



KUNG HEI FAT CHOY



Wishing you good
fortune in the
Year of the Ox

02

Photo by Chung Chow

Chinese New Year celebrates the beginning of a new year in the traditional Chinese calendar. Most years this celebration would be marked with large-scale events and family gatherings, but this year those will largely be virtual.

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YEAR OF THE OX



The year 2021 is that of the ox according to Chinese custom.

Associated with many myths and customs, the Chinese New Year arrives Feb. 12.

This is the Year of the Ox which, according to Chinese culture, is hard working, positive and honest.

One of the most important holidays in China, the new year (also commonly referred to as the Spring Festival) marks the end of winter and leads to the Lantern Festival held on the 15th day of the year.

The festival was traditionally a time to honour deities and ancestors. It's also an important family time, with annual reunion dinner often central. It is also tradition that every family thoroughly clean their homes to sweep away bad fortune and make way for incoming good luck.

Lighting fireworks and presenting money in red paper envelopes are also common traditions, while in the northern regions of China dumplings are often served as the first meal of the year.

Aberdeen takes Chinese New Year countdown virtual

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year or Spring Festival, is usually a time of huge public celebration in Richmond and around the world.

Traditionally, Chinese New Year's Eve celebrations include a big meal, prayer or parties. On New Year's Day, lion dances welcome in the new year and scare away evil spirits. Firecrackers may also be lit throughout the night to disperse of these spirits. The colour red, central to Chinese New Year celebrations, symbolizes joy, virtue, truth and sincerity.

At Aberdeen Centre—the Lower Mainland's largest Asian mall—Chinese New Year has been celebrated in a major way for 25 years. Normally, there would be a countdown show on Chinese New Year's Eve, and then large-scale live performances on New Year's Day, including dragon and lion dances, firecrackers, and stage performances.

But this year, with all gatherings banned and people spending more time at home, festivities are being taken online.

"This year is very different," says Tiffany Ho, senior vice-president and senior general manager of Fairchild Developments, which operates the mall. "All the events, indoor and outdoor, have to be suspended this year—but we will still do a lot of decorations."

The mall's fountain, which was decorated for Christmas amid the temporary cancellation of its musical show, is now filled with figurines—including one of the cow or ox to mark this year as the Year of the Ox. And Ho says there are also decorations like Chinese lanterns throughout the mall.

And the countdown show will happen virtually through the mall's connection with Fairchild Radio and Fairchild TV. The channels will air a program



Photo courtesy Aberdeen Centre

Aberdeen Centre normally hosts a large Chinese New Year countdown and other public events, but this year all celebration is happening virtually.

beginning around 10:55 on Chinese New Year's Eve, which will run past midnight. Normally, Fairchild TV is only for subscribers, but for the month of February it will be free to anyone with cable.

Some performances will feature overseas performers, as well as blessings and fortune telling for the year to come—popular shows, Ho notes.

Video clips from the countdown event will be posted on Aberdeen Centre's social media channels for more people to share in the celebration.

"This is more like Christmas to us, to everybody, so I don't think people will forget," she says of the unusual year. "We are working hard to make sure that the local community will continue as much as possible, without any disruption."

After the first day of the New Year—Feb. 12 this year—there are other significant days with their own celebrations. The seventh day of the new year is referred to as everybody's birthday, and the 15th day is Chinese Valentine's Day, says Ho.

She adds that, because of the many days of

celebrating decorations will likely stay up at Aberdeen Centre throughout the month of February.

While normally people would share big meals with family and friends, this year more restaurants are developing take out options. Fisherman's Terrace Seafood Restaurant is one of Aberdeen Centre's tenants, and they are offering layered take out boxes with traditional foods.

"People are used to ordering take out now, and taking it back home for celebration," says Ho.

Anyone who visits Aberdeen Centre on New Year's Day will be able to partake in one of their usual practices—giving out fai chun (posters sharing well wishes or good luck messages).

The pivot to a largely virtual format has been necessary this year, but Ho hopes the introduction of a COVID-19 vaccine will mean next year's celebration can be more traditional.

"Hopefully next year everything will be back to normal," she says. "We stay very positive."

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Richmond council approves 5.68 per cent tax increase

By DON FENNEL
and HANNAH SCOTT
Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Richmond has a reputation for being one of the safest cities in the region. But while it enjoys a very low crime rate, a moderate increase in the last few years, coupled with a recent rash of incidents, has raised concerns.

Recognizing public safety as a top priority, and committed to eradicating crime wherever possible, city councillors voted last month in favour of a 2021 operating budget that provides for the hiring of an additional 16 RCMP police officers. The new budget represents a 5.68 per cent tax increase for 2021.

"I've always tried to keep taxes down (but) we need to look at safety first," said Coun. Bill McNulty, who put the third option on the table after staff recommended a slightly lower increase.

"(During the COVID-19 pandemic) we've had shootings, drive-bys, arsons, all kinds of issues we haven't faced before in Richmond," he said. "An \$82 increase (per average household with an assessed value of \$996,000) as opposed to a \$51 increase can mean the difference between safety in our community and not being safe. We need to have every officer that we can on the street."

McNulty also stressed that there's no certainty Richmond will get all the additional officers it is hoping for.

"We're lucky to get RCMP officers, with the rest of Canada asking for officers too. We need to put our oar in the water now—we're not going to see an officer for 14 to 24 months anyhow."

However, Coun. Chak Au was not in favour of the "historical" increase, saying he would not approve growth of more than five per cent. He added that Richmond is not the worst city in the region in terms of police officer to population ratio, with 666 residents per officer. In comparison, Surrey has 692 residents per officer, Burnaby 799, and Coquitlam 829.

On April 14, 2020, in response to the pandemic



Photo by Hannah Scott

Richmond city council approved a 5.68 per cent tax increase last month.

and uncertainty around collecting property taxes, council approved a 2.01 per cent reduction to the 2020 property tax increase that had been approved Dec. 9, 2019 by eliminating the additional one per cent transfer to reserve. As a result, that deferred the hiring of 12 RCMP officers and five municipal employees to support the RCMP detachment, as well as the City Centre North Community Centre operating budget phase-in, and the operating budget impact from the 2020 capital budget.

"We've been playing catch-up, we had a very low ratio of police to our population," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. "I hear so many people talking about being in favour of community safety and how we really have to be safe as a community. What is more fundamental than having police officers?"

The 2021 budget also accounts for 11 new municipal workers to support the RCMP detachment, as well as 12 additional firefighters. The full breakdown of increases is as follows:

- 0.99 per cent for same-service budget increase

of \$2,380,910 after tax growth

- One per cent for transfer to reserves in the amount of \$2,393,567
- 0.11 per cent for senior government increase of \$255,000
- 0.67 per cent for \$1,609,318 deferred for community safety increases from 2020's operating budget
- 0.13 per cent for partial funding of operating budget impact from 2019 capital budget year three of three, \$311,220
- 0.59 per cent for \$1,409,684, the remainder of the operating budget impacts
- 1.24 per cent for the hiring of 16 RCMP officers and 11 municipal employees in the amount of \$2,990,022
- 0.18 per cent for same-service budget increase of \$421,700
- 0.02 per cent for a senior government increase of \$45,000
- 0.75 per cent for the hiring of 12 firefighters in the amount of \$1,801,859

Seeking nominations for Richmond Arts Awards

It's time again to shine a spotlight on the stars of Richmond's vibrant arts community.

Innovative artists, cultural leaders and supporters, including volunteers and sponsors, are among those to be recognized for their contributions to Richmond's arts scene. Anyone can submit an online nomination for the 13th annual Richmond Arts Awards until 5 p.m. on March 15.

Nominations are being sought in the following categories:

- Arts Education
- Artistic Innovation
- Business and the Arts

- Cultural Leadership
- Volunteerism
- Youth Arts

All artistic disciplines are eligible: visual, performing, literary and culinary arts, as well as craft, environmental arts and new media.

The annual awards ceremony has been cancelled due to safety precautions with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following last year's model, the recipient of each category will be recognized through the City's various online platforms and social media campaigns beginning in May 2021.

Once again, the Richmond Arts Coalition will award a \$200 cash prize to the winner of the Youth Arts category, which recognizes a performing literary or visual artist 24 years of age or younger, who has demonstrated outstanding promise and commitment to the Richmond arts community.

The Richmond Arts Awards program is presented by the City of Richmond in partnership with the Richmond Arts Coalition.

For more information on the Richmond Arts Awards and to submit an online nomination, visit www.richmond.ca/artsawards.

Library raising awareness during Black History Month

By DON FENNELL
@rmdsentinel

Mary Wilson would prefer to deflect credit elsewhere, asking the author of a 2018 story on Black History Month in the *Richmond Sentinel* that the article not be about her.

But there's no denying Wilson's efforts sparked local recognition of Black History Month in February. And the modest Richmond woman continues to play an important role while standing up for injustice.

"In 2020, the world focused on the Black community, the discrimination and violence we often experience. The Black community assisted by other cultures and community groups connected to fight against these injustices," she says. "This February, Black History Month in Canada provides another opportunity to share our history, heroes and contributions to Canada as we get to know one another to work towards a just society for all."

A passionate community advocate, Wilson has been instrumental in the Richmond Public Library's ongoing efforts to unite the community in celebration and raise awareness. This year, she worked closely with community services librarian Millicent Mabi to plan the programming for this year's Black History Month celebrations.

At *Storytimes* throughout February, the library will be featuring specially chosen age-appropriate children's materials that address topics of fairness, justice and awareness of Black history. These *Storytimes* aim to spark conversations between young children and their families, while promoting awareness and fostering understanding. Hopefully, these conversations will continue long after the *Storytime* is complete. The book club programs for older children and teens aim to inspire youth who may already been witnessing or experiencing racism, injustice or unfairness, and by participating in these programs, youth may be encouraged to become the leaders of their own conversations.

Mabi also carefully considered what books to purchase on Black history on the library's behalf. The library recently purchased over 100 books for adults on Black Lives Matter issues and topics. Mabi focused on looking for recent books that



Photo by Chung Chow

A modest but passionate community advocate, Mary Wilson is again assisting the library during its efforts to raise awareness of Black history.

had been published within a year of the purchase date to ensure that the topics were timely and relevant. She also looked for books that touched on Canadian Black Lives Matter issues, and noted that there were fewer of these than books focusing on American context and content. Additionally, she consulted online book lists for their recommendations and considered these in making her selections, and finally, she selected books that explored a wide variety of topics so that the library could offer a well-rounded collection for the community.

Wilson will be welcoming the community virtually all month long to a series of events celebrating the legacy of Black Canadians past and present. This year's theme recognizes and explores the Canadian Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity.

On Feb. 2, an enlightening panel discussion and

question-and-answer session will focus on this year's Black History Month theme. Panelists, representing diverse backgrounds and demographics, will share aspects of their history, and how it has informed their current life and lived experiences. Pre-registration is required for this online program at yourlibrary.bibliocommons.com/events

Visit any library branch to browse the newly-acquired collection of books that support this year's theme, and explore these specially curated Black History Month book lists for children and adults at yourlibrary.bibliocommons.com

"Through sharing these materials and offering these events, the library aims to inform and engage the community," says library spokesperson Stephanie Vokey. "We are proud to offer a diverse range of reading materials and to create unique opportunities to connect virtually together."

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City appoints new library board

At their most recent meeting, the Richmond Public Library Board elected Jordan Oye as chair and Caty Liu vice-chair while thanking Robin Leung for his many contributions as chair over the past two years.

Returning board members also include Chaslynn Gillanders, Danielle Lemon and Denise Hui. City councillor Linda McPhail will continue to serve as the council representative with Coun. Bill McNulty as alternate. New to the board for 2021 are Diane Cousar and Sherine Merhi, recently appointed by Richmond City Council for a two-year term.

Cousar is a previous board trustee and a committed community volunteer. She brings with her over 30 years of real estate sales and management experience and looks forward to continuing to represent the library on the Steveston Community Centre and Branch Library Building Committee.

Merhi is a passionate advocate for libraries and the continuous pursuit of knowledge and healthy integration of newcomers to Canada. A resident of Richmond since 2011, she has served in various volunteer posi-

tions in the city and the community at large and holds a BS in Landscape Design and Eco-Management.

The Richmond Public Library Board also extends thanks to outgoing board trustees Traci Corr and Denise Hawthorne for their dedication and service.

Newly-elected chair Oye says that the library board and staff are looking forward to continuing to support the community through the challenges presented by the pandemic and beyond.

"The library is committed to ensuring that everyone has access to its programs, services and resources," he says. "We are proud to serve and are always evolving to meet the changing needs of our growing and diverse community."

Oye added: "We would like to acknowledge and thank city council, our community and our dedicated Friends of the Library for their ongoing support. We could not provide such innovative opportunities to Richmond residents without them."

SPCA assumes animal services in Richmond

Responsibility for animal sheltering and services in the City of Richmond transferred to the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA) as of Monday (Feb. 1).

The new phone number for animal services is 604-709-4668. It is also the number for reporting barking, nuisance or injured animals. After hours phone messaging will provide details on when and how to contact either the city's bylaws department or RCMP.

Inquiries related to animal regulations, dog licensing and fees will continue to be directed to the city's community bylaws department at 604-276-4345. This number is unchanged.

The BC SPCA will make every effort to contact pet owners in order to return lost and wandering animals to their homes before they are taken to shelter. If shelter is needed, animals will be processed and cared for at the SPCA's Vancouver location at 1205 East 7th Ave. while awaiting their owners or re-homing. This will enable construction to begin on the new Richmond Animal

Shelter at 12071 No. 5 Rd. this coming spring. Because the new facility will be built on the same site, the existing shelter will close for approximately two years during the construction.

The BC SPCA supports an enhanced quality of life and ethical treatment for animals and follows the Canadian Standards of Care Guidelines for all animals in its care. It will work with Richmond pet owners to ensure they are reunited with their pets as soon as possible.

The BC SPCA and City urges owners to have their pets given IDs (i.e. tags, microchips, tattoos) and to keep their contact information up to date at both their veterinarian and the City dog licensing department (doglicence@richmond.ca) to aid in the quick return of lost or wandering animals.

The BC SPCA took over from the Regional Animal Protection Society (RAPS), which supported the community by taking responsibility for the shelter and animal control throughout the City since 2017. Its contract ended on Jan. 31.



Photo courtesy City of Richmond
The BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has assumed the responsibility for animal sheltering and services in Richmond as of Monday.

Happy Lunar New Year 新年快樂!

Wishing everyone a healthy and prosperous year of the ox!

Thank you for doing your part in following health orders and guidelines.

祝大家牛年大吉，身體健康！感謝大家繼續配合防疫指引。



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Council supports ban on rodenticides

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Councillors voted unanimously last month in favour of banning rodenticides on city property.

Several delegates spoke on the issue, indicating their support for the proposed ban.

"We know birds and other wildlife are dying from rodenticide use," said Sharon McGougan, president of the Garden City Conservation Society. "That should be a good enough reason to try a different method of pest control."

Coun. Bill McNulty indicated his desire to add the development of an education program to the motion. And Coun. Michael Wolfe said he would support asking the province to ban rodenticides outright. A further amendment to the motion will see staff submit a request to the Union of BC Municipalities to discuss and consider a potential ban at their annual meeting.

City applies for flood protection funding

Richmond is hoping to receive grant funding that will allow dike upgrades to enhance flood protection.

The city has applied to the province for funding through its National Disaster Mitigation Program, which is intended to reduce or negate the effects of flood events. The funding would be used for the

city's Steveston Island Preliminary Dike Design project, which is the next step in a council-approved work plan that encompasses a multi-decade initiative.

The city has also submitted a proposal to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program's COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream, which includes support for disaster mitigation. The proposal involves installing five generators at various locations in a drainage pump station backup power upgrade.

The city also hopes to apply for further funding through the Union of BC Municipalities' Community Emergency Preparedness Fund, which has a funding stream to help fund flood protection strategies.

Ferguson Road speed limit lowered

The speed limit on Ferguson Road will be lowered to 30 kilometres per hour following approval at last week's city council meeting.

The stretch of road is on Sea Island, near the airport-adjacent Canada Post and UPS locations. The Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant is also accessed via Ferguson Road.

In a report, city staff noted that tens of thou-

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sands of cyclists use the road yearly, and due to its length and lack of traffic signals it is often used by competitive cyclists for training. However, some parts of the road are so narrow that cyclists and vehicles must share the same lane.

The stretch between McDonald and Shannon roads is within the city's jurisdiction, and will

have its speed limit changed following amendment of the relevant traffic bylaw. The west-most side of the road is within the jurisdictions of Vancouver Airport Authority and Metro Vancouver, who have also agreed to implement the same 30 kilometres per hour speed limit on their sections of the road.

City applies to TransLink for cost-share funding

The city is applying to TransLink's cost-share funding programs in hopes of receiving up to \$4.4 million towards 13 pedestrian, cycling and road improvement projects.

These projects include updating a number of major intersections, adding paved off-street pathways for pedestrian and cyclist use and continuing to upgrade bus stops to provide for universal accessibility.

City will delay conversion of planned Minoru Arts Centre

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The planned conversion of the Minoru Place Activity Centre to an arts centre will be delayed.

Construction on the new arts centre was originally scheduled to begin in April, with the building currently acting as an emergency response centre for people experiencing homelessness. That contract—a collaboration with BC Housing and Turning Point Recovery Centre—was slated to end March 31.

But because the city is seeking up to \$2.4 million towards the project through the Investing in Canada infrastructure program's community, culture and recreation stream, which was delayed by the B.C. election, they could forego the grant amount if construction begins prior to notification of successful submissions.

While the project could be completed using previously approved budget, it would then be ineligible for supplementary financial support. Successful submissions will be notified by this summer, and construction on the facility would be complete by late summer 2022.

Councillors were in favour of the delay, with Coun. Linda McPhail asking if BC Housing could extend the operation of their emergency response centre while construction was delayed. Richmond's director of community social development Kim Somerville said conversations with BC Housing are in progress about potential extensions.

Arts groups that are hoping to be able to use the renovated space have



Photo by Don Fennell

The conversion of the Minoru Place Activity Centre—currently serving as an emergency response centre—to an arts centre will be delayed pending approval for a joint provincial/federal grant.

also been contacted.

"They're understanding of the need and the benefit to the city of this grant and just want to see the program move forward when the time is right for the city," said director of arts, culture and heritage services Marie Fenwick.

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Photo screen grab from Google Maps

Whiteside and Bridge elementary schools will receive seismic upgrades beginning early next year.

Whiteside, Bridge will get seismic upgrades

Nearly 700 more Richmond students will soon be learning in safer classrooms when seismic upgrades are complete at James Whiteside and William Bridge elementary schools.

"Safe learning environments are essential to students' well-being as they learn, grow and play in the important early years of their education," said Education Minister Jennifer Whiteside.

The province is investing \$312 million for seismic upgrades at the two schools to help ensure they can protect students and staff in the event of an earthquake. The Richmond School District is contributing \$2.14 million to include further improvements to James Whiteside Elementary, including accessibility, HVAC, interior finishing and energy enhancements.

For both projects, staff and students are expected to remain on site during construction, which is scheduled to begin in early 2022 and be completed by mid-2023.

"William Bridge Elementary and James Whiteside Elementary will soon be aligned to modern seismic standards and these foundational changes will be welcomed by students, staff and parents," said Richmond school board chair Sandra Nixon. "The Richmond board fully supports these seismic updates as they will allow for both schools to continue to safely serve students and communities now and in the years ahead."

These investments are part of the province's work to accelerate investments in seismic safety at high-risk schools throughout British Columbia. Funding now totals \$129.7 million invested for seismic upgrades at 11 Richmond schools in fewer than four years.

"Between 2010 and 2017, only one school was approved for seismic upgrades in Richmond, but our government is doing things differently to ensure students are safe at school," said Aman Singh, MLA for Richmond-Queensborough. "With 11 schools now approved for seismic upgrades, nearly 4,500 more families can send their children to school with the comfort of knowing they'll be safe in an earthquake."

Schools in Richmond under construction for seismic upgrades include Mitchell, Manoah Steves, F.A. Tomsett, James McKinney and Maple Lane elementary schools. Upgrades have recently been completed at Hugh Boyd Secondary, William Cook, Robert J. Tait, and W.D. Ferris elementary schools.

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KPU design grads showcase work virtually

From personal flotation devices to paraclimbing pants for outdoor enthusiasts with spinal cord injuries, students graduating from the Technical Apparel Design program at the Wilson School of Design at Kwantlen Polytechnic University have created designs with purpose.

Hanae Yaskawa is from the heart of Silicon Valley and studied Physics and Italian Studies at Wellesley College in Boston. After working at a food and tech start-up, she joined the Technical Apparel Design program at the Wilson School of Design.

For her capstone project, Hanae has designed outdoor paraclimbing pants for climbers with spinal cord injuries. Called "Resilience Climbing Pants", Yaskawa says the name is a nod to the abrasion-resistant quality, as well as a recognition of the resilient spirit of athletes who find creative ways to navigate a world that is not designed for them.

"I was inspired by athletes who train and perform with the added challenge of living with a disability," she says.

"Through chats with para-athletes, coaches, and sports organization representatives, I discovered many apparel challenges. I chose this project because the apparel solution could not only allow paraclimbers to climb more freely and for longer, but also allow more people living with spinal cord injuries to start engaging in the sport."

Mechanical engineer Joel Maerz designed the "Chinuuk", a weatherproof,



Photo from www.kpu.ca/design/technicalapparel/alumni
Graduates from Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Wilson School of Design continue to shine.

tection for boxing

- Inflatable vest for deep water soloing (climbing)
- A personal floatation device for rowers

The post-baccalaureate students take 3 – 4 months working on the projects, from brainstorming to creating prototypes. They also work directly with local industry including Arc'teryx and Mustang on their capstone projects.

Unlike past years, when the public was invited to view the designs and meet the designers, this year the graduation and showcase took place online.

"Year after year, the students from the Technical Apparel Design program leave us in awe of their innovative design solutions for the performance issues they address. Congratulations to the graduating class," says Andhra Goundrey, dean, Wilson School of Design.

alpine-capable pack built from a repurposed waterproof shell.

"Simply put, waterproof breathable shells are not recyclable. The inspiration for my design comes from just asking the question "okay, but what can we do about it?," says Maerz.

Originally from Calgary, Maerz now works for the development team at Vancouver-based Stoko Design Inc. and says he is exactly where he wants to be—designing supportive apparel.

Other project designs include:

- Support device for yoga and meditation
- Flexible and breathable body pro-

Teachers fear bringing COVID home

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

A survey by the Richmond Teachers' Association suggests the majority of teachers are worried about bringing COVID-19 home to their family or immediate household.

The results, presented at last week's school board meeting by Richmond Teachers' Association president Liz Baverstock, indicates 75 per cent of teachers are worried.

"Members had a lot to say," says Baverstock. "This year, on top of everything that we have to do in regards to health and safety, we're dealing with new structures."

There were 694 respondents of about 1,600 members in total. Elementary teachers who responded said they had workload concerns around transitional learning, and supported assigning designated teachers to support at-home learners. Secondary teachers wanted reduced class sizes for Grade 8 and 9 students, and noted that the pace of the quarter system adds significant workload. Elementary and secondary teachers shared a desire to re-

duce reporting demands.

Along with concerns around workload, Baverstock said 54 per cent of respondents said they were not confident the provincial protocols help to reduce transmission of COVID-19, and 63 per cent said they are often worried about their own health in their school due to COVID-19.

But despite the concerns shared by teachers, Baverstock was optimistic.

"I know that we can learn, we can learn together, and we can do more, because we're only halfway through the school year. We're going to keep working towards it."

CUPE president Ian Hillman said he was "fully in support" of Baverstock's comments, and noted that educational assistants are often unable to maintain a two-metre distance because of the nature of their work. Along with the lack of access to personal protective equipment early on in the pandemic, these staff members face additional challenges.

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Photo courtesy Richmond Teachers' Association

Richmond Teachers' Association president Liz Baverstock presented the results of a district-wide survey last week which highlighted teacher fears about bringing COVID-19 home from school.

Dine Out will satisfy Valentine's Day palate

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

For Lower Mainland foodies, the annual Dine Out Vancouver festival is a great opportunity to try new restaurants—or revisit local favourites. And with Valentine's Day around the corner, it's a great time to consider dining out or ordering take out from a local restaurant.

"For Valentine's Day, along with our three-course Dine Out menu (\$24), we will be offering happy hour from 3 to 5 p.m. (cheap tacos, wine and beer), \$10 pizzas from 5 p.m. until close, and a late night happy hour from 8:30 p.m. until close (two for one appetizers)," says Michael Halsey-Brandt, general manager of Flying Beaver Bar & Grill.

This year, the festival features over 330 participating restaurants, including 24 in Richmond, and spans 31 days from Feb. 5 to March 7.

Featuring fixed-price menus, many restaurants are also offering take out options this year. There are gluten-free and vegetarian options available at some restaurants, as well as a mixture of lunch and dinner menus.

Diners are reminded that current provincial health orders require people to dine only with others from their own household, and within their health region. Public health orders also limit capacity for restaurants, so it's even more important to



Photo by Hannah Scott

The annual Dine Out Vancouver festival returns this year from Feb. 5 to March 7, offering Valentine's Day dining options that help support local businesses.

honour reservations or cancel well in advance.

"We are expecting probably about one third the volume of other years," says Halsey-Brandt. "It's even more important to support local this year in order to ensure that small businesses, along with all the jobs they provide our community, are able to weather the economic storm that COVID-19 has brought about."

Participating Richmond restaurants are:

- 75 West Coast Grill (7571 Westminster Hwy.)
- Blue Canoe Waterfront Restaurant (140-3866 Bayview St.)
- Britannia Brewing Steveston (12240 Second Ave.)

- Browns Socialhouse (11660 Steveston Hwy.)
 - Cactus Club Cafe (1666-6551 No. 3 Rd.)
 - Catch Kitchen + Bar (200-3866 Bayview St.)
 - Cavu Kitchen Bar (5911 Minoru Blvd.)
 - Chop Steakhouse & Bar (10251 St. Edwards Dr.)
 - Ember Indian Kitchen (135-6168 London Rd.)
 - Flying Beaver Bar & Grill (4760 Inglis Dr.)
 - Freebird Table & Bar (5991 Alderbridge Way)
 - Gyu-Kaku Japanese BBQ (7971 Alderbridge Way)
 - Harold's Kitchen and Bar (7551 Westminster Hwy.)
 - Hotpot Palace (168-7911 Alderbridge Way)
 - The Keg Steakhouse + Bar (11151 No. 5 Rd.)
 - Kirin Seafood Restaurant (200-7900 Westminster Hwy.)
 - Milltown Bar & Grill (101-9191 Bentley St.)
 - Moxie's Grill & Bar (3233 St. Edwards Dr.)
 - The Old Spaghetti Factory (110-14200 Entertainment Blvd., Richmond Entertainment Complex)
 - Shady Island Seafood Bar & Grill (112-3800 Bayview St.)
 - The Shoestring Cafe (180-4611 No. 6 Rd.)
 - The Buck & Ear (12111 3rd Ave.)
 - Yokohama Teppanyaki & Sushi (140-12251 No. 1 Rd.)
 - Yuu Japanese Tapas (1118-3779 Sexsmith Rd.)
- To learn more about Dine Out Vancouver, at www.dineoutvancouver.com/

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Province honours Richmond RCMP officer

A Richmond police officer is one of six British Columbians to be recognized by the province with a Community Safety and Crime Prevention Award.

Winner of the Youth Leadership Award, RCMP Const. Baljinder Kandola found her passion in crime prevention and community policing early in her 19-year policing career. As co-ordinator of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program for the RCMP within Richmond schools, she has been instrumental in providing youth the tools they need to make healthy choices, including resistance strategies on how to deal with peer pressure and stress in a positive way. Since joining the DARE Society's board of directors in 2016, Kandola has expanded her passion for education beyond schools, developing and implementing DARE initiatives and events within the community.

Recognized via a virtual ceremony, the award winners "demonstrate that we can make a real difference in the lives of those who have been impacted by crime, violence and victimization," said Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General. "On behalf of the government, I want to thank each recipient for their dedication and commitment in keeping our communities safe and helping survivors of crime."

The awards acknowledge individuals, non-profit organizations, police and other local partners for their work in advancing crime prevention, restorative justice and other approaches that keep our communities safer. These efforts support provincial initiatives in policing, community safety and victim services.

"Each of the award recipients has shown an outstanding commitment to community, to care and to make our communities safer," added Grace Lore, parliamentary secretary for gender equity.



Photo courtesy Richmond RCMP

Richmond RCMP Const. Baljinder Kandola is the winner of the province's Community Safety and Crime Prevention Award for youth leadership.

Chimo preparing for annual Coldest Night walk

By HANNAH SCOTT
Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Richmond's Chimo Community Services is encouraging people to bundle up and help raise funds for their fifth annual Coldest Night of the Year event.

Money raised will support people experiencing homelessness, hurt and hunger. The family-friendly walk is completely virtual this year and will take place from Feb. 6 to 20. People can walk alone, or with members of their bubbles, throughout the community—while joining together with thousands of other participants in 149 cities across Canada.

The Richmond event will see people walking outdoors on a self-designed route of two or five kilometres. Participants who raise over \$150, or youth participants who raise over \$75, will receive a unique toque to stay warm during their walk.

Chimo is hoping to raise \$25,000 to support their services. An anticipated 100 walkers and 16 teams are expected to brave the cold weather. The local lead sponsor is Vancity Richmond, as well as other sponsors Turning Point Recovery and Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

Chimo has been serving Richmond for 48 years, and funds raised during the Coldest Night of the Year event will benefit clients during a time of year known historically for low levels of giving. Participants can register for Chimo's Coldest Night of the Year at cnoy.org/register
•hannahs@richmondsentinel.ca



Photo courtesy Chimo

Chimo Community Services is participating in their fifth annual Coldest Night of the Year event, raising funds for people experiencing homelessness, hurt and hunger. (Photo from last year's event.)

Young actor navigates virtual performance

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Amanda Sum always knew she liked performing—but didn't always realize a future as an actor was in the cards.

Sum, who grew up splitting her time between Richmond and East Vancouver, got her start on stage in Gateway Theatre's 2003 production of *The King and I*.

"My mom wanted me and my older sister and herself to audition for it, so we all prepped our song," says Sum. "Once we got to the audition I chickened out and didn't want to audition—and she didn't force me—so my mom and my sister got into the show."

Midway through the rehearsal process, the opportunity arose again for Sum to perform.

"Because my mom and dad were separated, and because my sister and my mom were at rehearsal (when) it wasn't my dad's weekend, I would come and sit on the side and they asked 'who is that little one'," she explains. "But little six-year-old me was a little disappointed, because my sister got to play my mom's daughter and when I got into the show I had someone else playing my mom."

A few years later, she and her sister both auditioned for *Annie*. Her sister got in, but Sum didn't—which she says was her first taste of not getting a role. She was able to make more time for theatre later in high school, and decided to go to Simon Fraser University (SFU) for her post-secondary theatre training.

"(At SFU) they tell you straight up from your first day that they're not training you to get an agent and work for others," she says. "They're training you to have these bases to be able to create your own work—so that was always at the top of my mind, out of school and during school, was 'what do I want to make' as opposed to 'how do I go to all of these auditions?'"

Early in the pandemic, it was uncertain how long the shift online would last for the live theatre industry. But now, more technologies have been used to help create the live show experience in a new and different way. Sum says the possibilities of new mixed-media performances are exciting.

"I'm really interested in how to marry theatre with music in a way that's not quite musical theatre, because those are two areas that I have always looked at separately, and I think my music, I've focused on that a bit this year," she says. "I kind of do it as a separate thing from what I do for theatre, but now I'm drawn to how to let them be in dialogue with each other."

The pandemic has given Sum more time to work on her music, recording and releasing a few songs late last year. Amid working on her music, Sum also



Photo by Savannah Wheaton

Richmond's Amanda Sum got her start on stage in 2003 in Gateway Theatre's *The King and I*.

appeared in *A Craigslist Cantata*, a show mounted by the Cultch last fall that was re-formatted for an entirely online delivery. She says the show was very different than anything she'd worked on previously.

"It was so quick—typically with a show you would do three weeks' rehearsal, but we did one, and we would get called in separately. I wouldn't see the (other) cast members unless I was leaving and another cast member was coming in—we're doing this show together, but we never see each other."

Sum was also in the Cultch's annual Christmas pantomime. In that show, actors were masked and distanced, filmed using creative angles to create a unique performance. She says the energy in the room was a mix of excitement and caution.

"It's not quite acting on film, but it's not quite straight up theatre," says Sum. "So, how to engage the camera—the awareness that it's there, but we don't want it to look like an archival video."

Virtual shows, Sum says, involve a lot of trust. The audience is there, but not visible or audible for performers.

"It's a bit harder, especially with funny shows like this when you tell a joke and you have no idea if it lands or not," she says. "The people at home, if they want to clap they'll clap, but if they don't they don't, and we can't tell."

Sum is also starring in the encore performance of *A Craigslist Cantata*, staged for live online

viewing from Feb. 5 to 7. For tickets or more information, visit thecultch.com/event/a-craigslist-cantata/.

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RAPS COMMUNITY REPORT Caring for the animals who care for us

Be meow Valentine?



**Eyal
Lichtmann**

Valentine's Day is when we celebrate love and our connections with our significant others. For many of us, one of the most important relationships is with our pets. The Regional Animal Protection Society is devoted to the idea that animals make our lives, families, neighbourhoods and communities safer, healthier and happier.

But significant relationships happen not only between people and animals but, of course, between animals. Whether they are siblings from the same litter or unrelated pals who hook up and become inseparable, bonded pairs (or larger groups) are familiar to anyone who has witnessed intra-species friendships.

At the RAPS Cat Sanctuary, we see so many examples of tight bonds between pairs and groups.

Despite looking like siblings, and the fact that they arrived at the same time, Bodhi and Luke came to us from different places. Luke came with another cat but, once released, the two went their separate ways. Luke preferred the comfort of a more sedentary lifestyle. He has bonded with Bodhi, who is probably a little older. Bodhi came to us from a hoarding situation and was very wary about contact with humans at first, but the two of them are now ready to approach volunteers, and enjoy some petting.

Sandy and Pebble, on the other hand, have been together their entire lives. These two tuxedos came to us as ferals and are both siblings and besties. Their appearances are remarkably similar—we can tell them apart because Pebble's marking is on the left of her nose, and Sandy's is on the right. Despite the physical similarities, their per-



Photos submitted
Sandy and Pebble (left) are sisters and best friends, and Bodhi and Luke (below) developed a close bond when they met. All four are residents of the RAPS Cat Sanctuary.

sonalities could hardly be more different. Pebble quite likes human company and presents herself for petting. Twin sister Sandy is more likely to greet visitors with a claws-out swat in true feral fashion.

These are just two examples of the unbreakable bonds between animals. In your own home, you may witness the relationships between your pets, which may range from best friends to sworn enemies. Why some animals bond with each other and others do not is no more mysterious than why some humans don't get along with particular others. Members of any species can be picky.

At RAPS, we're celebrating Valentine's Day by inviting people to sponsor bonded pairs of cats at the sanctuary. Our sponsorship program is an important part of our funding model. For \$25 a month (\$50 for a pair,) a sponsor helps cover expenses for food, shelter, litter, maintenance and veterinary care for the hundreds of cats in our care.

We also have tribute cards you can send your



Valentine, letting them know that a donation has been made in their honour to RAPS (see rapsbc.com). Depending on the person, this may be something they appreciate more than chocolates or flowers.

Happy Valentine's Day. We hope you celebrate love in all its intra-species or inter-species forms.

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

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COVID-19 post-recovery clinics established

British Columbians recovering from COVID-19 now have access to three post-recovery clinics at St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver General Hospital and the Jim Pattison Outpatient Care and Surgery Centre in Surrey.

In addition to the direct care provided to patients, the Provincial Health Services Authority has provincial oversight for coordination and for integrating knowledge and best practice at the clinics through a new Interdisciplinary COVID-19 Care Network.

"We know some people who recover from COVID-19 experience long-term health effects," says Health Minister Adrian Dix. "Through the dedication of a large team of experts and health leaders across the province, we are working to ensure that specialized care is available to British Columbians, when they need it."

The clinics provide an opportunity for patients to receive specialized care and allow for specialists to further understand the long-term adverse effects of COVID-19. The clinics connect patients with a network of specialists, allied health professionals and sub-specialists through a mix of on-site and telehealth-enabled appointments.

"This new network ensures that B.C. patients not only will have access to care in the most

efficient manner but that we will be sure that we have a province-wide approach to learning more about how best to manage this new condition," says Dr. Adeera Levin, network lead and currently executive director of BC Renal within the Provincial Health Services Authority. "The network is a first in kind for any province to our knowledge, rooted in patient centered care and innovation."

Dr. Zachary Schwartz, internist and physician lead of the Vancouver General Hospital clinic, says "We quickly identified the need to learn more about the potential long-term effects of those suffering from COVID-19 in order to provide the support needed to British Columbians. The clinics will offer standardized assessments, education, and opportunities to participate in research studies. The network of clinics will allow us to learn from each other, understand patients' journeys in more detail, and provide the expert level of care expected."

The St. Paul's Hospital clinic has already seen more than 160 post-COVID-19 patients. Physician lead and internist Dr. Jesse Greiner says "We want patients to feel like they are not alone. We are here. We're listening."

Research is a key component of this network, particularly since the clinics have thus far seen

the small percentage of patients who were hospitalized with severe COVID-19. One early joint study showing more than half of participants had abnormal breathing tests three months after they first started feeling sick with COVID-19. Further examination with CT scans showed one in five had lung scarring, which is permanent damage that will lead to compromised lung function.

"COVID-19 presents a special opportunity for research—we are leveraging the unprecedented focus on a single threat to bring together investigators and patients, who would otherwise be isolated, to create and mobilize new insights to benefit our community and beyond," adds Dr. Chris Carlsten, Vancouver Coastal Health scientific director of legacy for airway health, and professor of medicine and head of the division of respiratory medicine at UBC.

Post-COVID-19 care expertise is also available to medical practitioners around the province, usually within the same day, through the Rapid Access to Consultative Experts phone line. In addition, educational materials are being developed to support patients and physicians.

The clinics are currently seeing COVID-19 patients who are discharged from hospital, as well as those referred by other physicians.

Richmond recovery services get boost

Richmond's New Democrat MLAs Henry Yao, Aman Singh and Kelly Greene are welcoming funding for addictions treatment and recovery services in the city.

The services will assist providers in ensuring people struggling with addictions are supported during COVID-19.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges for people dealing with addiction, and the organizations that support them," said Yao, MLA for Richmond South Centre. "This funding will help offset those challenges so people can get the support they need right now."

"During these two health emergencies, I want people to know that our government is there for them," said Singh, MLA for Richmond-Queensborough and an active member of the recovery community. "We are making sure that people can continue to access treatment programs here in Richmond and continue their pathway to recovery. In my own recovery I have intimately seen the amazing, often life-saving, work that Turning Point does. The people they



Photo submitted
Richmond-Queensborough MLA Aman Singh is an active member of the recovery community.

help will directly benefit from this."

Turning Point Recovery Society in Richmond is one of 53 organizations receiving support as part of the \$2 million in provincial government funding being distributed across B.C. These grants support existing bed-based treatment and recovery services and are an investment in quality living environments where people can focus on their recovery journey.

"When treatment and recovery program providers told us how the pandemic had impacted their ability to help people, our government listened," said Greene, MLA for Richmond-Steveston. "We took action and provided support so that organizations like Turning Point can focus on the important work they do."

The MLAs say improving treatment and recovery services has long been a priority of the New Democrat government and is an integral part of A Pathway to Hope — B.C.'s roadmap for making the system of mental health and addictions care better for people.

Frontline workers sing at Canucks' home opener

By DON FENNELL
@rmdsentinel

A Richmond couple ushered in the Vancouver Canucks' 2020-21 home schedule.

Victoria Groff and Chris Clute, both frontline workers, married their gifted voices to sing *O Canada* prior to the NHL game between the Canucks and Montreal Canadiens Jan. 20 at Rogers Arena.

"We were unbelievably honoured for this chance to perform for the Canucks," Groff says. "I think I can speak for both of us when I say how excited we were and our families were about this opportunity. This past year has not been easy for my family, especially when I lost my aunt to cancer in August, but something that really kept me going and gave me hope that things would get better was always music. I wish she could (have) been here to watch, but I know she (was) cheering for us in spirit as she loved our music and the Canucks."

Wanting to recognize and honour the dedication and sacrifices of frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Canucks offered the gig to Groff and Clute—a registered nurse at BC Children's Hospital and a team leader at YMCA respectively.

"A few weeks ago, one of my colleagues, Katrina, messaged me and asked if I would be interested in singing the anthem for the Canucks," Groff explains. "She knew I had prior experience singing for the (Vancouver) Canadians and



Photo submitted

Ardent Vancouver Canucks fans and frontline workers, Richmond's Chris Clute and Victoria Groff joined forces on the national anthem prior to the Canucks' home opener versus the Montreal Canadiens Jan. 20.

thought I'd be a great fit. I asked Chris if he'd want to join in a duet and of course he said yes."

They practiced the song about 30 or 40 times that night, she says, finally figuring out a duet version with harmonies, recorded it, and sent it in for consideration.

Both stellar athletes growing up in Richmond (Groff in softball and Clute in hockey), they first met about 11 years ago in high school, when both competed against each other in RichCity Idol. Neither won, but Groff says it was such an amazing experience as teens.

"Then back in the summer of 2019, I was asked

by a friend to sing at her wedding," Groff says. "Seeing as I didn't have a ton of personal experience performing and had just started learning guitar, I reached out to Chris and asked if he'd be interested in performing as a duo. He agreed, and we started practising once a week for the wedding."

Unfortunately with the pandemic, the wedding was cancelled and they weren't able to perform. But, says Groff, "I think both of us feel like through that loss we gained something better—a partner who we connected with, and who has the same type of love for music."

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**We were unbelievably
honoured for this
chance to perform for
the Canucks.**

— Victoria Groff

**RICHMOND
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OUR COMMUNITY NEWS

RICHMOND AT A GLANCE

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Dunfee Walks for KidSport

By DON FENNELL
 @rmdsentinel

Evan Dunfee never misses an opportunity to give back.

His latest effort, Camp KM, further reflects the Richmond Olympic race walker's level of commitment.

Articulate and thoughtful, Dunfee shares at dunfeewalks.com the steps he's currently taking en route to a return to the Olympic Games—hopefully later this summer in Tokyo.

At the same time, Dunfee expresses how "sport is an arena to develop and showcase your strength and your values, to be an ambassador, and to have your voice heard." Building upon on that premise, Dunfee has

teamed with KidSport BC and Run Canada's Series Camp KM to work towards his training goals and raise money to get more youth into sport.

Throughout January, Dunfee hoped to raise \$6,000 during a 600-plus kilometre training month; an effort that, he explained, "would) help support more kids learn the same amazing lessons in sport that I've been lucky enough to learn."

Dunfee said the fundraising went extraordinarily well, noting they had raised more than \$6,600 raised at the halfway mark.

"The funds will go directly to getting more than 15 kids into sport who otherwise wouldn't have had the chance, which is fantastic," he said.

•dfennell@richmondsentinel.ca



Photo submitted

Through his latest effort, Camp KM, Richmond Olympian Evan Dunfee is giving back to the grassroots by using his training kilometres this month to raise funds for KidSport.

Rogers wins women's weight throw



Photo courtesy Cal Athletics/kicfotos

The 2019 NCAA hammer throw champion, Richmond's Camryn Rogers recently won the women's weight throw at an indoor track and field meet in Colorado Springs.

By DON FENNELL
 @rmdsentinel

Camryn Rogers hadn't been able to compete for almost a year. But no matter, the Richmond thrower picked up right where she left off: winning.

The Richmond athlete, now a senior at the University of California at Berkeley, sat out the 2020 indoor season in preparation for the upcoming outdoor season and Olympics. Then COVID-19 came along and derailed those plans.

On Jan. 22, in the women's weight throw, Rogers (the 2019 NCAA women's hammer throw national champion) improved on her second-best all-time mark at the school with a throw of 21.08 metres (69 feet, two inches) during the Air Force Invitational indoor track and field meet being held at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

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