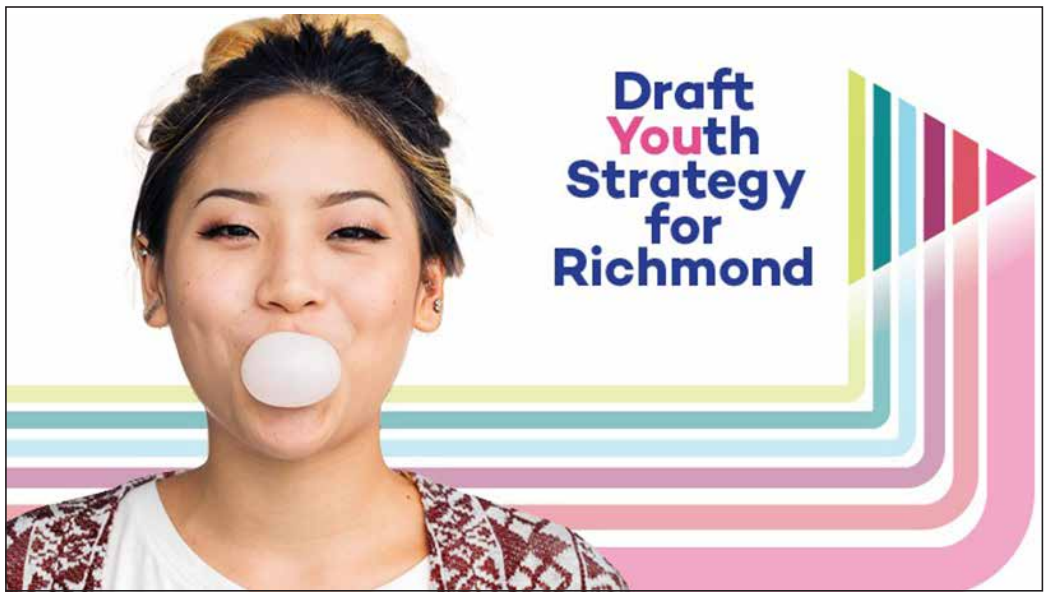


Photo courtesy City of Richmond

The city is seeking comments on its Draft Youth Strategy. Comments can be submitted anytime before April 3.

School District No. 38, Vancouver Coastal Health, Foundry Richmond, and non-profit groups to ensure input at this stage continues to be thorough.

Feedback collected through the engagement process will ensure the diverse perspectives and interests of youth and those supporting youth

are represented in the final strategy before it is presented to city council later this year.

For more information, visit LetsTalkRichmond.ca, email youthservices@richmond.ca, or call 604-276-4000 and ask for the program lead, youth.

Provide feedback on programs and services



Photo by Jaana Björk

The 2023 Community Services Needs Assessment Study is underway through March 12.

The 2023 Community Services Needs Assessment Study is underway. Through a telephone or online survey, Richmond residents are encouraged to share their opinions and provide valuable feedback on facilities, programs, and services delivered by the city's Community Services Division and its commu-

nity association and society partners.

"Our city's parks, libraries, recreation, arts, culture, and heritage facilities, programs, and services play an important role in contributing to the well-being of our community," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. "As Richmond neighbourhoods continue to grow and change, it

is vital for us to have current feedback from residents about their evolving participation and needs. I encourage all community members to participate in the telephone survey if contacted, or participate through the online survey."

There are two ways for the public to participate:

- A telephone survey, with the goal of reaching 1,000 residents, began recently. On behalf of the city, Oraclepoll Research will be contacting Richmond households with interviewers fluent in English, Mandarin, and Cantonese.

- An online survey at LetsTalkRichmond.ca is open to everyone through March 12. The online survey is available in English as well as Simplified and Traditional Chinese.

Information gathered will provide valuable insights into planning and delivering future community services facilities and programs to enhance community well-being as the city continues to grow and transform.

Visit LetsTalkRichmond.ca for information on the project along with the online survey and project contact information.

City council officially adopts antisemitism definition

Recently, as part of its commitment to create a more diverse and inclusive city, Richmond city council adopted the terminology and definitions in Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019–2022, including Discrimination, Anti-Asian Racism, Anti-Black Racism, Islamophobia, and Antisemitism.

This motion made Richmond the latest Canadian jurisdiction to adopt or commit to using the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. The decision received resounding support from leaders of Richmond's Jewish community, who, in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), advocated for the definition to be adopted by the government as they looked to develop tools to tackle racism and hate.

The IHRA working definition of antisemitism is the consensus definition that best reflects lived experiences of Jews today. Developed by IHRA's Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial, the definition is grounded in the research of the world's foremost experts on antisemitism and the Holocaust. It is supported by the United Nations, the European Union, and thirty countries including Canada and the United States.

"The City of Richmond's commitment and leadership in combating hate and discrimination is an example to follow," said Nico Slobinsky, Pacific region senior director, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. "To combat hate effectively, we must be able to define it. By adopting the definitions of prejudice set out in Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy, which includes IHRA, Richmond city council demonstrates the importance it places in understanding how communities experience hate."

The motion is timely, because in 2021 Canada saw a 27 per cent surge in police-reported hate crimes. Antisemitic incidents targeting the Jewish community accounted for a significant portion: 55 per cent of all religiously motivated incidents, and 14 per cent of overall reported hate crimes. And yet, in Canada, Jews comprise less than one per cent of the population.

Richmond's adoption of these definitions of racism will work to develop a framework to identify, understand, and combat the hate and oppression experienced by minorities. According to the



Photo by Jaana Björk

Richmond city council has officially adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism.

motion, the adopted definitions of hate, including IHRA, "will inform the City of Richmond on setting policies and standards of behaviours that we can expect our council, staff, contractors, suppliers, and stakeholders to meet."

"Mayor (Malcolm) Brodie and Richmond city council sent a strong message that antisemitism or hate in any form have no place in society," said Ezra Shanken, chief executive officer of the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver. "The rise of antisemitic hate crimes across the country has made the need to counter them urgent. No one should live in fear because of who they are. The IHRA definition will help the people of Richmond identify antisemitism in all its manifestations so that they can help put a stop to it and protect the values of diversity, equality, and community that we cherish."

Coun. Alexa Loo introduced the motion to adopt the terminology and definitions of hate es-

tablished on pages 21 to 24 of Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019–2022, in their entirety, on Feb. 6.

"Every community should be empowered to define the hate and oppression they face. It is important that Jewish lived experience—that of our community in Canada and around the world—is reflected in the understanding of antisemitism. That is why the adoption of IHRA is so meaningful to the Jewish community. (This) motion is a victory for all who stand against hate—no matter which group is the immediate target," said Slobinsky.

The IHRA non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

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Workshop series for artists launches

The City of Richmond is announcing the 2023 launch of Art at Work, a series of free professional development workshops designed for professional artists and arts organizations.

With workshops and presentations on a wide array of topics, the series builds knowledge and skills relevant to pursuing a professional practice in the field of public art, performance, visual art, and community arts.

This year's workshop sessions are:

- Tax Basics for Artists, facilitated by Marianna Scott of Quantum Accounting Services, on Feb. 25 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. This workshop is an online webinar.

- Conservation and Maintenance: Best Practices for Artists Working in Public Art, facilitated by art conservator Sabina Sutherland, on March 4 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. This workshop is an online webinar.

- Conservation Best Practices for Studio-Based Artists, facilitated by art conservator Sabina Sutherland, on April 27 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. This workshop will be held in the Performance Hall at Richmond Cultural Centre.

- Applying for Public Art Calls, facilitated by Richmond Public Art public art planner Bilianna Velkova, on May 13 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. This workshop will be held in the Performance Hall at Richmond Cultural Centre.



Photo courtesy City of Richmond

Water Off A Duck's Back by Douglas Coupland is part of the Art at Work March 4 workshop, Conservation and Maintenance: Best Practices for Artists Working in Public Art.

- Art Rental Information Session, facilitated by Florene Belmore of North Van Arts, on June 10 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. This workshop will be held in the Performance Hall at Richmond Cultural Centre.

- Preparing Exhibition Proposals, facilitated by Richmond Art Gallery director Shaun Dacey, on July 6 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. This workshop will be held in the Performance Hall at Richmond Cultural Centre.

- Richmond Arts and Culture Grant Program Information and Application Tips, facilitated by Community Cultural Development program manager Camyar Chaichian, on Sept. 28 from 6 to 8 p.m. This workshop will be held in the Performance Hall at Richmond Cultural Centre.

For more information or to register for sessions, visit richmond.ca/culture/artistsopportunities/artists

Registration opens one month in advance of each session.

For questions including those regarding accessibility and adaptations for participation, contact Todd Evanger at Todd.Evanger@richmond.ca or 604-247-8320.

Art at Work is presented in partnership by the City of Richmond Arts Services and Richmond Art Gallery.

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Pilot project protects Sturgeon Bank marsh

By HANNAH SCOTT
Senior reporter

Richmond's Sturgeon Bank is the site of a new pilot project aimed at protecting the crucial marsh area through sediment deposits.

The tidal marsh off the west coast of Richmond has been receding for some time, losing hundreds of metres of marsh. Investigation into the problem has increased in the last decade; senior restoration biologist Eric Balke first got involved in 2016 while working on his Master's degree research.

"It's really tricky to conduct science in such a dynamic place, such a variable place, and the marsh recession has occurred over such a large area and such a large period of time," he says. "Trying to play that forensic scientist can be a bit challenging."

The current Sturgeon Bank Sediment Enhancement Pilot Project, which is led by Ducks Unlimited Canada in partnership with several other groups, is part of a larger initiative—the Fraser River Estuary Salmon Habitat (FRESH) Restoration Project. This government-funded project, ongoing since 2021 and ending in 2024, is part of the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund. Through it, Ducks Unlimited and its partners are hoping to restore estuary tidal marsh habitat for the benefit of salmon and other fish in the Fraser River.

The sediment enhancement project is receiving additional funding from Tsawwassen First Nation and Vancouver Fraser Port Authority. Balke says there is potential for the project to scale up. Current funding allows for two years of annual sediment addition, and more funding is being sought for the future.

"We want to add sediment to an area of receded tidal marsh," he says. "We use a technique that is trying to mimic natural sediment delivery that would have happened from the river itself. (We're) going to take sediment that's already being dredged from the Fraser River as part of navigation—while normally that sediment would be dumped out into the Salish Sea, instead we're going to reuse that sediment—and pump it through a temporary sediment delivery pipeline into the area of receded tidal marsh."

The sediment enhancement project addresses one possible mechanism for tidal marsh shrinkage proposed by Balke and other researchers. Other possibilities may include relative sea level rise, snow geese and Canada geese eating the marsh for large parts of the year, and increased salinity due to diverting sediment.

Restoring the tidal marsh will benefit salmon and migratory birds, as well as reducing local flooding.

"Tidal marshes support coastal flood protection and add to coastal flood defences," says Balke. "Doing nothing potentially makes (us) even more vulnerable to coastal flooding."

Balke calls it a "win-win-win" because dredged sediment, which would other-



Photos courtesy Ducks Unlimited Canada

A pilot project at Sturgeon Bank off the west coast of Richmond aims to protect the crucial marsh area.

wise go to waste, can be reused to restore the marsh.

"We're taking a bit of a precautionary approach, not dumping a ton of sediment out there that will be seen as mounds for years," says Balke. "The first year, we're targeting just under 13,000 cubic metres of sediment."

During the initial stage, a pipeline is placed by crew members. Sediment will be pumped in over a period of four to five days. A hands-off approach, with no additional machinery digging sediment around, minimizes impacts to the environment.

"From an ecological perspective, the Fraser River Delta is a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance," says Balke. "From a bird perspective, it's the last stop on the Pacific flyby migratory route up to the Arctic; it's of hemispheric importance. The Fraser Delta is the single most important location in Canada for raptors and waterfowl; from a bird perspective, this is a gem. From a fish perspective, it's the largest salmon river in Canada and the Fraser Estuary is the biggest estuary in western Canada. Juvenile Pacific salmon can rely very heavily upon the tidal marshes of the estuary as part of a key aspect of their life cycle."

With impending sea level rise also on the horizon, the sediment project provides an opportunity to improve areas like Sturgeon Bank; Balke is in favour of planning for the future by trying pilot projects like this one to see what is most effective.

Since the west coast of Richmond is subject to strong winds and waves, it is particularly in need of protection.

"Fish and wildlife aside, from a selfish perspective these tidal marshes are helping to protect us—if they continue to die off, that makes us more vulnerable to coastal flooding from sea level rise," says Balke.

Individuals can help by remaining on the dyke paths and keeping their dogs out of the marshes. People can also speak to local elected officials to advocate for what Balke calls "nature-based solutions to coastal flooding."

"I've had very positive reception from (Richmond) mayor and council and city staff; they've been supportive of this project and helpful," he says.

People walking along the dyke will see information boards and a scannable QR code that provides more information.

"This is one project in a huge delta—it requires a village, as the metaphor goes. We're all required for shared stewardship of this important area. When it comes to big things like sea level rise, it can feel overwhelming," says Balke. "We don't have to feel hopeless to these overwhelming challenges—we can chip away at it, but we do need to take action."

•hannahs@richmondsentinel.ca



RCMP reports decline in hate crimes

Hate crimes and hate incidents declined in Richmond last year, according to Richmond RCMP's 2022 year in review report.

The report was presented to the city recently. Overall, the number of reported hate crimes and hate incidents dropped by 24 per cent, from 45 in 2021 to 34 in 2022.

Hate specific offences in the Criminal Code of Canada include "advocating or promoting genocide" and "inciting hatred." Hate propaganda falls into these two categories. In Canada, hate crimes include these offences, but they also include any criminal offence committed against a person or property, if that offence is motivated by hate.

Whether it be based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other similar factor, hate is one of many factors considered by the courts (judge or justice) during sentencing proceedings. That is, hate is considered once an accused person has been convicted of a criminal offence.

A hate incident may be motivated by the same factors as a hate crime, but these are typically incidents where a criminal offence has not been committed. Derogatory, degrading, and distasteful comments may fall into this category if there is no other criminal offence committed at the time.

Richmond RCMP recognizes that both hate crimes and hate incidents have a negative effect on the community, and police are committed to investigating all such complaints thoroughly.

While there was a very slight increase in reported hate incidents—an increase of two from 24 in 2021 to 26 in 2022—the most noticeable statistic was the significant decline in hate crimes reported in 2022. This number dropped from 21 in 2021 to eight in 2022, which represents a 62 per cent drop.

Over the past few years, Richmond RCMP has undertaken a number of proactive initiatives including the creation of the Diversity and Inclusion Section, which works with various community partners to recognize the cultural diversity of the city while promoting acceptance, tolerance, and inclusion. Last fall, in collaboration with the city, Richmond RCMP also launched a "Hate has no place" poster campaign, which encourages victims and witnesses to call police.

Richmond RCMP's membership also reflects the diversity within the local community—currently, nearly half of the members can speak a second language. While Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Punjabi, Hindi, and French are the most common, Richmond RCMP officers are able to serve in 29 different languages or dialects.

"Richmond RCMP remains fully committed to giving hate crimes and hate incidents our fullest attention and oversight," says Chief Supt. Dave Chauhan, officer in charge of Richmond RCMP. "The decline in reported incidents may suggest that Richmond RCMP's no-tolerance approach to hate is working, but now is not the time to relax as a community. Richmond RCMP continues to encourage victims and witnesses to come forward to report these matters to us directly. By doing so, our investigators can get to work without delay, investi-



Photo courtesy Richmond RCMP

Richmond RCMP said there was a significant decline in hate crimes and hate incidents reported to police last year.

gating them fulsomely in the first instance."

The latest Richmond RCMP report also noted a decline in anti-Asian related hate crimes and hate incidents. When combined, anti-Asian hate crimes and hate incidents made up 52 per cent of the reports to Richmond RCMP in 2020 and 61 per cent in 2021. In 2022, that number dropped to 26 per cent.

"Although this is encouraging, we must remain vigilant, no matter who the victim may be," says Chauhan. "When a person makes a racist, homophobic, or other abhorrent comment to a stranger, it may not meet the threshold of a criminal offense, but hate is not welcome in our community. We need victims and witnesses to continue reporting these matters to us so we can keep up the pressure. Hate has no place here."

Award nominations open

Celebrate Richmond's volunteers with the annual Volunteers Are Stars Awards, which will be held in-person for the first time since the pandemic began.

The award ceremony is scheduled to happen on April 19 during National Volunteer Week. The awards, presented by Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives, recognize the community's most dedicated, passionate, and inspiring volunteers.

There are four categories that recognize individual, group, youth, and leadership volunteers. People can submit multiple nominations.

The eventual winners—one in each category—will be chosen by an impartial panel of community leaders. Every nominee will be recognized during the event and throughout the Volunteers Are Stars promotional campaign.

Nominations are open through March 10. To learn more or submit a nomination, visit rcrg.org/vas

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Richmond based Helijet International

The *Richmond Sentinel* recently spoke with Danny Sitnam, president and chief executive officer of Helijet International, and discovered the story behind Helijet.

Sitnam was born in London, England. When he was one year old his father, a civil aeronautical engineer, was transferred to Brazil. Six years later, the family was moved to Vancouver. In the early 1970s, Sitnam responded to a newspaper ad for a helicopter company seeking investors, and included was a free helicopter flying lesson. He loved it so much he went on to achieve a pilot's license in 1976, and the rest is history.

Jim Gordon (JG): *We're here on location at Helijet International with Danny Sitnam, president and (chief executive officer). This is very cool to see your operation behind the scenes. You've been here since the beginning in 1986—can you tell us how it all happened?*

Danny Sitnam (DS): Right after Expo (86) we launched our service from Vancouver to Victoria, and continued to climb from there.

JG: *You started with one helicopter and 14 employees. Jump ahead all these years later, you now have 15 helicopters, 150 employees, and 100,000 passengers a year. Talk about your company and how it came together by going back to when you started in 1986, right in the middle of when Vancouver was in a state of excitement with Expo (86).*

DS: I remember the day we launched, we had one passenger all day and seven flights. It was a challenging six to 12 months as the brand was not known. We were still learning how to sell seats while we refined the operation and ran a scheduled service.

JG: *Looking back, what kind of response did you get from travellers new to using this type of transportation?*

DS: There wasn't anyone in North America using the type of transportation we were proposing which was a scheduled point-to-point destination (downtown to downtown).

JG: *Talk about the changes in trends in passengers. I sense business travellers are a big part of your business—are there a lot more tourists and personal travellers compared to 20 years ago?*

DS: We're seeing a lot more family and friends travelling, as convenience is a big selling feature. You can be in Victoria in 35 minutes and because of this we're starting to see more tourism and hospitality business, but our predominant customer is still the business traveller.

JG: *One of the other areas that you have been proactive (in) is expanding into other areas. You are one of the largest providers of air medical services in Western Canada for B.C. health services. Because of this, you added a base in Prince Rupert to accommodate this expansion. Talk about that addition to your business.*

DS: We have been a service provider for B.C. health services for 25 years. We won the latest contract about 12 years ago and supplied a designated aircraft in Prince Rupert and two aircrafts out of our Richmond base. That has been a big change to Helijet and our mission profile. It's a project that our people can feel good about, because they're saving lives.

JG: *Staying with that theme of helping others, one of the helicopters I saw when I first walked into the hangar today is a relatively new project, Helicopters Without Borders, created to help those in need. Tell us about that addition to your family.*

DS: My son is a pilot and a captain with us. We've always been involved in supporting non-profits, as Helijet believes in giving back to the community. Helicopters Without Borders came from when my son and I looked at the opportunities and looked at how we could use our technology to service rural and remote communities that don't have access to air. The reality is, it's too expensive to use a helicopter to go back and forth to transport groceries, water, and so forth to these remote areas. So we decided to create Helicopters Without Borders and formed a charity status. We raised money through the private sector



to help pay for the helicopter time or plane time to fly into these remote areas. It's been operating for a year—the awareness of the program is coming. We have certain contracts with the First Nations Health Authority and we delivered all the vaccine transfers to these rural and remote areas. So it's a real good opportunity to give back.

JG: *How did you go about planning for additional routes from when you started back in 1986 with Vancouver/Victoria?*

DS: We started with routes between Vancouver/Victoria, then we tried Victoria/Seattle for many years, then shut the Seattle destination down. We



al – home to years of history



Photos courtesy Helijet

Danny Sitnam (left) is the president and chief executive officer of Helijet. His son Owen is the chief executive officer of Helicopters Without Borders.

that a lot of big manufacturers, science, engineering and money is going into electrifying these aircraft. One day, we will see helicopters and drones and even un-manned vehicles running on either electrics or hydrogen power and moving away from fossil fuel. So, we want to be in front of that process. We established a new group called the Canadian Advance Air Mobility, and it's to educate and promote sustainable aviation. We're hoping and planning Vancouver will be the platform to launch services in Canada for these new technologies.

JG: *You're not just the president of Helijet—you have a son, Owen, (who) is also a pilot, and he's also the (chief executive officer) of Helicopters Without Borders. I also understand that you are also a pilot and inducted into the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame.*

DS: My son Owen is an active captain with our company and has taken it upon himself to launch Helicopters Without Borders with my assistance. A few other board members and a lot of staff are supporting the aircraft, so he's well on his way to establishing Helicopters Without Borders in British Columbia and eventually nationally and internationally. I am a pilot, I still retain my license. In 2017 I was nominated for entry into the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame, and how I look at it, it's the 150 to 160 people that work here that brought us to that opportunity—I just grabbed the baton on behalf of everyone.

JG: *I commend you on what you and your team have accomplished and given back in 35 years. It's been a pleasure, and thank you for sharing your story.*

For the full video interview, visit richmondsentinel.ca/videos

operated other routes: Vancouver/Abbotsford/Victoria, and we recently opened Vancouver/Nanaimo. We are currently looking at going back to travel service to Seattle.

JG: *The last time I flew with Helijet it was in heavy fog. Talk about the difference between flying on a helicopter and a sea plane in fog or inclement weather.*

DS: It's the technology. The helicopter flies under instrument flight rules, unlike a sea plane which flies under visual flight rules—they can't fly at night, or take off or land in inclement weather like fog. That's a rule and regulation based on technology. With the

helicopter this is an advantage we can offer the traveller: we can fly at night and we can fly in inclement weather, which the west coast has a lot of.

JG: *It must make you feel very satisfied that you've been able to increase and improve your company. Looking forward, I understand one of the things you are trying to move forward with is the electric game?*

DS: We wanted to move the industry to a more sustainable environment. We're driven by our customers who are asking us to do this, and we want to do this. One of the things that's happening in the industry that's an exciting time for the helicopter industry—or what we call the vertical lift industry—is



Gateway show immerses viewers

By HANNAH SCOTT
Senior reporter

Gateway Theatre's new show *Prophecy Fog* will immerse viewers in a journey about relationships and sacred spaces.

Written and performed by award-winning Indigenous artist Jani Lauzon, the show was the product of a Toronto residency that encouraged creators to travel and experience other places to better understand themselves and others. For the first part of the residency, Lauzon visited Giant Rock in the Mojave Desert, something she had researched in high school.

"I had a question—if our sacred spaces are desecrated, do they still hold spiritual power? I knew the answer to the question in a way before I went, but I wanted to experience it for myself," says Lauzon.

She adds that Giant Rock is significant in a number of ways—local Indigenous peoples used it as a gathering place, and it also functioned as a hub for UFO believers in the 1950s.

"I'm a single parent and took my daughter with me," says Lauzon. "My director Franco Boni, along with my environmental designer Melissa Joakim, spent a lot of time in the studio weaving various stories together that all came out of my time with the rock, and also with my love of stones that I had since I was a kid."

She describes the experience of the show as immersive and intimate, requiring a shift in the relationship between audience and performer. Audience members are seated on floor cushions or chairs set up in a circle.

"I'm in the centre of that circle with the stones,



Photos by Dahlia Katz

***Prophecy Fog*, a one-person show written and performed by Jani Lauzon, is on at Gateway Theatre from March 9 to 18.**

and I'm hoping people leave with a sense of breath and a different relationship with breathing" says Lauzon. "The genre or the style of performance is based in storytelling, and I have a direct address to the audience so it's a combination of storytelling, theatre, and ceremony."

By the end of the show, the whole acting space is covered in stones functioning as Lauzon's scene partners in the one-person show.

"Each one of (the) stones is based on a teaching that I received from an Elder in Ontario that stones are alive and that they are our story keepers," she says.

The show poses questions, but does not answer them concretely. The aim is to leave audiences with questions to ponder, perhaps bringing about new ways of thinking.

"One of the most important themes to me is the passing down of knowledge from generation to generation," says Lauzon. "My relationship with my daughter is something that is featured in the show a lot, I think because it's been such an important part of my life—especially with how strong our relationship is, and as a single parent how wonderful that opportunity was for me."

While *Prophecy Fog* is not a comedy, Lauzon says there are moments of joy and laughter, and she describes hearing people

laugh as "one of the best things ever." She adds that the process of working on this show was one of the hardest she's ever gone through as a performer.

"I've had a really amazing career and an opportunity to be on a variety of stages—I started out as a street performer and actually did a lot of street performance in Vancouver when I was young" she says. "I would say that, in some ways, this is closest to that. There's a vulnerability when you bring your personal stories into the work, and I questioned whether I could make the story open and universal in a way to others so that it would resonate with folks."

She credits her artistic team for helping guide her toward the opportunity—to a new way of looking at things and releasing the feeling that a performer should entertain as opposed to just being.

Lauzon, who is also a singer-songwriter and musician, says she always looks for ways to incorporate music into her theatre. This show incorporates musical elements including Lauzon's traditional flute.

"I just love creating an atmosphere where I'm sharing with people my love and passion about stones and who I think they are in the world and why we should pay more attention to them," says Lauzon.

"We're offering an opportunity to experience theatre in a different form, an opportunity to be engaged in a theatrical environment that can feel wonderfully uncomfortable, and a gentle reminder that being in a circle together is a powerful thing."

Prophecy Fog is on at Gateway from March 9 to 18. For more information or to buy tickets, visit gatewaytheatre.com/events/prophecy-fog/

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In their own words...

Building Community by building Community Centres



**Alexa
Loo**
Councillor

I grew up in Richmond and some of my fondest memories involve meeting friends and experiencing new things at the local community centre.

Mine was South Arm, where I have participated in everything from summer camps – both attending as a camper to working as a “leader in training” – to Introduction to Rhythmic Gymnastics and Babysitting Basics.

Babysitting Basics is still offered and seems like a wonderful rite of passage for aspiring sitters here in Richmond. Over the years, I have used every community centre fitness centre in Richmond, not just for a great workout, but to see and meet friends. Even recently, before the pandemic, I took courses at various community centres: cookie decorating, crock pot cooking, and tennis.

Ah, COVID-19. It sure put a dent into the activities and programs offered at our community centres. We were fortunate in Richmond to have community associations and staff that were able to pivot and

keep doors open as much as possible. Unfortunately, many programs were halted and not everyone has felt comfortable returning as quickly as others. Some have aged out of the last program they attended and have yet to find their way back to their local centre.

I hope that will change and encourage everyone to come back. Our community centres are truly welcoming spaces. When I was a young, we had a “Teen Committee”. We mostly hung out after school in the games room socializing, playing foosball, air hockey and ping pong, as well as volunteering for various events like dances or seniors’ teas. I recently realized how important this group was when a friend confided that it was a safe place to stay away from a physically abusive father.

Sadly, abuse still happens in some homes. That’s why it is so important that we have community centres serving and supporting our neighbourhoods. They are safe spaces which promote physical and mental growth and well-being, provide interesting programming, as well as opportunities to meet and engage with our neighbours and friends.

Since being elected to Council in 2014, we have opened City Centre Community Centre, the Minoru Centre for Active Living and upgraded South Arm and Thompson. The City Centre North Community Centre



near Capstan Station is coming, as is the new Steveston Community Centre and Library. Construction costs impacted the Bowling Green Community Activity Centre, but we hope this community space will be back on track again soon.

Community centres are about more than just fitness and activity. They are a key part of bringing people together and making Richmond a vibrant and inclusive community. Check out your local centre and see for yourself. I hope to see you there.

City of Richmond Council Meetings Calendar

The City of Richmond Council and Committee Meetings are available online. Watch live or view previous meetings by visiting richmond.ca/WatchOnline.

For further information, meeting schedules and assistance in participating either virtually or in person, please visit richmond.ca/CityHall or contact the City Clerk’s Office at 604-276-4007 or CityClerk@richmond.ca.

Mar 1 | 3:30 p.m.
Development Permit Panel

Mar 6 | 4:00 p.m.
General Purposes Committee followed by Finance Committee

Mar 7 | 4:00 p.m.
Planning Committee

Mar 13 | 7:00 p.m.
Council Meeting

Mar 14 | 4:00 p.m.
Community Safety Committee

Mar 15 | 3:30 p.m.
Development Permit Panel

Mar 20 | 4:00 p.m.
General Purposes Committee followed by Finance Committee

Mar 21 | 4:00 p.m.
Planning Committee

Mar 22 | 4:00 p.m.
Public Works and Transportation Committee

Mar 27 | 7:00 p.m.
Council Meeting



For meeting agendas and reports, visit www.richmond.ca/CityHall. Meeting schedule subject to change

Visit www.richmond.ca/WatchOnline to link to live streaming or watch archived video.



Actress shares experience on Schitt's Creek

By JIM GORDON & LEETA LIEPINS
Contributors

The *Our City Tonight* team recently sat down with Canadian actress, writer, and comedian Jennifer Robertson.

Robertson is perhaps most widely known for her role as Jocelyn Schitt in the Emmy Award-winning TV series *Schitt's Creek*. She has been nominated for two Screen Actors Guild Awards—winning one—as well as four Canadian Screen Awards.

Our City Tonight (OCT): *I mentioned Schitt's Creek, but you have so many other projects that you have excelled at including another top TV series, Ginny & Georgia, that just released the second season to excellent reviews and large audience numbers. Tell us a bit about this show and your character Ellen.*

Jennifer Robertson (JR): Ellen is the light in the dark situations in the show. She pops in to bring a little levity to some rather heavy storylines, especially in Season 2. There's a lot of heavy subject matter, and the show took that very seriously. They did not write those storylines flippantly, or lightly. They consulted with psychiatrists and really did the research. It's rated as a (young adult) show but it has found a home all over the place.

OCT: *The writers really do deal well with the topic of mental health, and the network also goes so far as to put a lot of warnings up on the screen prior to viewing in case the subject matter is too difficult for some viewers. It is well written, well-acted, and we are all looking forward to a third season.*

JR: Everyone says they feel very positive so we will see. We made audiences wait so long between the first and the second season. It takes time as you must write the show, edit the show, and then Netflix has to translate the show into over 100 languages. The process of shooting it to getting it on the screen is long and everybody excitedly binge-watches it in 48 hours and then is looking for the next season.

OCT: *Let's talk about your famous Jocelyn character for a minute. You mentioned that in Season 1 of Schitt's Creek you had to tease your hair to get that iconic style and it really took a toll on your hair. That's when costuming introduced the Jocelyn wig. What happened to that?*

JR: They offered me the wig when I finished (the show) but I wasn't sure what I would do with it. Then the cast of *Schitt's Creek* got asked to do something for Barack and Michelle Obama and we had to do it in character. We got asked to do this online song with Mariah Carey for (graduates) in the first year of the COVID pandemic. They (mailed) me the wig and now I have it, but the wig has to stay in a cupboard.

OCT: *You were born in Canada, right?*

JR: I was born in Calgary. Then I lived on Salt Spring Island, and moved to Burnaby when I was eight.

OCT: *You come from a comedic family—your dad and stepmom were famous for the CBC show*



Photo courtesy Jennifer Robertson

Jennifer Robertson is an actress, writer, and comedian.

When we started working on (Schitt's Creek) and rehearsing, definitely the note was (that) you don't have to make it bigger. They wanted the characters to find their own thing that would reflect their own unique style.

— Jennifer Robertson

Double Exposure. *Was it funny in your house all the time?*

JR: Everybody asks that, but I have to say not particularly. My dad was a funny guy for sure, but I think once you get home, you don't do the bits. My mother, conversely, is in my opinion one of the most serious women ever—so there was a balance, a very funny dad versus my mom. I think my mom has

lightened up much more over the years, and enjoys a good joke now.

OCT: *Speaking of jokes, I do have to bring up the question: how was the transition from sketch comedy to the subtle humour in the show Schitt's Creek?*

JR: When we started working on the show and rehearsing, definitely the note was (that) you don't have to make it bigger. They wanted the characters to find their own thing that would reflect their own unique style. There was no multi-(camera), so we were not supposed to dial it up like we would in a sketch, but instead make it as grounded as those characters could be.

OCT: *What was it like to work with comedy legends Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara?*

JR: It was remarkable. Every day, the whole cast was wonderful, but especially with them—everyone knows them, and they are incredibly professional. They always knew their lines. As actors you go through playing smaller roles, and sometimes the bigger actors on set don't seem to care or don't pay attention to details, but with these two, absolutely every detail was tended to. It was so great to watch and be in scenes with them. Catherine and I, I think in Season 3, got to spend more time together, and I loved every minute of it.

For the full video interview, visit richmondsentinel.ca/videos

Jim Gordon and Leeta Liepins are contributing writers to the Richmond Sentinel.

Students competing in geography challenge

By HANNAH SCOTT
Senior reporter

Three Richmond students are among the top 20 at the Canadian Geographic Challenge.

Grade 11 students Jimbo Cai and William Zhang and Grade 12 student Max Long are being coached by Eric Li—who competed and ranked in the top 10 participants last year—and teacher Rakshin Kandola.

“Something that motivated me to do the challenge was personal interest,” says Cai. “When I first heard about the challenge, I was quite curious and intrigued about the competition and decided to try it out. In school I am taking International Baccalaureate (IB) Geography as a subject, so doing this challenge was also to expand on my knowledge.”

Cai adds that training includes lessons in geography as well as resources for independent study.

Zhang says time is the biggest challenge, particularly when balancing his schoolwork in the IB program.

“I spend most of the time practicing usually late at night when I’m done my schoolwork—this means I have to be more efficient with my schoolwork; you can’t take too much time,” he says.

Long is grateful for the help of Kandola and Li, and says the preparation process has allowed him to engage with geography and nurture his passion.



Photo courtesy Eric Li

From left: students Max Long, William Zhang, and Jimbo Cai.

“When Eric was captain of the Science Team, he was able to lead us to third place in the province-wide Kwantlen Science Challenge—despite our high school historically ranking near the bottom in these competitions. I feel that his drive to represent Richmond Secondary well despite little to no resources is certainly very admirable and has been a driving force behind our motivation,” says Long.

He encourages other students to try their hand at the challenge if they’re interested.

“The competition really broadened my scope and my view of what geography is and a lot of what geography involves,” says Long. “Something I might

tell others is to always be open and receptive to new information and knowledge about geography, and this will help not only to be more prepared for the challenge but also just to open our minds to geographical information.”

The students recently completed a written test at their school, adjudicated by Kandola with Li also present to help troubleshoot.

Both Cai and Zhang said they would be interested in competing again next year, and added that they appreciate the new knowledge they’ve gained through preparing for the challenge.

“Working with Ms. Kandola has certainly taught me a lot about perseverance,” says Li. “If you want to get involved, make sure that you have a strong teacher to help you out—that’s been Ms. Kandola.”

Kandola says geography is crucial knowledge for students, and that this challenge is a great way for students to get excited about the subject.

“I hope to see more Richmond teachers encouraging students to participate in this challenge, (which) is open to students in grades four to 12. It’s a great way to ignite passion early in students’ academic careers and for them to learn more about Canada and the world,” says Kandola.

She adds that having three students from the same school in the top 20 is a huge achievement, and calls Li a trailblazer for the school community.

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For more information, visit:
www.LetsTalkRichmond.ca

City of Richmond Community Wayfinding Strategy

Share your ideas and help shape this strategy



Visit www.LetsTalkRichmond.ca to learn more and complete an online survey. The survey will be open until Sunday, March 26 at 11:59 p.m.



Drop by one of the pop-up events taking place:

Sunday, February 26 | 11 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Adjacent to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site, Steveston Village

Saturday, March 11 | 1:00–4:00 p.m.

Lansdowne Centre adjacent to the Lansdowne Canada Line Station

There will be a Mandarin and Cantonese interpreter at the in-person pop-up events.

Photo credit: Tourism Richmond



Richmond student a finalist for Loran Award

By HANNAH SCOTT
Senior reporter

Gerardo Mejia, a Grade 12 student at Cambie secondary, is a finalist for the Loran Award.

The Loran Scholars Foundation is a prestigious national award that annually provides 36 Canadian students with over \$100,000 in funding over their four-year undergraduate studies, as well as other supports like mentorship, work experience, and scholar gatherings.

Mejia explains that he started the application process early; his older brother missed the opportunity to apply, so the family was on top of the process.

"I had done preliminary research; they had a few templates of previous questions so I used those to start thinking about it," says Mejia. "They encourage independence, and finding young leaders and people who are involved—basically their core beliefs aligned with mine, and then they help you out tremendously with that independence aspect. They have mentors, they have summer internships, the whole program seemed like the entire package."

The process as a semi-finalist involved additional elements like questionnaires and an online video submission, Mejia says. Scheduling is flexible, but requires students to be dedicated. While the pandemic has shifted the in-person interviews to an online format, all finalists still travelled to Toronto last week-end with updated protocols in place.

"If you do get COVID prior to or at the event, they have different plans to work around it," says Mejia. "It's nice that they're putting in the effort and making sure everyone's safe and you can engage with everyone as a team."

Mejia learned he was named a finalist on his mom's birthday.

"She said it was the best gift she could have ever received," he says. "It was just shock, because as you progress your chances statistically get better but you realize you're competing against the top students in Canada."

While students are asked about their career goals and which universities they're interested in during the Loran interview process, there is some flexibility for changing plans. Mejia wants to study medicine to become a cardiothoracic surgeon. He hopes to attend the University of British Columbia or University of Toronto for his undergraduate studies, since both schools have good medical programs for an easy transition after the first four years.

Mejia chairs Cambie's grad council committee, organizing events for the graduating class and entire school. He's a keen photographer and baker and also plays the piano, among other extracurriculars.



Cambie secondary student Gerardo Mejia is a Loran Award finalist.

He also works with the Migrant Workers Ministry, which helps migrant workers coming from places like Mexico and Guatemala. Volunteers host events like soccer games, holiday celebrations, and dinners to make workers feel at home. They also help with tasks like going to the doctor and arranging cellphone plans, to make daily life easier.

"My brother was involved with them (and) the church that I attend was involved. I started young—setting things up, cleaning sometimes, (and) as it progresses you can move up. I've helped cook and baked and presented things for dinner. Most recently, I helped drive around care packages house to house."

Mejia mentions teacher Linda Au as a current mentor, and says she's been a huge help with the application process as well as demonstrating how career paths can shift—initially she had a passion for zoology, but became a teacher, Mejia says. He's also appreciated guidance and advice from his parents and other family members; his aunt is a nurse who arranged shadow shifts for Mejia at the hospital.

Going through high school during the pandemic has emphasized the importance of connection for Mejia and his peers. It's also created a bit of a backlog, requiring students to catch up on

missed learning.

"University wants you to have high grades and extracurriculars, so if nothing is open what do you do? It helped people think outside the box—you see so many young teens do so many things during COVID; people want to help, they want to be part of something," says Mejia. "It helped people take initiative to be creative, and realize that when you're at school it's your responsibility and not necessarily your teachers'."

Mejia's advice to others is to do things they're passionate about.

"Trying to fill out your resume just so it looks good is harder than to do something you actually like. If you're not passionate about it, it's 10 times harder and you won't have the passion to speak about these things," says Mejia.

"Even if I don't make it in the finals, I've made it to Toronto, I've spoken to so many people, connected with students from across Canada, and connected with alumni. Just try, and you never know where you'll end up."

Since 2015, four Richmond students have been named Loran Scholars: Bonnie Zhang (Palmer secondary) in 2015, Cole Longer and Leon Picha (McNair secondary) in 2019, and Leilani Pearson (Boyd secondary) in 2020.

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CARHA Hockey World Cup arriving in Richmond

By MATTHEW CHEUNG
Reporter

The Canadian Adult Recreational Hockey Association (CARHA) Hockey World Cup is beginning soon in Richmond.

The event will take place from March 19 to 26 and feature participants and spectators from all around the world. Some participating countries include Canada, the United States, Kazakhstan, Finland, and Sweden.

Labelled by many as the Olympics of recreational hockey, the Molson CARHA Hockey World Cup presented by Lulu Island Winery has taken place in many cities across Canada and has grown into one of the largest international adult recreational hockey tournaments.

The quadrennial event began in 1996 in Toronto, with the goal of providing recreational hockey players the opportunity to participate in a hockey tournament with an Olympic touch. About 2,500 participated in the event, generating \$7 million in one week.

Four years later in Vancouver, the 2000 tournament included 4,500 players and 135 teams representing 11 different countries; 15,000 spectators generated \$12 million.

In 2004, the tournament returned to the east coast and was held in the nation's capital, Ottawa. Hosting over 120 teams, more than 4,500 participants and 18,000 spectators attended the week of events and generated more than \$15 million.

The 2008 event in Quebec City hosted 167 teams, 135 of which were travelling teams from 11 different countries. Over 5,000 players and 30,000 spectators attended the tournament—the most people the tournament has ever hosted to date. It also generated \$19.2 million.

In 2012, the tournament was hosted in a smaller city: Sault Ste. Marie. Playing host to over 2,500 players and 45,000 spectators, the event generated almost \$10 million.

In 2016, the final event before the COVID pandemic was hosted in Windsor. Attracting over 40,000 people in total between spectators and players, the tournament included 134 different teams from 14 different countries. It was also the first time that the event included an opportunity for participants to watch a professional national hockey game live. In total, the event generated over \$10 million.

Richmond delivered the strongest bid for the 2020 event, but due to the pandemic, the tournament had to be postponed several times.



Photo courtesy CARHA Hockey
A Canadian player tries to score on a Slovenian goalie.

Generating an estimated \$10 to 12 million in economic activity, each team will be guaranteed at least three games throughout the tournament.

The March of Athletes on March 19 will start off the event with all participants walking towards the Richmond Olympic Oval for the opening ceremonies. Organizers hope to have the streets filled with hockey fans cheering on participants, who will be wearing their own countries' jerseys.

Around 200 games will be played throughout the week at the Richmond Olympic Oval and Richmond Ice Centre. The feature game, which will be televised, takes place on March 24. Ticketed closing ceremonies on March 25 will conclude the event.

For more information about the event, visit CARHAHockeyWorldCup.ca
•matthewwc@richmondsentinel.ca

STR8TS

No number can be repeated in any row or column. Rows and columns are divided by black squares into compartments. Each compartment must contain a 'straight,' a set of numbers with no gaps in any order, eg. [4,2,3,5]. Numbers in black cells are not part of straights but also cannot be repeated in their row or column.

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